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“REINVENTING THE GODS”: BLOOMIAN MISPRISION IN THE NIETZSCHEAN
INFLUENCE OF JIM MORRISON

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PREFACE

“Nietzsche killed Jim Morrison, I had once said rather melodramatically to some startled friends in Berkeley. Morrison the Superman, the Dionysian madman, the Birth of Tragedy himself. But who knows who or what killed him? God knows, a million people have come to me hoping I had the answer”: John Densmore, drummer for the Doors, wrote these words in his autobiography *Riders on the Storm: My Life with Jim Morrison and the Doors* published almost twenty years after Morrison’s mysterious death (Densmore 3). More than thirty years later, new theories continue to surface, adding to myriad tales of drug overdose, murder, suicide, and a plot to fake his death in hopes of removing himself from the celebrity spotlight. The following essay will not attempt to speculate further into the details of Morrison’s passing, nor will it add to the multitude of literature reproaching the Doors and Morrison for the degeneration of impressionable minds or celebrating them for the liberating effects of their music. In contrast, this essay will explore the connection between Morrison and Friedrich Nietzsche alluded to in Densmore’s quote above. The purpose of this venture is to uncover the role Nietzschean philosophy played in the work of Jim Morrison and to honor the intellectual creativity and power of the band, an area often ignored. Using Harold Bloom’s theory of misprision as a guide, this essay will examine a selection of Morrison’s poems and lyrics, as well as his actions on stage, through the lens of several of Nietzsche’s concepts. In order to delve into this topic, it was necessary to complete extensive research including but not limited to Harold Bloom, Arthur Schopenhauer, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Jim Morrison. Harold Bloom’s texts *The Anxiety of Influence* and *A Map of Misreading* provide the framework for the analysis of influence. Elements of Arthur Schopenhauer’s book *The World as Will and Representation* establish the

obvious connection between the work and the work of Nietzsche. Such investigation required familiarity with many Nietzschean texts such as *The Birth of Tragedy*, *The Will to Power*, and *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. Finally, several biographies and autobiographies related to the Doors and Morrison such as John Densmore's book *Riders on the Storm* and Ray Manzarak's book *Light My Fire* as well as Morrison's poetry books, *Wilderness*, *The American Night*, and *The Lords an the New Creatures*, along with a book of song lyrics supplies the heart of the essay. Perhaps, Doors lovers and haters alike can find a new appreciation for the breadth of the band's knowledge and how it enhanced their dedication and their art.

INTRODUCTON

When the four members of the 1960's rock band the Doors began working on the type of image they wanted to portray and the style of music that would set them apart from other popular musicians of the time, they aspired to create an intellectual rock/jazz/blues sound. Lead singer, Jim Morrison, was an avid reader as well as a film student at UCLA where he met Doors' organist, Ray Manzarek, who was completing a Masters Degree in film. Manzarek, already a known musician, was intrigued by Morrison's breadth of literary knowledge and his ability to incite unique poetry. Morrison incorporated his affinity for philosophy, literature, and cinema into both his personal image and the band's image through a combination of haunting lyrics, spontaneous poetry recitations, and dramatic, stage performances, creating what would come to be described as Rock-n-Roll Theater. While inspiration behind the Doors' music came from a multitude of jazz, blues, and rock musicians, many of the words, images, and themes captured in the poetry and lyrics were inspired by Morrison's favorite thinkers and writers. Proud recipients of creative inspiration, the band made a point to publicly attribute borrowed aspects of their work to their rightful originators rather than deny having been influenced by anything other than their own inventiveness. Sounds of Coltrane, Howlin' Wolf, and German opera, among others, complement lyrics derived from a mixture of mind expanding drugs and influence from literary forerunners such as Blake and Huxley.

One of the most prevalent influences on Doors' material comes from the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche. Nietzsche's impact on Morrison was so profound that he devoted his entire self: mind, body, and soul, to embracing Nietzschean concepts such as the "Apollonian/Dionysian" dichotomy, the "Overman," the "Will to Power," and "Nihilism."

Several sources have documented that Morrison did read and discuss Nietzsche's works; it is impossible, however, to determine exactly how much Nietzsche Morrison read and understood before Nietzsche joined the repertoire of influences subject to the Doors' creative interpretation (Densmore 42)¹. Morrison's zest for creating and the nature of his lyrics and poetry suggests both familiarization with Nietzsche's philosophy, specifically of the above mentioned concepts, as well as knowledge of William Blake and Aldous Huxley. For Morrison, ideas of personal freedom through the reconciliation of body and soul integrated with exploration of sense perception expounded by such writers fostered his philosophy of the world. As a strong philosopher/poet, Morrison's personal and professional style reveals a Nietzschean revisor rather than an imitator of Nietzsche. Morrison adapted aspects of Nietzsche and reworked them to represent his own philosophical beliefs on life and art. The product of his interpretation became the backbone for the image of what the band would begin to call "psychedelic rock" (Manzarek 102). The process of "creative misinterpretation" or "poetic misprision," a concept studied and explicated by literary critic, Harold Bloom, in his works *The Anxiety of Influence: The Theory of Poetry* and *The Map of Misreading*, suggests that the work of one writer always echoes the work of those who inspired him; notwithstanding deliberate, or more importantly, inadvertent attempts to distance himself from this inspiration. The strong writer proves himself through his ability to successfully complete the works of his predecessors. Much of Nietzsche's philosophy evolved from and then transgressed Arthur Schopenhauer's concept of the "will," hence Nietzsche's work can be seen as a poetic misprision of Schopenhauer. Morrison's work, being no different

¹ Information concerning Morrison's interest in Nietzsche can be found in a number of books such as: *The Lizard King: The Essential Jim Morrison* by Jerry Hopkins; *Break on Through: The Life and Death of Jim Morrison* by James Riordan and Jerry Prochnicky; *Jim Morrison: Life, Death, Legend* by Stephen Davis; *No One Here Gets Out Alive* by Jerry Hopkins and Danny Sugarman; *Riders on the Storm: My Life with Jim Morrison and the Doors* by John Desmore; and *Light My Fire: My Life with the Doors* by Ray Manzarek.

than any other writer/poet's work, exemplifies aspects of poetic misprision as he finds his own voice through the creative misinterpretation of those voices he most revered; and Bloom's theory of misprision provides an interesting framework for examining this poetic process. Accordingly, before applying Bloom's theory to Nietzsche's impact on the work of Jim Morrison, an explanation of the evolution of Bloom's concept, as well as the application of the process, will help illuminate the relationships of influence discussed later in the essay.

CHAPTER 1

“—THE CYCLE BEGINS ANEW”: THE EVOLUTION OF THE POET WITH HAROLD BLOOM’S THEORY OF MISPISSION

As a literary critic, Harold Bloom has dedicated himself to examining ways of reading and understanding texts. In a number of his books, he analyzes the relationships between texts written by different writers. He sees the similarities and differences among literary works as a continuing dialogue among old and new writers. To further this idea, Bloom has created a formula for identifying the influence of writers on other works and how each overcomes the tendency to simply imitate others and discover their own talents. Morrison and Nietzsche both contributed to this ongoing conversation and unknowingly participated in Bloom’s intricate process of transition.

Bloom’s theory of creative misinterpretation begins with what he calls the “anxiety of influence” which he discusses in full in a book of that title: *The Anxiety of Influence: The Theory of Poetry*. The concept of the “anxiety of influence” evolved from the area of research on “revisionism.” Bloom defines “revisionism” as “a re-aiming or a looking-over-again, leading to a re-esteeming or a re-estimating” (*A Map of Misreading* 4). He clarifies this definition with “the formula: the revisionist strives to *see* again, so as to *esteem* and *estimate* differently, so as then to *aim* ‘correctively’” (4). The inspiration for Bloom’s theory as well as some of the terms he uses to discuss it comes from “Lurianic Kabbalism” which he believes to be “the ultimate model for Western revisionism from the Renaissance to the present” (4). Bloom explains that his theory relates to “The Lurianic story of creation” as it provides “the best paradigm available for a study of the way poets war against one another in the strife of Eternity that is poetic influence”

(5). The model for Bloom's theory is based on the "three main stages" of this creation story: "Zimzum, Shevirath hakelim, Tikkun." Bloom describes Zimzum as "the Creator's withdraw or contraction" in order to design something other than himself (5). In other words, the creator pulls himself away from influence in order to expose new creative channels (5-6). He describes Shevirath hakelim as "a vision of creation-as-catastrophe" (5). Basically, this means that the unique creation overcomes the old (6). He then defines Tikkun as "restitution or restoration—man's contribution to God's work" (5). To clarify, Tikkun symbolizes the creation itself (6). Lurianic Kabbalism provided Bloom with the vision and the framework for investigating revisionism which he has since developed into an intricate theory of the creative process.

According to Bloom, every new poet suffers from the realization that voices of earlier poets in some way resonate through his work. Upon realizing this, the new poet becomes burdened with an overwhelming sense of anxiety that threatens his future as a poet. To depict the gravity of the affliction, Bloom paraphrases Blake stating "To be enslaved by any precursor's system, Blake says, is to be inhibited from creativity by an obsessive reasoning and comparing, presumably of one's own works to the precursor's" (*The Anxiety of Influence* 29). Through creatively misinterpreting the ideas of his "precursors," the new poet finds his niche in the poetic sphere which in turn allows him to distance himself and his poetry from the works of those before him and prove himself as a poet. Paradoxically, the works that he furiously tries to ignore at one time provided him the source of inspiration to begin writing. The need to distance himself from any precursors encourages the poet to rework his style so that it contrasts even slightly with

his most affecting poets (10). Bloom argues that this process of revision which he interchangeably refers to as “poetic influence” or “poetic misprision” “is necessarily the study of the life-cycle of poet-as-poet” (7). In several books dedicated to the art of misprision, Bloom elaborates on the concept of anxiety and breaks down the process into six stages of poetic development: “*clinamen*,” “*tessera*,” “*kenosis*,” “*daemonization*,” “*askesis*,” and “*apophrades*” (14-16). The “ephebe,” or new poet, proves his strength as an individual by successfully completing each stage of creative separation from his poetic forefathers. Simultaneously, while establishing himself as a poet, he learns the detriment of completely severing the ephebe/precursor relationship as it supplies the imaginative fuel—another paradox that adds to the anxiety of influence. In contrast, poets who find themselves so enamored by earlier poets that they cannot break from their influence enough to discover their own voice are conquered by their precursors (5). The key is to find a balance between “anxieties of indebtedness” and “poetic misprision” (5). Bloom provides an involved discussion of the affect of the “anxiety of influence” on new poets followed by a discussion of each of the six stages, or “revisionary ratios,” of poetic development (14). A more in depth look at this theory allows for a better understanding of Nietzsche’s relationship with his “Poetic Father,” Schopenhauer, and Morrison’s relationship with his “Poetic Father,” Nietzsche (37).

Before the ephebe moves into the revisionary ratios of poetic misprision, he must possess the desire to become a poet. The desire to write poetry comes from his admiration of another’s work. The “Other” in turn reaches an even higher level of esteem for the new poet because the work inspired this newly found creative desire (35). After discovering his desire to become a poet, the first step is to discover the imperfection “that is not there” in the “Great Original” (31).

Bloom argues that once the ephebe commits to the act of writing poetry and determines the problem with the earlier work, it becomes his obligation to work through the revisionary ratios to complete the work correctly (31-32). The level of skill with which he performs the six revisionary ratios then determines his worth as a poet. Bloom argues that the strong poet separates himself from the others with the knowledge he obtains during the process. The strong poet works with an open imagination but recognizes his artistic limits as he courageously ventures back to the realm of the Other in order to move forward, to embrace “the terrible splendor of cultural heritage” (32). In order to conquer the anxiety and understand the necessity of the paradoxical relationship of poetic indebtedness, the ephebe must first break away from the Other.

The first ratio, *clinamen*, borrowed from “Lucretius, where it means a ‘swerve’ of the atoms so as to make change possible in the universe” is used by Bloom to mean “misreading or misprision proper” (14). In this stage of the creative process, the ephebe’s poem, having up to this point resembled the work of another, shifts significantly in some way such as subject, tone, meaning from his predecessor. Bloom argues that this deviation suggests that while the precursor’s poem began perfectly, the place of deviation in the new poem represents where the precursor’s work failed (14). It then becomes the new poet’s responsibility to “correct” the precursor’s work from the weak point by expounding upon and/or opposing the work of the precursor thereby proving that the “parent-poem” should have continued “precisely in the direction that the new poem moves” (14). In essence, the *clinamen* is the moment when the ephebe realizes that although his fascination with his precursor inspired him to write poetry, his

thoughts are not the same as the thoughts of those who at one time influenced him to create.

While his writing career began with modeling his poetry after the works of his precursor, there comes a moment when as an inspired novice striving to become a true poet his work splits from that of the predecessor. Bloom maintains that some new poets make a deliberate attempt to split from their precursor. Nonetheless, the stronger poets often remain unaware of their revisionary practice.

Bloom adopts the word, *tessera*, a term used in “ancient mystery cults” to represent “a token of recognition,” as the name of his second ratio which he defines as a “completion and antithesis” (14). *Tessera*, more specifically, describes the process where the ephebe’s oppositional reading of his predecessor’s poem encourages him to create a similar poem. He accomplishes this by preserving the precursor’s “terms” yet using them so that they are antithetical in meaning. More simply, the ephebe uses the terms to mean the opposite or something more than the original work; this implies that the precursor neglected to see the full potential of his poem (14). In other words, the new poet allows that initial split in the *clinamen* to guide his creative impulses and moves on to undertake a much larger and bolder project: completely countering the parent-poem of his precursor. This provides his readers with a second and more thorough version of the original work. The new poet then considers his work the final product of the precursor’s rough draft complete with alternate interpretations and no unanswered questions.

Bloom’s third revisionary ratio, *kenosis*, is defined as “a movement towards discontinuity with the precursor” (14). The word comes “from St. Paul, where it means the humbling or emptying-out of Jesus by himself, when he accepts reduction from divine to human status” (14).

During *kenosis*, the ephebe's work becomes a lament. The excitement felt as a result of successfully reworking the precursor's poem changes to anxiety, and he becomes insecure about his creative potential as a poet. Under the pressure of the anxiety of influence, he considers quitting to avoid impending failure. He uses his poetry as a cathartic exercise to purge himself of both his dreams of being an accomplished poet and the inspiration found in the works of the precursor that created the foundation for the dream (14-15). Ironically, the ephebe's lamentation directly results from feelings sparked by a poem written by the precursor where he acknowledges his own limitations as a poet. Like the ephebe, the precursor at one time found himself confronted with a similar realization about his predecessor. Reading the precursor's poem then mollifies the ephebe's feelings of self-doubt and creative dependency. Oddly enough, his dependency on the precursor which is the source of the anxiety becomes his panacea as he discovers in the precursor's work that his feelings are a normal part of the process. With his talent reaffirmed, he moves on to the next step in the creative process. The process of *kenosis*, therefore, serves as the moment of distress and illumination for the ephebe as he recognizes that his poetic voice has been significantly influenced by his precursor. By reading his precursor's poem, he learns his precursor also suffered anxiety created by the ephebe/precursor relationship. At this point, the ephebe understands the necessity of finding his own place as a poet; the effort to separate himself from his precursor becomes more visible in his work.

The fourth ratio, *daemonization*, which Bloom attributes to "Neo-Platonic usage, where an intermediary being, neither divine nor human, enters into the adept to aid him" comes to signify "a movement towards a personalized Counter-Sublime, in reaction to the precursor's Sublime" (15). In the essay *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime*

and Beautiful, Edmund Burke contends that “Whatever is fitted in any sort to excite the ideas of pain, and danger, that is to say, whatever is in any sort terrible, or is conversant about terrible objects, or operates in a manner analogous to terror, is a source of the *sublime*, that is, it is productive of the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling” (Burke 134). Later in the essay, Burke argues that “the great power of the sublime...anticipates our reasonings, and hurries us on by an irresistible force” (135). Immanuel Kant argues that “the sublime is to be found in an object devoid of form, so far as it immediately involves, or else by its presence provokes, an image of limitlessness, yet with a super-added thought of its totality” (Kant 306). Kant further insists that an object cannot be sublime; the perception in the mind based on an encounter with an object that excites the imagination, signifies the sublime (306-308). Basically, anything that incites feelings of awe, wonder, and boundlessness is referred to as sublime. Encounters with the sublime affect the individual emotionally and physically and motivate him to act. After cleansing himself of personal doubt and dependence, the ephebe is now free to welcome his own poetic muse. The evolution of the new poet’s inspiration begins with his ability to identify those elements in the precursor’s work that represent the sublime. The ephebe then recognizes that these elements are not only essential to the precursor’s poetry but all poetry. Hence, learning the secrets of his precursor’s poetry and more importantly, poetry in general, places him slightly ahead of his precursor in terms of poetic intuition (*The Anxiety of Influence* 15). With this knowledge, the ephebe’s poetic voice contains the information necessary to further his creative development. He aims to surpass the precursor’s ability as a poet by weaving the essential elements from the precursor’s work into his own poetry as if they are common to all poetry rather than signatures of the precursor so “as to generalize away the uniqueness of the

earlier work” (14). *Daemonization* then represents the point when the ephebe has learned all he can from the work of his precursor and uses the information to ignite the source of his own creativity. The ephebe manipulates distinctive elements of the precursor’s work into something commonplace in the new poem which in turn leaves the prominence of the precursor in the past. Breathing life into “old” themes shows that the ephebe is innovative; this in turn gives him an advantage over his predecessor.

