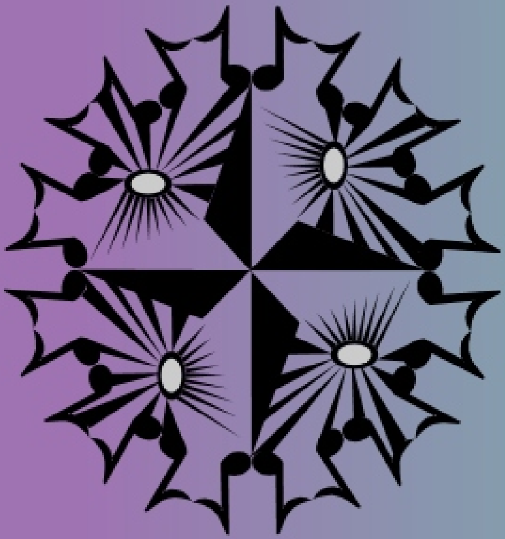
Friedrich Nietzsche

Birth of Tragedy

Out of the Spirit of Music



Translated by Ian Johnston

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The Birth of Tragedy Out of the Spirit of Music

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Nietzsche
Birth of Tragedy

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Translator's Note

In the following translation, where Nietzsche uses a foreign phrase this text retains that phrase and includes an English translation in square brackets and italics immediately afterwards. Explanatory **footnotes, usually to identify** a person named in the text or the source of a quotation, have been added by the translator.

Historical Note

The Birth of Tragedy, Nietzsche's first book, was published in 1872, when he was 28 years old and a professor of classical philology at Basel. The book had its defenders but, in general, provoked a hostile reception in the academic community and affected Nietzsche's academic career for the worse. As the opening section (added in 1886) makes clear, Nietzsche himself later had some important reservations about the book. However, since that time the work has exerted a very important influence on the history of Western thought, particularly on the interpretations of Greek culture. It is also a vital introduction to the work of the most provocative philosopher of modern times.

In later editions part of the title of the book was changed from "Out of the Spirit of Music" to "Hellenism and Pessimism," but the former phrase has remained the more common.

The Birth of Tragedy
An Attempt at Self-Criticism[1]

Whatever might have been be the basis for this dubious book, it must have been a question of the utmost importance and charm, as well as a deeply personal one at the time—testimony to that effect is the period in which it arose, *in spite of* which it arose, that disturbing era of the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-71.While the thunderclap of the Battle of Wörth was reverberating across Europe, the meditative lover of enigmas whose lot it was to father this book sat somewhere in a corner of the Alps, extremely reflective and perplexed, thus simultaneously very distressed and carefree, and wrote down his thoughts about the *Greeks*—the kernel of that odd and difficult book to which this later preface (or postscript) should be dedicated.[2] A few weeks after that, he found himself under the walls of Metz, still not yet free of the question mark which he had set down beside the alleged "serenity" of the Greeks and of Greek culture, until, in that month of the deepest tension, as peace was being negotiated in Versailles, he finally came to peace with himself and, while slowly recovering from an illness he had brought back home with him from the field, finished composing the *Birth of Tragedy out of the Spirit of Music*.[3]—From music? Music and tragedy? The Greeks and the Music of Tragedy? The Greeks and the art work of pessimism? The most successful, most beautiful, most envied people, those with the most encouraging style of life so far—the Greeks? How can this be? Did they of all people *need* tragedy? Even more—art? What for—Greek art?

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[1] This opening section of the *Birth of Tragedy* was added to the book many years after it first appeared, as the text makes clear. Nietzsche wrote this "Attempt at Self-Criticism" in 1886. The original text, written in 1870-71, begins with the Preface to Richard Wagner, the second major section in this text.

[2] *The Battle of Wörth* occurred in August 1870. The German army defeated the French forces.

[3] Nietzsche contracted a serious and lingering illness while serving as a medical orderly with the Prussian forces in the Franco-Prussian War. The illness forced him eventually to give up his academic position.

One can guess from all this just where the great question mark about the worth of existence was placed. Is pessimism *necessarily* the sign of collapse, destruction, of disaster, of the exhausted and enfeebled instincts—as it was with the Indians, as it is now, to all appearances, among us, the "modern" peoples and Europeans? Is there a pessimism of *strength*? An intellectual inclination for what in existence is hard, dreadful, evil, problematic, emerging from what is healthy, from overflowing well being, from living existence *to the full*? Is there perhaps a way of suffering from the very fullness of life? A tempting courage of the keenest sight which *demands* what is terrible as the enemy, the worthy enemy, against which it can test its power, from which it wants to learn what "to fear" means? What does the *tragic* myth mean precisely for the Greeks of the best, strongest, and bravest age? What about that tremendous phenomenon of the Dionysian?[1] And what about what was born out of the Dionysian—the tragedy? And by contrast, what are we to make of what killed tragedy— Socratic morality, dialectic, the satisfaction and serenity of the theoretical man?[2] How about that? Could not this very Socratism *[Sokratismus]* be a sign of collapse, exhaustion, sickness, the anarchic dissolution of the instincts? And could the "Greek serenity" of later Greek periods be only a red sunset? Could the Epicurean will *hostile to* pessimism be merely the prudence of a suffering man?[1] And even science itself, our science—indeed, what does all science in general mean considered as a symptom of life? What is the point of all that science and, even more seriously, *where did it come from*? What about that? Is scientific scholarship perhaps only a fear and an excuse in the face of pessimism? A delicate self-defence against—the *Truth*? And speaking morally, something like cowardice and falsehood? Speaking unmorally, a clever trick?[2] O Socrates, Socrates, was that perhaps *your* secret? O you secretive ironist, was that perhaps your—irony?—

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[1] In Greek mythology, Dionysus, son of Zeus and the mortal Semele, was the god of wine, associated with ecstatic and intoxicated group rituals.

[2] *Socrates*: (470-399 BC), Athenian philosopher famous for his devotion to challenging the beliefs of his contemporaries with intense questioning. Also as the main character in Plato's early dialogues, Socrates becomes the chief spokesman for a more rational understanding of life.

2

What I managed to seize upon at that time, something fearful and dangerous, was a problem with horns, not necessarily a bull exactly, but in any event a *new* problem; today I would state that it was the *problem of science itself*—science for the first time grasped as problematic, as dubious. But that book, in which my youthful courage and suspicion then spoke, what an *impossible* book had to grow out of a task so contrary to the spirit of youth! Created out of merely premature, really immature personal experiences, which all lay close to the threshold of something communicable, built on the basis of *art*—for the problem of science cannot be understood on the basis of science—a book perhaps for artists with analytical tendencies and a capacity for retrospection (that means for exceptions, a type of artist whom it is necessary to seek out and whom one never wants to look for . . .), full of psychological innovations and artists' secrets, with an artist's metaphysics in the background, a youthful work, full of the spirit of youth and the melancholy of youth, independent, defiantly self-sufficient, even where it seemed to bow down with

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[3] *Epicurus*: (341-270 BC), Greek philosopher who stressed that the purpose of thinking was the attainment of a tranquil, pain-free existence.

[4] The German word *Wissenschaft*, a very important part of Nietzsche's argument, has a range of meanings: scholarship, science, scholarly research. In this translation I have normally used *science* or *scientific knowledge* or *scholarship*. The meaning of the term is by no means confined to the physical sciences.

special reverence to an authority, in short, a first work also in every bad sense of the word, afflicted, in spite of the problem better suited for old men, with every fault of youth, above all with its "excessive verbiage" and its "storm and stress." On the other hand, looking back on the success the book had (especially with the great artist to whom it addressed itself, as if in a conversation, that is, with Richard Wagner), the book *proved itself*—I mean it was the sort of book which at any rate was effective enough among "the best people of its time."[1] For that reason the book should at this point be handled with some consideration and discretion. However, I do not want totally to hide how unpleasant the book seems to me now, how strangely after sixteen years it stands there in front of me—in front of an older man, a hundred times more discriminating, but with eyes which have not grown colder in the slightest and which have themselves not become estranged from the work which that bold book dared to approach for the first time: *to look at science from the perspective of the artist, but to look at art from the perspective of life*.

3

Let me say again: today for me it is an impossible book—I call it something poorly written, ponderous, embarrassing, with fantastic and confused imagery, sentimental, here and there so saccharine it is effeminate, uneven in tempo, without any impulse for logical clarity, extremely self-confident and thus dispensing with evidence, even distrustful of the *relevance* of evidence, like a book for the initiated, like "Music" for those baptized into music, those who are bound together from the start in secret and esoteric aesthetic experiences as a secret sign recognized among blood relations *in artibus [in the arts]*—an arrogant and rhapsodic book, which right from the start hermetically sealed itself off from the *profanum vulgus [profane rabble]* of the "educated," even more than from the "people," but a book which, as its effect proved and continues to prove, must also understand this issue well enough to search out its fellow rhapsodists and to tempt them to new secret pathways and dancing grounds. At any rate, here a *strange* voice spoke—people admitted that with as much curiosity as aversion—the disciple of an as yet "unknown God," who momentarily hid himself under the hood of a learned man, under the gravity and dialectical solemnity of the German man, even under the bad manners of a follower of Wagner. Here was a spirit with alien, even nameless, needs, a memory crammed with questions, experiences, secret places, beside which the name Dionysus was written like one more question mark. Here spoke—so people said to themselves suspiciously—something like a mystic and an almost maenad-like soul, which stammered with difficulty and arbitrarily, in a foreign language, as it were, almost uncertain whether it wanted to communicate something or hide itself.[1] This "new soul" should have *sung*, not spoken! What a shame that I did not dare to utter as a poet what I had to say at that time; perhaps I might have been able to do that! Or at least as a philologist—even today in this area almost everything is still there for philologists to discover and dig up! Above all, the issue *that* there is a problem right here—and that the Greeks will continue to remain, as before, entirely unknown and unknowable as long as we have no answer to the question, "What is Dionysian?" . . .

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[1] *Richard Wagner*: (1813-1883), German composer and essayist, most famous for his operas. Early in Nietzsche's career he and Wagner (who met in 1868) were close friends.

