The Birth of Tragedy

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

1844–1900

The Birth of Tragedy

Die Geburt der Tragödie

Translated from the German with AI (Claude) and edited



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The Birth of Tragedy · Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900)

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INTRODUCTION

The Birth of Tragedy (1872) was Nietzsche's first book, written while he was a young professor of classics at Basel and dedicated to Richard Wagner. It asks how the Greeks, of all peoples, came to create tragedy, and what that tells us about art and suffering.

Its answer rests on two forces named after two gods. Apollo stands for dream, form and the beautiful illusion of the individual; Dionysus for intoxication, music and the dissolving of the self. Tragedy was born when the two joined, out of the singing and dancing chorus, and it died when Euripides and Socrates put reason and explanation in its place. Only as an aesthetic phenomenon, Nietzsche writes, are existence and the world justified. The book ends by hoping for a rebirth of tragedy in German music, meaning Wagner's.

Classical scholars attacked it at once. In 1886 Nietzsche reissued it with a new preface, the "Attempt at a Self-Criticism," printed here first, in which he mocks its style and its romantic hopes but defends its central question.

Attempt at a Self-Criticism

Versuch einer Selbstkritik
Fourteen years on, Nietzsche judges his first book: "to see science under the optics of the artist, but art under the optics of life."

VERSUCH EINER SELBSTKRITIK

ASC.1 Whatever may lie at the bottom of this questionable book, it must have been a question of the first rank and the strongest allure, and a deeply personal question at that. The proof is the time in which it arose, *in spite of* which it arose: the turbulent time of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–71. While the thunder of the battle of Wörth rolled away over Europe, the brooder and lover of riddles who was granted the paternity of this book sat somewhere in a corner of the Alps. He was deep in brooding and deep in riddles, and consequently very troubled and untroubled at once, and he wrote down his thoughts about the *Greeks*—the core of the odd and hard-to-approach book to which this late preface (or postscript) is to be devoted.[1] A few weeks later he found himself beneath the walls of Metz, still not free of the question marks he had set against the alleged "cheerfulness" of the Greeks and of Greek art. At last, in that month of deepest suspense when peace was being negotiated at Versailles, he made peace with himself too. Slowly recovering from an illness brought home from the field, he settled once and for all in his own mind the "Birth of Tragedy out of the Spirit of *Music*."—Out

1 The battle of Wörth in Alsace (6 August 1870) was an early German victory in the Franco-Prussian War.

of music? Music and tragedy? The Greeks and the music of tragedy? The Greeks and the art of pessimism? The best-formed, most beautiful, most envied kind of human being there has been so far, the kind that most seduces us to live—the Greeks—what? they of all people *needed* tragedy? More than that—art? What for—Greek art?...[2]

You can guess where this placed the great question mark over the value of existence. Is pessimism *necessarily* the sign of decline, of decay, of failure, of exhausted and weakened instincts—as it was among the Indians, and as it is, to all appearances, among us "modern" people and Europeans? Is there a pessimism of *strength*? An intellectual predilection for what is hard, horrifying, evil and problematic in existence, arising from well-being, from overflowing health, from the *fullness* of existence? Is there perhaps a suffering from superabundance itself? A tempting, testing courage of the sharpest eye, which *craves* the terrible as its enemy, the worthy enemy on which it can test its strength? From which it wants to learn what "fear" is?[3] What is the meaning of *tragic* myth, precisely among the Greeks of the best, strongest, bravest age? And of the tremendous phenomenon of the Dionysian? And of tragedy, born from it?—And again: that of which tragedy died, the Socratism of morality, the dialectic, the contentment and cheerfulness of theoretical man—what? might not this very Socratism be a sign of decline, of fatigue, of sickness, of instincts dissolving in anarchy? And the "Greek cheerfulness" of later Greek culture merely a sunset glow? The Epicurean will *against* pessimism merely a sufferer's precaution? And science itself, our science—yes, what is the meaning of all science, viewed as a symptom of life? What for, worse still, *where from*—all science? What? Is the scientific spirit perhaps only a fear of pessimism and an escape from it? A subtle self-defense against—the *truth*? And, morally speaking, some-

2 "Cheerfulness" renders *Heiterkeit*, the Greek "serenity" that Winckelmann and his successors saw as the essence of classical antiquity.

3 Allusion to the Grimms' fairy tale of the youth who went out to learn what fear was.

thing like cowardice and falseness? Immorally speaking, a piece of cunning? O Socrates, Socrates, was that perhaps *your* secret? O mysterious ironist, was this perhaps your—irony?——

ASC.2 What I got hold of then was something terrible and dangerous, a problem with horns, not necessarily a bull, but in any case a *new* problem. Today I would say that it was the *problem of science* itself—science grasped for the first time as problematic, as questionable. But the book in which my youthful courage and suspicion then vented themselves—what an *impossible* book had to grow out of a task so unsuited to youth! It was built entirely out of premature, overgreen personal experiences, all of which lay close to the threshold of what can be communicated, and it was set on the ground of *art*—for the problem of science cannot be recognized on the ground of science. It was a book perhaps for artists with a side-talent for analysis and retrospection (that is, for an exceptional kind of artist, whom one has to search for and would not even care to search for...). It was full of psychological innovations and artists' secrets, with an artists' metaphysics in the background; a youthful work full of youthful courage and youthful melancholy, independent, defiantly self-reliant even where it seems to bow to an authority and to its own reverence. In short, it was a first work in every bad sense of the word too, despite its aged problem, afflicted with every fault of youth, above all with youth's "far too long," its "Sturm und Drang": on the other hand, in view of the success it had (especially with the great artist to whom it addressed itself as if in dialogue, Richard Wagner), a *proven* book—I mean one that at any rate satisfied "the best of its time."[4] For that reason alone it ought to be treated with some consideration and discretion. Nevertheless I do not want to suppress entirely how disagreeable it now seems to me, how strange it now looks to me after sixteen years. It stands before an older eye, a hundred times more fastidious, but by no means grown colder—an eye that has not become more of a stranger to the very task which that audacious book first dared

4 Echoes the prologue to Schiller's *Wallenstein*: whoever has satisfied the best of his time has lived for all times.

to approach: *to look at science through the lens of the artist, and at art through the lens of life*...

ASC.3 To say it again: today it is an impossible book to me. I call it badly written, ponderous, embarrassing, image-mad and image-muddled, sentimental, sugared here and there to the point of the feminine, uneven in tempo, without the will to logical cleanliness, very convinced and therefore too proud to bother with proof, mistrustful even of the *propriety* of proving. It is a book for initiates, "music" for those baptized in music, who are bound together from the very beginning of things by shared and rare experiences of art, a mark of recognition for blood relations *in artibus* [in the arts]. It is an arrogant and rhapsodic book, which from the outset shuts itself off from the *profanum vulgus* [profane crowd] of the "educated" even more than from the "people." Yet, as its effect proved and still proves, it must also know well enough how to seek out fellow enthusiasts and lure them onto new secret paths and dancing grounds.[5] Here, at any rate—people admitted this with curiosity as much as with aversion—a *strange* voice was speaking, the disciple of a still "unknown god," who for the time being had hidden himself under the scholar's hood, under the heaviness and dialectical joylessness of the German, even under the bad manners of the Wagnerian. Here was a spirit with strange, still nameless needs, a memory bursting with questions, experiences and hidden things, to which the name Dionysus was added like one more question mark. Here—so people told themselves with suspicion—something like a mystical and almost maenadic soul was speaking, stammering with effort and arbitrarily, as if in a foreign tongue, almost undecided whether it wanted to communicate or to conceal itself.[6] It should have *sung*, this "new soul"—and not spoken! What a pity that I did not dare to say what I then had to say as a poet: perhaps I could have! Or at least as a philologist

5 *Profanum vulgus*: from Horace, *Odes* 3.1, "I hate the profane crowd and keep it at a distance."

6 The "unknown god" recalls Paul's sermon in Athens (Acts 17:23); maenads were the ecstatic female followers of Dionysus.

—for even today almost everything in this field remains for the philologist to discover and dig up! Above all the problem *that* there is a problem here—and that the Greeks, as long as we have no answer to the question "what is Dionysian?", remain as utterly unknown and unimaginable as ever...

ASC.4 Yes, what is Dionysian?—This book gives an answer to that: one "who knows" is speaking there, the initiate and disciple of his god. Perhaps I would now speak more cautiously and less eloquently about so difficult a psychological question as the origin of tragedy among the Greeks. A fundamental question is the Greek's relation to pain, his degree of sensitivity—did this relation remain the same? or was it reversed? That is the question whether his ever stronger *craving for beauty*, for festivals, pleasures and new cults, really grew out of lack, out of deprivation, out of melancholy, out of pain. For suppose that precisely this were true—and Pericles (or Thucydides) gives us to understand as much in the great funeral oration. Where, then, would the opposite craving have to come from, the one that appeared earlier in time: the *craving for the ugly*, the good, stern will of the older Hellene to pessimism, to tragic myth, to the image of everything terrible, evil, enigmatic, destructive and fateful at the ground of existence? Where, then, would tragedy have to come from? Perhaps from *pleasure*, from strength, from overflowing health, from excessive fullness? And what, then, physiologically speaking, is the meaning of that madness out of which tragic as well as comic art grew, Dionysian madness? What? Is madness perhaps not necessarily the symptom of degeneration, of decline, of an overripe culture?[7] Are there perhaps—a question for psychiatrists—neuroses of *health*? Of a people's youth and youthfulness? What does that synthesis of god and goat in the satyr point to? Out of what personal experience, driven by what urge, did the Greek have to think of the Dionysian enthusiast and primal man as a satyr? And as for the origin of the tragic chorus: in those centuries when the Greek

7 Pericles' funeral oration for the Athenian dead, as reported by Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 2.35–46.

body flourished and the Greek soul foamed over with life, were there perhaps endemic raptures? Visions and hallucinations that communicated themselves to whole communities, whole cult gatherings? What if the Greeks, precisely in the richness of their youth, had the will *to* the tragic and were pessimists? What if it was precisely madness, to use a phrase of Plato's, that brought the *greatest* blessings upon Hellas?[8] And if, on the other hand and conversely, the Greeks became ever more optimistic, superficial and histrionic precisely in their periods of dissolution and weakness, ever more ardent for logic and the logicizing of the world, and so at once "more cheerful" and "more scientific"? What? Might not the victory of *optimism*, the *rationality* that had gained the upper hand, practical and theoretical *utilitarianism*, like democracy itself, with which it is contemporaneous—might it not, in defiance of all "modern ideas" and prejudices of democratic taste, be a symptom of declining strength, of approaching old age, of physiological fatigue? And precisely *not*—pessimism? Was Epicurus an optimist—precisely as a *sufferer*?—— You see, it is a whole bundle of hard questions that this book has burdened itself with. Let us add its hardest question! What, seen through the lens of *life*, is the meaning of—morality?...