The fifth ratio, *askesis*, a term Bloom adopts “as it is, particularly from the practice of pre-Socratic shamans like Empedocles” is “a movement of self-purgation which intends the attainment of a state of solitude” (15). A sense of accomplishment felt by the new poet resulting from his ability to move beyond the precursor’s influence allows him to consider himself in a position of equality, and even superiority, to the precursor which further widens the gap growing between them. At this point in the revisionary process, the ephebe, in an effort to prove himself different from others before him (particularly his precursor) and establish a place of his own, surrenders a portion of his poetic creativity to the gods (15). He accomplishes this by reverting back to his beginnings as a poet when he was influenced by the precursor. In his work, he cleverly admits that he harvested all he could from the precursor’s parent-poem in order to find his own voice. The admission simultaneously forces the precursor’s work to “undergo an *askesis* too; the precursor’s endowment is also truncated” as evidence of the precursor’s susceptibility to poetic influence is exposed (15). While the *askesis*, on one hand, acts as a humbling exercise for the ephebe; on the other hand, it serves as yet another tactic to establish his place at the front of a long line of poets. He pays for his poetic accomplishments by offering a share of his talent as a gift at once paralleling his creative journey with that of his predecessor. Thus, he offers part of

his predecessor's gift as well and separates himself from those who deny the true source of their poetic inspiration.

The final stage of the misprision process, *apophrades*, is described as “the return of the dead” (15). Bloom states “I take the word from the Athenian dismal or unlucky days upon which the dead returned to reinhabit the houses in which they had lived” (15). At this point in the creative journey, the ephebe has found his poetic voice but is beginning to suffer from the solitary position he created for himself during *askesis*. To reemerge into society, the ephebe reconciles his apprehensions about his precursor's influence and: “holds his own poem so open again to the precursor's work that at first we might believe the wheel has come full circle, and that we are back in the later poet's flooded apprenticeship, before his strength began to assert itself in the revisionary ratios” (15-16). The difference, however, is that in the beginning, the influence of the predecessor was not intentionally sought but rather unconsciously adopted by the ephebe. Now confident in his ability as a poet, the ephebe no longer fears evidence of the precursor's influence but welcomes it; the result is poetry that does not simply imitate that of the predecessor but seems to suggest that the ephebe not only wrote the new poem but the precursor's poem as well (16). In other words, *apophrades* is the final stage when after distancing himself from his precursor and discovering his own, poetic talent, the ephebe rejoins the society of poets. At the same time, he invites his precursor's influence into his work. This creates a poem so perfectly infused with the voices of both the ephebe and his predecessor that it appears as though there was no precursor—the ephebe is the originator of the precursor's works as well as his own.

The intricacies of Bloom's theory are fascinating; however, for the purposes of this essay, it is most important to understand the overall process of misprision and how each ratio effects the ephebe's development as a poet. Both *The Anxiety of Influence* and *A Map of Misreading* go into great detail describing the different poetic devices and techniques the ephebe applies during each revisionary ratio to overcome his precursor. Bloom argues that every poet suffers from anxiety of influence. Before becoming a poet, the ephebe simply enjoys the work of others. As a new poet, however, he cannot escape influence from these works. Although the ephebe may not be aware of this anxiety, his work confirms it. Bloom asserts that the poetry of a strong poet must undergo the revisionary process of misprision in order to separate himself from his precursor. His worth as a poet is determined by the skill with which he completes the revisionary ratios of *clinamen*, *tessera*, *kenosis*, *daemonization*, *askesis*, and *apophrades* discussed above. The new poet must demonstrate his willingness to work for his place as a poet. Bloom chooses a quote from Kierkegaard to express the poet's ultimate reward: "He who is willing to work gives birth to his own father" (26). Although Bloom's discussion of misprision focuses on poetry, these concepts can be useful tools for examining one writer's interpretation or misinterpretation of literature in general. Bloom argues "Influence, as I conceive it, means that there are no texts, but only relationships between texts" (*A Map of Misreading* 3). Appropriately, the evolutionary process of Jim Morrison's misprision of Nietzsche follows along the Bloomian act of creative revision. Beginning with one of Nietzsche's most prominent, philosophical influences, Arthur Schopenhauer establishes the basis for Nietzsche's thought and his misprision of this philosophy. In order to substantiate the case, further explanation of the ratios in terms of specific textual examples will follow as needed.

CHAPTER 2

“WHY THE DESIRE FOR DEATH”: SCHOPENHAUER’S OPPOSITION TO THE SUBJECTIVITY OF THE WILL

To fully understand Bloom’s anxiety of influence and the concept of poetic misprision it helps to look at specific examples between works. The main concentration of this essay is to investigate instances of Jim Morrison’s poetic misprision of Nietzsche’s work and determine whether Morrison successfully combated his poetic anxieties. Nevertheless, as Bloom suggests, all poets suffer from feelings of indebtedness. Just as Morrison’s work speaks of Nietzsche’s influence, Nietzsche’s work speaks of Schopenhauer’s influence. Thus, an introduction of Schopenhauerian philosophy will help in identifying instances of his influence on Nietzsche’s work and also illuminate the chain-like progression of the anxiety of influence which ends in Nietzsche’s misprision of Schopenhauer (*The Anxiety of Influence* 19).

In the essay *Schopenhauer as Nietzsche’s Educator*, Christopher Janaway describes Arthur Schopenhauer as being “revered as the writer who evokes a particular mood: a kind of aestheticized elevation which transforms and ennobles suffering, quieting the will and leading to a renunciation of one’s earthly self” (Janaway 160). Schopenhauer’s work begins with his belief that “the basis of philosophy is essentially *idealistic*” (Schopenhauer 5). He argues that “nothing is more certain than that no one ever came out of himself in order to identify himself immediately with things different from him; but everything of which he has certain, sure, and hence immediate knowledge, lies within his consciousness” (4). For Schopenhauer, man’s perception of the world is subjective, and there can be no objective world as any argument for an objective world must originate in a particular consciousness (5-8). Schopenhauer’s book *The*

World as Will and Representation explains his philosophy that man's will provides him with a false sense of empowerment over his existence. Throughout the text he offers suggestions on how to overcome the power of the will. The text is broken up into books. The first book develops his argument against the objective world. The others discuss the connections between sensual representation, or perception, and the different aspects of everyday life such as art, survival and death. Schopenhauer contends that what we believe to be an "outside" objective world is obtained by our mind's understanding; the information attained through a connection made between our senses and the "outside" object allows us to perceive the object and results in the development of a perception (26). The concept of "*will*" is imperative to Schopenhauer's philosophy as he argues that it provides man's motivation and in turn is the foundation of the products of the motivation (35). Differing perspectives of the will itself constitute the basis for Nietzsche's misprision that will be examined later in the essay.

Schopenhauer first introduces the concept of will in Chapter IV of the first book "On Knowledge a Priori" (32-55). In this chapter, he discusses the idea that although "*time*," like any other concept, is subjective because it is known and used universally for mathematics and everyday planning; it appears to be an objective truth outside the influence of subjectivity. Nevertheless, Schopenhauer argues that there can be no objective world and that in reality, "*Time* is primarily the form of the *inner* sense" (35). He goes on to add that "the sole object of the inner sense is the knower's own *will*. Time is therefore the form by means of which self-knowledge becomes possible to the individual will, which originally and in itself is without knowledge" (35). More specifically, it is in the individual's relationship with time that his will is eventually realized and set into motion (35). Schopenhauer continues by clarifying that man

cannot identify will as a separate part of his being; but rather recognizes it through the action it motivates and that they, will and being, “both are one and indivisible” (36). He then explains how the will plays a significant role in “the law of causality” which states that there can be no motivation for any action without there being a previous action (38-39). The remainder of Schopenhauer’s text discusses how man’s will and action is triggered depending on the way he perceives the specific situation.

Throughout the work, Schopenhauer makes distinctions between the perceptions of lower animals and the perceptions of higher animals, particularly humans. In Chapter V: “On the Intellect Devoid of Reason,” he argues that lower animals lead a more pleasant existence because they move through life motivated only by the current moment while man is plagued with memories of the past, plans for the future and dreams, as well as current events (59-62). While man is the superior being in that he has an intellect and has the ability to reason, he is also cursed by it and forced to “*suffer*” from it (61). According to Georg Simmel, one of Schopenhauer’s most significant contributions to philosophy is that he “made suffering into the absolute substance of emotionally experienced existence...he made suffering into an a priori definition that grows out of the central roots of our existence” (Simmel 53). Schopenhauer’s view of suffering and how it relates to his philosophy of existence later becomes a motivating force for Nietzsche’s own writings. At this point in Schopenhauer’s text, the pessimistic view of suffering becomes an integral part of Schopenhauer’s discussion of man and will.

Chapter XXVIII: “Characterization of the Will-to-Live” presents the heart of Schopenhauer’s argument. Schopenhauer’s earlier introduction of will defines the concept in terms of how it is motivated but does not explain exactly what “purpose” the will serves

(Schopenhauer 349). Schopenhauer asserts that the all actions are working to achieve a common goal, the "*will-to-live*" (350). To clarify this position, he adds, "Everything presses and pushes towards existence, if possible towards organic existence, i.e., life, and then to the highest possible degree thereof. In animal nature, it then becomes obvious that *will-to-live* is the keynote of being, its only unchangeable and unconditioned quality" (350). He supports his argument by referring to one's reaction to a sentence of execution; where man's fear of dying stimulates his fight to live, despite the inescapable adversity he has experienced over a lifetime (351).

Schopenhauer, assured he has proven his point, concludes his argument on the *will-to-live* stating "Therefore in such phenomena it becomes evident that I have rightly declared the *will-to-live* to be that which is incapable of further explanation, but is the basis of every explanation; and that, far from being an empty-sounding word, like the Absolute, the infinite, the idea, and other similar expressions, it is the most real thing we know, in fact the kernel of reality itself" (351). In other words, man can be certain of only one thing: that he is motivated by an innate force always driving toward life. For Schopenhauer, the *will-to-live* goes beyond a natural need to survive the world as he argues it also infuses man with the motivating force to understand it (360). Schopenhauer's theory of the *will-to-live* is not only significant in describing the cycle of life and death, but is also, in his opinion, the foundation for philosophy and other intellectual endeavors.

Schopenhauer argues that man must have a *will-to-live* in order to have a will to know and understand the world (360). Thus philosophy, the science of knowing and understanding, begins with the *will-to-live* (360). Janaway expounds on this notion stating "The intellect arises for Schopenhauer as an outgrowth or instrument of the will. Organisms develop the capacity for

cognition, which for Schopenhauer is activity of the brain, as a way to satisfy the will's need for existence" (Janaway 163). In the third book of *The World as Will and Representation* Schopenhauer explains the evolution of the "intellect" and the products of intellectual "genius." He refers back to earlier discussions of perception reiterating that an animal's first ways of knowing result from the will assisting in the mind's ability to draw connections from sensual perceptions (Schopenhauer 363). He goes on to argue that further cultivation of the intellect from solely "scientific knowledge" to "artistic knowledge" works during brief moments when the intellect can separate itself from the will (363). In the essay "Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, and the Aesthetically Sublime," Bart Vandenabeele examines Schopenhauer's understanding of the aesthetic knowledge in terms of the beautiful and the sublime and their relationship to the will (Vandenabeele 90). According to Vandenabeele, Schopenhauer understands the beautiful as something that brings man to a higher level of knowledge or perception through "passive, will-less and serene contemplation"; while the knowledge or perception related to the sublime can only be achieved through "a troublesome, violent, and conscious elevation beyond that which threatens the will" (91). Schopenhauer argues that strong intellect can eventually free itself from the dominance of the will, an extremely difficult task that demands self-denial of one's will: "pure will-less knowledge is reached by the consciousness of other things being raised to so high a potential that the consciousness of our own selves vanishes" (Schopenhauer 364-366, 368). Schopenhauer argues that following one's will loyally results in man's complete knowledge of his personal connection to the world, a subjective experience, but breaking from one's will allows man a purer understanding of the world, an objective experience: "For we apprehend the world purely objectively, only when we no longer know that we belong to it; and all things

appear the more beautiful, the more we are conscious merely of them, and the less we are conscious of ourselves” (368). Vandenabeele is particularly interested in the intellect’s ability to break temporarily from the will as Schopenhauer has already determined that man’s motivations are dictated by the will. In other words, the intellect cannot free itself from the will without the will motivating the intellect’s drive for freedom (Vandenabeele 91-92). Vandenabeele argues that man’s struggle to free himself from his own subjectivity is the source of Schopenhauer’s sublime; Schopenhauer is fighting a natural urge to protect himself and therefore is contradictory to nature (92). Vandenabeele contends, however, that Schopenhauer believes man’s “aesthetic *self*, which is spontaneously and purposively operative in aesthetic reflection” is guided by “a kind of purposiveness that is not produced by the will” (92). For Schopenhauer, the denial of subjective experience is the solution for combating the horrors of existence.

Schopenhauer continues to offer support for denying the will complete with methods of living for the objective experience. He goes on to argue that those who live an existence of objectivity do not suffer because they are not slaves to their will (Schopenhauer 368). Simmel clarifies this idea as he states that when guided by our will “we experience ourselves always as more than we are” (Simmel 25). Schopenhauer believes that man’s intellect is at its most creative during the moments of objectivity; he explains “What is called the awakening of genius, the hour of inspiration, the moment of rapture, or exaltation, is nothing but the intellect’s becoming free, when, relieved for a while from its service under the will, it does not sink into inactivity or apathy, but is active for a short time, entirely alone and of its own accord” (Schopenhauer 380). At this moment, “the intellect is then of the greatest purity and becomes a clear mirror of the world...it is now the world as representation” (380). Vandenabeele continues

to examine Schopenhauer's conflicting ideas of the sublime suggesting that at several moments in the text there appears to be little difference between the sublime and the beautiful. He points to a discussion that the "aesthetic subject in the sublime 'may quietly contemplate, as pure, will-less subject of knowing, those very objects so terrible to the will'" (Vandenabeele 93). He clarifies Schopenhauer's argument adding that man in the contemplative state of objectivity learns to approach those situations that cause suffering from "a higher level" of the aesthetic state which counters the suffering (93). Vandenabeele adds that "Although the subject has an experience of fear or even terror it is not an emotion he or she regards as belonging to him or herself" (93). Schopenhauer believes those who can separate themselves belong to the category of "*genius*" as do the creative works they produce (Schopenhauer 385). Hence, for Schopenhauer, the true artist is a man of objectivity.

Schopenhauer devotes a large portion of the third book to his opinions on the different art media. Simmel suggests that "The importance of art for Schopenhauer's metaphysics is that in its existence between creative genius and individual receptivity, art is both effect and cause of emancipation of pure intellect from will" (Simmel77). Janaway further explains the purpose of art in Schopenhauer's philosophy asserting that Schopenhauer provides a "continuum of states" that assists man in dealing with "the absence of positive value in life" (Janaway 177). One extremity of the continuum is "Aesthetic experience" while the other extremity is "extinction" (177). Schopenhauer begins his discussion of will and art by contending that what separates a talented artist from an untalented artist is objectivity as the talented artist creates "for all times and ages" not for himself (Schopenhauer 385). Unlike the self-serving artist who creates for personal gain in his small area of the world, the true artist does not create his art to advance

himself in the world but to advance mankind's understanding of himself and the world (385-391). The objectivity of art, as an extension of aesthetic contemplation, allows man to approach the sublimity of life without experiencing the effects (Vandenbeeke 94). Schopenhauer again asserts that the *genius* is successful because he maintains childlike perception which allows him to see "into the world as into something strange and foreign, a drama, and thus with purely objective interest" (Schopenhauer 395). The *genius* avoids "the dull gravity and earnestness of ordinary men" who because they cannot renounce subjectivity are forced to "see in things merely motives for their actions" (395). It is only through experiencing the works produced by talented men who depict "life and things as they are in reality," that "ordinary men" can see the world through an objective lens (407). For Schopenhauer, art projects the universal not the individual (409). He continues this discussion by examining the elements of different realms of art. His discussions of poetry and music are of particular interest to this essay.