4

Indeed, what is Dionysian?—This book offers an answer to that question—a "knowledgeable person" speaks there, the initiate and disciple of his god. Perhaps I would now speak with more care and less eloquently about such a difficult psychological question as the origin of tragedy among the Greeks. A basic issue is the relationship of the Greeks to pain, the degree of their sensitivity—did this relationship remain constant? Or did it turn itself around?—That question whether their constantly stronger *desire for beauty*, for festivals, entertainments, and new cults really arose out of some lack, out of deprivation, out of melancholy, out of pain. For if we assume that this particular assertion is true—and Pericles, or, rather, Thucydides, in the great Funeral Oration gives us to understand that it is—where then must that contradictory desire stem from, which appears earlier than the desire for beauty, namely, the *desire for the ugly*, the good strong willing of the ancient Hellenes for pessimism, for tragic myth, for pictures of everything fearful, evil, enigmatic, destructive, and fateful as the basis of existence?[1] Where then must tragedy have come from? Perhaps out of *joy*, out of power, out of overflowing health, out of overwhelming fullness? And psychologically speaking, what then is the meaning of that madness out of which tragic as well as comic art grew, the Dionysian madness? What? Is madness perhaps not necessarily the symptom of degradation, of collapse, of cultural decadence? Are there perhaps—a question for doctors who treat madness—neuroses associated with *health*? With the youth of a people and with youthfulness? What is revealed in that synthesis of god and goat in the satyr? Out of what personal experience, what impulse, did the Greek have to imagine the Dionysian enthusiast and original man as a satyr? And so far as the origin of the tragic chorus is concerned, in those centuries when the Greek body flourished and the Greek soul bubbled over with life, were there perhaps endemic raptures? Visions and hallucinations which entire communities, entire cultural bodies, shared? How's that? What if it were the case that the Greeks, right in the richness of their youth, had the will *for* the tragic and were pessimists? What if it was clearly lunacy, to use a saying from Plato, which brought the *greatest* blessings throughout Greece? And, on the other hand, what if, to turn the issue around, it was precisely during the period of their dissolution and weakness that the Greeks became constantly more optimistic, more superficial, more hypocritical, and with a greater lust for logic and rational understanding of the world, as well as "more cheerful" and "more scientific"? What's this? In spite of all "modern ideas" and the prejudices of democratic taste, could the victory of *optimism*, the developing hegemony of *reasonableness*, of practical and theoretical *utilitarianism*, as well as of democracy itself, which occurs in the same period, perhaps be a symptom of failing power, of approaching old age, of physiological exhaustion, rather than pessimism? Was Epicurus an optimist—precisely because he was *suffering*?—We see that this book was burdened with an entire bundle of difficult questions—let us add its most difficult question: What, from the point of view of *living*, does morality mean? . . .

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[1] . . . *maenad-like*: a maenad is an ecstatic follower of the god Dionysus.

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[1] *Pericles*: (495-429 BC) political leader of Athens at the height of its power; his Funeral Oration commemorating those Athenians killed in the first year of the Peloponnesian War, as it is described by the great historian Thucydides (460-395 BC), celebrates the glories of Athens and its citizens.

5

The preface to Richard Wagner already proposed that art—and *not* morality—was the essential *metaphysical* human activity; in the book itself there appears many times over the suggestive statement that the existence of the world is *justified* only as an aesthetic phenomenon. In fact, the entire book recognizes only an artist's sense and—a deeper meaning under everything that happens—a "God," if you will, but certainly only a totally unthinking and amoral artist-God, who in creation as in destruction, in good things as in bad, desires to become aware of his own pleasures and autocratic power equally, a God who, as he creates worlds, rids himself of the *distress* of fullness and *superfluity*, of the *suffering* of pressing internal contradictions. The world is at every moment the *attained* redemption of God, as the eternally changing, eternally new vision of the one who suffers most, who is the most rent with contradictions, the most inconsistent, who knows how to save himself only in *appearances*. People may call this entire artistic metaphysics arbitrary, pointless, and fantastic—the essential point about it is that it already betrays a spirit which will at some point risk everything to stand against the *moralistic* interpretation and meaningfulness of existence. Here is announced, perhaps for the first time, a pessimism "beyond good and evil"; here is expressed in word and formula that "perversity in belief" against which Schopenhauer never grew tired of hurling his angriest curses and thunderbolts in advance—a philosophy which dares to place morality itself in the world of phenomena, to subsume it, not merely under the "visions" (in the sense of some idealistic *terminus technicus [technical term]*) but under "illusions," as an appearance, delusion, fallacy, interpretation, something made up, a work of art.[1] Perhaps we can best gauge the depth of this tendency *hostile to morality* from the careful and antagonistic silence with which Christianity is treated in the entire book—Christianity as the most excessively thorough elaboration of a moralistic theme which humanity up to this point has had available to listen to. To tell the truth, there is nothing which stands in greater opposition to the purely aesthetic interpretation and justification of the world, as it is taught in this book, than Christian doctrine, which is and wishes to be *merely* moralistic and which, with its absolute standards, beginning, for example, with its truthfulness of God, relegates art, *every* art, to the realm of *lies*—in other words, which denies art, condemns it, and passes sentence on it. Behind such a way of thinking and evaluating, which must be hostile to art, so long as it is in any way genuine, I always perceived also *something hostile to life*, the wrathful, vengeful aversion to life itself; for all life rests on appearance, art, illusion, optics, the need for perspective and for error. Christianity was from the start essentially and thoroughly life's disgust and weariness with life, which only dressed itself up with, only hid itself in, only decorated itself with the belief in an "other" or "better" life. The hatred of the "world," the curse against the emotions, the fear of beauty and sensuality, a world beyond created so that the world on this side might be more easily slandered, at bottom a longing for nothingness, for extinction, for rest, until the "Sabbath of all Sabbaths"—all that, as well as the absolute desire of Christianity to allow *only* moral values to count, has always seemed to me the most dangerous and the weirdest form of all possible manifestations of a "Will to Destruction," at least a sign of the deepest illness, weariness, bad temper, exhaustion, and impoverishment in living—for in the eyes of morality (and particularly Christian morality, that is, absolute morality) life *must* be seen as constantly and inevitably wrong, because life *is* something essentially amoral—hence, pressed down under the weight of contempt and eternal No's, life *must* finally be experienced as something not worth desiring, as something inherently worthless. And what about morality itself? Might not morality be a "desire for the denial of life," a secret instinct for destruction, a principle of decay, diminution, slander, a beginning of the end? And thus, the danger of dangers? . . . And so, my instinct at that time turned itself *against* morality in this questionable book, as an instinct affirming life, and invented for itself a fundamentally different doctrine and a totally opposite way of evaluating life, something purely artistic and *anti-Christian*. What should it be called? As a philologist and man of words, I baptized it, taking some liberties—for who knew the correct name of the Antichrist?—after the name of a Greek god: I called it the *Dionysian*.—

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[1] *Schopenhauer*: Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860), German philosopher whose work had a strong influence on Nietzsche.

6

Do people understand the nature of the task I dared to touch on back then with this book? . . . How much I now regret the fact that at the time I did not yet have the courage (or the presumptuousness?) to allow myself in every respect a *personal language* for such an individual point of view and such daring exploits—that I sought labouriously to express strange new evaluations with formulas from Schopenhauer and Kant, something which basically went quite against the spirit of Kant and Schopenhauer, as well as against their tastes![1] What then did Schopenhauer think about tragedy? He says, "What gives everything tragic its characteristic drive for elevation is the working out of the recognition that the world, that life, can provide no proper satisfaction, and thus our devotion to it is *not worthwhile*; the tragic spirit consists of that insight—it leads therefore to *resignation*" (*The World as Will and Idea*, II,3,37). O how differently Dionysus spoke to me! O how far from me then was precisely this whole doctrine of resignation! But there is something much worse about my book, something which I now regret even more than to have obscured and spoiled Dionysian premonitions with formulas from Schopenhauer: namely, that I generally *ruined* for myself the magnificent *problem of the Greeks*, as it arose in me, by mixing it up with the most modern issues! I regret that I tied myself to hopes where there was nothing to hope for, where everything indicated all too clearly an end point! That, on the basis of the most recent German music, I began to tell stories of the "German character," as if that character might be just about to discover itself, to find itself again—and that at a time when the German spirit, which not so long before still had the desire to rule Europe and the power to assume leadership of Europe, was, as its final testament, simply *abdicating* forever and, beneath the ostentatious pretext of founding an empire, making the transition to a conciliatory moderation, to democracy and "modern ideas"! As a matter of fact, in the intervening years I have learned to think of that "German character" with a sufficient lack of hope and of mercy—similarly with contemporary *German music*, which is Romantic through and through and the most un-Greek of all possible art forms, and besides that, a first-rate corrupter of the nerves, doubly dangerous among a people who love drink and esteem lack of clarity as a virtue, because that has the dual character of a drug which simultaneously intoxicates and *befuddles* the mind.—Of course, set apart from all the rash hopes and defective practical applications to present times with which I then spoiled my first book for myself, the great Dionysian question mark still remains as it is set out there, also in relation to music: How would one have to create a music which is no longer Romantic in origin, like the German—but *Dionysian*?

---

[1] *Kant*: Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), German philosopher, one of the most important figures in the Enlightenment.