ART AGAINST MORALITY

Nietzsche reads the book as an anti-moral, anti-Christian artists' metaphysics, which he named Dionysian.

ASC.5 Already in the Foreword to Richard Wagner, art—and *not* morality—is presented as the truly *metaphysical* activity of man; in the book itself the provocative proposition recurs several times that only as an aesthetic phenomenon is the existence of the world *justified*. Indeed, the whole book knows only an artist's meaning, and an artist's hidden meaning, behind everything that happens. It knows a "god," if you like, but certainly only an

8 Plato, *Phaedrus* 244a: the greatest blessings come to us through madness, when it is a gift of the gods.

entirely unscrupulous and immoral artist-god, who in building as in destroying, in good as in bad, wants to become aware of his one and the same pleasure and sovereignty. Creating worlds, this god frees himself from the *distress* of fullness and *overfullness*, from the *suffering* of the contradictions crowded within him. The world, at every moment the *attained* redemption of God, as the eternally changing, eternally new vision of the one who suffers most, who is most full of opposition and contradiction, and who knows how to redeem himself only in *illusion*: you may call this whole artists' metaphysics arbitrary, idle, fantastic. What matters about it is that it already betrays a spirit that will one day, at any risk, defend itself against the *moral* interpretation and significance of existence. Here, perhaps for the first time, a pessimism "beyond good and evil" announces itself. Here that "perversity of mind" against which Schopenhauer never tired of hurling in advance his angriest curses and thunderbolts finds word and formula: a philosophy that dares to set morality itself in the world of appearance, to set it down, and not only among "appearances" (in the sense of the idealist *terminus technicus* [technical term]) but among "deceptions"—as illusion, delusion, error, interpretation, contrivance, art. Perhaps the depth of this *anti-moral* inclination can best be measured by the wary and hostile silence with which Christianity is treated throughout the book—Christianity as the most extravagant set of variations on the moral theme that humanity has ever been made to listen to. In truth, there is no greater antithesis to the purely aesthetic interpretation and justification of the world taught in this book than the Christian doctrine. That doctrine is and wants to be *only* moral, and with its absolute standards—with its truthfulness of God, for example—it relegates art, *every* art, to the realm of *lies*: that is, it negates, damns and condemns it. Behind a way of thinking and valuing of this kind, which must be hostile to art as long as it is at all genuine, I always sensed also what is *hostile to life*, the furious, vengeful aversion to life itself. For all life rests on illusion, art, deception, optics, the necessity of perspective and error. Christianity was from the

beginning, essentially and thoroughly, life's disgust and weariness with life, which merely disguised itself, merely hid itself, merely dressed itself up in the belief in an "other" or "better" life. Hatred of the "world," the curse on the passions, fear of beauty and sensuality, a beyond invented the better to slander this world, at bottom a longing for nothingness, for the end, for rest, for the "sabbath of sabbaths"—all this, like Christianity's unconditional will to let *only* moral values count, always seemed to me the most dangerous and uncanny of all possible forms of a "will to perish," at the very least a sign of the deepest sickness, weariness, discontent, exhaustion and impoverishment of life. For before morality (especially Christian, that is, unconditional morality) life *must* constantly and inevitably be in the wrong, because life is something essentially immoral. Crushed under the weight of contempt and of the eternal No, life *must* in the end be felt as unworthy of desire, as worthless in itself. Morality itself—what? might morality not be a "will to negate life," a secret instinct of annihilation, a principle of decay, of belittlement, of slander, a beginning of the end? And, consequently, the danger of dangers?... It was *against* morality, then, that my instinct turned at that time, with this questionable book, as an instinct that pleads for life. It invented for itself a fundamental counter-doctrine and counter-valuation of life, a purely artistic one, an *anti-Christian* one. What to call it? As a philologist and man of words I baptized it, not without some liberty—for who could know the right name of the Antichrist?—with the name of a Greek god: I called it the *Dionysian*. —

ASC.6 Do you see what task I already dared to touch on with this book?... How I regret now that I did not yet have the courage (or the immodesty?) to allow myself, in every respect, a *language of my own* for such personal views and ventures! That I laboriously tried to express, with Schopenhauerian and Kantian formulas, strange and new valuations that ran fundamentally counter to the spirit of Kant and Schopenhauer, as well as to their taste! What, after all, did Schopenhauer think of tragedy? "What gives everything tragic its peculiar impetus toward elevation," he says

(*The World as Will and Representation* II, 495), "is the dawning of the knowledge that the world, that life, can give no true satisfaction and is therefore *not worthy* of our attachment: this is what the tragic spirit consists in—it accordingly leads to *resignation*." Oh, how differently Dionysus spoke to me! Oh, how far from me, just then, was this whole resignationism!—But there is something much worse about the book, which I now regret even more than having obscured and spoiled Dionysian intimations with Schopenhauerian formulas: that I *spoiled* for myself the grandiose *Greek problem* altogether, as it had dawned on me, by mixing in the most modern things! That I attached hopes where there was nothing to hope for, where everything pointed all too clearly to an end! That, on the strength of the latest German music, I began to spin tales about the "German essence," as if it were just on the point of discovering and finding itself again—and that at a time when the German spirit, which not long before had still had the will to rule over Europe and the strength to lead Europe, was just *abdicating*, once and for all, as if by last will and testament! Under the pompous pretext of founding an empire, it was making its transition to mediocrity, to democracy and "modern ideas"! Indeed, in the meantime I learned to think hopelessly and unsparingly enough about this "German essence," and likewise about present-day *German music*, which is Romanticism through and through and the most un-Greek of all possible art forms. It is, moreover, a ruiner of the nerves of the first rank, doubly dangerous among a people that loves drink and honors unclarity as a virtue—namely in its double capacity as an intoxicating and at the same time *befogging* narcotic.—Apart, of course, from all the rash hopes and misguided applications to the most present-day matters with which I then spoiled my first book, the great Dionysian question mark, as it is set there, still stands and goes on standing, with regard to music too: what would a music have to be like that was no longer of Romantic origin, like German music—but *Dionysian*?...

"YOU SHOULD LEARN TO LAUGH"

An imagined critic calls the book Romantic; Nietzsche tells young pessimists to learn to laugh instead.

ASC.7 — But, my dear sir, what in the world is Romanticism, if *your* book is not Romanticism? Can the deep hatred of "the present age," "reality" and "modern ideas" be pushed further than it is in your artists' metaphysics—which would rather believe in nothingness, rather believe in the devil, than in the "now"? Doesn't a ground bass of anger and lust for destruction rumble on beneath all your contrapuntal vocal art and seduction of the ear —a furious determination against everything that is "now," a will not too far removed from practical nihilism, which seems to say: "Better that nothing be true than that *you* should be right, than that *your* truth should prevail!" Listen yourself, my dear Mr. Pessimist and deifier of art, with a more open ear, to one single selected passage from your book, that not ineloquent dragon-slayer passage, which may sound insidiously Pied-Piper-like to young ears and hearts. What? Is that not the genuine, true-blue Romantic confession of 1830, under the mask of the pessimism of 1850? Behind it the usual Romantic finale is already sounding its prelude—break, breakdown, return and prostration before an old faith, before *the* old God… What? Is your pessimist's book not itself a piece of anti-Hellenism and Romanticism, itself something "as intoxicating as it is befogging," a narcotic at any rate, even a piece of music, *German* music? But listen:

"Let us imagine a rising generation with this fearlessness of gaze, with this heroic pull toward the tremendous; let us imagine the bold stride of these dragon-slayers, the proud audacity with which they turn their backs on all the feeble doctrines of optimism in order 'to live resolutely' in the whole and in the full. *Would it not be necessary* that the tragic man of this culture, in his self-education toward seriousness and terror, should desire a

new art, *the art of metaphysical comfort*, tragedy, as the Helen that belongs to him, and cry out with Faust:[9]

And should I not, by force of utmost longing, / Draw into life that one, most singular form?"[10]

"Would it not be *necessary*?"... No, three times no, you young Romantics: it would *not* be necessary! But it is very probable that it will *end* like that, that *you* will end like that—namely "comforted," as it is written, despite all your self-education toward seriousness and terror, "metaphysically comforted," in short, as Romantics end: *Christianly*... No! You should first learn the art of *this-worldly* comfort—you should learn to *laugh*, my young friends, if you are absolutely determined to remain pessimists. Perhaps then, as those who laugh, you will some day send all metaphysical comforting to the devil—and metaphysics first of all! Or, to say it in the language of that Dionysian fiend who is called *Zarathustra*:

"Lift up your hearts, my brothers, high, higher! And don't forget your legs, I tell you! Lift up your legs too, you good dancers—and better still: stand on your heads!

This crown of the one who laughs, this rose-wreath crown: I myself have set this crown upon my head, I myself have pronounced my laughter holy. I found no one else today strong enough for it.

Zarathustra the dancer, Zarathustra the light one, who beckons with his wings, one ready for flight, beckoning to all birds, ready and set, a blissfully light-hearted one: —

Zarathustra the soothsayer, Zarathustra the sooth-laugher, not impatient, not unconditional, one who loves leaps and sideleaps: I myself have set this crown upon my head!

This crown of the one who laughs, this rose-wreath crown: to you, my brothers, I throw this crown! Laughter I have pro-

9 "To live resolutely" adapts Goethe's poem "General Confession": to live resolutely in the whole, the good, the beautiful.

10 Goethe, *Faust*, Part Two, Act 1: Faust, having glimpsed Helen of Troy, resolves to bring her back to life.

nounced holy: you higher men, *learn*, I tell you—to laugh!" / *Thus Spoke Zarathustra, Part Four*

Foreword to Richard Wagner

Vorwort an Richard Wagner
The 1871 dedication: art as the highest task and the truly metaphysical activity of this life.