In Chapter XXXVIII: "Aesthetics of Poetry," Schopenhauer defines poetry as what he believes to be "the simplest and most correct definition...the art of bringing into play the power of imagination through words" (424). According to Schopenhauer, the poet uses his poetry to penetrate man's "imagination" with images of "what the world is" (425). In other words, the poet uses his poetic ability to expose others to the objective world. The level of the objectivity obtained and portrayed by the poet determines his level of genius and his worth as a poet (425). He argues that poetry and philosophy are related in the sense that poetry provides the initial encounter with an experience while philosophy provides the intricate details of the experience (427). For this reason, he equates poetry with "the character of youth, philosophy that of age" (427). Schopenhauer argues, however, that poetry depicts life as "interesting yet painless"; this

contradicts real life which “is uninteresting so long as it is painless” (427). Therefore, life remains uninteresting until there is suffering, and those introduced to poetry can never be satisfied with reality because it cannot provide the excitement of poetic life without the pain of real life (427). Schopenhauer also suggests that what makes a poet “great” depends on his ability to become a part of each of his characters which in turn makes them believable. Poets who only relate to the main character leave others flat which in turn effects the believability of the main character (433). Similarly, he discusses the importance of “tragedy” and the poet’s ability to portray the “sublime” as well as the “beautiful”; when “that aspect of the world is brought before our eyes which directly opposes our will,” man is forced at that moment to experience the objective world (433). Schopenhauer concludes his discussion of the poet by establishing the responsibility of the “dramatic or epic poet” wherein he states: “The dramatic or epic poet should know that he is fate, and therefore should be, like this, inexorable; likewise that he is the mirror of the human race...” (436). As a “mirror of the human race,” the poet’s poetry must depict an array of personalities such as “many bad and sometimes wicked characters, as well as many fools, eccentrics, and simpletons; now and again a person who is reasonable, prudent, honest, or good, and only as the rarest exception someone magnanimous” (436). While Schopenhauer feels poetry results from the poet’s heightened sense of objectivity and introduces the ordinary man to the objective world, he feels that music remains the only subjective art form.

Schopenhauer explains the difference between music and the other media of artistic expression in Chapter XXXIX: “The Metaphysics of Music” as “music” does not reveal the objective world but rather exposes the will, the subjective experience, while at the same time

responding to it by stirring “the feelings, passions, and emotions of the hearer, so that it quickly raises these or even alters them” (448). Interestingly, because music remains self-contained within the cycle of will, he considers music “the most powerful of all the arts” (448). Nonetheless, music’s ability to incite and react to will in conjunction with poetry’s ability to capture the objective world creates a perfect balance of “our most direct and most indirect methods of knowledge” (449). Music provides direct knowledge as it both stimulates and projects the will’s motivations and poetry articulates these projections (449). Still, while music and poetry together provide a deeper level of knowledge than either alone, music remains the dominant art because the poetry is constantly controlled by it. Schopenhauer explains that poetry set to music serves to describe the “feelings” evoked by the music in the audience. Poetry written without music invokes music for dramatic emphasis (448-449). Near the end of the chapter, however, Schopenhauer returns to his argument that the role of art is to portray reality; he admits that music encourages man’s subjective outlook. It “flatters only the will-to-live since it depicts the true nature of the will, gives it a glowing account of its success and at the end, expresses its satisfaction and contentment” (457). In summation, the value of art lies in its ability to project a realistic portrayal of existence, including both pleasant and unpleasant aspects, while temporarily alleviating the actual suffering of existence for the viewer. Such an end to suffering can otherwise only be accomplished through “negation of the will” (Simmel 88). In response to Schopenhauer’s philosophy of art, Simmel argues “Therefore, the meaning of art can only be for him mere concentration of interest in the world as pure imagination, and mere flight into the world that is untouched by the reality of will and pain” (88). After spending numerous chapters explaining how will affects man’s ability to perceive, to reason, and to create,

Schopenhauer revisits his discussion of man's *will-to-live* as a natural instinct to avoid death and further develops the concept of self-denial as a method to approaching life.

Schopenhauer asserts that unlike the animal who lives day to day with no concept of dying, man's ability to perceive more than the present and to reason and reflect on this additional information causes him to suffer daily with the inevitability of his own mortality (Schopenhauer 463). As a means of easing the "fear of death" provoked by his advanced intellect, man engages himself in philosophy and other methods of knowing in hopes of illuminating some of death's secrets (463). Schopenhauer contends, however, that this fear of death is "inborn" in all animals regardless of whether or not they recognize their own mortality (465). He supports this argument by referring to the animal instinct of fight or flight (465). Schopenhauer elucidates on the absurdity of this fear as it remains impossible to know whether life is truly better than death. He argues, however, that man's fear originates not necessarily from the belief that life is better but from his imaginings of life continuing without him (465-466). The most terrifying result of death is the death of the will as "this organism is the will itself manifested as body" (468). Nevertheless, Schopenhauer boldly asserts that man should consider death a liberation because his will is no longer enslaved. Specifically he states, "death is the great opportunity no longer to be I; to him, of course, who embraces it. During life, man's will is without freedom, on the basis of his unalterable character, his conduct takes place with necessity in the chain of motives" (507-508). These motives lead to actions; some of which, because they did not go as planned, haunt our memories. Schopenhauer adds that because of man's "unalterable character," he is doomed to continue the same behavior until death. Death then "loosens those bonds; the will again becomes free" (508). Simmel argues that "Schopenhauer...is profoundly shattered by the dark

fate of being” (Simmel 47). Consequently, Schopenhauer surmises that “nothing else can be stated as the aim of our existence except the knowledge that it would be better for us not to exist” (Schopenhauer 605). Once man recognizes this truth he no longer needs to move through life dictated by his will but can devote himself to serving mankind as a whole (606-607).

Nonetheless, as Schopenhauer already established in the earlier chapters, breaking from one’s will is a feat achieved only by a few great men with a great sense of perception and a great intellect.

Schopenhauer’s text *The World as Will and Representation* encompasses a plethora of topics from sense perception and the evolution of the philosopher, to art and death. Although these topics may appear only slightly related, Schopenhauer asserts that they are all connected by the most natural and important element of all living organisms—the *will-to-live*. The *will-to-live* provides animals with the instincts to survive; man with the drive to advance himself in society and strive for personal contentment. At the same time, the *will-to-live* infects man with a tremendous amount of self-importance as it provides a subjective view of the world as opposed to an objective view. Some, however, privy to a more objective sense of being use their talents to expose this objective world to others; an essential element for man’s realization that the purpose of existence is to understand the futility of such existence. When man has learned this secret, he can cease fearing death and welcome it as liberation of the will. In the meantime, he learns to deny his will by occupying himself with the objective rather than subjective goals. Simmel refers to this concept as “the effort to dissolve the being-for-itself of things into a being-for-each-other” (Simmel 20). Ultimately, Schopenhauer argues for the renunciation of self in life.

Schopenhauer's work is often categorized as philosophy of pessimism. In the book *Schopenhauer and Nietzsche*, Simmel asserts that "Schopenhauer sees in the abhorrence of life the tip of the iceberg of horror which fills some natures in the face of brute existence, as opposed to others who are filled with the happiness of sensual and religious ecstasy" (6). He adds that Schopenhauer's pessimism robs him of "the feeling of life as celebration" (6). Schopenhauer's philosophy had a profound impact on the development of Friedrich Nietzsche's own philosophy (*The Will to Power* xii). Simmel points out, however, that Nietzsche "takes a totally new concept of life, which is very much opposed to that of Schopenhauer" (Simmel 6). While Nietzsche translator and scholar Walter Kaufmann states that some critics such as Oehler believe "that the early Nietzsche 'was completely under the influence of Schopenhauer,' and a pessimist," he argues that "Nietzsche's very first book, *The Birth*, constitutes a declaration of independence from Schopenhauer" (*Basic Writings* 11). Whether or not Nietzsche's early work loyally follows Schopenhauer's philosophy, it is clear that he was significantly influenced by him even as the development of his own ideas forced him in a different direction. Like Schopenhauer, Nietzsche's work relies heavily on the will's motivation and the products such as art that result from this motivation. Following the Bloomian cycle of influence, however, he creates a philosophy of affirmation to counter the pessimism espoused by Schopenhauer. Further, elements of his philosophy of affirmation aptly become the source of inspiration for Morrison's poetry, lyrics, and performance, which presents yet a third interpretation of the relationship between will and life.

CHAPTER 3

“I AM A GUIDE TO THE LABYRINTH”: NIETZSCHE TEACHES THE APPRECIATION OF LIFE’S PLEASURE AND PAIN

The anxiety of influence and Bloom’s process of misprision can be described as a progression of interconnectedness; the new poet involuntarily relies on the work of earlier poets in order to invent something new. The work of Morrison and the Doors adapted elements from an array of artists, but the influence of Nietzsche often overshadows the rest. Similarly, although Nietzsche’s work speaks of a number of creative influences, Schopenhauer’s work becomes the basis for Nietzsche’s ideas on life and art. Paul Strathern argues that Nietzsche discovered Schopenhauer at one of his darkest moments. Schopenhauer’s philosophy of “pessimism and detachment” sparked his interest, but “did not quite fit Nietzsche’s nature” (Strathern 16-17). In an essay discussing Schopenhauer’s influence on Nietzsche, Christopher Janaway elaborates on Nietzsche’s changing opinion of Schopenhauer; he argues that while Nietzsche once considered Schopenhauer’s philosophy of “self-devaluation in the name of value” and “self-destruction in the name of salvation,” the “sublimest enticement,” it soon became for him the “greatest danger” (Janaway 170). The impact of Schopenhauer’s work, however, provided Nietzsche with the desire and the inspiration he needed to develop his own philosophical views based on a more positive approach to the world (Strathern 17-18).

As mentioned earlier, Bloom’s process of misprision begins with the new poet welcoming the creative desire. Nietzsche announces his commitment to create in a letter to Carl von Gersdorff written in December 12, 1870, as he writes “Give me a few more years and you will notice a new influence in the study of antiquity too, and with it, I hope, a new spirit in the

scientific and ethical *education* of our nation” (*Selected Letters* 73). Now, he must confront the anxiety of influence by beginning the journey of poetic misprision as Bloom argues, “strong poets” contribute to the legacy of poetry “by misreading one another, so as to clear imaginative space for themselves” (*The Anxiety of Influence* 5). In order to secure his position as a legitimate philosopher and ease his creative anxieties, Nietzsche works to prove that Schopenhauer’s philosophy perpetuates feelings of negativity and oppression and therefore needs to be reevaluated. He then dedicates his life to establishing himself as a philosopher and artist through creative misprision of Schopenhauer’s work; this in turn produces works that would later inspire Jim Morrison’s imagination.

In his texts, Nietzsche openly discusses the impact Schopenhauer’s work had on his metaphysical beliefs. Like Schopenhauer, Nietzsche approaches his work by examining a number of concepts in relation to the will. Four major concepts always prevalent and interconnected throughout Nietzsche’s early and late works are: “Nihilism,” the “Apollonian/Dionysian” dichotomy, the “Superman,” also translated as the “Overman” and the “Will to Power.” Each of these concepts originated from Nietzsche’s interpretation of Schopenhauer’s argument that mankind is motivated mentally, physically and emotionally by a *will-to-live*. In the introduction to a publication of Nietzsche’s book, *The Will to Power*, David Taffel contends that Nietzsche’s interest in Schopenhauer “produced in him an awareness of nihilism as the central dilemma of contemporary European culture” (*The Will to Power* xii). As addressed above, Schopenhauer believed man’s will provided him with the motivation and purpose to live contented in a life where the only certainty is suffering. He argues, however, that

this self-serving existence hinders man from reaching the only real goal of life—coming to terms with the inconsequentiality of his own existence and non-existence—which can only be attained by practicing asceticism. Although Nietzsche considers Schopenhauer’s work innovative, he refuses to accept this dejected view of life, and therefore, finds himself opposed to many of Schopenhauer’s assertions. Georg Simmel speaks of their different philosophical beliefs stating “Just as Schopenhauer recognizes only the negation of life as an absolute value, so Nietzsche acknowledges only one thing: Life” (Simmel 136). The text *Pathways in Philosophy* further simplifies Nietzsche’s resistance to Schopenhauer by stating, “We can summarize the difference that eventually emerged between Nietzsche and Schopenhauer in Nietzsche’s own terms as one in which Schopenhauer says ‘no’ to life, and Nietzsche says ‘yes’” (Jacquette 375). Dale Jacquette goes on to explain that Nietzsche found Schopenhauer’s call for self-sacrifice “intellectually and in other ways unhealthy,” and “identifies any such self-limiting attitudes as life-denying, and in their extreme form he characterizes them as ‘nihilism’” (375). Their differing opinions concerning the effects of nihilism on man and society caused the initial rift in their beliefs (*Basic Writings* 11). This initial rift represents the *clinamen* ratio, “or serve,” as it is “what divides each poet from his Poetic Father” (*The Anxiety of Influence* 42). Kaufmann further clarifies the distinctions between the two philosophers, which he argues were insipient as early as *The Birth of Tragedy*, explaining “while Nietzsche admires him for honestly facing up to the terrors of existence, Nietzsche himself celebrates Greek tragedy as a superior alternative to Schopenhauer’s ‘Buddhistic negation of the will.’ From tragedy Nietzsche learns that one can affirm life as sublime, beautiful and joyous in spite of all suffering and cruelty” (*Basic Writings* 11). Nietzsche’s opposite view of life represents the act of misprision from his precursor. He

swerves away from Schopenhauer's pessimistic view of life and argues that to experience both pleasure and pain, to embrace both the beautiful and the sublime, is to live the way life is meant to be lived.

Nietzsche admired the attention Schopenhauer devoted to nihilism and agreed that it was a growing problem, but he was not content to reconcile the meaninglessness of life with self-sacrifice (*The Will to Power* XII). Instead, he begins to formulate his own answer to nihilism. Taffel describes this process by suggesting that first Nietzsche determines that nihilism results from "a feeling of loss of metaphysical beliefs (e.g., belief in God, heaven, an afterlife)" (xii). Nevertheless, these beliefs and man's dependence on them are a social construct and "not essential to human nature or well-being" (XII). Taffel continues adding that Nietzsche then proposes that "to free ourselves from the experience of nihilism, we need to analyze these beliefs, expose their mundane origins, and root them out" (XII). Taffel concludes this process with Nietzsche's realization that "'Truth' is always relative to the goals of the one who claims to possess it"; and in order to avoid being drawn into such pessimism, man must embrace it as a motivator for progress (XV). Nietzsche devoted a significant portion of his life to elaborating on his unique approach to defeating nihilism; this not only solidified his division from Schopenhauer, but inspired the development of the most influential concepts of his own philosophy. As stressed by Bloom, the development of one's own genius is a laborious task; it took years for Nietzsche's interpretation of nihilism to come to fruition. His own ideas about nihilism and the will began to materialize in his first book *The Birth of Tragedy: Out of the Spirit of Music* in connection with his investigation of the Apollonian and Dionysian elements of Greek tragedy.

Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy* explores the relationship between Greek tragedy and society as he, like Schopenhauer, believed art was an essential part of mankind's understanding of the world. He concludes the preface with "I am convinced that art represents the highest task and the truly metaphysical activity of this life" (*Basic Writings* 31-32). According to Ronald Hayman in the book *Nietzsche: A Critical Life*, Nietzsche examines the purpose of art in society through the work of Richard Wagner because for Nietzsche "Wagner was not only the greatest Romantic composer: as a poet and dramatist, he was the artist who could reunite music with drama – a momentous cultural achievement which would have the effect of bringing art and philosophy together again after two thousand years of divorce" (Hayman 117). The incorporation of Wagner's philosophy of music with Schopenhauer's philosophy of art provides Nietzsche the perfect combination of genius with which to embark on such a project: "Nietzsche was now convinced that, just as Schopenhauer was the greatest philosopher since Plato, Wagner represented the highest point in the evolution of modern music" (117). Hayman continues to explain Nietzsche's fascination with reinventing Greek tragedy contending that although contemporary music was growing increasingly "poetic," the "separation of the arts" made it feel "artificial" (117). With Schopenhauer and Wagner to guide him, Nietzsche calls for a reunification of music and philosophy and a revival of creativity. Despite Nietzsche's later disappointment with the book, which he makes clear in his "Self-Criticism," wherein he admits that the writing is not his greatest and that it is often obsequious, *The Birth of Tragedy* introduces one of his most popular concepts, the "Apollonian and Dionysian duality" (*Basic Writings* 15-27). An exploration of this concept reveals Nietzsche's move into the *tessera* ratio.