7

But, my dear sir, what in all the world is Romantic if *your* book is not? Can the deep hatred against "modernism," "reality," and "modern ideas" go any further than in your artists' metaphysics—which would sooner still believe in nothingness or the devil than in the "here and now"? Does not a fundamental bass note of anger and desire for destruction rumble underneath all your contrapuntal vocal art and seductive sounds, a raging determination in opposition to everything "contemporary," a desire which is not too distant from practical nihilism and which seems to say "Better that nothing were true than that *you* were right, than that *your* truth were correct!" Listen to yourself, my pessimistic gentleman and worshipper of art, listen with open ears to a single selected passage from your book, to that not ineloquent passage about the dragon slayer, which may sound like an incriminating pied piper to those with young ears and hearts. What? Is that not a true and proper Romantic declaration of 1830, under the mask of the pessimism of 1850, behind which is already playing the prelude to the usual Romantic finale—break, collapse, return, and prostration before an ancient belief, before *the* old God . . . What? Isn't your book for pessimists itself an anti-Greek and Romantic piece, even something "as intoxicating as it is befuddling," in any event, a narcotic, even a piece of music, *German music*? Listen to the following:

> Let us picture for ourselves a generation growing up with this fearlessness in its gaze, with this heroic push into what is tremendous; let us picture for ourselves the bold stride of these dragon slayers, the proud audacity with which they turn their backs on all the doctrines of weakness associated with optimism, in order to live with resolution, fully and completely. *Would it not be necessary* that the tragic man of this culture, having trained himself for what is serious and frightening, desire a new art, *the art of metaphysical consolation*, the tragedy, as his own personal Helen of Troy, and to have to cry out with Faust:

> With my desire's power, should I not call
> Into this life the fairest form of all?[1]

"Would it not be *necessary*?" . . . No, three times no! You young Romantics: it should *not* be necessary! But it is very likely that things will *end up* like that—that you will end up like that—namely, "being consoled," as it stands written, in spite of all the self-training for what is serious and frightening, "metaphysically consoled," in short, the way Romantics finish up, as *Christians*. . . . No! You should first learn the art of consolation *in this life*—you should learn *to laugh*, my young friends, even if you wish to remain thoroughly pessimistic. From that, as laughing people, some day or other perhaps you will for once ship all metaphysical consolation to the devil—and then away with metaphysics! Or, to speak the language of that Dionysian fiend called *Zarathustra*:[2]

> "Lift up your hearts, my brothers, high, higher! And for my sake don't forget your legs as well! Raise up your legs, you fine dancers, and better yet, stand on your heads!"
>
> "This crown of the man who laughs, this crown wreathed with roses—I have placed this crown upon myself. I myself declare my laughter holy. Today I found no one else strong enough for that."
>
> "Zarathustra the dancer, Zarathustra the light hearted, who beckons with his wings, a man ready to fly, hailing all birds, prepared and ready, a careless and blessed man."—
>
> "Zarathustra the truth-teller, Zarathustra the true laugher, not an impatient man, not a man of absolutes, someone who loves jumps and leaps to the side—I myself crown myself!"
>
> "This crown of the laughing man, this crown of rose wreaths: you

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[1] A quotation from Goethe's *Faust II*, 7438-9.

[1] *Zarathustra*: the name Nietzsche uses throughout his works for his reinterpretation of Zoroaster, the ancient Persian prophet, in order to make him a spokesman for his own ideas, notably in *Thus Spake Zarathustra* (1883-1885).

> my brothers, I throw this crown to you! Laughter I declare sacred: you higher men, for my sake *learn*—to laugh!"

Sils-Maria, Upper Engadine
August 1886

Preface to Richard Wagner

In order to keep far away from me all possible disturbances, agitation, and misunderstandings which the assembly of ideas in this piece of writing will bring about on account of the peculiar character of our aesthetic public, and also to be capable of writing a word of introduction to the book with the same contemplative joy which marks every page, the crystallization of good inspirational hours, I am imagining to myself the look with which you, my esteemed friend, will receive this work—how you, perhaps after an evening stroll in the winter snow, look at the unbound Prometheus on the title page, read my name, and are immediately convinced that, no matter what this text consists of, the writer has something serious and urgent to say, and that, in addition, in everything which he composed, he was conversing with you as with someone present and could write down only what was appropriate to such a presence. In this connection, you will remember that I gathered these ideas together at the same time that your marvellous commemorative volume on Beethoven appeared, that is, during the terror and grandeur of the war which had just broken out. Nevertheless, people would be wrong if this collection made them think of the contrast between patriotic excitement and aesthetic rapture, between a brave seriousness and a cheerful game. By actually reading this text, they should instead be astonished to recognize clearly the serious German problem which we have to deal with, the problem which we really placed right in the middle of German hopes, as its vortex and turning point. However, it will perhaps be generally offensive for these same people to see an aesthetic problem taken so seriously, if, that is, they are incapable of seeing art as anything more than a cheerful diversion, an easily dispensable bell-ringing in comparison with the "Seriousness of Existence," as if no one understood what was involved in this contrast with such "Seriousness of Existence." For these earnest readers, let this serve as a caution: I am convinced that art is the highest task and the essential metaphysical capability of this life, in the sense of that man to whom I here, as to my sublime pioneer on this path, wish this writing to be dedicated.

Basel, End of the Year 1871

The Birth of Tragedy

1

We will have achieved much for scientific study of aesthetics when we come, not merely to a logical understanding, but also to the certain and immediate apprehension of the fact that the further development of art is bound up with the duality of the *Apollonian* and the *Dionysian*, just as reproduction similarly depends upon the duality of the sexes, their continuing strife and only periodically occurring reconciliation. We take these names from the Greeks, who gave a clear voice to the profound secret teachings of their contemplative art, not in ideas, but in the powerfully clear forms of their divine world. With those two gods of art, Apollo and Dionysus, we establish our recognition that in the Greek world there exists a huge contrast, in origin and purposes, between the visual arts, the Apollonian, and the non-visual art of music, the Dionysian.[1] These two very different drives go hand in hand, for the most part in open conflict with each other and simultaneously provoking each other all the time to new and more powerful offspring, in order to perpetuate in them the contest of that opposition, which the common word "Art" only seems to bridge, until at last, through a marvellous metaphysical act of the Greek "will," they appear paired up with each other and, as this pair, finally produce Attic tragedy, as much a Dionysian as an Apollonian work of art.

In order to bring those two drives closer to us, let us think of them first as the separate artistic worlds of *dream* and of *intoxication*, physiological phenomena between which we can observe an opposition corresponding to the one between the Apollonian and the Dionysian. According to the idea of Lucretius, the marvellous divine shapes first stepped out before the mind of man in a dream.[1] It was in a dream that the great artist saw the delightful anatomy of superhuman existence, and the Greek poet, questioned about the secrets of poetic creativity, would have also recalled his dreams and given an explanation similar to the one Hans Sachs provides in *Die Meistersinger*.[2]

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[1] *Apollo*: in Greek mythology the son of Zeus and Leto (hence a half-brother of Dionysus), associated with the sun and prophecy.

> My friend, that is precisely the poet's work—
> To figure out his dreams, mark them down.
> Believe me, the truest illusion of mankind
> Is revealed to him in dreams:
> All poetic art and poeticizing
> Is nothing but interpreting true dreams.

The beautiful appearance of the world of dreams, in whose creation each man is a complete artist, is the precondition of all plastic art, and also, in fact, as we shall see, an important part of poetry. We enjoy the form with an immediate understanding; every shape speaks to us; nothing is indifferent and unnecessary. For all the most intense life of this dream reality, we nevertheless have the shimmering sense of their *illusory quality*: that, at least, is my experience. For the frequency, indeed normality, of this response, I could point to many witnesses and the utterances of poets. Even the philosophical man has the presentiment that under this reality in which we live and have our being lies hidden a second, totally different reality and that thus the former is an illusion. And Schopenhauer specifically designates as the trademark of philosophical talent the ability to recognize at certain times that human beings and all things are mere phantoms or dream pictures. Now, just as the philosopher behaves in relation to the reality of existence, so the artistically excitable man behaves in relation to the reality of dreams: he looks at them precisely and with pleasure, for from these pictures he fashions his interpretation of life; from these events he rehearses his life for himself. This is not merely a case of the agreeable and friendly images which he experiences in himself with a complete understanding; they also include what is serious, cloudy, sad, dark, sudden scruples, teasing accidents, nervous expectations, in short, the entire “divine comedy” of life, including the Inferno—all this moves past him, not just like a shadow play—for he lives and suffers in the midst of these scenes—and yet also not without that fleeting sense of illusion. And perhaps several people remember, like me, amid the dangers and terrors of a dream, successfully cheering themselves up by shouting: “It is a dream! I want to dream it some more!” I have also heard accounts of some people who had the ability to set out the causality of one and the same dream over three or more consecutive nights. These facts are clear evidence showing that our innermost beings, the secret underground in all of us, experiences its dreams with deep enjoyment and a sense of delightful necessity.

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[2] *Lucretius*: Titus Lucretius Carus (99 BC to 55 BC), Roman philosopher and poet, author of *De Rerum Natura* (*On the Nature of Things*).

[1] *Hans Sachs*: a historical person and a character portrayed in Richard Wagner's opera *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*.

In the same manner the Greeks expressed this joyful necessity of the dream experience in their Apollo. Apollo, as the god of all the plastic arts, is at the same time the god of prophecy. In accordance with the root meaning of his association with “brightness,” he is the god of light; he also rules over the beautiful appearance of the inner fantasy world. The higher truth, the perfection of this condition in contrast to the sketchy understanding of our daily reality, as well as the deep consciousness of a healing and helping nature in sleep and dreaming, is at the same time the symbolic analogy to the capacity to prophesy the truth, as well as to art in general, through which life is made possible and worth living. But also that delicate line which the dream image may not cross so that it does not work its effect pathologically—otherwise the illusion would deceive us as crude reality —that line must not be absent from the image of Apollo, that boundary of moderation, that freedom from more ecstatic excitement, that fully wise calm of the god of images. His eye must be "sun-like," in keeping with his origin; even when he is angry and gazes with displeasure, the consecration of the beautiful illusion rests on him. And so concerning Apollo one could endorse, in an eccentric way, what Schopenhauer says of the man trapped in the veil of Maja: "As on the stormy sea which extends without limit on all sides, howling mountainous waves rise up and sink and a sailor sits in a row boat, trusting the weak craft, so, in the midst of a world of torments, the solitary man sits peacefully, supported by and trusting in the *principium individuationis [principle of individuation]*" (*World as Will and Idea*, I.1.3).[1] In fact, we could say of Apollo that the imperturbable trust in that principle and the calm sitting still of the man caught up in it attained its loftiest expression in him, and we may even designate Apollo himself as the marvellous divine image of the *principium individuationis*, from whose gestures and gaze all the joy and wisdom of "illusion," together with its beauty, speak to us.