VORWORT AN RICHARD WAGNER

P The thoughts gathered in this essay will give rise to all sorts of misgivings, agitation and misunderstanding, given the peculiar character of our aesthetic public. To keep all this at a distance, and to be able to write these introductory words with the same contemplative delight whose marks the essay itself bears on every page, as the fossil of good and uplifting hours, I picture to myself the moment when you, my highly esteemed friend, will receive it. Perhaps after an evening walk in the winter snow, you look at Prometheus unbound on the title page, read my name, and are at once convinced that, whatever this essay may contain, its author has something serious and urgent to say. You are convinced, too, that in everything he thought out he was conversing with you as with someone present, and could write down only what was worthy of that presence.[1] You will remember that I was gathering myself for these thoughts at the same time as your splendid commemorative essay on Beethoven came into being—that is, amid the terrors and sublimities of the war that had just broken out. Yet anyone who, in connection with this gathering of thoughts, might think of an opposition between patriotic excitement and aesthetic indulgence, between

1 The title page of the first edition (1872) carried a vignette of Prometheus unbound.

brave seriousness and cheerful play, would be mistaken. On a real reading of this essay it might rather become clear to such people, to their astonishment, what a seriously German problem we are dealing with—one that we place quite properly at the very center of German hopes, as vortex and turning point.[2] But perhaps these same people will find it offensive in general to see an aesthetic problem taken so seriously—if, that is, they can see in art nothing more than an amusing sideshow, a jingle of bells that could well be done without, accompanying the "seriousness of existence": as if no one knew what such a "seriousness of existence" really amounts to when set against art in this way. Let these serious people learn that I am convinced that art is the highest task and the truly metaphysical activity of this life, in the sense of the man to whom I wish to dedicate this essay, as to my sublime champion on this path.

Basel, end of 1871

2 Wagner's essay *Beethoven* (1870) was written for the centenary of the composer's birth.

Sections 1–10: Apollo and Dionysus

Die Geburt der Tragödie aus dem Geiste der Musik, 1–10
The Apollinian and the Dionysian, dream and intoxication; Greek art as a response to suffering; tragedy born from the chorus.

DIE GEBURT DER TRAGÖDIE AUS DEM GEISTE DER MUSIK

[1] We shall have gained much for the science of aesthetics once we have come not merely to the logical insight but to the immediate certainty of intuition that the continuing development of art is bound up with the duality of the *Apollinian* and the *Dionysian*—in much the same way as procreation depends on the duality of the sexes, with its continual struggle and only periodic reconciliation. We borrow these names from the Greeks, who make the profound secret doctrines of their view of art perceptible to the discerning, not in concepts, it is true, but in the intensely clear figures of their world of gods.[1] To their two deities of art, Apollo and Dionysus, is tied our recognition that in the Greek world there is a tremendous opposition, in origin and aims, between the art of the sculptor, the Apollinian art, and the imageless art of music, the art of Dionysus. These two very different drives run side by side, mostly in open conflict, continually provoking each other to new and more powerful births, in which they perpetuate the struggle of that opposition—an opposition which the common word "art" bridges only in

1 "Apollinian" (rather than the more usual "Apollonian") follows Nietzsche's *apollinisch*; with "Dionysian" it names the two artistic drives the book sets against each other.

appearance. At last, by a metaphysical miracle of the Hellenic "will," they appear paired with each other, and in this pairing they finally beget the work of art of Attic tragedy, which is as Dionysian as it is Apollinian.

To bring these two drives closer to us, let us first think of them as the separate art-worlds of *dream* and *intoxication*, two physiological phenomena between which we can observe an opposition corresponding to that between the Apollinian and the Dionysian. It was in dreams, according to Lucretius, that the glorious forms of the gods first appeared to human souls; in dreams the great sculptor saw the enchanting bodily structure of superhuman beings. And the Hellenic poet, asked about the secrets of poetic creation, would likewise have recalled dreams and given much the same instruction as Hans Sachs gives in *Die Meistersinger*:[2]

> My friend, just this is the poet's work:
> to mark his dreams and read their meaning.
> Believe me, man's truest illusion
> is opened up to him in dreams:
> all poetry and verse-making
> is nothing but interpreting true dreams.

The beautiful illusion of the dream worlds, in whose making every human being is a complete artist, is the precondition of all the visual arts, and indeed, as we shall see, of an important half of poetry too. We take pleasure in the immediate understanding of form; all forms speak to us; nothing is indifferent or unnecessary. Yet even when this dream reality is at its most vivid, we still have the glimmering sense that it is *illusion*. That, at least, is my experience, and for its frequency, indeed its normality, I could offer a good deal of evidence, including the sayings of the poets. The philosophically minded person even has a presentiment that beneath this reality in which we live and have our being there lies hidden a second, quite different one, so that

2 Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things* 5.1169–82; Hans Sachs gives this advice to the young Walther in Act 3 of Wagner's *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* (1868).

it too is an illusion. Schopenhauer actually calls the gift of seeing, at times, people and all things as mere phantoms or dream images the mark of a talent for philosophy. As the philosopher stands to the reality of existence, so the artistically sensitive person stands to the reality of dreams: he watches closely and with pleasure, for from these images he interprets life for himself, and in these events he practices for life. It is not only the pleasant and friendly images that he experiences in himself with that complete intelligibility. The serious, the gloomy, the sad, the dark, sudden obstacles, the teasing of chance, anxious expectations—in short, the whole "divine comedy" of life, with its *Inferno*, passes before him, not merely like a shadow play—for he lives and suffers along with these scenes—and yet also not without that fleeting sense of illusion. And perhaps some people, like me, will remember sometimes calling out to themselves amid the dangers and terrors of a dream, encouragingly and with success: "It is a dream! I will go on dreaming it!" I have also been told of people who were able to continue the causal thread of one and the same dream over three or more successive nights. These facts bear clear witness that our innermost being, the common ground of us all, experiences dreams with deep pleasure and joyful necessity.

This joyful necessity of the dream experience was likewise expressed by the Greeks in their Apollo. Apollo, as the god of all image-making powers, is at the same time the god of prophecy. He who, by the root of his name, is the "shining one," the deity of light, also rules over the beautiful illusion of the inner world of fantasy. The higher truth, the perfection of these states in contrast to the only partly intelligible reality of the day, and then the deep awareness of nature's healing and helping power in sleep and dreams—all this is at the same time the symbolic analogue of the gift of prophecy, and of the arts in general, through which life is made possible and worth living.[3] But the image of Apollo must not lack that delicate line which the dream

3 "The shining one" renders *der Scheinende*, a play on *Schein*, which means both radiance and illusion; Apollo's epithet Phoebus means "bright."

image may not cross if it is not to have a pathological effect—for otherwise illusion would deceive us as crude reality. It must include that measured limitation, that freedom from the wilder impulses, that wise calm of the sculptor-god. His eye must be "sunlike," in keeping with his origin; even when it is angry and looks displeased, the solemnity of the beautiful illusion rests upon it. And so what Schopenhauer says of the man caught in the veil of Maya might apply to Apollo in an eccentric sense (*The World as Will and Representation* I, p.[4] 416): "Just as a boatman sits in a small boat on the raging sea, which, unbounded on every side, raises and lowers howling mountains of waves, trusting in his frail craft, so the individual human being sits calmly in the midst of a world of torments, supported by and trusting in the *principium individuationis* [principle of individuation]." Indeed, one might say of Apollo that in him the unshaken trust in that *principium* [principle], and the calm repose of the one caught up in it, have received their most sublime expression. One might even call Apollo the glorious divine image of the *principium individuationis*, whose gestures and glances would speak to us of the whole pleasure and wisdom of "illusion," together with its beauty.[5]

In the same passage Schopenhauer has described for us the tremendous *dread* that seizes a person when he suddenly loses his bearings among the cognitive forms of appearance, because the principle of sufficient reason, in one of its forms, seems to suffer an exception. If we add to this dread the blissful ecstasy that rises up from the innermost depths of man, indeed of nature, at this same shattering of the *principium individuationis*, we catch a glimpse of the essence of the *Dionysian*, which is brought closest to us by the analogy of *intoxication*. Either under the influence of the narcotic drink of which all early human beings and peoples speak in hymns, or with the mighty

4 "Sunlike" echoes Goethe: were the eye not sunlike, it could never see the sun. The veil of Maya is Schopenhauer's image, taken from Indian thought, for the world of appearance that hides the true nature of things.

5 *Principium individuationis*: Schopenhauer's term for space and time, which split the one will into a multitude of separate individuals.

approach of spring that joyfully pervades all nature, those Dionysian stirrings awaken, and as they intensify, the subjective vanishes into complete self-forgetting. In the German Middle Ages, too, ever-growing throngs, singing and dancing, whirled from place to place under the same Dionysian power. In these St. John's and St. Vitus' dancers we recognize the Bacchic choruses of the Greeks, with their prehistory in Asia Minor, all the way back to Babylon and the orgiastic Sacaea.[6] There are people who, from lack of experience or from dullness, turn away from such phenomena as from "epidemic diseases," mocking or pitying them in the feeling of their own health. The poor things have no idea, of course, how corpse-like and ghostly this very "health" of theirs looks when the glowing life of Dionysian enthusiasts roars past them.

Under the spell of the Dionysian, not only is the bond between human being and human being forged anew: nature too, estranged, hostile or subjugated, celebrates once more her festival of reconciliation with her prodigal son, man. The earth offers her gifts of her own accord, and the beasts of prey from the rocks and the desert approach in peace. The chariot of Dionysus is heaped with flowers and garlands; panthers and tigers stride beneath its yoke. Turn Beethoven's jubilant song of "Joy" into a painting, and do not let your imagination lag behind when the millions sink awestruck into the dust: then you can approach the Dionysian. Now the slave is a free man; now all the rigid, hostile barriers that necessity, caprice or "insolent fashion" have fixed between people break apart.[7] Now, with the gospel of universal harmony, each person feels himself not only united, reconciled and fused with his neighbor, but one with him, as if the veil of Maya had been torn apart and now merely fluttered in tatters before the mysterious primordial One. Singing and dancing, man expresses himself as a member of a

6 The St. John's and St. Vitus' dances were outbreaks of mass dancing mania in medieval Europe. The Sacaea was a Babylonian festival, described by Greek writers, marked by license and the reversal of social roles.