As discussed above, *tessera* signifies the moment when the ephebe's split from his precursor, or *clinamen*, grows more obvious. The ephebe uses a term or theme related to the precursor in a new way making it his own (*The Anxiety of Influence* 66-67). Immediately at the start of the book, Nietzsche begins explaining the Apollonian and the Dionysian as two conflicting "tendencies" in art. Nietzsche explicates how these two approaches affect the art as the "tendencies run parallel to each other, for the most part openly at variance; and they continually incite each other to new and more powerful births, which perpetuate an antagonism only superficially reconciled by the common term 'art'" (*Basic Writings* 33). Only "by a metaphysical miracle" do the two join together to form what Nietzsche considers the ideal art-form, "an equally Dionysian an Apollonian form of art---Attic tragedy" (33). He then moves on to describe the Greek gods from whom this concept evolved. Apollo represents the poet. He illuminates the ideal world, "This joyous necessity of the dream experience," while at the same time remaining composed and rational (35-36). In contrast, Dionysus represents music, movement, and indulgence. He incites chaos, passion, panic, and "the blissful ecstasy that wells from the innermost depths of man" (36). Nietzsche's characterization of Apollo is reminiscent of Schopenhauer's argument that the purpose of art, poetry specifically, was to reveal to man the world of objectivity; while the characterization of Dionysus echoes Schopenhauer's discussion of the man guided by the subjectivity of the will. Janaway goes as far as to say that "the Schopenhauerian system hovers eerily in the background" (Janaway 166). Regardless, it is clear that Nietzsche is working to distance himself from Schopenhauer and prove himself as a philosopher; he explains that the world contains Apollonian artists destined to portray nature as an ideal state and Dionysian artists destined to portray nature as mysterious and terrifying (*Basic*

Writings 33-37). His differing views on how to approach nihilism affect his understanding of art; the result is the institution of the Apollonian/Dionysian dichotomy, an adaptation of Schopenhauer's description of objective and subjective perspectives mixed with Greek mythology, and the denotation into his movement into *tessera*. More specifically, the dichotomy becomes a tool used in the "later poet's attempt to persuade himself (and us) that the precursor's Word would be worn out if not redeemed as a newly fulfilled and enlarged Word of the ephebe" (*The Anxiety of Influence* 67). Hence, Nietzsche's alteration of the opposing elements of nature permits him to further diverge from his precursor.

At its height, Greek drama included elements of both Apollonian and Dionysian art. In the beginning of the book, Nietzsche frequently uses Schopenhauer's work as the foundation for his own ideas on reinventing tragedy. Yet, as already addressed, once the analysis is underway, he continues to grow as a philosopher and advances toward the next ratios of misprision. In the text, he openly acknowledges Schopenhauer's influence and repeatedly struggles between his feelings of devotion and feelings of discontent with Schopenhauer's philosophy. Nietzsche then makes a bold step toward dissolution as he publicly disagrees with aspects of Schopenhauer's argument stating, "I cannot follow him"; he persists with a respectful statement concerning his revision of Schopenhauer's "metaphysics of music" stating, "I believe I have removed the difficulty here in his spirit and to his honor" (*Basic Writings* 51) Such a process is necessary for the development of *kenosis*, or "emptying," which "appears to be an act of self-abnegation, yet tends to make the fathers pay for their own sins, and perhaps those of the sons also" (*The Anxiety of Influence* 87, 91). The completion of *kenosis* frees him for *daemonization* which "attempts to expand the precursor's power to a principle larger than his own, but pragmatically makes the son

more of a daemon and the precursor more of a man” (106). Nietzsche’s advancement into the *daemonization* ratio is marked by a proliferation of ideas on nihilism, art and life.

During *daemonization*, Nietzsche discovers his abilities as a philosopher and becomes more confident with himself. He exhibits this confidence in the remainder of the essay as he establishes his philosophy of art (*Basic Writings* 51). Interestingly, Bloom refers to Nietzsche and Schopenhauer in his description of *daemonization* as he describes Nietzsche’s work in *The Birth of Tragedy* as the moment “where he tries to overcome his darker precursor by a direct refutation” (*The Anxiety of Influence* 106). Bloom, however, argues that in the long run, Nietzsche is unsuccessful in his attempts to overcome his precursor as Schopenhauer demonstrates a “greater wisdom” (107). Despite Bloom’s preference for Schopenhauerian thought, Nietzsche does continue to complete the ratios as is required by the process of misprision. In fact, during this *daemonization* ratio, Nietzsche works to separate himself from Schopenhauer’s Sublime—the devaluation of self and life—by demonstrating his Counter-Sublime—the celebration of life—derived from his investigation of Greek tragedy. From his research he surmises that both “joy” and “suffering” are required for man to realize his full potential (*Basic Writings* 43-46). In his discussion of the aesthetic in the works of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, Vandenabeele contrasts Schopenhauer’s idea on the beautiful and the sublime in art and life with those of Nietzsche. While Schopenhauer believes that it is in man’s best interest to approach sublimity of life from an objective standpoint so as not to be affected; Nietzsche believes that man does not view life through art; but through living life, he actually becomes art (Vandenabeele 100). For man to become art, he must surrender to the will and the sublimity of life (100). Man cannot move through his existence from a position of objectivity but must unite

himself with the world (100). For Nietzsche, “a split subject dwelling in two no matter how different worlds does not experience Dionysian sublimity” which again is essential in order for man to have a full life (104). Stories about their gods, told through song, poetry and dance, provided the Greeks with a safe environment to confront some of their worries about life and the world and encouraged them to embrace the certain duality of existence (*Basic Writings* 43-44). Greek drama confronted the duality of existence using both Apollonian and Dionysian elements which engaged the audience mind, body and soul.

Nietzsche attributes the deterioration of drama to the suppression of the Dionysian impulse, a result of growing trends started by Greeks such as Socrates that began placing significant importance on rationality rather than creativity. He contends that true art must encompass both the Apollonian and the Dionysian elements: “the intricate relation of the Apollonian and the Dionysian in tragedy may really be symbolized by a fraternal union of the two deities: Dionysus speaks the language of Apollo; and Apollo, finally the language of Dionysus; and so the highest goal of tragedy and of all art is attained” (130). In other words, art fashioned from the blending of the two impulses is the most perfect art. Further, while Schopenhauer believes the most productive art acts to suppress the individual will, Nietzsche believes the most effective art cultivates both the Apollonian and the Dionysian tendencies as two essential halves of one whole. Maintaining an equal balance is necessary for art and life; however, as the Dionysian impulse proves the more powerful of the two while the Apollonian acts as the regulator (143). As explained earlier, though, Nietzsche asserts that artists can be possessed by one or the other or both; and in many of his works, he asserts his penchant for Dionysus. He feels a kinship with Dionysus because Dionysus relishes life and all the pleasure

and pain that comes with it (726-730). In his reflections on “The Birth of Tragedy” in his work *Ecce Homo*, he expounds on his connection with Dionysus and again declares his opposition to Schopenhauer’s philosophy as he states:

This ultimate, most joyous, most wantonly extravagant Yes to life represents not only the highest insight but also the *deepest*, that which is most strictly confirmed and born out by truth and science. Nothing in existence may be subtracted, nothing is dispensable—those aspects of existence which Christians and other nihilists repudiate are actually on an infinitely higher level in the order of rank among values than that which the instinct of decadence could approve and call good. (728)

Should any doubt persist, in the preface to *Ecce Homo* he goes as far as to say, “I am a disciple of the philosopher Dionysus; I should prefer to be even a satyr to being a saint” (673).

Nietzsche, maturing as a philosopher, continues to develop his own ideas about how will can help produce nihilism or conquer it. According to Nietzsche, it takes a special type of individual to teach man the possibilities and the dangers of the will. Nietzsche calls this individual the “Superman” (also translated as the “Overman”) and dedicates an entire book to explaining his significance.

In the book *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Nietzsche attempts a more creative approach to his philosophy, a somewhat autobiographical fiction. Nietzsche tells the story of a prophetic individual, Zarathustra, who after years of contemplative isolation attempts to educate mankind on the value of life and prepare him for the coming of a being neither God nor human; “an inspiring vision,” the Superman, or Overman (Übermensch), who will free man from oppression

and raise him to a new level of brilliance. Zarathustra's first attempt, however, leaves him ridiculed and chastised by society. Realizing that society is not ready to receive his message, he returns to his self-inflicted seclusion vowing only to educate those unique individuals who seek his wisdom (*Thus Spoke Zarathustra* xv-xxxi). The story of Zarathustra can be seen as Nietzsche's *askesis*, "a way of purgation intending a state of solitude as its proximate goal" (*The Anxiety of Influence* 116). Bloom's elaboration of this process helps to secure the correlation: "Intoxicated by the fresh repressive force of a personalized Counter-Sublime, the strong poet in his daemonic elevation is empowered to turn his energy upon himself, and achieves, at terrible cost, his clearest victory in wrestling with the mighty dead" (116). While Nietzsche strove to free himself from Schopenhauer's influence, he soon realizes that few fully understand and appreciate his distinctive philosophy of the world. This leaves him in an emotionally secluded place carved out by his own desire for recognition: "My time has not yet come, some are born posthumously...that I am not heard today, that no one today knows how to take from me, is not only comprehensible; it even seems to me right" (*Why I Am So Wise* 47). Nevertheless, with Zarathustra advocating the philosophy of life and the coming of the Superman, Nietzsche continues to refine his thoughts on nihilism and the will.

Nietzsche introduces the concept of the Overman in *Zarathustra's Prologue* as Zarathustra addresses the townspeople, "I teach you the *Uebermensch*. Man is something that shall be overcome. What have you done to overcome him?" (*Thus Spoke Zarathustra* 9). He goes on to say "The *Uebermensch* is the meaning of the earth. Let your will say: The *Uebermensch shall be* the meaning of the earth!" (9). Zarathustra then goes on to urge man to discount the stories of other, better lives told by those who "are despisers of life" and embrace

the life he lives today. Zarathustra explains that man alone possess the power to improve his condition of life and bring about the coming of the Overman; he, Zarathustra, possess the knowledge that will help man understand his true potential (11-12). After failing to recruit, however, he learns that he can only help those who want to help themselves stating ““But I need living companions, who will follow me because they want to follow themselves...Fellow creators the creator seeks—those who write new values on new tablets” (17-18). Throughout the remainder of the text, Zarathustra educates those who seek his guidance with his wisdom.

Zarathustra lectures on a number of specific subjects, similar to the style Nietzsche uses in his other texts, always encouraging his followers to liberate themselves from the oppressors of life: “My brothers, do you want to suffocate in the fumes of their snouts and appetites? Rather break the window and spring to freedom!/ Escape from the bad smell!.../ The earth is free now for great souls. There are yet many empty seats for the lonesome and the twosome” (45-46). In order to free themselves, people must become “creators” and work for a “Change of values” (53). With creators like Nietzsche, the change in values becomes a quest for individuality and leads man away from “the multitude” into an existence of isolation and subjectivity as Zarathustra professes “Lonely one, you are going the way to yourself!” (56-57). In turn, these individuals become the salvation of the earth: “You lonely ones of today, you that are drawing away, you shall one day be a people: out of you who have chosen yourselves, shall a chosen people arise—out of them the *Urbemensch*” (68). Nietzsche never abandons his hope for a new man and a new world. In his last book *The Will to Power*, Nietzsche again assumes the role of the teacher; he becomes Zarathustra by calling for creators, anticipating the Superman and

coming to a deeper understanding the motivations of the will. Also, in returning his focus to the will, he again returns his focus to Schopenhauer—a compulsory aspect of the *apophrades* ratio.

Nietzsche continues refuting Schopenhauer's philosophy of the will and more specifically, the *will-to-live*, with his concept of the "will to power." Taffel begins the introduction to Nietzsche's book *The Will to Power* with the statement "If there are still things, in this ironic postmodern age, as 'dangerous thoughts,' surely no book is more overflowing with them than Friedrich Nietzsche's *Will to Power*" (*The Will to Power* IX). Taffel asserts "many of Nietzsche's fundamental insights are encountered as they first inspired the thinker and as he first wrestled them into words" (IX). In other words, many of the arguments and concerns addressed throughout his career reappear and evolve in this text. He continues to work and rework his own ideas as well as those of others; these changes reflect social and historical issues of the time and his continuing growth as a philosopher. Again, Nietzsche uses the concept of will to illuminate a number of topics. First, however, he defines the will according to his philosophy which requires him to revisit the ideas of his precursor.

Nietzsche's interpretation of the will challenges Schopenhauer's understanding of its purpose. In doing this, Nietzsche faces the last ratio, *apophrades*—"the dismal or unlucky days upon which the dead return to inhabit their former houses" (*The Anxiety of Influence* 141). Bloom further describes *apophrades* as the inevitable moment when elements of the precursor reemerge in the ephebe's work only altered so that the ephebe maintains the control rather than the precursor as in earlier ratios (141). The purpose of reviving the predecessor is so that the new artist can make a last attempt to confirm his progress (152). Nietzsche displays his movement into *apophrades* with deliberate references to his association with Schopenhauer as he

writes “My precursors: Schopenhauer. To what extent I deepened pessimism, and first brought its full meaning within my grasp, by means of its most extreme opposite” (*The Will to Power* 272). Later in the text he describes specifically his need for a modification of Schopenhauer’s philosophy: “Schopenhauer’s interpretation of the ‘absolute’ as *will* was certainly a step towards that concept of the ‘absolute’ which supposed it to be necessarily good, blessed, true, and integral; but Schopenhauer did not understand how to deify this will...He did not realize that there is an infinite number of ways of being different, and even of being God” (*The Anxiety of Influence* 567-568). Again, Nietzsche accepts the responsibility of showing man that will plays an integral part in his freedom from repression.

Although Nietzsche also sees will as the underlying force for man’s motivations, he discounts Schopenhauer’s concept of the *will-to-live* as a misinterpretation of man’s intent. In Chapter I: “The Will to Power in Science,” Nietzsche argues that man’s intellect serves no other purpose than to aid in the attainment of “power” (*The Will to Power* 283). He adds that man aspires for “Knowledge,” only as a device to gain more power. The amount of power obtained determines the amount of control one commands over another (283-284). Nietzsche then applies this will to power to specific aspects of life starting with the increasing nihilism. He blames the spread of nihilism on people and institutions that misuse their will to power to create “moral values” for those less powerful. Pressure from these moral values then perpetuates the need to conform—an occurrence he refers to as the “herd instinct”—or risk segregation and other consequences (161). He not only considers this detrimental to society but also to the individual and to creativity as he surmises “the herd seeks to maintain and preserve one type of man, and that it defends itself on two sides—that is to say, against those which are decadents from its

ranks (criminals, etc.), and against those who rise superior to its dead level. The instincts of the herd tend to a stationary state of society; they merely preserve. They have no creative power” (168). Simmel clarifies asserting that “Nietzsche views the life of humanity to which he is passionately devoted as exhibited only by individuals” (Simmel 145). Consequently, Nietzsche, again demonstrating his break from Schopenhauer, believes in the importance of the creative individual to challenge these oppressors and their misuse of the will to power. One way of accomplishing this is through art. His philosophy of art and the artist offers insight into what he believes is his purpose as a philosopher.

In the first aphorism of the chapter, “The Will to Power in Art,” Nietzsche proclaims his belief that the power of art lies in its ability to confront the ills of society contributing to the nihilism of existence. He asserts, “OUR religion, morality, and philosophy are decadent human institutions. The counter-agent: Art” (*The Will to Power* 455). For Nietzsche, art can invigorate not only the artist but also the everyday man. It possesses a special quality that “increases strength, it kindles desires...it excites all the more subtle recollections” (464). That which does not infuse this sensation in man, but instead instills feelings of nihilism, represents “Ugliness” (465). According to Nietzsche, the proficient artist enjoys three “physiological conditions” which places him above the everyday man (466). Nietzsche describes the first condition, “intoxication, the feeling of enhanced power,” as the artist’s need to project his ideas of “fullness and perfection” onto the everyday. The second condition, “the extreme sharpness of certain sense,” allows the artist the ability to both comprehend and create new modes of communication such as “music.” The third condition, “the compulsion to imitate,” is the artist’s uncontrollable urge to act out his perceptions through “the movement of the limbs” (466-467). Nietzsche

further elaborates on the role of the artist as he maintains “Artists should not see things as they are; they should see them fuller, simpler, stronger: to this end, however, a kind of youthfulness, of vernality, a sort of perpetual elation, must be peculiar to their lives” (458). Just as Schopenhauer believes in the potential of art to educate man about the value of existing through life, Nietzsche also believes in the potential of art to educate man on the different ways to live life. As addressed earlier, good art must reflect elements of both Apollonian and Dionysian impulses. In addition, the artist must be liberated from the misuse of the will to power. Hence, the value of art is to teach the value of life; those free from oppressive institutions of the will to power such as Zarathustra, Dionysus and Nietzsche, with unique ways of perceiving the world, represent true creators.