In the same place Schopenhauer also described for us the tremendous *awe* which seizes a man when he suddenly doubts his ways of comprehending illusion, when the principle of reason, in any one of its forms, appears to suffer from an exception. If we add to this awe the ecstatic rapture, which rises up out of the same collapse of the *principium individuationis* from the innermost depths of a human being, indeed, from the innermost depths of nature, then we have a glimpse into the essence of the *Dionysian*, which is presented to us most closely through the analogy to *intoxication*. Either through the influence of narcotic drink, of which all primitive men and peoples speak in their hymns, or through the powerful coming on of spring, which drives joyfully through all of nature, that Dionysian excitement arises; as it intensifies, the subjective fades into complete forgetfulness of self. Even in the German Middle Ages, under the same power of Dionysus, constantly growing hordes thronged from place to place, singing and dancing; in these St. John's and St. Vitus's dances we recognize the Bacchic chorus of the Greeks once again, with its precursors in Asia Minor, right back to Babylon and the orgiastic *Sacaea [riotous Babylonian festival]*. There are people who, from a lack of experience or out of apathy, turn mockingly or pityingly away from such phenomena as from a "sickness of the people," with a sense of their own health. These poor people naturally do not have any sense of how deathly and ghost-like this very "health" of theirs sounds, when the glowing life of the Dionysian throng roars past them.

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[1] . . . *the veil of Maja*: a phrase used by Schopenhauer to describe a screen which exists between "the world inside my head and the world outside my head."

Under the magic of the Dionysian, not only does the bond between man and man lock itself in place once more, but also nature itself, no matter how alienated, hostile, or subjugated, rejoices again in her festival of reconciliation with her prodigal son, man. The earth freely offers up her gifts, and the beasts of prey from the rocks and the desert approach in peace. The wagon of Dionysus is covered with flowers and wreaths; beneath his yolk stride panthers and tigers. If someone were to transform Beethoven's *Ode to Joy* into a painting and not restrain his imagination when millions of people sink dramatically into the dust, then we could come close to the Dionysian. Now the slave a free man; now all the stiff, hostile barriers break apart, those things which necessity and arbitrary power or "saucy fashion" have established between men. Now, with the gospel of world harmony, every man feels himself not only united with his neighbour, reconciled and fused together, but also as one with him, as if the veil of Maja had been ripped apart, with only scraps fluttering around in the face of the mysterious primordial unity. Singing and dancing, man expresses himself as a member of a higher community: he has forgotten how to walk and talk and is on the verge of flying up into the air as he dances. The enchantment speaks out in his gestures. Just as the animals now speak and the earth gives milk and honey, so something supernatural also echoes out of him:

he feels himself a god; he himself now moves in as lofty and ecstatic a way as he saw the gods move in his dream. The man is no longer an artist; he has become a work of art: the artistic power of all of nature, to the highest rhapsodic satisfaction of the primordial unity, reveals itself here in the transports of intoxication. The finest clay, the most expensive marble—man—is here worked and hewn, and the cry of the Eleusinian mysteries rings out to the chisel blows of the Dionysian world artist: "Do you fall down, you millions? World, do you have a sense of your creator?"[1]

2

Up to this point, we have considered the Apollonian and its opposite, the Dionysian, as artistic forces which break forth out of nature itself, *without the mediation of the human artist*, and in which the human artistic drives are for the time being satisfied directly—on the one hand, as a world of dream images, whose perfection has no connection with an individual's high level of intellect or artistic education, on the other hand, as the intoxicating reality, which once again does not respect the individual, but even seeks to abolish the individual and to redeem him through a mystical feeling of collective unity. In comparison to these unmediated artistic states of nature, every artist is an "imitator," and, in fact, is an artist either of Apollonian dream or Dionysian intoxication or, finally—as in Greek tragedy, for example—simultaneously an artist of intoxication and of dreams. As the last, it is possible for us to imagine how he sinks down in Dionysian drunkenness and mystical obliteration of the self, alone and apart from the rapturous choruses, and how, through the Apollonian effects of dream, his own state now reveals itself to him, that is, his unity with the innermost basis of the world, *in a metaphorical dream picture*.

Having set out these general assumptions and comparisons, let us now approach the *Greeks*, in order to recognize to what degree and to what heights those *artistic drives of nature* were developed in them: in that way we will be in a position to understand more deeply and to assess the relationship of the Greek artist to his primordial images or, to use Aristotle's expression, his "imitation of nature." In spite of all their literature on dreams and numerous dream anecdotes, we can speak of the *dreams* of the Greeks only hypothetically, although with a fair degree of certainty. Given the incredibly clear and accurate plastic capability of their eyes, along with their intelligent and open love of colour, one cannot go wrong in assuming that, to the shame all those born later, their dreams also had a logical causality of lines and circumferences, colours, and groupings, a sequence of scenes rather like their best bas reliefs, whose perfection would certainly entitle us, if such a comparison were possible, to describe the dreaming Greek man as Homer and Homer as a dreaming Greek man, in a deeper sense than when modern man, with respect to his dreams, has the temerity to compare himself with Shakespeare.

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[1] ". . . *creator*": this quotation comes from Schiller's poem which provides the words for Beethoven's *Ode to Joy*. *Eleusinian mysteries:* secret ecstatic religious ceremonies.

On the other hand, we do not need to speak merely hypothetically when we are to expose the immense gap which separates the *Dionysian Greeks* from the Dionysian barbarians. In all quarters of the ancient world— setting aside here the newer worlds—from Rome to Babylon, we can confirm the existence of Dionysian celebrations, of a type, at best, related to the Greek type in much the same way as the bearded satyr, whose name and attributes are taken from the goat, is related to Dionysus himself. Almost everywhere, the central point of these celebrations consisted of an exuberant sexual promiscuity, whose waves flooded over all established family practices and their traditional laws. The very wildest bestiality of nature was here unleashed, creating that abominable mixture of lust and cruelty, which has always seemed to me the real "witches' cauldron." From the feverish excitement of those festivals, knowledge of which reached the Greeks from all directions by land and sea, they were, it seems, for a long time completely secure and protected through the figure of Apollo, drawn up here in all his pride. Apollo could counter by holding up the head of Medusa, for no power was more dangerous than this massive and grotesque Dionysian force.[1] Doric art has immortalized that majestic bearing of Apollo as he stands in opposition.[2] This resistance became more questionable and even impossible as similar impulses finally broke out from the deepest roots of Hellenic culture itself: now the effect of the Delphic god, in a timely final process of reconciliation, limited itself to taking the destructive weapon out of the hand of the powerful opponent. This reconciliation is the most important moment in the history of Greek culture. Wherever we look, the revolutionary effects of this event manifest themselves. It was the reconciliation of two opponents who from now on observed their differences with a sharp demarcation of the border line to be kept between them and with occasional gifts sent to honour each other, but basically the gap was not bridged over. However, if we see how, under the pressure of that peace agreement, the Dionysian power revealed itself, then we now understand the meaning of the festivals of world redemption and days of transfiguration in the Dionysian orgies of the Greeks, in comparison with that Babylonian Sacaea, which turned human beings back into tigers and apes.

In these Greek festivals, for the first time nature achieves its artistic jubilee. In them, for the first time, the tearing apart of the *principii individuationis [the principle of individuation]* becomes an artistic phenomenon. Here that dreadful witches' cauldron of lust and cruelty was without power. The strange mixture and ambiguity in the emotions of the Dionysian celebrant only remind him—as healing potions remind one of deadly poison—of that phenomenon that pain awakens joy, that the jubilation in his chest rips out cries of agony. From the most sublime joy echoes the cry of horror or the longingly plaintive lament over an irreparable loss. In those Greek festivals it was as if a sentimental feature of nature is breaking out, as if nature has to sigh over her dismemberment into separate individuals. The song and the language of gestures of such a doubly defined celebrant was for the Homeric Greek world something new and unheard of, and in it Dionysian *music*, in particular, awoke fear and terror. If music was apparently already known as an Apollonian art, this music, strictly speaking, was a rhythmic pattern like the sound of waves, whose artistic power had been developed for presenting Apollonian states. The music of Apollo was Doric architecture expressed in sound, but only in intimate tones characteristic of the cithara.[1] It kept at a careful distance, as something un-Apollonian, the particular element which constitutes the character of Dionysian music and, along with that, of music generally, the emotionally disturbing tonal power, the unified stream of melody, and the totally incomparable world of harmony. In the Dionysian dithyramb man is aroused to the highest intensity of all his symbolic capabilities; something never felt forces itself into expression, the destruction of the veil of Maja, the sense of oneness as the presiding genius of form, in fact, of nature itself. Now the essence of nature is to express itself symbolically; a new world of symbols is necessary, the entire symbolism of the body, not just the symbolism of the mouth, of the face, and of the words, but the full gestures of the dance, all the limbs moving to the rhythm. And then the other symbolic powers grow, those of the music, in rhythm, dynamics, and harmony—with sudden violence. To grasp this total unleashing of all symbolic powers, man must already have attained that high level of freedom from the self which desires to express itself symbolically in those forces. Because of this, the dithyrambic servant of Dionysus will be understood only by someone like himself! With what astonishment must the Apollonian Greek have gazed at him! With an amazement which was all the greater as he sensed with horror that all this might not be really so foreign to him, that, in fact, his Apollonian consciousness was, like a veil, merely covering the Dionysian world in front of him.

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[1] . . . *head of Medusa*: In Greek mythology, Medusa was one of the three monstrous sisters called the Gorgons; her face could turn those who looked at it into stone.

[2] *Doric art*: An older form of Greek art and architecture which arose in the seventh century BC.

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[1] . . . *cithara*: a traditional stringed instrument.

3

In order to grasp this point, we must dismantle that artistic structure of *Apollonian culture*, as it were, stone by stone, until we see the foundations on which it is built. Here we now become aware for the first time of the marvellous *Olympian* divine forms, which stand on the pediments of this building and whose actions decorate its friezes all around in illuminating bas relief. If Apollo also stands among them as a single god next to others and without any claim to a preeminent position, we should not on that account let ourselves be deceived. The same drive which made itself sensuously perceptible in Apollo gave birth to that entire Olympian world in general, and, in this sense, we are entitled to value Apollo as the father of that world. What was the immense need out of which such an illuminating society of Olympian beings arose?