7 The finale of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony sets Schiller's "Ode to Joy," from which come "the millions," "insolent fashion" and the call to the Creator below.

higher community: he has forgotten how to walk and speak and is on the point of dancing his way up into the air. His gestures speak of enchantment. Just as the animals now talk and the earth yields milk and honey, so something supernatural sounds from him too: he feels himself a god; he himself now walks about as ecstatic and exalted as he saw the gods walk in dreams.[8] Man is no longer an artist; he has become a work of art. Here, amid the shudders of intoxication, the artistic power of all nature reveals itself, to the highest blissful satisfaction of the primordial One. The noblest clay, the most precious marble —man—is here kneaded and hewn, and to the chisel blows of the Dionysian world-artist rings out the cry of the Eleusinian mysteries: "Do you fall down, you millions? Do you sense your Creator, world?" —[9]

APOLLO AND DIONYSUS AMONG THE GREEKS

The Greeks meet the barbarian Dionysian festivals with Apollo, then reconcile the two gods.

[2] So far we have considered the Apollinian and its opposite, the Dionysian, as artistic powers that burst forth from nature itself, *without the mediation of the human artist*, and in which nature's art-drives are satisfied in the first instance and directly. On the one hand they appear as the image world of dreams, whose perfection has no connection with the intellectual level or artistic education of the individual; on the other, as an intoxicated reality, which again pays no heed to the individual, but even seeks to destroy the individual and redeem him through a mystical feeling of oneness. Compared with these immediate art-states of nature, every artist is an "imitator": either an Apollinian artist of dream or a Dionysian artist of intoxication, or finally—as in Greek tragedy, for example—an artist of intoxication and of

8 The primordial One (*das Ur-Eine*): Nietzsche's name for the single ground of all being that lies beneath the world of individuals.

9 The Eleusinian Mysteries were secret initiation rites of Demeter and Persephone at Eleusis near Athens; the words are again Schiller's.

dream at once. We might picture the latter somewhat like this: in Dionysian drunkenness and mystical self-abandonment he sinks down, alone and apart from the rapturous choruses; and now, through the Apollinian influence of dream, his own state—that is, his oneness with the innermost ground of the world—is revealed to him *in a symbolic dream image*.

After these general premises and contrasts, let us now approach the *Greeks*, in order to recognize to what degree and to what height those *art-drives of nature* were developed in them. This will enable us to understand and appreciate more deeply the relation of the Greek artist to his archetypes—or, in Aristotle's phrase, "the imitation of nature." About the *dreams* of the Greeks, despite all their dream literature and numerous dream anecdotes, we can speak only conjecturally, yet with fair certainty. Given the incredibly precise and sure plastic capacity of their eye, together with their bright and candid delight in color, one cannot help assuming—to the shame of all who were born later—that their dreams too had a logical causality of lines and contours, colors and groupings, a sequence of scenes resembling their best reliefs. If a comparison were possible, the perfection of these dreams would certainly entitle us to call the dreaming Greeks Homers, and Homer a dreaming Greek—in a deeper sense than when modern man dares to compare himself, as regards his dreams, with Shakespeare.

On the other hand, we need not speak merely conjecturally when it comes to uncovering the tremendous gulf that separates the *Dionysian Greeks* from the Dionysian barbarians. From every corner of the ancient world—to leave the modern one aside here—from Rome to Babylon, we can show the existence of Dionysian festivals whose type relates, at best, to the Greek type as the bearded satyr, who took his name and attributes from the goat, relates to Dionysus himself. Almost everywhere the center of these festivals lay in an extravagant sexual licentiousness, whose waves flooded over all family life and its venerable laws. Precisely the wildest beasts of nature were unleashed here, up to that abominable mixture of lust and cruelty that has always

seemed to me the true "witches' brew." Knowledge of those festivals reached the Greeks by every route over land and sea. Against their feverish stirrings the Greeks were, it seems, completely secured and protected for a time by the figure of Apollo, rising up here in all his pride; and he could hold up the Medusa's head against no more dangerous power than this grotesquely uncouth Dionysian one. It is in Doric art that this majestic, rejecting posture of Apollo has been immortalized. The resistance became more precarious, and even impossible, when at last similar drives broke out from the deepest root of Hellenic nature itself. Now the activity of the Delphic god was restricted to taking the destructive weapons out of the hands of his mighty opponent by a reconciliation concluded at the right moment. This reconciliation is the most important moment in the history of Greek cult: wherever one looks, the upheavals caused by this event are visible. It was the reconciliation of two opponents, with a sharp definition of the boundary lines to be observed from then on and with a periodic sending of gifts of honor; at bottom the gulf had not been bridged. But if we see how the Dionysian power revealed itself under the pressure of that peace treaty, we now recognize in the Dionysian orgies of the Greeks—compared with those Babylonian Sacaea and their regression of man to tiger and ape—the significance of festivals of world redemption and days of transfiguration. Only with them does nature attain its artistic jubilation; only with them does the tearing apart of the *principium individuationis* become an artistic phenomenon. That hideous witches' brew of lust and cruelty had no power here. Only the strange mixture and duality in the emotions of the Dionysian enthusiasts recalls it—as medicines recall deadly poisons: that phenomenon whereby pains awaken pleasure, and jubilation wrings cries of agony from the breast. From the highest joy sounds the cry of horror, or the yearning lament for an irreplaceable loss. In those Greek festivals a sentimental trait of nature breaks forth, as it were, as if she had cause to sigh over her dismemberment into individuals. The song and the gestural language of such doubly attuned enthusi-

asts were something new and unheard-of for the Homeric Greek world; and Dionysian *music* in particular aroused terror and dread in it.[10] If music was, as it seems, already known as an Apollinian art, it was so, strictly speaking, only as the wave-beat of rhythm, whose image-making power was developed to represent Apollinian states. The music of Apollo was Doric architecture in tones, but in tones merely hinted at, such as belong to the kithara. The very element that makes up the character of Dionysian music, and thus of music as such, is carefully kept away as un-Apollinian: the shattering power of tone, the unified stream of melos [melody], and the utterly incomparable world of harmony. In the Dionysian dithyramb man is stimulated to the highest intensification of all his symbolic faculties; something never felt before presses for expression—the annihilation of the veil of Maya, oneness as the genius of the species, indeed of nature.[11] Now the essence of nature is to express itself symbolically; a new world of symbols is needed. First comes the whole symbolism of the body—not only the symbolism of the mouth, the face, the word, but the full gesture of dance, moving every limb in rhythm. Then the other symbolic powers, those of music, suddenly grow tempestuous in rhythm, dynamics and harmony. To grasp this total unleashing of all symbolic powers, man must already have reached that height of self-abandonment which seeks to express itself symbolically in those powers. The dithyrambic servant of Dionysus is therefore understood only by his own kind! With what astonishment the Apollinian Greek must have looked at him! With an astonishment all the greater because it was mixed with the dread that all this was really not so alien to him after all—indeed, that his Apollinian consciousness only hid this Dionysian world from him like a veil.

10 "Sentimental" renders *sentimentalisch*, Schiller's term (from *On Naive and Sentimental Poetry*) for a consciousness that longs for a lost unity with nature.
11 The kithara was the large lyre associated with Apollo; the dithyramb was the choral hymn to Dionysus.

THE WISDOM OF SILENUS

The Greeks created the radiant Olympian gods to make a terrible existence bearable.

[3] To understand this, we must dismantle the elaborate edifice of *Apollinian culture* stone by stone, as it were, until we see the foundations on which it rests. The first thing we notice here is the magnificent *Olympian* figures of the gods, who stand on the pediments of this edifice and whose deeds, depicted in reliefs that shine far and wide, adorn its friezes. Apollo stands among them too, as one god beside others and with no claim to first place, but we must not let this mislead us. The same drive that took sensuous form in Apollo gave birth to that whole Olympian world, and in this sense we may regard Apollo as its father. What was the tremendous need from which so radiant a company of Olympian beings sprang?

Anyone who approaches these Olympians with another religion in his heart, and looks to them for moral elevation, even holiness, for disembodied spirituality, for looks of compassionate love, will soon have to turn his back on them in disappointment and ill humor. Nothing here reminds us of asceticism, spirituality and duty. Here only an exuberant, even triumphant existence speaks to us, in which everything that exists is deified, whether it is good or evil. And so the onlooker may well stand quite taken aback before this fantastic overflow of life, and ask himself what magic potion these high-spirited people must have had in their bodies to enjoy life so much that wherever they looked, Helen, the ideal image of their own existence, "floating in sweet sensuality," smiled back at them. But to this onlooker, who is already turning away, we must call out: Do not leave! First hear what Greek folk wisdom says about this same life that spreads out before you here with such inexplicable cheerfulness. There is an old legend that King Midas hunted for a long time in the forest for the wise *Silenus,* the companion of Dionysus, without catching him. When at last Silenus falls into

his hands, the king asks what is the very best and most excellent thing for human beings. Rigid and motionless, the daemon keeps silent, until, forced by the king, he finally breaks out with shrill laughter into these words: "Wretched, ephemeral race, children of chance and toil, why do you force me to tell you what it would be most profitable for you not to hear?[12] What is best of all is utterly beyond your reach: not to be born, not to *be*, to be *nothing*. But the second best for you is—to die soon."

How does the Olympian world of the gods relate to this folk wisdom? As the rapturous vision of the tortured martyr relates to his torments.

Now the Olympian magic mountain opens up before us, as it were, and shows us its roots. The Greek knew and felt the terrors and horrors of existence. To be able to live at all, he had to set before them the radiant dream-birth of the Olympians. That tremendous mistrust of the titanic powers of nature; that Moira enthroned mercilessly above all knowledge; that vulture of the great friend of humanity, Prometheus; that terrible fate of the wise Oedipus; that curse on the house of Atreus which drives Orestes to kill his mother; in short, that whole philosophy of the woodland god, together with its mythical examples, which brought the melancholy Etruscans to ruin—all this the Greeks continually overcame anew through that artistic *middle world* of the Olympians, or at any rate veiled it and withdrew it from sight.[13] To be able to live, the Greeks had to create these gods, out of the deepest necessity. We should probably imagine the process like this: out of the original titanic divine order of terror, the Olympian divine order of joy developed by slow transitions, through that Apollinian drive to beauty—as roses burst forth from a thorny thicket. How else could that people, so sensitive in its feelings, so impetuous in its desires, so uniquely capable of *suffering*, have endured existence, if existence had not

12 Silenus: an elderly, satyr-like woodland spirit, companion and tutor of Dionysus. His verdict echoes the chorus in Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus* (1224–27).
13 Moira: Fate, the allotted portion that in Greek belief even the gods could not override.

been shown to it in its gods, bathed in a higher glory? The same drive that calls art into being, as the complement and consummation of existence that seduces us into living on, also gave rise to the Olympian world, in which the Hellenic "will" held up a transfiguring mirror to itself. Thus the gods justify human life by living it themselves—the only satisfactory theodicy! Existence under the bright sunshine of such gods is felt to be desirable in itself, and the real *pain* of Homeric men concerns parting from it, above all parting from it soon. So one might now say of them, reversing the wisdom of Silenus, "that the very worst thing for them is to die soon, the second worst is to die at all." If ever their lament is heard, it tells again of short-lived Achilles, of the changing and passing of the human race like the leaves, of the decline of the heroic age. It is not unworthy of the greatest hero to long to live on, even as a day laborer.[14] So vehemently, at the Apollinian stage, does the "will" long for this existence, so completely does Homeric man feel at one with it, that even his lament becomes a song in its praise.