Although Nietzsche recognizes that many of his ideas are ahead of their time, he sustains the conviction that his philosophical accomplishments have surpassed the others (*Ecce Homo* 64-65). He continues to proclaim that his philosophy will one day save the world: “my philosophy will one day conquer, for what has hitherto been forbidden on principle has never been anything but the truth” (5). In the book *The Shortest Shadow*, Alenka Zupancic focuses on the “nonrelationship between Dionysis and the Crucified,” a duality Nietzsche creates for himself as philosopher against morality (Zupancic 18). She refers to the quotes from *Ecce Homo* where Nietzsche states “‘I’ am two’ and examines this in terms of the “event” of becoming the “two” (18). She argues Nietzsche suffers from “megalomania” as she points out that he repeatedly refers to himself as “‘dynamite’” and “‘destiny’” (4-5). Nonetheless, she believes his dreams of grandeur are worth serious consideration because they relate to the concept of himself as the “event”; she contends that “Nietzsche’s theory of the event constitutes a part of the event

called ‘Nietzsche’” (5, 16-17). As addressed earlier, Nietzsche believes only a few, remarkable individuals have the potential to comprehend his message and bring about change. When the moment comes the individual will be experiencing the “event” that is Nietzsche. Jim Morrison and the Doors eagerly joined the pursuit for life and personal freedom with their music in the Nietzschean fashion accepting both the rewards and the sacrifices. Through the process of misprision, Morrison accepts the role of poet which allows him to reinvent Nietzsche in a way that the “event” is no longer the “event” that is Nietzsche—it is the “event” that is Morrison.

CHAPTER 4

“THOUGHTS IN TIME & OUT OF SEASON”: MORRISON DISCOVERS THE WAYS TO UNLOCK THE DOORS

Although Morrison’s work displays a strong Nietzschean influence, his early explorations with sensory perception relate more specifically to the work of William Blake and Aldous Huxley. Like Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, the works of Blake and Huxley address the theme of expanding one’s consciousness in order to better understand the world. Blake and Huxley, however, pay particular interest to the idea of the endless possibilities of an open mind. The concept of the “infinite,” as related to the Romantic sublime addressed earlier, appealed to Morrison’s dark side. In the essay “The Discourse of the Sublime and the Inadequacy of Presentation,” Beatriz Gonzalez Moreno contends that in the 1800’s an interest in the “alliance between the mind and imagination” challenged traditional views on aesthetics and in turn “redefined the boundaries and made room for disproportion, obscurity and monster-like appearances” (Moreno 42). She goes on to argue that “The sublime became a way of thinking about excess as the key to a new kind of subjectivity that delighted the experience of Terror” (42). The sublime becomes integral to Morrison’s work. Inspired by works supporting the cultivation of the imagination Morrison began experimenting with the expansion of his own perception and developing methods of inciting sensory activity. As a result, the ideas of Blake and Huxley, along with those of Nietzsche, represent the foundation of Morrison’s philosophy. Instances of influence from Blake and Huxley in Morrison’s work demonstrate his inclination to rewrite his precursors.

The band name “The Doors” itself alludes to two literary works. Concerning the origin

of the band name, Ray Manzarek briefly discusses that Morrison's knowledge of both Blake's poem "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell" and Huxley's essay *The Doors of Perception* led to the decision (Manzarek 78). By claiming the name "The Doors," the band joined Huxley in the commendation of the Blakean ideas advocated in the poem; Huxley uses a direct phrase from the poem as the title of his essay. Morrison felt connected to both works as they express the necessity for pure knowledge and offer different methods of attaining it. A discussion of Blake and "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell" is necessary as his work is the original source from which Huxley and Morrison both begin to form their own ideas of perception.

Mary Lynn Johnson and John E. Grant preface Blake's poem with the assertion that he criticizes "unimaginative, simplistic systems in which passive 'good' is valued over active 'evil' (Blake 81). They go on to address Blake's message in the poem as the need for "the liberation of all human powers" from oppressive systems often related to "church and state" (81). Johnson and Grant conclude their introduction with a discussion of the appeal of Blake's poem during the French Revolution as society anticipated "a new era" of "spiritual and political liberation" (83). Morrison as the son of a military man struggled with his own feelings of oppression and stifled creativity (*The Lizard King* 35-36; *No One Here Gets Out Alive* 7-9, 40-42). Morrison found Blake's poem intriguing and the name, "The Doors," directly relates to the quote: "If the doors of perception were cleansed every thing would appear to man as it is, infinite" (Blake 93). For Blake, this meant seeing through the corruption of the oppressive institutions, reuniting the body and the soul, experiencing the world with increased "sensual enjoyment," and appreciating the "genius" in every man as he argues "The worship of God is: Honoring his gifts in other men, each/ according to his genius, and loving the/ greatest men best. Those who envy or culminate

great men hate God, for there is no other God” (Blake 93, 99). Morrison believed strongly in Blake’s message and wanted the band to be “the doors” through which society must go to experience life with an unbridled sense of perception. For Morrison, however, the “doors of perception” meant something more. They meant self-discovery; they meant a joining together of ideas; they meant reinventing the everyday to make it new; they meant beauty; they meant horror; they meant anything and everything. He expresses this belief in his poem “The Opening of the Trunk”: “—Moment of inner freedom/ when the mind is opened & the/ infinite universe revealed/ & the soul is left to wander/ dazed & confus’d searching/ here & there for teachers & friends” (*Wilderness* 5). Among other methods, Morrison believed poetry provided a channel through which one could enter into different perceptions of the world. In a “Self-interview,” he states “Listen, real poetry doesn’t say anything, it just ticks of possibilities. Opens all the doors. You can walk through any that suits you...If my poetry aims to achieve anything, it’s to deliver people from the limited ways in which they see and feel (2). In order to set himself apart from his precursors, Morrison’s work often contains an aspect of fear and revulsion. The poem above expresses a feeling of loneliness as “the soul is left to wander...here & there for teachers and friends” (5). Although fear surfaces in his poetry in a number of ways, he puts great emphasis on the element of death as the ultimate mystery always lurking behind one of the doors of life.

With his poems and lyrics, he provides an array of views on life and death as well as other aspects of the everyday. The eerie fascination with death, danger and the unknown not only distinguishes Morrison from his literary precursors; it also distinguishes the Doors’ music from the more light-hearted songs popular at the time earning them the reputation of being dark and ominous. While the allusion to the “doors of perception” remains the most commonly

discussed Blake reference used by the Doors, other elements of the poem can be found in lyrics written by Morrison. Manzarek discusses another tribute to Blake in the chorus to the song, "End of the Night," which says "Realms of bliss/ Realms of light/ Some are born to sweet delight/ Some are born to sweet delight/ Some are born to the endless night"; he attributes these lyrics to Blake's words "God appears and God is light/ To those poor souls who dwell in night" (Manzarak 77-78; Doors 32). These lyrics also echo Blake's quote, "The soul of sweet delight can never be defil'd" (Blake 90). This again serves as another reference to the allure of a heightened sense of perception, or "endless night," as "sweet delight" represents the knowledge gained by those willing to surrender themselves to the mysteries of the unknown. With Morrison's interest in limitlessness and obscurity, the reference to Blake cannot be limited to one idea. As Bloom insists, the poet must reuse a word or theme of his precursor to mean something new. In this case, the "endless night" is also reminiscent of death where the "realms of bliss" and the "sweet delight" represent the end of life's suffering in the comforts of the afterlife. Many of the ideas espoused by Blake in the poem, "The Marriage..." relate to ideas that attracted Morrison to Nietzsche's work such as appreciating the "genius" of man addressed above. Another example of their similar views can be summed up in these lines from the *Argument*, "Without Contraries is no progression. Attraction and Repulsion, Reason and Energy, Love and Hate, are necessary to Human existence" (86). Lines from the poem's *Proverbs of Hell* also foreshadow the philosophies of both Nietzsche and Morrison: "The road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom" and "Improvement makes strait roads, but the crooked roads without/ Improvement are roads to Genius" (89-90). In Blake, Morrison found the same enthusiasm for individuality and creativity that he felt as a creator and the passion to pursue his

ideas despite the obstacles. These are the same values he would also revere in the work of Huxley and, of course, Nietzsche.

Drugs opened another door for Morrison. He saw drugs as means to creative thought as he writes “Drugs are a bet w/your mind” (*Wilderness* 78). Morrison, who was no stranger to experimenting with mind-altering drugs like marijuana and LSD, and who was an admirer of Blake, found himself drawn to Aldous Huxley’s essay *The Doors of Perception* (*The Lizard King* 59; Manzarek 78). In the essay, Huxley recounts his part in a mescaline experiment in 1953 performed to learn more about the psychological consequences (Huxley 12). Huxley, familiar with previous mescaline research, was curious to experience the effects of the drug. When introducing the reasons for mescaline ingestion he states “at least one professional philosopher has taken mescaline for the light it may throw on such ancient, unsolved riddles as the place of mind in nature and the relationship between brain and consciousness” (10). For Huxley, the “doors of perception” represent places in the mind which can only be accessed through methods of transcending consciousness such as drugs and alcohol. Huxley begins his narrative with the statement “We live on, we act on, and react to, one another; but always and in all circumstances we are by ourselves...By its very nature every embodied spirit is doomed to suffer and enjoy in solitude” (12). In Morrison’s view, everyone designs an alternate life for themselves in their mind which sometimes conflicts with their life in the “real” world: “Urge to come to terms with the ‘Outside,’ by/ absorbing, interiorizing it. I won’t come out,/ you must come in to me. Into my womb-garden/ where I peer out. Where I can construct a universe/ within the skull, to rival the real” (*The Lords and the New Creatures* 42). Morrison’s experience is one of paranoia where the “universe within the skull” represents a sanctuary. During the experiment, Huxley

was asked a number of thought provoking questions. While responding to a question regarding how he perceived “spacial relationships,” he remarks that his psyche remained undisturbed by actual dimensions but seemed transfixed on “being and meaning” (Huxley 19-20). Later in the essay, Huxley discusses that when listening to the tape of his responses, he repeated the phrase “This is how one ought to see, how things really are” (34-35).

During the process, Huxley discovers the significance of “things,” particularly “human beings” (35). He goes on to explain by elaborating on his thought: “Things without pretensions, satisfied to be merely themselves, sufficient in their Suchness, not acting apart” (38). As alluded to in the discussion of Blake, Morrison’s idea of perceiving the “infinite” not only means to see more clearly, but to understand that there is no right or wrong way to see because things are limitless: “Metamorphose. An object is cut off from its name,/ habits, associations. Detached, it becomes only/ the thing, in and of itself. When this disintegration/ into pure existence is at last achieved, the object/ is free to become endlessly anything” (*The Lords and the New Creatures* 78). Nevertheless, Huxley realizes that while the mescaline high leads to a “cleansed perception,” the information gained from the revelation cannot assist in matters of everyday life as “It gives access to contemplation—but to a contemplation that is incompatible with action and even with the will to action, the very thought of action” (Huxley 40-41). Still, he argues that man has a need to temporarily relieve himself of everyday pressures that he fulfills most often with drugs or alcohol. Similarly, while discussing his “reputation as a drinker” in an interview for the *Los Angeles Free Press* in 1971, Morrison argues that “drinking is a way to cope with living in a crowded environment, and also a product of boredom” (*The Lizard King* 260). In a poem, Morrison writes “I drink so I/ can talk to assholes./ This includes me” (*Wilderness* 207).

Huxley further contends that “The universal and ever-present urge to self-transcendence is not abolished by slamming the currently popular Doors in the Wall;” a problem to which he suggests “The only reasonable policy is to open other, better doors” (Huxley 62-64). Additionally, Huxley believes that an opportunity for man to momentarily transcend “ordinary perception” and to see “the outer and the inner world...directly and unconditionally” is an invaluable experience, “especially to the intellectual” (73). He goes on to explain both the positive and negative qualities of expanding one’s consciousness.

With the acknowledgement of different ways of perceiving the world, man grows more aware of the “half opaque concepts” (74). In other words, man realizes that there are things that can be fully understood by uncovering those facets that are hidden; thus he feels a compulsory need to expose the clandestine. Despite the stigma attributed to “transcendence” and the methods used to attain such, the inclination is innate in humans. Therefore, man will continue to look for new methods of attaining this higher level of understanding whether through drugs or some other process. Huxley concludes the essay with a rather profound, yet disturbing, perception stating that once one transcends the bounds of consciousness, he will never be the same (79). He clarifies this observation by describing some of the changes: “He will be wiser but less cocksure, happier but less self-satisfied, humbler in acknowledging his ignorance yet better equipped to understand the relationship of words to things, of systematic reasoning to the unfathomable Mystery which it tries, forever vainly, to comprehend” (79). Like Huxley, Morrison’s experimentation with transcendence left him with an expanded consciousness; which in turn provoked a fever of creativity yet increased his anxiety about life and his place in it: “What sacrifice, at what price can the city be born?” (*The Lords and the New Creatures* 28).

Morrison, inspired by precursor's who challenged traditional modes of approaching the world, regarded cinematography as yet another door through which to achieve and share new ways of perceiving the world. Morrison employs film and theater, like poetry and drugs, as another artistic outlet for expanding the boundaries of consciousness. Exposing his audience to some of his unique ideas and observations in turn encourages their minds to wander. While Nietzsche sees the combination of music and poetry as the culmination of art's power, Morrison believes film to be "the closest approximation in art that we have to the actual flow of consciousness, in both dream life and in everyday perception of the world" (*The Lizard King* 222-223). As a young man, Morrison wanted to write and make movies, a desire that never diminished even with stardom. In an interview with Salli Stevenson in 1970, he remembers his early ambitions as he states, "Initially, I didn't start out to be a member of a band. I wanted to make films, write plays, books" (243). As a member of the band, he wanted to include some aspects of these other passions into the music and performance (243). Morrison's ideas for film described by Manzarek as "cinematic poetry...a juxtaposition of images that really didn't have any relationship...nonlinear...purely experimental"; however, deviated from those of his professors and peers at UCLA, and his dreams of becoming a filmmaker were temporarily halted (Manzarek 55). Nonetheless, Morrison's ideas on cinematography pervade his poetry and lyrics allowing his audience a glimpse of how he sees the world. He feels film presents the best representation of "consciousness," but he argues that poetry is "eternal"—no art form, even film, can outlast "songs and poetry" (*The Lizard King* 220). Morrison's love of cinema and theater occurs as a central theme in his poetry and life as he writes "Cinema returns us to anima, religion of matter,/ which gives each thing its special divinity and sees gods in all things and beings.//

Cinema, heir of alchemy, last of an erotic science” (*The Lords and the New Creatures* 87). In keeping with his darker thoughts, Morrison writes “Films are collections of dead pictures which are/ given artificial insemination” (50). Despite his failures as a film student, Morrison’s vision of perception helped him realize his calling as a poet and songwriter.

Unlike the other members of the Doors, Morrison had no training in music and songwriting. It did not take long, however, before he realized the potential of music to stimulate the senses as he states in his poem “An American Prayer” that “Music inflames temperament” (*The American Night* 5). In an interview with Jerry Hopkins, Morrison asserts that he somehow always knew it was his destiny to become “a performer” (*The Lizard King* 218-219). He states “I guess that all the time I was unconsciously accumulating inclination and listening. So when it finally happened, my subconscious had prepared the whole thing” (219). He goes on to describe the moment he accepted the task of creating: “Those first five or six songs I wrote, I was just taking notes at a fantastic rock concert that was going on inside my head. And once I had written the songs, I had to sing them” (219). He continues with a detailed description of the setting of inspiration: “I just got out of college and I went down to the beach...I was free for the first time...It was a beautiful hot summer, and I just started hearing songs...This kind of mythic concert that I heard...I’d like to try and reproduce it sometime...I’d like to reproduce what I heard on the beach that day” (219). Morrison revisits this moment in his poem “In that Year...” as he writes “In that year we had a great visitation of energy./ Back in those days everything/ was simpler & more confused./ One summer night, going/ To the pier, I ran into/ 2 young girls. The/ blonde was called Freedom,/ the dark one, Enterprise./ We talked, & they told/ me this story” (*The American Night* 55). Another version of that poem alludes to Nietzsche as he

concludes with the lines “At night the moon became/ a woman’s face./ I met the Spirit of Music” (*Wilderness* 36). According to Bloom, welcoming the desire to create prepares Morrison for the process of poetic influence. With the help of the Doors, Morrison embraces the challenge to create and discovers his forte as a lyricist.