Anyone who steps up to these Olympians now with another religion in his heart and seeks from them ethical loftiness, even sanctity, non-physical spirituality, loving gazes filled with pity, will soon have to turn his back despondently in disappointment with them. Here there is no reminder of asceticism, spirituality, and duty: here speaks to us only a full, indeed a triumphant, existence, in which everything present is worshipped, no matter whether it is good or evil. And thus the onlooker may well stand in real consternation in front of this fantastic excess of life, to ask himself with what magical drink in their bodies these high-spirited men could have enjoyed life, so that wherever they look, Helen laughs back at them, that ideal image of their own existence, "hovering in sweet sensuousness." However, we must call out to this onlooker who has already turned his back: "Don't leave them. First listen to what Greek folk wisdom expresses about this very life which spreads itself out here before you with such inexplicable serenity. There is an old legend that king Midas for a long time hunted the wise *Silenus*, the companion of Dionysus, in the forests, without catching him. When Silenus finally fell into the king's hands, the king asked what was the best thing of all for men, the very finest. The daemon remained silent, motionless and inflexible, until, compelled by the king, he finally broke out into shrill laughter and said these words, "Suffering creature, born for a day, child of accident and toil, why are you forcing me to say what would give you the greatest pleasure not to hear? The very best thing for you is totally unreachable: not to have been born, not to *exist*, to be *nothing*. The second best thing for you, however, is this —to die soon."

What is the relationship between the Olympian world of the gods and this popular wisdom? It is like the relationship of the entrancing vision of the tortured martyr to his torments.

Now, as it were, the Olympic magic mountain reveals itself and shows us its roots. The Greek knew and felt the terror and horrors of existence: in order to be able to live at all, he must have placed in front of him the gleaming dream birth of the Olympians. That immense distrust of the titanic forces of nature, that *Moira [Fate]* enthroned mercilessly above everything which could be known, that vulture of the great friend of man, Prometheus, that fatal lot of wise Oedipus, that family curse on the House of Atreus, which compelled Orestes to kill his mother, in short, that entire philosophy of the woodland god, together with its mythical illustrations, from which the melancholy Etruscans died off—that was overcome time after time by the Greeks, or at least hidden and removed from view, through the artistic *middle world [Mittelwelt]* of the Olympians.[1] In order to be able to live, the Greeks must have created these gods out of the deepest necessity. We can readily imagine the sequential development of these gods: through that Apollonian drive for beauty there developed, by a slow transition out of the primordial titanic divine order of terror, the Olympian divine order of joy, just as roses break forth out of thorny bushes. How else could a people so emotionally sensitive, so spontaneously desiring, so singularly capable of *suffering*, have been able to endure their existence, unless the same qualities, with a loftier glory flowing round them, manifested themselves in their gods. The same impulse which summons art into life as the seductive replenishment for further living and the completion of existence also gave rise to the Olympian world, in which the Hellenic "Will" held before itself a transfiguring mirror. In this way, the gods justify the lives of men, because they themselves live it—that is the only satisfactory theodicy! Existence under the bright sunshine of such gods is experienced as worth striving for in itself, and the essential *pain* of the Homeric men refers to separation from that sunlight, above all to the fact that such separation is coming soon, so that people could now say of them, with a reversal of the wisdom of Silenus, "The very worst thing for them was to die soon; the second worst was to die at all." When the laments resound now, they tell once more of short-lived Achilles, of the changes in the race of men, transformed like leaves, of the destruction of the heroic age. It is not unworthy of the greatest hero to long to live on, even as a day labourer.[1] Thus, in the Apollonian stage, the "Will" spontaneously demands to keep on living, the Homeric man feels himself so at one with living, that even his lament becomes a song of praise.

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[1] *Prometheus*, a Titan, brought fire down from heaven to human beings. Zeus punished him by chaining him to a mountain and sending a vulture to feed on his liver during the day. *Oedipus*' fatal destiny had him unknowingly kill his father and marry his mother. When he learned the truth, he tore out his own eyes. The *House of Atreus* suffered from a savage curse which pitted Atreus, father of Agamemnon, against his brother Thyestes. Thyestes' son, Aegisthus, seduced Agamemnon's wife, Clytaemnestra, and together they murdered Agamemnon. Orestes, Agamemnon's

Here we must now point out that this harmony, looked on with such longing by more recent men, in fact, that unity of man with nature,

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only son, avenged his father by killing Aegisthus and his own mother, Clytaemnestra. The *Etruscans* were the dominant group in central Italy before the rise of the Roman Republic

[1] The shade of the dead Achilles makes this claim to Odysseus in Book XI of the *Odyssey*.

for which Schiller coined the artistic slogan “naive,” is in no way such a simple, inevitable, and, as it were, unavoidable condition, like a human paradise, which we *necessarily* run into at the door of every culture: such a belief is possible only in an age which seeks to believe that Rousseau’s Emile is also an artist and which imagines it has found in Homer an artist like Emile raised in the bosom of nature.[1] Wherever we encounter the “naive” in art, we have to recognize the highest effect of Apollonian culture, which always first has to overthrow the kingdom of the Titans and to kill monsters and, through powerfully deluding images and joyful illusions, has to emerge victorious over the horrific depth of what we observe in the world and the most sensitive capacity for suffering. But how seldom does the naive, that sense of being completely swallowed up in the beauty of appearance, succeed! For that reason, how inexpressibly noble is *Homer*, who, as a single individual, was related to that Apollonian popular culture as the individual dream artist is to the people’s capacity to dream and to nature in general. Homeric “naivete” is only to be understood as the complete victory of the Apollonian illusion. It is the sort of illusion which nature uses so frequently in order to attain her objectives. The true goal is concealed by a deluding image: we stretch our hands out toward this image, and nature reaches its goal through our deception. With the Greeks the “Will” wished to gaze upon itself through the transforming power of genius and the world of art; in order to glorify itself, its creatures had to sense that they themselves were worthy of being glorified; they had to see themselves again in a higher sphere, without this complete world of contemplation affecting them as an imperative or as a reproach. This is the sphere of beauty, in which they saw their mirror images, the Olympians. With this mirror of beauty, the Hellenic “Will” fought against the talent for suffering,

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[2] *Schiller*: Johann Christoph Friedrich von Schiller (1759-1805), German poet, dramatist, and philosopher. *Rousseau*: Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778), French philosopher, novelist, and political theorist. His book *Emile*, published in 1762, presents his extremely influential philosophy and program of education.

which is bound up with artistic talent, and the wisdom of suffering, and, as a memorial of its victory, Homer stands before us, the naive artist.

4

Using the analogy of a dream, we can learn something about this naive artist. If we recall how the dreamer, in the middle of his illusory dream world, calls out to himself, without destroying that world, "It is a dream. I want to continue dreaming it," and if we can infer from that, on the one hand, that he has a deep inner delight at the contemplation of the dream, and, on the other, that he must have completely forgotten the day and its terrible demands, in order to be capable of dreaming at all with this inner joy at contemplation, then we may interpret all these phenomena, with the guidance of Apollo, the interpreter of dreams, in something like the manner which follows. To be sure, with respect to both halves of life, the waking and the dreaming parts, the first one strikes us as disproportionately more privileged, more important, more valuable, more worth living, in fact, the only part which is lived; nevertheless, I would like to assert, something of a paradox to all appearances, for the sake of that secret foundation of our essence, whose manifestation we are, precisely the opposite evaluation of dreams. For the more I become aware of those all- powerful natural artistic impulses and the fervent yearning for illusion contained in them, the desire to be redeemed through appearances, the more I feel myself pushed to the metaphysical assumption that the true being and the primordial oneness, ever-suffering and entirely contradictory, constantly uses the delightful vision, the joyful illusion, to redeem itself; we are compelled to experience this illusion, totally caught up in it and constituted by it, as the truly non-existent, that is, as a continuous development in time, space, and causality, in other words, as empirical reality. But if we momentarily look away from our own "reality," if we grasp our empirical existence and the world in general as an idea of the primordial oneness created in every moment, then we must now consider our dream as the *illusion of an illusion*, as well as an even higher fulfilment of the original hunger for illusion. For this same reason, the innermost core of nature takes that indescribable joy in the naive artist and naive work of art, which is, in the same way, only "an illusion of an illusion." *Raphael*, himself one of those immortal "naive" men, has presented in an allegorical painting that reduction of an illusion into an illusion, the fundamental process of the naive artist and Apollonian culture as well.[1] In his *Transfiguration* the bottom half shows us, with the possessed boy, the despairing porters, the helplessly frightened disciples, the mirror image of the eternal primordial pain, the sole basis of the world. The "illusion" here is the reflection of the eternal contradiction, of the father of things. Now, out of this illusion there rises up, like an ambrosial fragrance, a new world of illusion, like a vision, invisible to those trapped in the first scene—something illuminating and hovering in the purest painless ecstasy, a shining vision to contemplate with eyes wide open. Here we have before our eyes, in the highest symbolism of art, that Apollonian world of beauty and its foundation, the frightening wisdom of Silenus, and we understand, through intuition, their reciprocal necessity. But Apollo confronts us once again as the divine manifestation of the *principii individuationis*, the only thing through which the eternally attained goal of the primordial oneness, its redemption through illusion, takes place: he shows us, with awe-inspiring gestures, how the entire world of torment is necessary, so that through it the individual is pushed to the creation of the redemptive vision and then, absorbed in contemplation of that vision, sits quietly in his rowboat, tossing around in the middle of the ocean.

This deification of individuation, if it is thought of in general as commanding and proscriptive, understands only one law, the individual, that is, observing the limits of individualization, *moderation* in the Greek sense. Apollo, as an ethical divinity, demands moderation from his followers and, so that they can observe self-control, a knowledge of the self. And so alongside the aesthetic necessity of beauty run the demands “Know thyself” and “Nothing too much!”; whereas, arrogance and excess are considered the essentially hostile daemons belonging to the non-Apollonian sphere, and therefore characteristics of the pre-Apollonian period, the age of the Titans, and of the world beyond the Apollonian, that is, the barbarian world.[1] On account of his Titanic love for mankind, Prometheus had to be ripped apart by the vulture. For the sake of his excessive wisdom, which solved the riddle of the sphinx, Oedipus had to be overthrown in a bewildering whirlpool of evil. That is how the Delphic god interpreted the Greek past.[2]

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[1] *Raphael*: Raphael Sanzio (1483-1520) a major artist of the Renaissance.