Here it must be said that this harmony, indeed this unity, of man with nature, on which modern people gaze with such longing and for which Schiller brought the technical term "naive" into currency, is by no means so simple, self-evident, as it were inevitable a condition that we *must* encounter it at the threshold of every culture, as a paradise of humanity. Only an age could believe this that tried to picture Rousseau's *Emile* as an artist too, and fancied it had found in Homer just such an artist-Emile, raised at the heart of nature.[15] Wherever we encounter the "naive" in art, we must recognize it as the supreme effect of Apollinian culture—a culture that always has first to overthrow a realm of Titans and slay monsters, and must have triumphed, through powerful delusive visions and pleasurable illusions, over a terrible depth in its view of the world and a most acute

14 Allusions to the *Iliad* (6.146, generations of men like leaves) and the *Odyssey* (11.489–91), where the shade of Achilles would rather be a hired laborer on earth than king among the dead.

15 In *On Naive and Sentimental Poetry* Schiller calls poetry still at one with nature "naive." *Emile* (1762) is Rousseau's treatise on an education according to nature.

capacity for suffering. But how rarely is the naive attained, that complete absorption in the beauty of illusion! How inexpressibly sublime, then, is *Homer*, who as an individual stands to that Apollinian folk culture as the individual dream artist stands to the dreaming capacity of the people and of nature as a whole. Homeric "naïveté" can be understood only as the complete victory of Apollinian illusion. It is an illusion of the kind that nature so often uses to achieve its purposes. The true goal is concealed by a phantom: we stretch out our hands toward the phantom, and nature attains the goal through our deception. In the Greeks the "will" wanted to behold itself, transfigured in genius and in the world of art. In order to glorify itself, its creatures had to feel themselves worthy of glorification; they had to see themselves again in a higher sphere, without this perfected world of contemplation acting on them as a command or a reproach. This is the sphere of beauty, in which they saw their mirror images, the Olympians. With this mirroring of beauty the Hellenic "will" fought against the talent for suffering and for the wisdom of suffering, which is the correlate of the talent for art; and Homer, the naive artist, stands before us as the monument to its victory.

DREAM, ILLUSION AND MEASURE

Dream is illusion of illusion; Apollo demands measure, yet cannot live without Dionysus.

[4] The analogy of dream can teach us something about this naive artist. Let us picture the dreamer who, in the midst of the illusion of the dream world and without disturbing it, calls out to himself: "It is a dream; I want to go on dreaming it." From this we must infer a deep inner pleasure in the contemplation of dreams. On the other hand, to be able to dream at all with this inner pleasure in looking, we must have completely forgotten the day and its terrible importunity. If all this holds, we may interpret these phenomena roughly as follows, under the guidance of Apollo, the interpreter of dreams. Of the two halves of

life, the waking and the dreaming half, the former certainly strikes us as incomparably the more privileged, more important, more dignified, more worth living—indeed, as the only half truly lived. Yet, paradoxical as it may seem, I would maintain that for that mysterious ground of our being, of which we are the appearance, the value of dreams is exactly the reverse. For the more I become aware in nature of those all-powerful art drives, and in them of an ardent longing for illusion, for redemption through illusion, the more I feel driven to the metaphysical assumption that what truly is, the primordial One, eternally suffering and full of contradiction, also needs the rapturous vision, the pleasurable illusion, for its constant redemption. This illusion—in which we are wholly caught up and of which we consist—we are compelled to experience as what truly is not, that is, as a continual becoming in time, space and causality; in other words, as empirical reality. So if for a moment we set aside our own "reality," and conceive our empirical existence, like that of the world in general, as a representation of the primordial One generated at every moment, then the dream must now count for us as the *illusion of illusion*, and hence as a still higher satisfaction of the primordial craving for illusion. For this same reason the innermost core of nature takes that indescribable pleasure in the naive artist and the naive work of art, which is likewise only "illusion of illusion." *Raphael*, himself one of those immortal "naive" ones, has depicted for us in an allegorical painting this reduction of illusion to illusion, the primordial process of the naive artist and, at the same time, of Apollinian culture. In his *Transfiguration* the lower half, with the possessed boy, the despairing bearers, the bewildered and frightened disciples, shows us the reflection of eternal primordial pain, the sole ground of the world: "illusion" here is the reflection of eternal contradiction, the father of things. Out of this illusion there now rises, like an ambrosial fragrance, a new, visionary world of illusion, of which those caught in the first illusion see nothing—a luminous hovering in purest bliss, a painless contemplation beaming from wide-open eyes. Here, in

the highest symbolism of art, we have before our eyes that Apollinian world of beauty and its substratum, the terrible wisdom of Silenus, and we grasp by intuition their mutual necessity.[16] Apollo, however, again appears to us as the deification of the *principium individuationis*, in which alone the eternally attained goal of the primordial One, its redemption through illusion, is accomplished. With sublime gestures he shows us how the whole world of torment is necessary, so that through it the individual may be driven to produce the redeeming vision, and then, absorbed in contemplating it, sit calmly in his tossing boat in the midst of the sea.

This deification of individuation, if it is thought of as commanding and prescribing at all, knows only *one* law: the individual, that is, the observance of the limits of the individual, *measure* in the Hellenic sense. Apollo, as an ethical deity, demands measure of his followers and, so that they can observe it, self-knowledge. And so, alongside the aesthetic necessity of beauty, run the demands "Know yourself" and "Nothing in excess!", while presumption and excess were regarded as the truly hostile demons of the non-Apollinian sphere, and hence as characteristics of the pre-Apollinian age, the age of the Titans, and of the extra-Apollinian world, that is, the world of the barbarians.[17] Because of his titanic love for human beings, Prometheus had to be torn apart by the vultures; because of his excessive wisdom, which solved the riddle of the Sphinx, Oedipus had to plunge into a bewildering whirlpool of crimes. That is how the Delphic god interpreted the Greek past.

To the Apollinian Greek, the effect aroused by the *Dionysian* also seemed "titanic" and "barbaric"—though he could not conceal from himself that he too was, inwardly, akin to those fallen Titans and heroes. Indeed, he had to feel still more: his whole existence, with all its beauty and moderation, rested on a hid-

16 Raphael's last painting (1516–20, Vatican) sets Christ's transfiguration above the disciples' failed attempt to heal a possessed boy. "The father of things" echoes Heraclitus: "War is the father of all."

17 The two maxims inscribed at Apollo's temple at Delphi.

den substratum of suffering and knowledge, which was revealed to him again by that Dionysian element. And see! Apollo could not live without Dionysus! The "titanic" and the "barbaric" were in the end just as much a necessity as the Apollinian! And now let us imagine how into this world, built on illusion and moderation and artificially dammed in, there sounded the ecstatic strains of the Dionysian festival, in ever more alluring magical melodies; how in them the whole *excess* of nature, in pleasure, pain and knowledge, became audible, rising to a piercing scream. Let us imagine what, set against this daemonic popular song, the psalm-chanting artist of Apollo, with his ghostly harp-sound, could mean! The Muses of the arts of "illusion" paled before an art that spoke the truth in its intoxication; the wisdom of Silenus cried Woe! Woe! at the cheerful Olympians. The individual, with all his limits and measures, went under here in the self-forgetfulness of the Dionysian states and forgot the Apollinian precepts. *Excess* revealed itself as truth; contradiction, the bliss born of pain, spoke of itself out of the heart of nature. And so, wherever the Dionysian broke through, the Apollinian was suspended and annihilated. But it is just as certain that where the first onslaught was withstood, the prestige and majesty of the Delphic god expressed itself more rigidly and menacingly than ever. For I can explain the *Doric* state and Doric art to myself only as a perpetual military camp of the Apollinian. Only in unceasing resistance to the titanic-barbaric nature of the Dionysian could so defiantly austere an art, walled in by ramparts, so warlike and harsh an upbringing, so cruel and ruthless a political order, have lasted for any length of time.

Up to this point I have worked out more fully what I remarked at the beginning of this essay: how the Dionysian and the Apollinian, in ever new births succeeding one another and intensifying each other, dominated the Hellenic character; how out of the "bronze" age, with its battles of Titans and its harsh popular philosophy, the Homeric world developed under the sway of the Apollinian drive to beauty; how this "naive" splendor was in turn swallowed up by the inrushing flood of the

Dionysian; and how, against this new power, the Apollinian rose to the rigid majesty of Doric art and the Doric view of the world. If in this way the older history of Greece, in the struggle between those two hostile principles, falls into four great artistic stages, we are now driven to ask further about the ultimate plan of all this becoming and striving—unless, that is, we are to regard the last period reached, that of Doric art, as the summit and purpose of those art drives. And here there appears before our eyes the sublime and much-praised artwork of *Attic tragedy* and the dramatic dithyramb, as the common goal of both drives, whose mysterious marriage, after a long preceding struggle, has glorified itself in such a child—at once Antigone and Cassandra.

THE LYRIC POET

Archilochus shows how the lyric poet, one with the primordial One, turns music into images.