In his autobiography *Light My Fire: My Life with The Doors*, Manzarek reminisces about the moment he and Morrison decided to form a band. He emphasizes that their intentions for forming the band derived from their interest in art. Although they met in UCLA’s cinematography program, they decided their vision would be better conveyed through music rather than film (Manzarek 53). Manzarek asserts that finding a way to incorporate their “artistic backgrounds” into the music was essential to their vision: “How do we bring the drama, how do we bring the depth of emotion, how do we bring the pathos, the joy, the sorrow, the terror into rock and roll music? How do we bring the terror, indeed. *That’s* what the Doors are all about” (53). While the collection of music, theater and poetry relates to Nietzsche’s discussion of the Greeks, the “terror” celebrated in Morrison’s work goes beyond the Nietzschean acceptance of life’s suffering. Again, Morrison’s familiarity with the poetry of Blake, as well as Rimbaud and Baudelaire, encouraged his attraction to the darker themes of the Sublime (*The Lizard King* 40; *No One Here Gets Out Alive* 17-19; Densmore 43). Morrison found the investigation of the more mysterious and threatening aspects of life as captivating, if not more so, than focusing all one’s attention on the brighter aspects. Manzarek later describes their creative roles: “Jim was a poet. I was the jazzier-musician-blues guy” (Manzarek 75). Together with the guitarist, Robby Krieger, and the drummer, John Densmore, they formed what Manzarek describes as “the diamond”; he and Morrison represented the points “north and south”

and Krieger and Densmore represented the points “east” and “west,” “the four cardinal points” (133). As a collective whole they represented “Height, width, breadth, depth” (133). Jointly, they perfected an amalgamation of music and poetry; according to Nietzsche, this fusion results in a more compelling art-form than either of them alone or any other art medium. Nietzsche explains his reasoning in a passage from *Human, All Too Human*: “In itself, no music is profound or significant, it does not speak of the ‘will’ or of the ‘thing in itself’; the intellect could suppose such a thing only in an age which had conquered for musical symbolism the entire compass of the inner life. It was the intellect itself which first *introduced* this significance into sounds” (*Nietzsche Reader* 128). From the beginning, it is clear that the Doors were driven by the influence of Nietzsche. Specifically, Morrison’s work follows a similar path to that of Nietzsche’s as his thoughts on nihilism lead him to Nietzsche’s *Birth of Tragedy*, and hence Apollo and Dionysus. Through an invocation of the gods of art combined with his own will to power, Morrison meets a Bloomian distortion of the Overman. By the end, Morrison’s abilities as a poet, songwriter and performer denote the success of a strong poet and creator. In order to successfully misinterpret the work of his precursor, Morrison must first identify his precursor’s mistake.

While Nietzsche openly admits that the inspiration for his work comes from his dissatisfaction with Schopenhauer’s philosophy, Morrison’s misprision of Nietzsche is more subtle. His exploration of sensory perception with drugs and alcohol, inspired by his precursors Blake and Huxley, results in an explosion of artistic activity: the study of cinema, an outpouring of poetry, the invocation of song, and an exploration of theatrics. Throughout his career, Morrison molds his ideas on cinematography and theater into his poetry, lyrics and stage

persona; he then provides his audience with an altered sense of perception and a new found interest in an existence driven by a Dionysian sublime. By combining these alternate methods of perceiving the world into one grand Doors' performance, Morrison rejuvenates Nietzsche's Attic tragedy where Dionysus appears and conjures up the Superman in every willing individual.

CHAPTER 5

“IN THAT YEAR WE HAD A GREAT VISITATION OF ENERGY”: MORRISON

WELCOMES THE MUSE AND REWRITES THE MYTH

The first half of this essay introduced the concept of the anxiety of influence and Bloom's theory of poetic misinterpretation, or misprision. The theory was then taken out of its original context of poetry and used to show the ephebe/precursor relationship between the philosophers Schopenhauer and Nietzsche. The second portion of the essay will use Bloom's theory to examine the ephebe/precursor relationship between Morrison and Nietzsche by looking for elements of Nietzschean philosophy in Morrison's poetry, lyrics and performance. The level of misprision Morrison's work performs on that of Nietzsche illustrates a poet worthy of recognition; he proves himself to be a poetic visionary, as well as, powerful influence.

As addressed in the discussion of Bloom's theory of misprision, every new poet is inevitably born from inspiration he finds in the works of those he admires. When the ephebe first experiences his yearning to write poetry, he begins a process of self-discovery wherein he must discover himself as a poet. Bloom asserts that this process of discovery “will end only when he has no more poetry within him” (*The Anxiety of Influence* 25). During his self-discovery, or “Second Birth,” the ephebe learns of his susceptibility to the influence of his precursors. Once he understands the problem of being dependent on someone creatively, the new poet is encouraged to move his work in another direction than that of his precursor. This shift in turn proves both his independence and his worth as a poet. Bloom contends, however, that total independence remains impossible as “Poetic influence in the sense—amazing, agonizing, delighting—of *other poets*, as felt in the depths of the all but perfect solipsist, the

potentially strong poet. For the poet is condemned to learn his profoundest yearnings through an awareness of *other selves*" (26). The work of Morrison and the Doors is no different. Like Nietzsche's work that grew from the fundamentals of Schopenhauer's philosophy, the personalities of Jim Morrison, Ray Manzarak, Robby Krieger and John Densmore were shaped by the literature, music and films they encountered. As briefly addressed earlier, the Doors borrowed and transformed ideas of the precursors with which they most identified into a powerful combination of songs, poetry and theater. With their unique style, they communicate the importance of fighting for personal freedom, making use of creative energy and seeking out the dark areas of existence.

Discussing his beginnings as a poet in an interview with Jerry Hopkins, Morrison remembers the notebooks he filled from "high school and college" years that he later discarded and makes an interesting comment: "But maybe if I'd never thrown them away, I'd never have written anything original – because they were mainly accumulations of things I'd read or heard, like quotes from books. I think if I'd never gotten rid of them I'd never have been free" (*The Lizard King* 220). Again, Bloom's theory shows that the ephebe is never completely liberated from his precursors. Manzarek openly admits that they crafted their distinctive music, lyrics, poetry and performances after those who had once inspired them. With lyrics Morrison wrote by "borrowing and quoting and paying homage to his masters" and music that Manzarek admits was inspired from "quotes from all my favorite jazz and blues musicians, and even a Western classical rift," the Doors fashioned a new style of rock and roll—"psychedelic" (Manzarek 102). Nietzsche's philosophy continually appears among the names of significant influences for Morrison; biographies about the Doors and Morrison, however, draw mostly, general

connections between Morrison and Nietzsche in respect to their affinity for Dionysus and their propensity for overindulgence. Some refer to Nietzschean themes in Morrison's poetry and lyrics throughout his career; yet only a handful of works provide evidence with concrete examples.²

While elements of many writers surface in the songs and poetry, Nietzsche's influence is prevalent in Morrison's work from his early poems and lyrics until the end. Nietzsche's philosophy provided an explanation for many of the behaviors Morrison exhibited even in his youth and stimulated the propagation of much of his own philosophy. One of the most widely agreed upon facts about Morrison is that Nietzsche's philosophy had a significant impact on his life and work. In the biography *Break on Through: The Life and Death of Jim Morrison*, Riordan and Prochnicky state that "In the works of Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) the young Jim found insight into the essence of power and the nature of man" (Riordan and Prochnicky 38). They argue that Nietzsche's philosophy "fueled the fires of rebellion already burning within him, for Nietzsche too was controversial to the bone" (39). They elaborate by adding that Nietzsche's "prophetic independence of the spirit opened hundreds of doors in young Jim Morrison's mind" (39). They speculate that one of the "doors" opened by Nietzsche promoted Morrison's interest in the oracular abilities of the musician (39-40). They believe that he was most affected by Nietzsche's teachings of "the new breed of philosopher" (40). Discussing Nietzsche's philosophy of the Overman as a "redeemer" whose mission is to "liberate the will and restore its

² The following books provide discussions relating to Nietzsche, Morrison and the Dionysian influence: *The Lizard King: The Essential Jim Morrison* by Jerry Hopkins; *Break on Through: The Life and Death of Jim Morrison* by James Riordan and Jerry Prochnicky; *Jim Morrison: Life, Death, Legend* by Stephen Davis; *No One Here Gets Out Alive* by Jerry Hopkins and Danny Sugarman; *Riders on the Storm: My Life with Jim Morrison and the Doors* by John Desmore; and *Light My Fire: My Life with the Doors* by Ray Manzarek. The article "Obscene on the Sunset Strip" published in Rolling Stone in June 2004, references an interview with Manzarek that briefly touch on the subject as well.

goal to the earth,” they contend that “whether he fully realized it or not, for most of the remainder of his life, Jim Morrison would try in vain to be that person” (40-41). Stephen Davies makes a similar argument in his Morrison biography *Jim Morrison: Life, Death, Legend* as he states “In the summer between his sophomore and junior years, Jimmy delved into Nietzsche’s astonishing work and tragic life, and what he read changed him in profound, even perhaps fatal ways. If Nietzsche didn’t exactly kill Jim Morrison, his radical thoughts set Jim on a course that provided its own tragic momentum” (Davis 21). Despite the consensus concerning Nietzsche’s influence on Morrison’s life and work, few prefer to focus on specific instances in his writing; the drunken, Dionysian outbursts on stage tend to steal the spotlight.³ The Doors, however, did express with candor several of the literary references Morrison adapted, including Nietzsche. In his autobiography, Manzarek refers to their performances as Nietzschean where he represents the Apollonian impulse and Morrison represents the Dionysian (Manzarek 18). Evidence of Morrison’s knowledge of Nietzsche permeates some of his early poetry and blends with the ideas about the role of perception in poetry, music and performance. Nevertheless, Morrison, as an ephebe suffering from the anxiety of influence, is not content to simply regurgitate Nietzsche’s philosophy to his audience. As discussed previously, Schopenhauer sees art as a means to encourage a life guided by the objective will and free from suffering. In contrast, Nietzsche sees art as a means to cultivate a life complete with pleasure and pain and guided by a balanced will that is dictated by both Apollonian and Dionysian tendencies. Morrison, however, sees art as a

³ In the essay “Jim Morrison’s Poetry,” William Cook analyses Morrison’s poetry in relation to his influences to prove Morrison deserves recognition as a great American poet. Cook examines the influence of poetry written by Rimbaud, Artaud, and Nietzsche in Morrison’s works pointing to examples of Morrison’s unique style. While Cook’s essay makes some interesting observations concerning elements of Morrison’s poetic influences in his poetry, my essay focuses specifically on the evolution of the poet through Bloom’s theory of poetic misprision to show how the poet revises the work of his most influential precursors.

means to instigate a life guided by the subjective, free will and goaded by menace.

Whereas Nietzsche argues that to lead a life-affirming existence man must accept suffering as an unavoidable obstacle to be overcome, Morrison argues that to lead a life-affirming existence man must relish suffering. He argues that it is through suffering that man knows he is alive (Densmore 196). In keeping with his philosophy of life, Morrison's work explores the countless possibilities of an unimpeded relationship between excess and creativity that Nietzsche warns against. Although Morrison is eventually consumed by his encounters with limitlessness, he believes it a small price to pay for art. In the Forward to the Morrison biography *No One Here Gets Out Alive*, Danny Sugarman expounds upon Morrison's devotion to the creative process: "the mad ones, the doomed ones, the writers, poets, and painters, the artists stubbornly resistant to authority and insistent on being loyal to their true nature, at any cost—this was the lineage with whom Jim most passionately identified, and it was to their standard that he aspired" (*No One Here Gets Out Alive* xiii-xiv). He continues with this thought adding "To be a poet, to be an artist, meant more than writing or painting or singing; it meant having a vision and the courage to see that vision through, despite any opposition. What didn't kill you made you stronger, and if you had what it took, you were rare and wondrous, and if you didn't, it couldn't be faked" (*No One Here Gets Out Alive* xiii-xiv). Although much of Morrison's work alludes to Nietzsche's affirmation of life, it goes beyond both Schopenhauer and Nietzsche as it promotes total surrender to the will. Morrison's work demonstrates a fervent will-to-know through the will-to-experience. Unlike Nietzsche who openly places himself in opposition to Schopenhauer during the *clinamen* ratio, Morrison exhibits a true *clinamen*. Specifically, Morrison's *clinamen* appears to be an unintentional (but obvious) shift based on a

misreading of Nietzsche's celebration of life; which arguably results from Nietzsche's misinterpretation of his own philosophy (*The Anxiety of Influence* 45).

Nietzsche's misinterpretation of his own views is best explained in Robert Wicks essay "Nietzsche 'Yes' to Life and the Apollonian Neutrality of Existence"; he argues that although Nietzsche claims to approach the difficulties of life from a Dionysian perspective, his philosophy of affirmation actually represents a more Apollonian approach (Wicks 101). Wicks refers to Nietzsche's characterizations of the Apollonian and Dionysian tendencies in *The Birth of Tragedy* with Apollo representing a beautiful, dream-like state and Dionysus representing pain and cruelty (104-106). He examines these tendencies in the philosophy of Zarathustra surmising that Nietzsche's philosophy of the affirmation of life is contradictory as "what makes human life worth living is our Apollonian capacity to idealize and beautify both our surroundings and ourselves, whatever their nature may be" (108). He elaborates on this idea by discussing the Dionysian world as "a field of constantly recycling energy without any particular meaning or point" (111). He then asserts that Nietzsche's "Will to Power" helps to maintain "The balance between terror and tranquility within Nietzsche's affirmative mirror image" (112). Only the true creators possess the strength to adopt "an intensely joyful attitude" toward "the pain of absurdity" (114). Further, Nietzsche's method of "glorifying" existence allows him to view the world from the position of an "objective" observer rather than a participant. The "distanced attitude is one of complete emotional disengagement" which results in "the unrealistic ideal of an absolutely detached, God-eye perspective" (118-119). From this stance, Nietzsche appears to prefer an Apollonian perspective; his thoughts grow more "reason-oriented" and "reflective" as well as idealistic (119-120). Wicks does argue, however, that Nietzsche's Apollonian view of

the world “is the condition for” the Dionysian quality of “self-glorification” which he clearly demonstrates (121). Nevertheless, Wicks maintains that because Nietzsche’s philosophy of affirmation “is based on excessive reflection,” it is not Dionysian which he describes as “prereflective, immediate, expansive, and instinctual” (122). Furthermore, he argues that although Nietzsche’s writing does include some elements of “violence,” they exist simply to color the otherwise “erudite texts” (123). Wicks counters Nietzsche’s style with that of the Marquis de Sade, whom he describes as a more Dionysian writer, with his “‘witches brew’ of violence and excessive venereal appetites” (123). Morrison’s work, like the Marquis de Sade, depicts a more sublime, Dionysian perspective of existence in contrast to Nietzsche’s Apollonian view. Morrison’s partiality to sublime, Dionysian themes contributes to his ability to take Nietzsche’s ideas and run with them. Just as Nietzsche’s break from Schopenhauer begins with their approaches to the nihilistic views of existence, Morrison’s break from Nietzsche begins with nihilism as well. Nietzsche combats his nihilistic thoughts by excusing the absurdity of life as an unavoidable circumstance of the glory of living. Morrison, on the other hand, approaches nihilism by concentrating on the absurdity of life simply for the possibilities that accompany the meaninglessness and irrationality. Morrison’s opposition to Nietzsche’s view of suffering starts the fissure between Nietzsche’s philosophy and his own. Hence suffering represents the source of his *clinamen*, as Bloom argues that “what divides each poet from his Poetic Father (and so saves, by division) is an instance of creative revisionism” (*The Anxiety of Influence* 42).

During his college career, Morrison wrote a number of thoughts, poems and lyrics sparked by his interest in film and its relationship to perception that would later be published as a book of writings, *The Lords and the New Creatures* (*The Lizard King* 257-259). Much of the

writing hints of Nietzschean influence; allusions to Nietzsche's herd instinct, the role of the creator and the Superman surface repeatedly though Morrison never mentions Nietzsche specifically within the text. While Morrison describes the works included in *The Lords* as his ideas for films or reflections of films he had seen, the theme of nihilism follows throughout its entirety (257). According to Morrison, "the Lords" first represented those who controlled others perceptions of the world; but later they came to represent "a romantic race of people who have found a way to control their environment and their own lives" (257-258). Both interpretations of the "Lords" relate to Nietzsche: the former relates to the "herd instinct" where oppressive institutions abuse their will to power to control society; the latter relates to the "creators" called for by Zarathustra. Although many of the nihilistic thoughts echo those of Nietzsche, Morrison's fondness for absurdist texts instills in him a preference for nonsense rather than rationality.