To the Apollonian Greek the effect aroused by the *Dionysian* also seemed “Titanic” and “barbaric.” But he could not, with that response, conceal that he himself was, nonetheless, at the same time also internally related to those deposed Titans and heroes. Indeed, he must have felt even more: his entire existence, with all its beauty and moderation, rested on a hidden underground of suffering and knowledge, which was exposed for him again through that very Dionysian. And look! Apollo could not live without Dionysus! The “Titanic” and the “barbaric” were, in the end, every bit as necessary as the Apollonian! And now let us imagine how in this world, constructed on illusion and moderation and restrained by art, the ecstatic sound of the Dionysian celebration rang out all around with a constantly more enticing magic, how in these celebrations the entire *excess* of nature made itself known in joy, suffering, and knowledge, even in the most piercing scream. Let us imagine what the psalm-chanting Apollonian artist, with his ghostly harp music could have meant in comparison to this daemonic popular singing! The muses of the art of "illusion" withered away in the face of an art which spoke truth in its intoxicated state: the wisdom of Silenus cried out "Woe! Woe!" against the serene Olympians. The individual, with all his limits and moderation, was destroyed in the self-oblivion of the Dionysian condition and forgot the Apollonian principles. *Excess* revealed itself as the truth. The contradiction, the ecstasy born from pain, spoke of itself right out of the heart of nature. And so the Apollonian was cancelled and destroyed everywhere the Dionysian penetrated. But it is just as certain that in those places where the first onslaught was halted, the high reputation and the majesty of the Delphic god manifested itself more firmly and threateningly than ever. For I can explain the *Doric* state and Doric art only as a constant Apollonian war camp: only through an uninterrupted opposition to the Titanic-barbaric essence of the Dionysian could such a defiantly aloof art, protected on all sides with fortifications, such a harsh upbringing as a preparation for war, and such a cruel and ruthless basis for government endure for a long time.[1]

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[1] *Titans*: In Greek mythology these were the divine figures before the Olympians. Zeus overthrew and imprisoned them. The *barbarian world*, for the Greeks, included those people who did not speak Greek, whose language sounded like gibberish to them (“*bar . . . bar . . . bar*”).

[2] The *sphinx* was a monster who terrorized the city of Thebes. Oedipus solved the riddle posed by the Sphinx and was made king of Thebes. The *Delphic god* is Apollo, who had his major shrine at Delphi.

Up to this point I have set out at some length what I observed at the opening of this essay: how the Dionysian and the Apollonian ruled the Hellenic world in a constantly new sequence of births, one after the other, mutually intensifying each other; how, out of the "first" age, with its battles against the Titans and its austere popular philosophy, the Homeric world developed under the rule of the Apollonian drive for beauty; how this "naive" magnificence was swallowed up once more by the breaking out of the Dionysian torrent; and how, in opposition to this new power, the Apollonian erected the rigid majesty of Doric art and the Doric world view. If in this way the earlier history of the Greeks, in the struggle of those two hostile principles, falls into four major artistic periods, we are now impelled to ask more about the final stage of this development and striving, in case we should consider, for example, the last attained period, the one of Doric art, the summit and intention of those artistic impulses. Here, the lofty and highly praised artistic achievement of *Attic tragedy* and of the dramatic dithyramb presents itself before our eyes, as the common goal of both impulses, whose secret marriage partnership, after a long antecedent struggle, glorified itself with such a child—at once Antigone and Cassandra.[1]

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[1] Dorian art was associated with Sparta, a city state preoccupied with military training, warfare, and an inflexible political system.

5

We are now approaching the essential goal of our undertaking, which aims at a knowledge of the Dionysian-Apollonian genius and its work of art, at least at an intuitive understanding of that mysterious unity. Here now, to begin with, we raise the question of where that new seed first manifests itself in the Hellenic world, the seed which later develops into tragedy and the dramatic dithyramb. On this question, classical antiquity itself gives us illustrative evidence when it places *Homer* and *Archilochus* next to each other in paintings, cameos, and so on, as the originators and torch-bearers of Greek poetry, in full confidence that only these two should be equally considered wholly original natures from whom a firestorm flowed out over the entire later world of the Greeks.[2] Homer, the ancient, self- absorbed dreamer, the archetype of the naive Apollonian artist, now stares astonished at the passionate head of wild Archilochus, the fighting servant of the Muses, battered by existence. In its interpretative efforts, our more recent aesthetics has known only how to indicate that here the first "subjective" artist stands in contrast to the "objective" artist. This interpretation is of little use to us, since we recognize the subjective artist only as a bad artist and demand in every style of art and every high artistic achievement, first and foremost, a victory over the subjective, redemption from the "I," and the silence of every individual will and desire; indeed, we are incapable of believing the slightest artistic creation true, unless it has objectivity and a purely disinterested contemplation. Hence, our aesthetic must first solve that problem of how it is possible for the "lyric poet" to be an artist, for he, according to the experience of all ages, always says "I" and sings out in front of us the entire chromatic sequence of the sounds of his passions and desires. This very Archilochus startles us, alongside Homer, through the cry of his hate and scorn, through the drunken eruptions of his desire. By doing this, is not Archilochus, the first artist called subjective, essentially a non-artist? But then where does that veneration come from, which the Delphic oracle itself, the centre of "objective" art, showed to him, the poet, in very remarkable utterances.

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[2] *Antigone*, a daughter of Oedipus, who killed herself rather than obey the state, is the famous tragic heroine of Sophocles' tragedy *Antigone*. *Cassandra*, daughter of Priam, king of Troy, was a prophetess. She was given to Agamemnon as a war prize and murdered along with him by Aegisthus and Clytaemnestra when the Greek armies returned home after the Trojan War.

[1] *Homer*: the name given by the Greeks to the author of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* (composed in the eighth century BC); *Archilochus*: (680 BC to c. 645 BC), Greek poet from the island of Paros.

Schiller has illuminated his own writing process for us with a psychological observation which was inexplicable to him but which nevertheless did not appear questionable, for he confesses that when he was in a state of preparation, before he actually started writing, he did not have something like a series of pictures, with a structured causality of ideas, in front of him and inside him, but rather a *musical mood* ("With me, feeling at first lacks a defined and clear object; the latter develops for the first time later on. A certain musical emotional state comes first, and from this, with me, the poetic idea then follows." If we now add the most important phenomenon of the entire ancient lyric, the union, universally acknowledged as natural, between *the lyricist* and *the musician*, in fact, their common identity—in comparison with which our recent lyrics look like the image of a god without a head—then we can, on the basis of the aesthetic metaphysics we established earlier, now account for the lyric poet in the following manner. He has, first of all, as a Dionysian artist, become entirely unified with the primordial oneness, with its pain and contradiction, and produces the reflection of this primordial oneness as music, if music can with justice be called a reworking of the world and its second casting. But now this music becomes perceptible to him once again, as in a *metaphorical dream image*, under the influence of Apollonian dreaming. That reflection, which lacks imagery and ideas, of the original pain in the music, together with its redemption in illusion, gives rise now to a second reflection as a particular metaphor or illustration. The artist has already surrendered his subjectivity in the Dionysian process; the image which now reveals to him his unity with the heart of the world is a dream scene, which symbolizes that original contradiction and pain, together with the primordial joy in illusion. The "I" of the lyric poet thus echoes out of the abyss of being. What recent aestheticians mean by his "subjectivity" is mere fantasy. When Archilochus, the first Greek lyric poet, announces his raging love and, simultaneously, his contempt for the daughters of Lycambes, it is not his own passion which dances in front of us in an orgiastic frenzy: we see Dionysus and the maenads; we see the intoxicated reveller Archilochus sunk down in sleep—as Euripides describes it for us in the *Bacchae*, asleep in a high Alpine meadow in the midday sun—and now Apollo steps up to him and touches him with his laurel. The Dionysian musical enchantment of the sleeper now, as it were, flashes around him fiery images, lyrical poems, which are called, in their highest form, tragedies and dramatic dithyrambs.[1]

The plastic artist, as well as his relation, the epic poet, is absorbed in the pure contemplation of images. The Dionysian musician totally lacks every image and is in himself only and entirely the original pain and original reverberation of that image. The lyrical genius feels a world of images and metaphors grow up out of the mysterious state of unity and of renunciation of the self. These have a colour, causality, and speed entirely different from that world of the plastic artist and of the writer of epic. While the last of these (the epic poet) lives in these pictures and only in them with joyful contentment and does not get tired of contemplating them with love, right down to the smallest details, and while even the image of the angry Achilles is for him only a picture whose expression of anger he enjoys with that dream joy in illusions—so that he, by this mirror of appearances, is protected against the development of that sense of unity and of being fused together with the forms he has created—the images of the lyric poet are, by contrast nothing but *he himself* and, as it were, only different objectifications of himself. He can say "I" because he is the moving central point of that world; only this "I" is not the same as the "I" of the awake, empirically real man, but the single "I" of true and eternal being in general, the "I" resting on the foundation of things, through the portrayal of which the lyrical genius looks right into that very basis of things. Now, let us imagine next how he also looks upon *himself* among these likenesses, as a non-genius, that is, as his own "Subject," the entire unruly crowd of subjective passions and striving of his will aiming at something particular, which seems real to him. If it now appears as if the lyrical genius and the non-genius bound up with him were one and the same and as if the first of these spoke that little word "I" about himself, then this illusion could now no longer deceive us, not at least in the way it deceived those who have defined the lyricist as a subjective poet. To tell the truth, Archilochus, the man of passionately burning love and hate, is only a vision of the genius who is by this time no longer Archilochus but a world genius and who expresses his primordial pain symbolically in Archilochus as a metaphor for man; whereas, that subjectively willing and desiring man Archilochus can generally never ever be a poet. It is not at all essential that the lyric poet see directly in front of him only the phenomenon of the man Archilochus as a reflection of eternal being, and tragedy shows how far the visionary world of the lyric poet can distance itself from that phenomenon clearly standing near at hand.