[5] We now approach the real goal of our inquiry, which aims at knowledge of the Dionysian-Apollinian genius and its work of art, or at least at an intuitive understanding of that mystery of union. Here we first ask where that new seed, which later develops into tragedy and the dramatic dithyramb, first makes itself felt in the Hellenic world. On this point antiquity itself gives us a pictorial answer, when it places *Homer* and *Archilochus* side by side as the forefathers and torchbearers of Greek poetry, on sculptures, gems and so on, in the sure feeling that only these two are to be regarded as equally and completely original natures, from whom a stream of fire flows on over the whole of later Greek posterity.[18] Homer, the aged dreamer sunk in himself, the type of the Apollinian, naive artist, now gazes in astonishment at the passionate head of Archilochus, the warlike servant of the Muses, driven wildly through existence; and modern aesthetics could only add, by way of interpretation, that here

18 Archilochus of Paros (7th century BC), lyric and iambic poet famous for his invective.

the first "subjective" artist is set against the "objective" one. This interpretation is of little use to us, since we know the subjective artist only as a bad artist. In every kind and at every level of art we demand first and foremost the conquest of the subjective, redemption from the "I," and the silencing of every individual will and desire; indeed, without objectivity, without pure, disinterested contemplation, we can never believe in even the slightest genuinely artistic creation. Our aesthetics must therefore first solve the problem of how the "lyric poet" is possible as an artist—he who, as the experience of all ages shows, always says "I" and sings the entire chromatic scale of his passions and desires before us. This very Archilochus, beside Homer, alarms us with the cry of his hatred and scorn, with the drunken outbursts of his desire. Is he, the first artist to be called subjective, not therefore the real non-artist? But then where does the veneration come from that was shown to him as a poet, in very remarkable pronouncements, by the Delphic oracle too, of all things, the hearth of "objective" art?

Schiller has shed light on the process of his own composition through a psychological observation that he himself could not explain, but that does not seem doubtful. He confesses that the preparatory state before the act of composing poetry was not a series of images, with an ordered causality of thoughts, before him and within him, but rather a *musical mood*. ("With me the feeling is at first without a definite and clear object; this only takes shape later. A certain musical mood comes first, and only after it does the poetic idea follow in me.")[19] Let us now add the most important phenomenon of all ancient lyric poetry: the union, indeed the identity, of *the lyric poet* with *the musician*, which was everywhere taken for granted—compared with which our modern lyric poetry seems like the statue of a god without a head. On the basis of the aesthetic metaphysics set out earlier, we can then explain the lyric poet as follows. First, as a Dionysian artist, he has become entirely one with the primordial One, its pain and contradiction, and produces the copy of

19 From Schiller's letter to Goethe of 18 March 1796.

this primordial One as music, if music has rightly been called a repetition of the world and a second cast of it. But now, under the dream-influence of Apollo, this music becomes visible to him again as if in a *symbolic dream image*. That imageless and conceptless reflection of primordial pain in music, with its redemption in illusion, now produces a second mirroring, as a particular likeness or example. The artist has already given up his subjectivity in the Dionysian process. The image that now shows him his oneness with the heart of the world is a dream scene that embodies that primordial contradiction and primordial pain, together with the primordial pleasure of illusion. The "I" of the lyric poet thus sounds from the abyss of being: his "subjectivity," in the sense of modern aestheticians, is a fiction. When Archilochus, the first lyric poet of the Greeks, proclaims to the daughters of Lycambes both his raging love and his contempt, it is not his passion that dances before us in orgiastic frenzy. We see Dionysus and the maenads; we see the intoxicated reveler Archilochus sunk down in sleep—as Euripides describes it for us in the *Bacchae*, sleep in a high mountain pasture, in the midday sun—and now Apollo approaches him and touches him with the laurel. The Dionysian-musical enchantment of the sleeper now scatters sparks of images all around it, as it were: lyric poems, which in their highest development are called tragedies and dramatic dithyrambs.[20]

The sculptor, and with him his kinsman the epic poet, is absorbed in the pure contemplation of images. The Dionysian musician, without any image at all, is himself nothing but primordial pain and its primordial echo. The lyric genius feels a world of images and likenesses growing up out of the mystical state of self-abandonment and oneness, a world with an entirely different coloring, causality and speed from that of the sculptor and the epic poet. The epic poet lives in these images, and only in them, with joyful contentment, and never tires of contemplat-

20 Archilochus was betrothed to Neobule, daughter of Lycambes; when the father broke off the match, the poet attacked the family in verses so savage that, legend says, they hanged themselves.

ing them lovingly down to their smallest features. Even the image of the wrathful Achilles is for him only an image, whose wrathful expression he enjoys with that dreamer's delight in illusion—so that this mirror of illusion protects him against becoming one and fusing with his figures. The images of the lyric poet, by contrast, are nothing but *he* himself and, as it were, only different objectifications of himself; that is why, as the moving center of that world, he may say "I." Only this selfhood is not the same as that of the waking, empirically real human being, but the only selfhood that truly exists at all, eternal and resting at the ground of things, through whose images the lyric genius sees right down to that ground. Now let us imagine how, among these images, he also beholds *himself* as non-genius, that is, his "subject," the whole throng of subjective passions and stirrings of the will directed at some particular thing that seems real to him. It may now seem as though the lyric genius and the non-genius bound up with him were one, and as though the former were speaking that little word "I" of himself. But this semblance can no longer mislead us, as it has certainly misled those who have called the lyric poet the subjective poet. In truth Archilochus, the passionately inflamed man who loves and hates, is only a vision of the genius, who is no longer Archilochus but world-genius, and who expresses his primordial pain symbolically in that likeness, the man Archilochus; whereas that subjectively willing and desiring man Archilochus can never, ever be a poet. But it is not at all necessary that the lyric poet should see before him only the phenomenon of the man Archilochus as the reflection of eternal being; and tragedy shows how far the visionary world of the lyric poet can move away from that phenomenon, which admittedly lies closest at hand.

Schopenhauer, who did not hide from himself the difficulty that the lyric poet presents for the philosophical study of art, believes he has found a way out—one I cannot take with him. Yet he alone, in his profound metaphysics of music, had been given the means by which that difficulty could be decisively removed,

as I believe I have done here, in his spirit and to his honor. He, on the other hand, describes the peculiar essence of song as follows (*The World as Will and Representation* I, p. 295): "It is the subject of willing, that is, one's own willing, that fills the consciousness of the singer—often as a released, satisfied willing (joy), but still more often, perhaps, as a thwarted one (sorrow), always as affect, passion, an agitated state of mind. Beside this, however, and simultaneously with it, the sight of the surrounding nature makes the singer conscious of himself as the subject of pure, will-less knowing, whose unshakable, blissful calm now stands in contrast to the pressure of willing, which is always limited, always still needy. The feeling of this contrast, this interplay, is really what is expressed in the song as a whole and what constitutes the lyric state in general. In this state pure knowing comes to us, as it were, to redeem us from willing and its pressure. We follow, but only for moments: again and again willing, the memory of our personal aims, tears us away from calm contemplation; but again and again, too, the next beautiful surroundings, in which pure will-less knowledge offers itself to us, lure us away from willing. Therefore in the song and the lyric mood, willing (the personal interest of one's aims) and the pure contemplation of the surroundings that present themselves are wondrously mingled. Relations between the two are sought and imagined; the subjective mood, the affection of the will, imparts its color by reflection to the surroundings contemplated, and they in turn to it. The genuine song is the impression of this whole state of mind, so mingled and divided."

Who could fail to see that this description characterizes lyric poetry as an art imperfectly attained, one that reaches its goal seldom, and only by leaps, as it were—indeed as a half-art, whose *essence* is supposed to consist in willing and pure contemplation, that is, the unaesthetic and the aesthetic state, being wondrously mingled together? We maintain, rather, that the whole opposition between subjective and objective, by which even Schopenhauer still classifies the arts as if by a measure of value, is altogether out of place in aesthetics. For the subject, the

individual who wills and pursues his egoistic aims, can be conceived only as the opponent of art, not as its origin. But insofar as the subject is an artist, he is already redeemed from his individual will and has become, as it were, a medium through which the one truly existing subject celebrates its redemption in illusion. For this above all must be clear to us, to our humiliation *and* exaltation: the whole comedy of art is by no means performed for our sake, for our improvement and education, say; nor are we the real creators of that world of art. We may, however, assume of ourselves that for its true creator we are already images and artistic projections, and that our highest dignity lies in our significance as works of art—for only as an *aesthetic phenomenon* are existence and the world eternally *justified*—while our consciousness of this significance of ours is, of course, hardly different from the consciousness that warriors painted on a canvas have of the battle depicted on it. Thus all our knowledge of art is at bottom completely illusory, because as knowers we are not one and identical with that being which, as the sole creator and spectator of that comedy of art, prepares an eternal enjoyment for itself. Only insofar as the genius, in the act of artistic procreation, fuses with that primordial artist of the world does he know anything of the eternal essence of art. For in that state he is, wondrously, like the uncanny image in the fairy tale that can turn its eyes and look at itself; now he is at once subject and object, at once poet, actor and spectator.

FOLK SONG AND THE IMITATION OF MUSIC

In folk song and lyric poetry, language strains to imitate music, which appears as will.

[6] With regard to Archilochus, scholarly research has discovered that he introduced the *folk song* into literature, and that this deed earned him that unique place beside Homer in the general estimation of the Greeks. But what is the folk song, as opposed to the wholly Apollinian epic? What else but the *perpetuum vestigium* [perpetual trace] of a union of the Apollinian and the

Dionysian? Its enormous diffusion, extending over all peoples and increasing in ever new births, testifies to how strong that dual artistic drive of nature is—a drive that leaves its traces in the folk song in the same way that the orgiastic movements of a people perpetuate themselves in its music. Indeed, it should also be possible to show historically that every period highly productive of folk songs has at the same time been stirred most powerfully by Dionysian currents, which we must always regard as the substratum and precondition of the folk song.