As a college student, Morrison encountered the works of Absurdist writers such as Harold Pinter, Samuel Beckett and Antonin Artaud (*No One Here Gets Out Alive* 39-40). He even acted in the school performance of Pinter's play *The Dumbwaiter* (39; *The Lizard King* 44). In the text, *The Theater of the Absurd*, Martin Esslin argues that the "work most sensitively mirrors and reflects the preoccupations and anxieties, the emotions and thinking of many of their contemporaries in the Western world" (Esslin 22). Thus Absurdist's themes resemble those of the Attic tragedy Nietzsche describes in *The Birth of Tragedy*. Consequently, the style of Absurdist literature and theater suited Morrison's Dionysian approach to life. Hopkins' elucidation of Morrison's style further establishes the connection between the work of the Absurdist, Greek tragedy and Dionysus and Morrison: "His lyric themes included insanity, imprisonment, abortion, infanticide, incest, and murder...He told a generation starved for love

that ‘music is your only friend’. He spoke directly to the ache of loneliness. He captured the impatience of a generation that was frustrated and angry about the way things were being run” (*The Lizard King* 12). Hopkins goes as far as to say that Morrison lived life “in true existentialist tradition” (12). Morrison demonstrates his existentialist philosophy in his description of his book *The Lords* which he asserts, as a whole, represents “the feeling of powerlessness and helplessness that people have in the face of reality” (258). In other words, the book deals with the bleak notions of man as puppet destined to follow something, or someone, more powerful or man as puppeteer commanding the weak; he also includes how cinema plays a part. One poem in particular addresses this concept completely: “‘Players’—the child, the actor, and the gambler./ The idea of chance is absent from the world of the/ child and primitive. The gambler also feels in/ service of an alien power. Chance is a survival/ of religion in the modern city, as is theater,/ more often cinema, the religion of possession” (*The Lords and New Creatures* 27). The helpless tone of this poem differs significantly from Nietzsche’s hopeful Zarathustra waiting anxiously for the Superman and salvation. Morrison sees no point in trying to combat nihilism. His work exemplifies a life left to chance and art. Morrison suggests that the absurdity of the world enhances man’s sensory perception and allows the world to be whatever can be created in the mind. One method of creating an alternate existence is through film as he argues that “cinema” serves two purposes: “One is spectacle. Like the Phantasmagoria, its goal is the creation of a total substitute/ sensory world” (65). Before the Doors, he was content to explore the secrets of his own consciousness. Nonetheless, while Nietzsche’s philosophy took years to perfect; Morrison’s career changed from filmmaker to poet to lead-singer almost overnight. Although he struggled to reconcile his desire to remain in the sanctuary of his own mind with the

urge change the way man sees the world, he allowed chance to take control. In addition, he often let the element of chance guide his work; whether it was through “automatic writing,” impromptu recitations of poetry or spontaneous performer/audience interaction, chance increased the intensity of the creation (*Wilderness* 1; *The Lizard King* 212-214). Morrison used Nietzsche’s Apollonian/Dionysian dichotomy and the role of Greek tragedy to develop his own absurdist approach to art and life. The process of reinventing Nietzsche’s terms represents Morrison’s move from the *clinamen* ratio to *tessera*.

Like Nietzsche, Morrison’s inclination for art cultivates his philosophy on perception and life. In the description of *tessera*, Bloom asserts that “The ephebe who fears his precursors as he might fear a flood is taking the vital part for a whole, the whole being everything that constitutes his creative anxiety, the spectral blocking agent in every poet” (*The Anxiety of Influence* 57). More specifically, Nietzsche’s *Birth of Tragedy* serves as both a motivator for and an inhibitor to Morrison’s philosophy. In order to secure his own place as an artist, Morrison must find a way to triumph over the work. He accomplishes this by using Nietzsche’s discussion of the actor and the spectator against him; with Nietzsche’s description of the actor and the spectator, Morrison shows that an existence tempered by the balanced will is as unnatural as an existence based on Schopenhauer’s negation of the will. Nietzsche touches on the roles of the spectator and the actor in his illustration of Attic tragedy. He explains that in the beginning tragedy consisted of only a chorus. As it evolved, an individual would emerge from the chorus taking on the role of the actor, personifying the Dionysian element of art; this, in turn, enhances the role of the spectator as he argues “The spectator without the spectacle is an absurd notion” (*Basic Writings* 57-67). Nietzsche goes on to describe the Greek spectator as a sort of passive actor whose view

from above allows him to “*overlook* the whole world of culture around him and to imagine, in absorbed contemplation, that he himself was a chorist” (63). In *Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche argues that there are Apollonian artists and Dionysian artists; he stresses, however, the importance of maintaining a balance between the Apollonian and Dionysian impulses to gain a truer, more positive perspective of oneself and life, like the Greeks. Morrison, on the other hand, is disturbed by society’s nonchalant attitude which he discusses in many of his early poems that focus on the role of the “voyeur” in relation to the outside world. One poem addresses the conflict between those who act and those who watch as he writes, “There are no longer ‘dancers,’ the possessed./ The cleavage of men into actors and spectators/ is the central fact of our time” (*The Lords and New Creatures* 29). He concludes this poem with a haunting observation: “We are content with the ‘given’ in sensation’s/ quest. We have been metamorphosised from a mad/ body dancing on hillsides to a pair of eyes staring in the dark” (29). Despite his own affected psyche urging him to watch rather than act, Morrison believes the Dionysian to be the more primal and productive impulse. Thus, he sees no need for boundaries; and therefore, he encourages the proliferation of the uninhibited, Dionysian-self. Morrison turns to his Apollonian-self only to articulate the experience of the sublime that accompanies the Dionysian. Through Morrison’s work, the distinction between Nietzsche and himself grows more apparent; Morrison dreams to be the quiet writer but is unable to remain subdued because his Dionysian-self is more powerful.

In his poetry and lyrics, Morrison confronts conflicting feelings of remaining in the comfortable role of the “spectator” or assuming the unpredictable role of the “actor”— a problem he will ponder often during his career (39). This ambivalence, however, further adds to his

successful completion of the *tessera* ratio. One early poem foreshadows the reputation he receives as the Doors' front-man: "More or less, we're all afflicted with the psychology/ of the voyeur. Not strictly clinical or/ criminal sense, but in our whole physical and/ emotional/ stance before the world. Whenever we seek to break/ this spell of passivity, our actions are cruel and/ awkward and generally obscene, like an invalid who/ has forgotten how to walk" (39). Although Morrison appears reluctant to emerge from the chorus, he cannot deny his Dionysian impulse as he writes "A natural leader, a poet,/ a Shaman, w/the/ soul of a clown" (*Wilderness* 207).

Morrison understands that he must share his philosophy of a free will—a Dionysian will—in order to help others "break on through" to alternate ways of perceiving, contemplate the darker elements of life and discover their own, Dionysian selves. He recognizes his calling and accepts his role admitting "People need Connectors/ Writers, heroes, stars, leaders/ To give life form (14). When describing Morrison as a leader, Manzarek states "He seemed much older than his years, as if he were privy to an ancient knowledge. As if secrets had been imparted to him and it was his obligation to now pass them along to the lovers of America. And the secrets were joy and passion and intoxication with life. The Dionysian secrets" (Manzarek 171). Sugarman makes a similar observation about Morrison's knowledge as he states "For the ancients it was enough to know there were doors to a secret dimension that might open for those who earnestly sought them. Such hope and needs have not gone away with time...Morrison was the first rock star I know to speak of the mythic implications and archetypal powers of rock 'n' roll, about the ritualistic properties of the rock concert" (*No One Here Gets Out Alive* xii-xiii). His absurdist approach to nihilism in connection with his philosophy of the free, subjectivity of the will encourages him to disregard the rational as a necessity of life: "I am interested in anything about

revolt, disorder, chaos, especially activity that seems to have no meaning. It seems to be the road towards freedom – external freedom is a way to bring about internal freedom” (*The Lizard King* 251). Although Morrison’s work shows influence from Nietzsche, their methods to appreciating life prove that Morrison’s beliefs deviate from those of his precursor. Nietzsche considers himself driven by Dionysian impulses of action. As addressed in Wick’s essay; however, he exhibits more Apollonian characteristics in his solitary, observational approach to life which fails to live up to the unpredictability of being the participant. With allusions to Nietzsche and Greek tragedy, Morrison establishes the foundation of his true, Dionysian philosophy. Having successfully diverged from his precursor by reworking his precursor’s ideas, Morrison continues to the *kenosis* ratio.

As Bloom explains, the *kenosis* ratio forces the ephebe to once again confront the anxiety of influence and question his poetic abilities so that he can continue the process of misprision (*The Anxiety of Influence* 90-91). He elaborates with a “pragmatic formula: ‘Where the precursor was, there the ephebe shall be, but by the discontinuous mode of emptying the precursor of *his* divinity, while appearing to empty himself of his own’” (91). Morrison recognizes his susceptibility to influence in a short poem “A quality of ignorance,/ self-deception may be/ necessary to the poet’s survival” (*Wilderness* 115). He addresses his abilities as a struggling poet in the second stanza of another poem as he writes “a Knock? would shatter/ my dreams’ illusions/ deportment & composure/ The struggle of a poor poet/ to stay out of the grips/ of novels & gambling & journalism” (114). In yet another poem, Morrison alludes to his adoption of another’s ideas: “‘The program for this evening/ is not new. You have seen/ This entertainment thru & thru” (*The American Night* 11). Morrison’s self-doubt extends beyond his

abilities as a writer to his abilities as performer as well. In an interview with Salli Stevenson, Morrison responds to the question of whether he sees himself as “an idol or a hero” by asserting “I think of myself as an intelligent, sensitive human being with the soul of a clown, which always forces me to blow it at the most important moments” (*The Lizard King* 243). This emptying of *kenosis* is a tool used by the ephebe to purge himself of an undeserved sense of accomplishment. The purgation then opens him up creatively so that he can properly earn his place as an artist. After recognizing that his work depicts the influence of others before him and working through his dependency and self-doubt; Morrison’s desire to create is reaffirmed, and he is prepared for the next phase of the ratio.

The next phase of *kenosis* requires that the ephebe acknowledge his precursors before believing himself able to create something new. Nietzsche commends Schopenhauer’s efforts then politely declares his intention to oppose Schopenhauer’s philosophy. Morrison also shows appreciation to his precursors and his inspiration then publicly announces that he has found his own place. Although he does not specifically address Nietzsche, his poetry and lyrics continue to embrace Nietzsche’s mythic images always reminding the audience of his beginnings as a poet/philosopher. He honors his precursors in a number of poems because it is important for him to show his respect. In one poem, he alludes to both literary precursors and historical precursors as he writes “Better to be/ cool in our worship &/ gain the respect of the/ ancient & wise wearing/ those robes. They know/ the secret of mind-change/ reality” (*Wilderness* 31). Another poem shows an understanding of the relationship between ephebes and precursors: “Certainly things happen/ & reoccur in continuous promise;/ All of us have found a safe/ niche where we can store up/ riches & talk to our fellows/ on the same premise of disaster” (146). The ephebe

will not survive, however, if he does not make a deliberate break from his precursor. Morrison's poem "Crossroads" depicts his perception of this process while showing his proclivity for darker images: "Meeting you at your parent's gate/ We will tell you what to do/ What you have to do to survive// Leave the rotten towns/ of your father/ Leave the poisoned wells/ & bloodstained streets/ Enter now the sweet forest" (*The American Night* 64). After acknowledging his precursor's influence and vowing to sever the connection, Morrison's imagination is liberated: "—You've found your Voice,/ friend, after all else/ I recognize fast the/ Strong sure tones of/ a poet/ was it a question/ search or of strangling?" (*Wilderness* 48). With a poem, Morrison shows that his philosophy of life differs from Nietzsche; he believes the Dionysian impulse to be the life source of man as he writes "I know what you want./ You want ecstasy/ Desire & dreams./ Things not exactly what they seem./ I lead you this way, he pulls you that way./ I'm not singing to an imaginary girl./ I'm talking to you, my self./ Let's recreate the world./ The palace of conception is burning" (11). Morrison goes a step further in another poem as he urges his audience to listen to his words: "These lines are written/ to convey the message/ To ignore the warning/ To spree upward into/ Tantalizing voices/ To visit under-seas/ Believe/ Things more horrible/ than war/ Things out of the tales/ Great beasts/ Suffering extinction" (182). This poem is a perfect example of Morrison's philosophy of life as he proclaims his contempt for rules and boundaries and encourages an interest in the mysterious and dangerous aspects of existence. Having found his voice as a poet and creator, Morrison moves into the *daemonization* ratio.

Bloom describes *daemonization* as "a war between Pride and Pride, and momentarily the power of newness wins" (*The Anxiety of Influence* 101). Again, Bloom describes the goal of *daemonization* as the creation of the "Counter-Sublime" which "is purchased by a fresh and

greater repression than the precursor's Sublime" (106). The end result of this ratio "pragmatically makes the son more of a daemon and the precursor more of a man" (106). As discussed earlier, Nietzsche developed his philosophy of the affirmation of life as a Counter-Sublime to Schopenhauer's Sublime, the denial of self and life. Nietzsche's Apollonian/Dionysian affirmation of life now becomes the Sublime to which Morrison continues to develop a Counter-Sublime with the Dionysian absurdity of life. Nietzsche argues that man must appreciate his time on earth as a beautiful experience rather than wait for happiness in the next life. He claims that in order to fully appreciate this life man must experience it through an equal balance of Apollonian and Dionysian tendencies both in art and self. Nietzsche argues, however, that only a few possess the genius to rise from the herd of nihilistic society to the genius of the individual creator. Further, only one genius will emerge from the group as the Overman. Those unable to liberate themselves from traditional ways of thinking and feeling can find solace in the coming of the Overman; only he will possess the power to teach them to become creators. Similarly, Morrison also believes that life should be appreciated. His philosophy diverges from Nietzsche in that it nurtures man's Dionysian impulse; this allows man to confront the sublime aspects of life without beautifying them through the lens of the Apollonian tendency. Whereas Nietzsche believes only a small group will benefit from his philosophy, Morrison argues that with the right inspiration everyone will discover their Dionysian-selves and find enjoyment in the infinite possibilities of life.

During this ratio, Morrison begins to combine the mythic themes of Greek tragedy with his interpretation of Nietzsche's will to power to convey his philosophy of art and life. The key to Morrison's philosophy of life and art relies on the will's ability to take over man's sensory

perception forcing him to not only view life, but feel it. Unlike Nietzsche, Morrison does not attempt to conquer nihilism by using art as an escape from the problems of existence but as a motivating force to move man away from the rationalization of life and closer to the celebration of the sublime in all its forms. Morrison summarizes his philosophy again in another poem as he writes “We have assembled inside this ancient/ & insane theater/ To propagate our lust for life/ & flee the swarming wisdom/ of the streets” (*The American Night* 5). Both Nietzsche and Morrison view the Dionysian as the driving force behind the will to create and believe in the destructive condition of the creative process. Nonetheless, Morrison’s art presents the beauty of a terrifying, chaotic world while Nietzsche’s art presents a beautiful, rational world interrupted by the occasional disturbance. Morrison’s will to power resides in the will to create a sublime, Dionysian experience for himself and his audience. He begins this process with poems as they offer “A mild possession, devoid of risk, at bottom/ sterile. With an image there is no apparent/ danger” (*The Lords and the New Creatures* 48). For example, one poem describes a séance conducted by the shaman:

In the séance, the shaman led. A sensuous panic,/ deliberately evoked through
 drugs, chants, dancing,/ hurls the shaman into trance. Changed voice, convulsive
 movement. He acts like a madman. These/ professional hysterics, chosen
 precisely for their/ psychotic leaning, were once esteemed. They/ mediated
 between man and spirit-world. Their mental/ travels formed the crux of religious
 life of/ the tribe. (71)

Sugarman contends that “He searched compulsively for the pulse of the world” (*The Doors: The Illustrated History* XI). For Morrison, “the pulse of the world” could be found in ritualistic

ceremonies. Such images dominate his poetry and lyrics as well as describe his unique approach to the rock concert wherein he works to fuse the unpredictability of the individual experience with the power of the communal experience.

He creates a similar aura through unsettling images, eerie music, bloodcurdling screams and grunts and frenzied dancing: “Through ventriloquism, gestures, play with objects,/ and all rare variations of the body in space,/ the shaman signaled his ‘trip’ to an audience/ which shared the journey” (*The Lords and the New Creatures* 70). Like Nietzsche, Morrison believes the relationship between music and poetry integral to the search for personal freedom. He explains this in a discussion concerning the difference between his process for composing song lyrics and his process for composing poetry during interview with Richard Goldstein of *Village Voice* in 1968 (*The Lizard King* 211). Morrison asserts that poetry and music are related in that when one writes poetry “you have to be in a state of mind that music can put you in, with its hypnotic quality that leaves you free, you know to let the subconscious play itself out wherever it goes” (214). He adds that music provides him with “a kind of security” which allows him to “express” himself (214). In his autobiography, Manzarek discusses the relationship between music and Dionysus as he asserts “it’s been said that Dionysus enters through the ears” (Manzarek 146). Morrison, with his background in theater and film, goes a step further by introducing theatrics reminiscent of Nietzsche’s Attic tragedy into the performance of the rock concert. When describing the “theatricality” of the show, Morrison states “In a large concert situation, I think it’s just...necessary, because it gets to be more than a musical event. It turns into a little bit of a spectacle. And it’s different every time” (*The Lizard King* 223). Using the power of music and lyrics to alter sensory perception and proclaiming that “The spectator is a dying animal,”

Morrison turns his audience into followers of Dionysus (*The Lords and the New Creatures* 68). On stage Morrison works to demonstrate the association between the Dionysian tendency and the dark, sublimity of existence: “The Politics of ecstasy are real/ Can’t you feel them working/ thru you” (*Wilderness* 173). Morrison uses elements of Dionysian myth in his poetry to describe his own creative experiences: “Running, I saw a Satan/ or Satyr, moving beside/ me, a fleshy shadow/ of my secret mind. Running, Knowing” (37). He knows that his audience is also guided by Dionysus, and he uses that to provoke them into participating in the experience as he inquires “Where are my dreamers/ Today & tonight./ Where are my dancers/ leaping madly/ Whirling and screaming” (179). The concert becomes the opportunity to for Morrison to share the ways to an enlightened sense of perception, to encourage others to submit to their will, to introduce them to the sublime side of life and to inspire the unique creativity of each individual. Successful in his effort to separate himself from Nietzsche with a natural approach to life and art, Morrison proves himself as a poet and creator which forces him to undergo *askesis*.