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[1] . . .*maenads*: These are the ecstatic female worshippers of Dionysus. *Euripides*: (480-406 BC), famous Greek tragedian. His last play, the *Bacchae*, was first produced after his death.

Schopenhauer, who did not hide from the difficulty which the lyric poet creates for the philosophical observation of art, believed that he had discovered a solution, something which I cannot go along with, when in his profound metaphysics of music he alone found a way of setting that difficulty decisively to one side, as I believe I have done here, in his spirit and with due honour to him. For the sake of comparison, here is how he describes the essential nature of song:

> The consciousness of the singer is filled with the subject of willing, that is, his own willing, often as an unleashed satisfied willing (joy), but also, and more often, as a restricted willing (sorrow), always as emotion, passion, a turbulent state of feeling. However, alongside this condition and simultaneous with it, the singer, through a glimpse at the surrounding nature, becomes aware of himself as a subject of pure, will-less knowledge, whose imperturbable, blessed tranquilly now enters in contrast to the pressure of his always hindered, always still limited willing: the sensation of this contrast, this game back and forth, is basically what expresses itself in the totality of the song and what, in general, creates the lyrical state. In this condition, pure understanding, as it were, comes to us, to save us from willing and the pressure of willing; we follow along, but only moment by moment: the will, the memory of our personal goals, constantly removes this calm contemplation from us, but over and over again the next beautiful setting, in which pure will-less knowledge presents itself to us once again, entices us away from willing. Hence, in the song and the lyrical mood, willing (the personal interest in purposes) and pure contemplation of the setting which reveals itself are miraculously mixed up together: we seek and imagine relationships between them both; the subjective mood, the emotional state of the will, communicates with the surroundings we contemplate, and the latter, in turn, give their colour to our mood, in a reflex action. The true song is the expression of this entire emotional condition, mixed and divided in this way. (*World as Will and Idea*, I.3.51)

Who can fail to recognize in this description that here the lyric has been characterized as an incompletely realized art, a leap, as it were, which seldom attains its goal, indeed, as a semi-art, whose *essence* is to consist of the fact that the will and pure contemplation, that is, the unaesthetic and the aesthetic conditions, must be miraculously mixed up together? In contrast to this, we maintain that the entire opposition of the subjective and the objective, which even Schopenhauer still uses as a measurement of value to classify art, has generally no place in aesthetics, since the subject, the willing individual demanding his own egotistical purposes, can only be thought of as an enemy of art, not as its origin. But insofar as the subject is an artist, he is already released from his individual willing and has become, so to speak, a medium, through which a subject of true being celebrates its redemption in illusion. For we need to be clear on this point, above everything else, to our humiliation *and* ennoblement: the entire comedy of art does not present itself for us in order to make us, for example, better or to educate us, even less because we are the actual creators of that art world. We are, however, entitled to assume this about ourselves: for the true creator of that world we are already pictures and artistic projections and in the meaning of works of art we have our highest dignity—for only as an *aesthetic phenomena* are existence and the world eternally *justified*—while, of course, our consciousness of this significance of ours is scarcely any different from the consciousness which soldiers painted on canvas have of the battle portrayed there. Hence our entire knowledge of art is basically completely illusory, because, as knowing people, we are not one with and identical to that being who, as the single creator and spectator of that comedy of art, prepares for itself an eternal enjoyment. Only to the extent that the genius in the act of artistic creation is fused with that primordial artist of the world does he know anything about the eternal nature of art, for in that state he is, in a miraculous way, like the weird picture of fairy tales, which can turn its eyes and contemplate itself. Now he is simultaneously subject and object, simultaneously poet, actor, and spectator.

6

With respect to Archilochus, learned scholarship has revealed that he introduced the *folk song* into literature and that, because of this achievement, he earned that individual place next to Homer in the universal estimation of the Greeks. But what is the folk song in comparison to the completely Apollonian epic poem? What else but the *perpetuum vestigum [the eternal mark]* of a union between the Apollonian and the Dionysian; its tremendous expansion, extending to all peoples and constantly increasing with new births, testifies to us how strong that artistic double drive of nature is, which leaves its trace behind in the folk song, just as, in an analogous manner, the orgiastic movements of a people leave their mark in its music. In fact, there must also have been historical evidence to show how every period richly productive of folk songs at the same time has been stirred in the most powerful manner by Dionysian currents, something which we have to recognize always as the foundation and precondition of folk song.

But to begin with, we must view the folk song as the musical mirror of the world, as the primordial melody, which now seeks for a parallel dream image of itself and expresses this in poetry. *Hence the melody is the primary and universal fact*, for which reason it can in itself undergo many objectifications, in several texts. It is also far more important and more essential in the naive evaluations of the people. Melody gives birth to poetry from itself, over and over again. That is what the *strophic form of the folk song* indicates to us. I always observed this phenomenon with astonishment, until I finally came up with this explanation. Whoever looks at a collection of folk songs, for example, *Des Knaben Wunderhorn [The Boy's Magic Horn]* with this theory in mind will find countless examples of how the continually fecund melody emits fiery showers of images around itself. These images, with their bright colours, their sudden alteration, indeed, their wild momentum, reveal a power completely foreign to the epic illusion and its calm forward progress. From the point of view of epic this uneven and irregular world of images in the lyric is easy to condemn—something no doubt the solemn epic rhapsodists of the Apollonian celebrations did in the age of Terpander.[1]

Thus, in the poetry of the folk song we see language most strongly pressured *to imitate music*. Hence, with Archilochus a new world of poetry begins, something which conflicts in the most profound and fundamental way with the Homeric world. Here we have demonstrated the one possible relationship between poetry and music, word, and tone: the word, the image, the idea look for an analogous expression in music and now experience the inherent power of music. In this sense we can distinguish two main streams in the history of the language of the Greek people, corresponding to language which imitates appearance and images or language which imitates the world of music. Now, let's think for a moment more deeply about the linguistic difference in colour, syntactic structure, and vocabulary between Homer and Pindar in order to grasp the significance of this contrast.[2] Indeed, in this way it will become crystal clear to us that between Homer and Pindar the *orgiastic flute melodies of Olympus* must have rung out, which even in the time of Aristotle, in the midst of a music infinitely more sophisticated, drove people into raptures of drunken enthusiasm and with their primordial effect certainly stimulated all the poetical forms of expression of contemporaries to imitate them. I recall here a well-known phenomenon of our own times, something which strikes our aestheticians as merely objectionable. Again and again we experience how a Beethoven symphony makes it necessary for the individual listener to talk in images, even if it is also true that the collection of different worlds of imagery created by a musical piece really looks fantastically confused, indeed, contradictory. In the art of those aestheticians the proper thing to do is to exercise their poor wits on such collections and yet to overlook the phenomenon which is really worth explaining. In fact, even when the tone poet has spoken in images about a composition, for example, when he describes a symphony as a pastoral and one movement as “A Scene by the Brook,” another as “A Frolicking Gathering of Peasants,” these expressions are similarly only metaphors, images born out of the music—and not some objective condition imitated by the music—ideas which cannot teach us anything at all about the *Dionysian* content of the music and which, in fact, have no exclusive value alongside other pictures. Now, we have only to transfer this process of unloading music into pictures to a youthful, linguistically creative crowd of people in order to sense how the strophic folk song arises and how the entire linguistic capability is stimulated by the new principle of imitating music.

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[1] *Terpander*: Greek poet in the first half of seventh century BC. *The Boy's Magic Horn* is a collection of folk songs.

[1] *Pindar*: (c. 522 BC to 443 BC), Greek lyric poet.

If we are thus entitled to consider the lyrical poem as the mimetic efflorescence of music in pictures and ideas, then we can now ask the following question: “What does music *look* like in the mirror of imagery and ideas?” *It appears as the will*, taking that word in Schopenhauer’s sense, that is, as the opposite to the aesthetic, purely contemplative, will-less state. Here we must now differentiate as sharply as possible the idea of being from the idea of appearance: it is impossible for music, given its nature, to be the will, because if that were the case we would have to ban music entirely from the realm of art—for the will consists of what is inherently unaesthetic—but music appears as the will. For in order to express that appearance in images, the lyric poet needs all the excitements of passion, from the whispers of affection right up to the ravings of lunacy. Under the impulse to speak of music in Apollonian metaphors, he understands all nature and himself in nature only as eternal willing, desiring, yearning. However, insofar as he interprets music in images, he himself is resting in the still tranquillity of the sea of Apollonian observation, no matter how much everything which he contemplates through that medium of music is moving around him, pushing and driving. Indeed, if he looks at himself through that same medium, his own image reveals itself to him in a state of emotional dissatisfaction: his own willing, yearning, groaning, cheering are for him a metaphor with which he interprets the music for himself. This is the phenomenon of the lyric poet: as an Apollonian genius, he interprets the music through the image of the will, while he himself, fully released from the greed of the will, is a pure, untroubled eye of the sun.

This entire discussion firmly maintains that the lyric is just as dependent on the spirit of music as is music itself. In its fully absolute power, music does not *need* image and idea, but only *tolerates* them as something additional to itself. The poetry of the lyricist can express nothing which was not already latent in the most immense universality and validity of the music, which forces him to speak in images. The world symbolism of music for this very reason cannot in any way be exhausted by or reduced to language, because music addresses itself symbolically to the primordial contradiction and pain in the heart of the original oneness, and thus presents in symbolic form a sphere which is above all appearances and prior to them. In comparison with music, each appearance is far more a mere metaphor: hence, *language*, as voice and symbol of appearances, can never ever convert the deepest core of music to something external, but always remains, as long as it involves itself with the imitation of music, only in superficial contact with the music. The full eloquence of lyric poetry cannot bring us one step closer to the deepest meaning of music.