The folk song, however, counts for us first and foremost as a musical mirror of the world, as original melody, which now seeks a parallel dream appearance and expresses it in poetry. *Melody is therefore primary and universal*, and so it can also undergo several objectifications, in several texts. In the naive estimation of the people, too, it is by far the more important and necessary element. Melody gives birth to poetry out of itself, and does so again and again: this, and nothing else, is what *the strophic form of the folk song* is telling us—a phenomenon I had always regarded with astonishment until at last I found this explanation. Anyone who examines a collection of folk songs—for example Des Knaben Wunderhorn [The Boy's Magic Horn]—in the light of this theory will find countless examples of how the continually generating melody scatters sparks of images all around it; in their variety, their abrupt changes, indeed their wild tumbling over one another, these reveal a power utterly alien to epic illusion and its calm onward flow. From the standpoint of the epic, this uneven and irregular world of images in lyric poetry is simply to be condemned: and this is surely what the solemn epic rhapsodes of the Apollinian festivals did in the age of Terpander.[21]

In the poetry of the folk song, then, we see language straining to the utmost to *imitate music*. That is why a new world of poetry begins with Archilochus, one that contradicts the Homeric

21 A collection of German folk-song texts edited by Achim von Arnim and Clemens Brentano (1805–08). Terpander of Lesbos (7th century BC), musician and poet active at Sparta.

world at its deepest root. With this we have identified the only possible relation between poetry and music, word and tone: the word, the image, the concept seeks an expression analogous to music and now undergoes in itself the power of music. In this sense we may distinguish two main currents in the history of the Greek language, according to whether language imitated the world of appearances and images or the world of music. Just reflect a little more deeply on the linguistic differences between Homer and Pindar in coloring, syntactic structure and vocabulary, and you will grasp the significance of this opposition. Indeed, it becomes palpably clear that between Homer and Pindar the *orgiastic flute melodies of Olympus* must have sounded—melodies that even in the age of Aristotle, amid an infinitely more developed music, swept people away into drunken enthusiasm, and that in their original effect surely provoked all the poetic means of expression of their contemporaries to imitate them. I would recall here a well-known phenomenon of our own day, one that our aesthetics finds merely objectionable.[22] Again and again we see a Beethoven symphony compel its individual listeners to talk in images, even if a collection of the different image-worlds produced by one piece of music looks quite fantastically motley, indeed contradictory. To exercise their poor wit on such collections and overlook a phenomenon that truly deserves explanation is very much in the manner of that aesthetics. Indeed, even when the composer has spoken of a composition in images—when, say, he calls a symphony pastoral and one movement "Scene by the Brook," another "Merry Gathering of Country Folk"—these too are only symbolic representations born of the music, and not the objects that the music imitates: representations that can teach us nothing whatever about the *Dionysian* content of music, and that indeed have no exclusive value beside other images. We must now transfer this process, in which music discharges itself in images, to a youthful, lin-

22 Olympus: legendary Phrygian flute player, said to have brought the music of the aulos to Greece; Aristotle (*Politics* 8.5) says his melodies fill the soul with enthusiasm.

guistically creative mass of people, if we are to gain an inkling of how the strophic folk song arises, and how the whole faculty of language is stirred up by the new principle of the imitation of music.

If, then, we may regard lyric poetry as music imitatively flashing forth in images and concepts, we can now ask: "As what does music *appear* in the mirror of imagery and concepts?" *It appears as will*, taking the word in Schopenhauer's sense, that is, as the opposite of the aesthetic, purely contemplative, will-less mood. Here one must distinguish as sharply as possible between the concept of essence and that of appearance. For music, in its essence, cannot possibly be will, since as will it would have to be banished from the realm of art altogether—for the will is the unaesthetic as such—but it appears as will. For to express its appearance in images, the lyric poet needs all the stirrings of passion, from the whisper of affection to the roar of madness. Impelled to speak of music in Apollinian likenesses, he understands the whole of nature, and himself within it, only as that which eternally wills, desires, longs. But insofar as he interprets music in images, he himself rests in the still, sea-calm quiet of Apollinian contemplation, however much everything he beholds through the medium of music surges and drives around him. Indeed, when he beholds himself through the same medium, his own image appears to him in a state of unsatisfied feeling: his own willing, longing, groaning, rejoicing is for him a likeness by which he interprets music to himself. This is the phenomenon of the lyric poet: as Apollinian genius he interprets music through the image of the will, while he himself, wholly released from the greed of the will, is a pure, undimmed eye of the sun.

This whole discussion holds firmly that lyric poetry is as dependent on the spirit of music as music itself, in its complete sovereignty, is independent of the image and the concept: it does not *need* them, but merely *tolerates* them beside it. The poetry of the lyric poet can express nothing that did not already lie, in the most tremendous universality and universal validity,

in the music that compelled him to speak in images. That is exactly why language can in no way exhaust the world-symbolism of music: music relates symbolically to the primordial contradiction and primordial pain in the heart of the primordial One, and so symbolizes a sphere that is above all appearance and prior to all appearance. Compared with it, every appearance is rather only a likeness. Hence *language*, as the organ and symbol of appearances, can never and nowhere turn the innermost core of music outward. As soon as it undertakes to imitate music, it always remains only in superficial contact with it, while all the eloquence of lyric poetry cannot bring music's deepest meaning one step closer to us.

THE TRAGIC CHORUS

Tragedy began as the satyr chorus, whose comfort is that life is indestructibly powerful and joyful.

[7] We must now call on all the principles of art discussed so far to help us find our way through the labyrinth—for that is what we must call *the origin of Greek tragedy*. I do not think I am saying anything absurd when I claim that the problem of this origin has not even been seriously posed until now, let alone solved, however often the fluttering tatters of ancient tradition have been stitched together in various combinations and torn apart again. This tradition tells us quite emphatically *that tragedy arose from the tragic chorus* and was originally only chorus and nothing but chorus. From this we derive the obligation to look into the heart of this tragic chorus as the real primordial drama, without in any way contenting ourselves with the current catchphrases of art criticism—that it is the ideal spectator, or that it represents the people over against the princely region of the stage. That last explanation, which sounds sublime to many a politician—as though the democratic Athenians represented the immutable moral law in the popular chorus, which is always proved right against the passionate excesses and extravagances of the kings—may be suggested as strongly as you like by a remark of Aris-

totle's. It has no bearing on the original formation of tragedy, since those purely religious origins exclude the whole opposition between people and prince, indeed any political or social sphere whatever. But even with regard to the classical form of the chorus that we know from Aeschylus and Sophocles, we would consider it blasphemy to speak here of an anticipation of "constitutional representation of the people"—a blasphemy from which others have not shrunk. The ancient constitutions knew no constitutional representation of the people *in praxi* [in practice], and, one hopes, did not even "anticipate" it in their tragedy.

Far more famous than this political explanation of the chorus is the idea of A. W. Schlegel, who recommends that we regard the chorus, in a sense, as the epitome and extract of the crowd of spectators—as the "ideal spectator." This view, taken together with the historical tradition that tragedy was originally only chorus, reveals itself for what it is: a crude, unscholarly, yet brilliant assertion, which owes its brilliance only to its concentrated form of expression, to the genuinely Germanic partiality for everything called "ideal," and to our momentary astonishment. For we are astonished as soon as we compare the theater audience we know so well with that chorus, and ask ourselves whether it could ever be possible to idealize anything analogous to the tragic chorus out of this audience.[23] We tacitly deny this, and are now as surprised at the boldness of Schlegel's assertion as at the totally different nature of the Greek audience. For we had always thought that the proper spectator, whoever he may be, must always remain conscious of having a work of art before him, not an empirical reality; whereas the tragic chorus of the Greeks is compelled to recognize the figures on the stage as living, bodily beings. The chorus of Oceanids really believes it sees the Titan Prometheus before it, and considers itself just as real as the god on the stage. And is this supposed to be the highest and purest kind of spectator—to take Prometheus, like the

23 August Wilhelm Schlegel (1767–1845), critic and translator of Shakespeare; the phrase comes from his *Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature* (1809–11).

Oceanids, as physically present and real?[24] And would it be the mark of the ideal spectator to run onto the stage and free the god from his torments? We had believed in an aesthetic audience, and considered the individual spectator the more capable the more he was able to take the work of art as art, that is, aesthetically; and now Schlegel's expression suggested to us that the perfect, ideal spectator lets the world of the stage act on him not aesthetically at all, but bodily and empirically. Oh, these Greeks! we sighed; they are overturning our aesthetics! But having grown used to it, we repeated Schlegel's dictum whenever the chorus came up.

But that very explicit tradition speaks against Schlegel here: the chorus in itself, without a stage—that is, the primitive form of tragedy—and that chorus of ideal spectators are incompatible. What kind of artistic genre would that be, drawn out of the concept of the spectator, whose true form would have to be the "spectator in himself"? The spectator without a spectacle is an absurd notion. We fear that the birth of tragedy can be explained neither by respect for the moral intelligence of the masses nor by the concept of the spectator without a spectacle, and we consider the problem too deep even to be touched by such shallow modes of consideration.

Schiller had already revealed an infinitely more valuable insight into the meaning of the chorus in the famous preface to *The Bride of Messina*, where he regarded the chorus as a living wall that tragedy draws around itself in order to close itself off completely from the real world and preserve its ideal ground and its poetic freedom.[25]

With this, his chief weapon, Schiller fights against the common concept of the natural, against the illusion commonly demanded of dramatic poetry. Although daylight itself on the stage is only artificial, the architecture only symbolic, and the

24 The Oceanids, daughters of Oceanus, form the chorus of Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound*.

25 Schiller's tragedy of 1803, written with a chorus on the Greek model; its preface is titled "On the Use of the Chorus in Tragedy."

metrical language has an ideal character, error, he says, still prevails in the whole: it is not enough merely to tolerate as a poetic license what is in fact the essence of all poetry. The introduction of the chorus, he says, is the decisive step by which war is openly and honestly declared on every kind of naturalism in art. —It is this kind of view, it seems to me, that our age, which fancies itself superior, dismisses with the catchword "pseudo-idealism." I fear that we, on the other hand, with our present veneration of the natural and the real, have arrived at the opposite pole of all idealism, namely in the region of the waxworks. There is an art in these too, as in certain popular novels of the present day: only let no one torment us with the claim that this art has overcome the "pseudo-idealism" of Schiller and Goethe.

Admittedly, it is an "ideal" ground on which, as Schiller rightly saw, the Greek satyr chorus, the chorus of the original tragedy, is accustomed to walk: a ground raised high above the real paths along which mortals wander. For this chorus the Greek built the suspended scaffolding of a fictitious *state of nature* and placed fictitious *natural beings* upon it. Tragedy grew up on this foundation, and for that very reason, of course, it was spared from the start any painstaking copying of reality. Yet this is no world fantasized arbitrarily into being between heaven and earth. It is rather a world with the same reality and credibility that Olympus and its inhabitants possessed for the believing Hellene. The satyr, as the Dionysian chorus member, lives in a reality granted by religion and sanctioned by myth and cult. That tragedy begins with him, that the Dionysian wisdom of tragedy speaks out of him, is a phenomenon we find just as strange here as the origin of tragedy out of the chorus in general. Perhaps we will gain a point of departure for our inquiry if I put forward the claim that the satyr, the fictitious natural being, stands in the same relation to cultured man as Dionysian music does to civilization. Of civilization, Richard Wagner says that it is canceled out by music as lamplight is by daylight.[26] In the same way, I believe, the cultured Greek felt himself canceled

26 From Wagner's *Beethoven*.

out in the presence of the satyr chorus. And this is the most immediate effect of Dionysian tragedy: the state and society, and in general all the gulfs between one human being and another, give way to an overwhelming feeling of unity that leads back to the heart of nature. Every true tragedy, as I suggest even here, leaves us with the metaphysical comfort that at the ground of things, despite all the changes of appearances, life is indestructibly powerful and full of joy. This comfort appears with bodily clarity as the satyr chorus: as a chorus of natural beings who live on, ineradicably as it were, behind all civilization, and who remain eternally the same despite all the changes of generations and of the history of nations.