The ephebe advances to the *askesis* ratio when he feels confident in his progress as a new poet. Bloom states that this ratio “posits a new kind of reduction in the poetic self, most generally expressed as a purgatorial blinding or at least a veiling. The realities of other selves are diminished” (*The Anxiety of Influence* 121). The new poet accomplishes this purgation by acknowledging his place in the long line of creators before him and offering his work to the gods in thanks. The purgation begins as a humbling process for the ephebe. At the same time, it makes the predecessor appear ungrateful for his talent which eventually strengthens the ephebe’s self-confidence as a talented and grateful poet. Hence, the ephebe believes that with his poetic abilities he has succeeded in completely severing the ephebe/precursor relationship which has

left him in a place all his own (121). Morrison, motivated by his will to power, creatively misinterprets Nietzsche's formula for the renaissance of art and life and recreates the terror of tragedy. In exchange for his gift, Morrison offers his poetry. In his poem "Augment of Re-birth," Morrison acknowledges that he has been influenced creatively in the past, has overcome the anxiety and has created something new: "—The cycle begins anew// a luring, lulling sick-sad maddening/ haunting ego-familiar strain/ call the wayward wander/ home again// a music mosaic made of all image/ tunes preceding/ The whistle or warm woman's cry that/ call the child home for play" (*The American Night* 190). The disquieting images that characterize Morrison's work help to show the pain that accompanies the anxiety of influence and the process of misprision. Morrison goes on to describe in detail his endeavors as he writes "Accomplishments:/ To make works in the face/ of the void/ To gain form, identity/ To rise from the herd-crowd// Public favor/ public fervor// even the bitter Poet-Madman is/ a clown/ Treading the boards" (*Wilderness* 124). Regardless of his progress, Morrison does not devalue the complexity of becoming a poet.

Throughout his career, Morrison remains very open about the difficulties of the creative process. In more than one interview, he discusses the struggles of the creator to invent something new that will captivate the audience (*The Lizard King* 204-205, 214,-215, 265). One poem in particular expresses his struggle as a poet and the lengths he will go to hold onto the source of his inspiration: "Why do I drink?/ So that I can write poetry.// Sometimes when it's all spun out/ and all that is ugly recedes/ into a deep sleep/ There is an awakening/ and all that remains is true./ As the body is ravaged/ The spirit grows stronger.// Forgive me Father for I know/ what I do.// I want to hear the last Poem/ of the last Poet" (*Wilderness* 119). Once purged

of the guilt he harbors from pillaging his precursor's work, Morrison, again inspired by myth, writes a beautiful poem as an offering to the gods. Morrison reveals his satisfaction with his work and a renewed self-worth as he writes: "Thank you, O Lord/ For the white blind light/ A city rises from the sea/ I had a splitting headache/ from which the future's made" (*The American Night* 191). Finally, Morrison comes to terms with the evolution of the poet and shows his appreciation to those who came to his aid. As a result, he succeeds in establishing his own space as a poet far removed from others before him, particularly his precursor.

In the solitude of his own space, Morrison continues to develop his philosophy. Like Bloom explains, however, Morrison begins to suffer from the isolation he so passionately sought. Nietzsche enjoys his beautiful solitude and prefers to stay; Morrison's lonely trip takes him to places that even he cannot endure forever alone: "I was doing time in the universal mind/ I was feeling fine/ I was turning keys, I was setting people free/ I was doing alright// Then you came along with a suitcase and a song/ Turned my head around/ Now I'm so alone, just looking for a home in every face I see/ I'm the freedom man" (*Doors* 168). No longer content in his loneliness, he returns to the community and to Nietzsche: "I bring these few rags/ back home this evening/ & lay them at your feet/ Miserable witness/ to a day of tragic/ sadness & disbelief" (*The American Night* 149). For Morrison, community becomes just as important as the individual as he writes "Separate, purify, reunite" (*The Lords and the New Creatures* 82). Although many of his poems focus on the significance of the communal experience, he considers the rock concert the most appropriate way to celebrate the community, the individual and the individual creativity of a community. Upon his return from his solipsism, Morrison calls on Nietzsche to again inspire his work as is required for the *apophrades* ratio; he invokes a new

kind of Overman to help him fuse with his audience as he writes “—Soon our voices must become one” (*Wilderness* 47). He uses his absurdist approach to life to reinvent Dionysian revelry using himself as the channel to the sublime.

The last ratio of poetic misprision, *apophrades*, demonstrates the growth of the ephebe in relation to his precursor. When the ephebe reopens his poetry to his precursor’s influence, it is not to suggest that the poet has failed. On the contrary, Bloom argues that “*Apophrades*, when managed by the capable imagination, by the strong poet who has persisted in his strength, becomes not so much a return of the dead as a celebration of the return of the early self-exaltation that first made poetry possible” (*The Anxiety of Influence* 147). Nietzsche resurfaces in Morrison’s work under Morrison’s terms. During the rock concert, Morrison entices his audience’s will to power with the Dionysian sublimity of his poetry, lyrics and theatrics: “Ceremonies, theater, dances/ To reassert Tribal needs & memories/ a call to worship, uniting/ above all, a reversion/ a longing for family& the safety magic of childhood” (*Wilderness* 14). Morrison’s ultimate goal is to conjure up a Dionysian Superman in everyone including himself as he claims “I’m real/ I’m human/ But I’m not an ordinary man/ No No No” and states ““I am the Lizard King/ I can do anything” (10; *The American Night* 45). He adds to the excitement asking his audience, “Brothers and Sisters of the pale forest/ O Children of Night/ Who among you will run w/the hunt?” (45). Morrison fascinated with the “psychology of crowds” believes them to contain “sexual neuroses much like those of individuals” (*No One Here Gets Out Alive* 35). He uses his interest in crowds as an opportunity to turn the negative compliance of Nietzsche’s “herd instinct” into positive energy. When discussing the purpose of the concert in an interview, he says “I think in a way rock concerts have always served a function. It gives a lot

of people, with the same station in life, a chance to gather together and kind of assemble and just feel the sheer mass of them that exists” (*The Lizard King* 212). Manzarek goes on to add that “there’s a sense of communion, a communal thing; we’re all here and there’s no reason. A lot of energy is dissipated in the concert, but there’s no reason that that same communal thing can’t be taken out into the outside world and ideally, hopefully, that’s what a rock, a good rock concert can do” (212). Several interviews question Morrison about the hedonistic behavior representative of a Doors’ concert. He reiterates his interest in “free activity” or “Play” by which he means meaninglessness (227-228). In response to audience participation, he states “I think that an audience should be an active participant in creating what’s happening” (259). In another interview, he further elaborates on the individuals in the crowd and his role as the door as he argues “It gives them a feeling of power and security in a strange way...It reinforces their trip. As a performer then, I’m just a focus for everyone’s attention” (254-255). More specifically, he testifies “Sometimes I’ll extend myself and work people up a little bit” (226). As addressed in an interview with Richard Goldstein in 1969, Morrison becomes a type of shaman “pursuing his own fantasies” and urging his audience to do the same (213).

For Morrison, when “free” individuals are drawn together, they form a community of actors who can teach others to appreciate the meaninglessness of life through their own absurdity. Manzarek describes his feelings on his participation in the invention of the music for the “Dionysian night” stating “Is this the mind, the Creator at work? Am I the Creator? Are *we* the Creative Mind? Is the mind of God...*our* mind? I had mentally stepped into the fourth dimension...The realm of Nietzsche’s *Urbemensch*” (Manzarek 200; 122). Densmore describes their concerts as “rock theater” (Densmore 142). Later, he elaborates on the concert asserting

that Morrison “surrendered so totally some nights that we released the sorcerer inside him. We were caught in a ritual” (196). Densmore then goes on to address an interview with Morrison published after his death wherein Morrison describes the feelings he was attempting to evoke with his words and performance. In the interview, Morrison contends “Pain is meant to wake us up. People try to hide their pain... You feel your strength in the experience of pain” (196). Taking inspiration from Artuad’s *Theater of Cruelty*, which seeks to “bring liberation and release” by drawing the audience into “myth and magic” through “a ruthless exposure of the deepest conflicts of the human mind,” and later the Living Theater’s performance of *Paradise Now*, where the actors confront their audience about the oppression of society, Morrison’s absurdist philosophy of art and life intensifies and his actions grow increasingly antagonistic and bizarre (Densmore 213-218; Esslin 383; *The Lizard King* 112-115). Morrison’s notorious, drunken outbursts and violent provocation are extreme examples of his philosophy (Manzarek 304-309; Densmore 213-218). In more subdued situations, he takes his audience to the darkest and most hysterical places of the sublime. Morrison leads his audience into the “realm of pain” and beyond entreating them with mythical poetry and lyrics: “Let’s reinvent the gods, all the myths/ of the ages/ Celebrate symbols from the deep elder forests...[Have you forgotten the lessons/ of the ancient war]// We need great golden copulations” (*The American Night* 41, 3). With the mixture of music, poetry and dancing, Morrison recreates the “Dionysiac revelries” of the “ecstatic and underworld...rituals” of “the cult of Dionysus” (Grant 68, 18). By encouraging the audience to take part in the making of the myths, Morrison’s philosophy, unlike Nietzsche’s, enforces the necessity of a symbiotic relationship between individual perceptions and the communal climate beyond the realm of art.

With his philosophy, Nietzsche attempts to recruit a society of geniuses with beautiful, inspiring stories of living a joyful experience in hopes of summoning the Overman who will one day change the world. Morrison, on the other hand, scares and excites his audience into action producing a community of Overmen right before his eyes: “Motel money/ Murder madness/ Let’s change the mood/ From glad to sadness// Mister Mojo risin’ ...Got to keep on risin’” (Doors 150). As addressed previously, the way to “recreate the world” begins with altering man’s perception (*Wilderness* 11). First, he shows the audience how to “Go Insane” by shutting out the outside world and wandering through their subconscious. He reassures them all the way: “This little game, is fun to do./ Just close you eyes, no way to lose/ And I’m right there, I’m going too/ Release control, we’re breaking Thru (*The American Night* 41). In one of his most sublime songs, “The End,” he asks “Can you picture what will be/ So limitless and free/ Desperately in need of some/ stranger’s hand/ In a desperate land” (Doors 36). Then he follows with “Come on baby, take a chance with us” (36). Once he captures his audience, he motivates them by playing on their eccentricities, insecurities and fears with songs such as “When the Music’s Over” where he assures them “For the music is your special friend/ Dance on fire as it intends/ Music is your only friend/ Until the end” and then works them up until everyone is singing “We want the world and we want it,/ We want the world and we want it, now/ Now? NOW!” (81). The Doors’ song “Wild Child” depicts a new Overman: “Wild Child/ full of grace/ Savior of the human race/ Your cool face// Natural child/ Terrible child/ Not you mother’s or your/ Father’s child/ You’re our child/ Screamin’ wild// (An ancient lunatic reigns in the tree of the night)” (119). These lyrics appeal to anyone feeling stifled and alienated and give them a purpose. The song “Five to One” builds communal confidence as it pleads “The old get old and

the young/ get stronger/ May take a week and it may/ take longer/ They got the guns/ but we got the numbers/ Gonna win/ Yeah, were takin' over/ Come on" (96). Finally he asks "Is everybody in?/ The ceremony is about to begin!" (172). Nietzsche's Apollonian tendency is no longer able to control the Dionysian. Morrison, driven by his will to perceive and his will to power, conquers his anxiety of influence and successfully completes *apophrades*. Morrison "gives birth to his own father" (*The Anxiety of Influence* 26). Morrison and the Doors have spontaneously called up the Dionysian wild child in everyone; the arena transforms into a Greek orgy with maenads and satyrs dancing naked and singing:

Beneath the moon

Beside an ancient lake

Enter again the sweet forest

Enter the hot dream

Come with us

Everything is broken up and dances. (Doors 186)

CONCLUSION

Jim Morrison's interest in the work of Friedrich Nietzsche has been well established by his friends and family. All conclude that Morrison worked to share Nietzsche's ideas on celebrating life, individuality and creativity with the youth culture of the 1960's. Some also contend that, intentionally or unintentionally, Morrison sacrificed his life in hopes of becoming Nietzsche's Superman and liberating the creatively-oppressed masses. They support this argument by alluding to Nietzschean influence in his poetry, lyrics and performance. Still, little research concerning Morrison has actually analyzed the presence of Nietzsche in his poetry. Although Morrison's work does echo the work of Nietzsche, it is not an imitation. Following a long tradition of strong poets, Morrison uses Nietzschean themes to rewrite Nietzsche and develop a philosophy of willful absurdity.

With his theory of poetic misprision, Harold Bloom asserts that every poet (or philosopher) suffers from the anxiety of influence causing him to rewrite the work of those before him. Every creator is afflicted by his susceptibility to the influence of his precursor. Bloom argues that new poets, or ephebes, are compelled involuntarily to prove their abilities and establish themselves as legitimate peers. Bloom states that the ephebe's effort to distance himself from his precursor's poetic influence leads him through six revisionary ratios: *clinamen*, *tessera*, *kenosis*, *daemonization*, *askesis* and *apophrades*. This process allows the ephebe to creatively misinterpret an element of his precursor's work and present his own interpretation thereby eradicating the need for the precursor's influence. As the ephebe continues to develop his own ideas, he begins to isolate himself from all others. The seclusion of his poetic niche remains comfortable only for a short time. Then he must return to poetic conversation and again

engage in a dialogue with his precursor. The difference between the first encounter with the precursor and the second is that the second encounter is initiated by the ephebe. This dialogue provides the ephebe with the power to use his precursor's ideas in his own voice. If the poet is strong enough, his work not only recreates the precursor but creates the illusion that the precursor's work was written by him as well. Poetic misprision continues in a chain-like fashion and no creator exists apart from this chain. This includes Morrison as well as Nietzsche. To illustrate the interconnectedness of the creative process between Morrison and Nietzsche, this essay began with Nietzsche's precursor, Schopenhauer.

By comparing the work of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, one can clearly see that Nietzsche's philosophy evolved through the process of creative misinterpretation. In his text *The World as Will and Representation*, Schopenhauer argues that man is motivated by a *will-to-live* that encourages him to pursue his desires despite adversity. He asserts that a life of asceticism provides the most profitable existence for man. Man practices self-denial by focusing all of his attention on cultivating his objective perception of the world rather than his subjective perception. Through the suppression of subjectivity, he becomes immune to inevitable suffering and can exist unaffected by the sublimity of life until he is liberated in death. Schopenhauer argues that man can learn how to approach life objectively through art. As a young philosopher, Nietzsche embraced Schopenhauer's philosophy. As his own ideas developed, he began to find Schopenhauer's pessimism disconcerting. As a result, Nietzsche used Schopenhauer's philosophy as a starting point for his own philosophical writings.

Nietzsche's philosophy is based on the appreciation of life. Although he commends Schopenhauer for his effort, Nietzsche believes Schopenhauer's ideas promote unhealthy

feelings. Nietzsche counters Schopenhauer's *will-to-live* with the will to power asserting that man is motivated by his will to control. While Schopenhauer calls for the negation of man's will, Nietzsche argues that man should use his will to power to strive for a life of joy. In his work *Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche suggests that Attic tragedy provides the perfect example of how to approach both art and life. He adds that by welcoming a balance between the Apollonian and the Dionysian tendencies in art, the Greeks learned to appreciate both beautiful and the sublime aspects of life. Nietzsche argues that man should cultivate both the beautiful, rational elements of the Apollonian impulse and the chaotic, horrible elements of the Dionysian impulse in himself to gain the most whole and productive perception of life. His texts *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* and *The Will to Power*, among others, tell of the coming of the Superman who will lead men of genius to a higher existence of freedom. Although Morrison's work incorporates many of the same themes, it deviates from both Schopenhauer and Nietzsche in its horror and irrationality.

An analysis of Morrison's work using Bloom's theory confirms that Morrison does not reproduce Nietzsche, but rather reinvents him. In his work, Nietzsche calls for a rebirth of tragedy and the affirmation of life guided by the wisdom of Apollo and Dionysus. Morrison uses poetry, lyrics and theatrics as a means of appreciating the Dionysian sublimity of life. Morrison argues that the most natural and dynamic existence requires complete submission to the will. Morrison's philosophy of a Dionysian existence requires the suppression of the Apollonian impulse. With the will to power guiding their will to know and will to create, Morrison and his audience tear down all boundaries and open all doors: "To participate in the creation/ To screw

things up. To brings Things/ into being” (*The American Night* 157). They are rewarded with a new tragedy of an ecstatic world where a Dionysian Superman exists in every individual.

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