7

We must now seek assistance from all the artistic principles laid out above, in order to find our way correctly through the labyrinth, a descriptive term we have to use to designate *the origin of Greek tragedy*. I do not think I am saying anything illogical when I claim that the problem of this origin still has not once been seriously formulated up to now, let alone solved, no matter how frequently the scattered scraps of ancient tradition have already been combined with one another and then torn apart once more. This tradition tells us very emphatically *that tragedy developed out of the tragic chorus* and originally consisted only of a chorus and nothing else. This fact requires us to look into the heart of this tragic chorus as the essential original drama, without allowing ourselves to be satisfied at all with the common ways of talking about art—that the chorus is the ideal spectator or had the job of standing in for the people over against the royal area of the scene. That last mentioned point, a conceptual explanation which sounds so lofty for many politicians—as though the invariable moral law was presented by the democratic Athenians in the people's chorus, which was always proved right in matters dealing with the kings' passionate acts of violence and excess—may well have been suggested by a word from Aristotle. But such an idea has no influence on the original formation of tragedy, since all the opposition between people and ruler and every political-social issue in general is excluded from those purely religious origins. But looking back on the classical form of the chorus known to us in Aeschylus and Sophocles we might also consider it blasphemous to talk here of a premonition of a "constitutional popular representation." Others have not been deterred from this blasphemous assertion. The ancient political organizations of the state had no knowledge *in praxi [in practice]* of a constitutional popular representation, and, in addition, they never once had a hopeful "premonition" of such things in their tragedies.

Much more famous than this political explanation of the chorus is A. W. Schlegel's idea.[1] He recommended that we consider the chorus to some extent as the quintessence and embodiment of the crowd of onlookers, as the "ideal spectator." This view, combined with the historical tradition that originally the tragedy consisted entirely of the chorus, reveals itself for what it is, a crude and unscholarly, although dazzling, claim. But its glitter survives only in the compact form of the expression, from the truly German prejudice for everything which is called "ideal," and from our momentary astonishment. For we are astonished, as soon as we compare the theatre public we know well with that chorus and ask ourselves whether it would be at all possible on the basis of this public ever to derive some idealization analogous to the tragic chorus. We tacitly deny this and are now surprised by the audacity of Schlegel's claim, as well as by the totally different nature of the Greek general public. For we had always thought that the proper spectator, whoever he might be, must always remain conscious that he has a work of art in front of him, not an empirical reality; whereas, the tragic chorus of the Greeks is required to recognize the shapes on the stage as living, existing people. The chorus of Oceanids really believes that they see the Titan Prometheus in front of them and consider themselves every bit as real as the god of the scene. And was that supposed to be the highest and purest type of spectator, a person who, like the Oceanids, considers Prometheus vitally alive and real? Would it be a mark of the ideal spectator to run up onto the stage and free the god from his torment? We had believed in an aesthetic public and considered the individual spectator all the more capable, the more he was in a position to take the work of art as art, that is, aesthetically, and now this saying of Schlegel's indicates to us that the completely ideal spectator lets the scenic world work on him, not aesthetically at all, but vitally and empirically. "O these Greeks!" we sigh, "they are knocking over our aesthetics!" But once we get familiar with the idea, we repeat Schlegel's saying every time we talk about the chorus.

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[1] *A. W. Schlegel*: August Wilhelm von Schlegel: German poet and critic, a major figure in German Romanticism. His On *Dramatic Art and Literature* was published in 1808.

But that emphatic tradition speaks here against Schlegel: the chorus in itself, without the stage, that is, the primitive form of tragedy, and that chorus of ideal spectators are not compatible. What sort of artistic style would there be which one might derive from the idea of the spectator, for which one might consider the "spectator in himself" the essential form? The spectator without a play is a contradictory idea. We suspect that the birth of tragedy cannot be explained either from the high estimation of the moral intelligence of the masses or from the idea of the spectator without a play, and we consider this problem too profound even to be touched upon by such superficial styles of commentary.

Schiller has already provided an infinitely more valuable insight into the meaning of the chorus in the famous preface to the *Bride from Messina*, which sees the chorus as a living wall which tragedy draws around itself in order to separate itself cleanly from the real world and to protect its ideal space and its poetical freedom for itself.[1]

With this as his main weapon Schiller fought against the common idea of naturalism, against the common demand for illusion in dramatic poetry. While in the theatre the day itself might be only artistic and stage architecture only symbolic, and the metrical language might have an ideal quality, on the whole, a misconception still ruled: it was not enough, Schiller claimed, that people merely tolerated as poetic freedom what, by contrast, was the essence of all poetry. The introduction of the chorus was the decisive step with which war was declared openly and honourably against every naturalism in art. Such a way of looking at things is the one, it strikes me, for which our age, which considers itself so superior, uses the dismissive catch phrase "pseudo-idealism." But I rather suspect that with our present worship of naturalism and realism we are situated at the opposite pole from all idealism, namely, in the region of a wax works collection. In that, too, there is an art, as in certain popular romance novels of the present time. Only let no one pester us with the claim that the "pseudo-idealism" of Schiller and Goethe has been overcome with this art.

Of course, it is an "ideal" stage on which, according to Schiller's correct insight, the Greek satyr chorus, the chorus of the primitive tragedy, customarily strolled, a stage lifted high over the real strolling stage of mortal men. For this chorus the Greeks constructed a suspended scaffolding of an imaginary *state of nature* and on it placed imaginary *natural beings*. Tragedy grew up out of this foundation and, for that very reason, has, from its inception, been spared the embarrassing business of counterfeiting reality. That is not to say, however, that it is a world arbitrarily fantasized somewhere between heaven and earth. It is much rather a world possessing the same reality and credibility as the world of Olympus, together with its inhabitants, had for the devout Greek. The satyr, as the Dionysian chorus member, lives in a reality granted by religion and sanctioned by myth and ritual. The fact that tragedy begins with him, that out of him the Dionysian wisdom of tragedy speaks, is a phenomenon as foreign to us here as the development of tragedy out of the chorus generally. Perhaps we can reach a starting point for this discussion when I offer the claim that the satyr himself, the imaginary natural being, is related to the cultural person in the same way that Dionysian music is related to civilization. On this last point Richard Wagner states that civilization is neutralized by music in the same way light from a lamp is neutralized by daylight. In just such a manner, I believe, the cultured Greek felt himself neutralized by the sight of the chorus of satyrs, and the next effect of Dionysian tragedy is that the state and society, in general the gap between man and man, give way to an invincible feeling of unity, which leads back to the heart of nature. The metaphysical consolation with which, as I am immediately indicating here, every true tragedy leaves us, that, in spite of all the transformations in phenomena, at the bottom of everything life is indestructibly powerful and delightful, this consolation appears in lively clarity as the chorus of satyrs, as the chorus of natural beings, who live, so to speak, indestructibly behind all civilization, and who, in spite of all the changes in generations and a people's history, always remain the same.

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[1] Schiller's preface, *Concerning the Use of the Chorus in Tragedy*, was published in 1803.

With this chorus, the profound Greek, uniquely capable of the most delicate and the most severe suffering, consoled himself, the man who looked around with a daring gaze in the middle of the terrifying destructive instincts of so-called world history and equally into the cruelty of nature and who is in danger of longing for a Buddhist denial of the will. Art saves him, and through art life saves him.

The ecstasy of the Dionysian state, with its obliteration of the customary manacles and boundaries of existence, contains, of course, for as long as it lasts, a *lethargic* element, in which everything personally experienced in the past is immersed. Because of this gulf of oblivion, the world of everyday reality and the world of Dionysian reality separate from each other. But as soon as that daily reality comes back again into consciousness, one feels it as something disgusting. The fruit of that state is an ascetic condition, in which one denies the power of the will. In this sense the Dionysian man has similarities to Hamlet: both have had a real glimpse into the essence of things. They have *understood*, and it disgusts them to act, for their action can change nothing in the eternal nature of things. They perceive as ridiculous or humiliating the fact that they are expected

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Friedrich Nietzsche

Birth of Tragedy

Translated by Ian Johnston

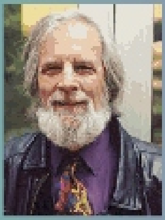
Friedrich Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy Out of the Spirit of Music,* published in 1872, is not only the first major work of the most provocative voice in modern philosophy but also the most important study of Greek tragedy since Aristotle's *Poetics.* In this remarkable essay Nietzsche announces his aggressive challenge to many of the most cherished philosophical assumptions of his own time, re-evaluates the development of classical Greek culture, and establishes aesthetic concepts whish have had a decisive influence on modern discussions of art.

The Greeks, Nietzsche argues, were in the period of their greatest achievements thoroughly pessimistic but found in artistic creativity the only possible justification for existence. As a result of this development they produced Greek tragedy, the noblest affirmation of human life. The later development of Greek culture, particularly the influence of Socrates and Euripides, was not, as so many modern classicists have maintained, the high point of Greek achievement, but a significant decline, the onset of a sickness from which the world is still suffering (a significant symption of which is our preoccupation with morality, especially Christian morality and our faith in scientific scholarship).

Central to Nietzsche's discussion is his analysis of the development of Greek tragedy as the result of the inherent tension between and ultimate reconciliation of two conflicting artistic impulses, the Apollonian and the Dionysian (corresponding to the two sources of artistic inspiration, dreams and intoxication, the former giving rise to the plastic arts and the latter to ecstatic visions and music). Only with the appropriate synthesis of these two drives could the highest form of life be attained.

The Birth of Tragedy received a cool reception in Nietzsche's day, especially from the academic community, but it has since become a central document in modern aesthetics and has led to a significant reappraisal of the nature of Classical Greek culture. The book also serves as an eloquent introduction to the disturbing challenges Nietzsche issued to modern thinking.

Ian Johnston's new translation captures the energy, eloquence, and power of Nietzsche's unique philosophical style in this extraordinary and influential work.



Ian Johnston was born in Valaparaiso, Chile, and educated in Canada and England. He has a BSc from McGill in Geology and Chemistry, a BA from Bristol in English and Greek, and an MA from Toronto in English. For many years he taught as a college and university-college instructor in British Columbia teaching English, Classics and Liberal Studies. He is the author of *The Ironies of War: An Introduction to Homer's Iliad.* Since 2006, he has had 18 titles published, including his translation of Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey,* which were issued in both book and audio form. He is now retired and living in Nanaimo, British Columbia.

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