With this chorus the profound Hellene comforts himself: he who was uniquely capable of the most delicate and the heaviest suffering, who had looked with a piercing gaze into the very midst of the terrible destructive frenzy of so-called world history, as well as into the cruelty of nature, and who is in danger of longing for a Buddhist negation of the will. Art saves him, and through art—life saves him for itself.

For the rapture of the Dionysian state, with its annihilation of the ordinary bounds and limits of existence, contains, while it lasts, a *lethargic* element in which everything personally experienced in the past is submerged. Thus this gulf of oblivion separates the world of everyday reality from that of Dionysian reality. But as soon as that everyday reality re-enters consciousness, it is felt as such, with nausea; an ascetic, will-negating mood is the fruit of those states. In this sense the Dionysian man resembles Hamlet: both have once cast a true glance into the essence of things, they have *understood*, and action nauseates them. For their action can change nothing in the eternal essence of things; they feel it to be ridiculous or shameful that they should be expected to set right a world that is out of joint. Knowledge kills action; action requires the veil of illusion—that is the lesson of Hamlet, not that cheap wisdom of Hans the Dreamer, who from too much reflection, from an excess of possibilities as it were,

never gets around to acting. Not reflection—no![27] — true knowledge, insight into the horrible truth, outweighs every motive that urges toward action, in Hamlet as well as in the Dionysian man. Now no comfort avails any longer; longing reaches beyond a world after death, beyond the gods themselves; existence is negated, together with its glittering reflection in the gods or in an immortal beyond. Conscious of the truth he has once seen, man now sees everywhere only the horror or absurdity of being; now he understands what is symbolic in Ophelia's fate, now he recognizes the wisdom of Silenus, the god of the woods: he is nauseated.

Here, in this supreme danger to the will, *art* approaches as a saving sorceress, expert in healing. She alone is able to turn those nauseating thoughts about the horror or absurdity of existence into notions with which one can live. These are the *sublime*, as the artistic taming of the horrible, and the *comic*, as the artistic release from the nausea of absurdity. The satyr chorus of the dithyramb is the saving deed of Greek art; the fits I described a moment ago exhausted themselves in the intermediate world of these Dionysian companions.

THE SATYR AND THE VISION ON STAGE

Transformed into satyrs, the chorus beholds the god, and drama arises as its Apollinian vision.

[8] The satyr and the idyllic shepherd of our more recent times are both offspring of a longing for the original and the natural. But with what firm, fearless grip the Greek seized his man of the woods, and how bashfully and softly modern man toys with the flattering image of a tender, flute-playing, gentle-natured shepherd! Nature not yet worked over by any knowledge, in which the bolts of culture are still unbroken—that is what the Greek saw in his satyr, who for that reason did not yet coincide, for him, with the ape. On the contrary: the satyr was the archetype

27 "The time is out of joint" is Hamlet's line (*Hamlet* I.5). "Hans the Dreamer" (*Hans der Träumer*) is a proverbial German name for an idle dreamer.

of man, the expression of his highest and strongest impulses. He was the enthusiastic reveler enraptured by the nearness of the god; the companion who suffers with the god, in whom the god's suffering is repeated; the herald of wisdom from the deepest breast of nature; the emblem of nature's sexual omnipotence, which the Greek is accustomed to contemplate with reverent awe. The satyr was something sublime and divine: so he must have seemed, above all, to the painfully broken gaze of the Dionysian man. The dressed-up, counterfeit shepherd would have offended him. His eye rested with sublime satisfaction on the unveiled, unstunted, magnificent handwriting of nature; here the illusion of culture had been wiped away from the archetype of man, here the true man revealed himself: the bearded satyr, shouting for joy to his god. Before him cultured man shrank to a mendacious caricature. For these beginnings of tragic art, too, Schiller is right: the chorus is a living wall against the onslaught of reality, because it—the satyr chorus—portrays existence more truthfully, more really, more completely than cultured man, who ordinarily regards himself as the only reality. The sphere of poetry does not lie outside the world, as some fantastic impossibility hatched in a poet's brain. It wants to be the very opposite, the unvarnished expression of the truth, and for that very reason it must cast off the mendacious finery of the supposed reality of cultured man. The contrast between this genuine truth of nature and the lie of culture that poses as the only reality is similar to that between the eternal core of things, the thing in itself, and the whole world of appearances. And just as tragedy, with its metaphysical comfort, points to the eternal life of that core of existence amid the continual destruction of appearances, so the symbolism of the satyr chorus already expresses in a parable that primordial relation between thing in itself and appearance. That idyllic shepherd of modern man is only a copy of the sum of cultural illusions that he takes for nature; the Dionysian Greek wants truth and nature in their highest power—he sees himself transformed by magic into a satyr.

Under such moods and insights the reveling throng of Dionysus' votaries shouts for joy; their power transforms the votaries before their own eyes, so that they imagine they behold themselves as restored spirits of nature, as satyrs. The later constitution of the tragic chorus is the artistic imitation of this natural phenomenon, in which, to be sure, a separation between Dionysian spectators and the Dionysian enchanted now became necessary. Only we must always keep in mind that the audience of Attic tragedy found itself again in the chorus of the orchestra, that there was at bottom no opposition between audience and chorus: for everything is only one great sublime chorus of dancing and singing satyrs, or of those who let themselves be represented by these satyrs. Schlegel's dictum must here reveal itself to us in a deeper sense.[28] The chorus is the "ideal spectator" insofar as it is the only *beholder*, the beholder of the visionary world of the stage. An audience of spectators as we know it was unknown to the Greeks. In their theaters, since the auditorium rose in terraces of concentric arcs, everyone could quite literally *overlook* the whole cultured world around him and, gazing his fill, imagine himself a chorus member. In light of this insight we may call the chorus, at its primitive stage in primordial tragedy, a self-reflection of the Dionysian man. This phenomenon is best made clear by the process of the actor who, if he is truly gifted, sees the image of the role he is to play hovering before his eyes, palpable enough to grasp. The satyr chorus is first and foremost a vision of the Dionysian mass, just as the world of the stage is in turn a vision of this satyr chorus. The force of this vision is strong enough to make the eye dull and insensitive to the impression of "reality," to the cultivated people ranged all around on the rows of seats. The form of the Greek theater recalls a lonely mountain valley: the architecture of the stage appears like a luminous cloud formation that the Bacchants, swarming through the mountains, behold from the

28 The orchestra was the circular dancing floor of the Greek theater, where the chorus performed.

heights—the splendid frame in whose midst the image of Dionysus is revealed to them.

The primordial artistic phenomenon we are invoking here to explain the tragic chorus is almost offensive to our scholarly view of the elementary artistic processes. Yet nothing can be more certain than that the poet is a poet only because he sees himself surrounded by figures who live and act before him and into whose innermost being he gazes. Through a peculiar weakness of modern talent we are inclined to imagine the primordial aesthetic phenomenon as too complicated and abstract. For the genuine poet, metaphor is not a rhetorical figure but a substitute image that actually hovers before him in place of a concept. For him a character is not a whole composed of individual traits gathered together, but an insistently living person before his eyes, distinguished from the painter's similar vision only by the fact that it goes on living and acting. Why does Homer describe so much more vividly than all other poets? Because he sees so much more. We talk so abstractly about poetry because we are all usually bad poets. At bottom the aesthetic phenomenon is simple: one need only have the ability to see a living play continually and to live constantly surrounded by throngs of spirits, and one is a poet; one need only feel the urge to transform oneself and to speak out of other bodies and souls, and one is a dramatist.

Dionysian excitement is able to communicate this artistic gift to an entire mass: the gift of seeing itself surrounded by such a throng of spirits, with whom it knows itself inwardly one. This process of the tragic chorus is the *dramatic* primordial phenomenon: to see oneself transformed before one's own eyes and then to act as if one had really entered another body, another character. This process stands at the beginning of the development of drama. Here is something different from the rhapsode, who does not fuse with his images but, like the painter, sees them outside himself with a contemplative eye; here there is already a surrender of the individual through entering into an alien nature. And this phenomenon occurs as an epidemic: a

whole throng feels itself enchanted in this way. The dithyramb is therefore essentially different from every other choral song. The maidens who proceed solemnly to the temple of Apollo with laurel branches in their hands, singing a processional song, remain who they are and keep their civic names. The dithyrambic chorus is a chorus of the transformed, whose civic past and social position are completely forgotten: they have become the timeless servants of their god, living outside every sphere of society. All the other choral lyric of the Hellenes is only an enormous intensification of the Apollinian solo singer, whereas in the dithyramb we have before us a community of unconscious actors who regard one another as transformed.

Enchantment is the precondition of all dramatic art. In this enchantment the Dionysian reveler sees himself as a satyr, *and as a satyr, in turn, he beholds the god*: that is, in his transformation he sees a new vision outside himself, as the Apollinian completion of his state. With this new vision the drama is complete.

In light of this insight we must understand Greek tragedy as the Dionysian chorus that again and again discharges itself anew in an Apollinian world of images. The choral parts with which tragedy is interwoven are thus, in a sense, the womb of the whole so-called dialogue, that is, of the entire world of the stage, the drama proper. In several successive discharges this primordial ground of tragedy radiates that vision of the drama. The vision is wholly a dream appearance and to that extent epic in nature; on the other hand, as the objectification of a Dionysian state, it represents not Apollinian redemption in illusion but, on the contrary, the shattering of the individual and his becoming one with primordial being. Thus the drama is the Apollinian embodiment of Dionysian insights and effects, and is thereby separated from epic as by an enormous gulf.

The *chorus* of Greek tragedy, the symbol of the whole mass in Dionysian excitement, finds its full explanation in this view of ours. Accustomed as we were to the position of a chorus on the modern stage, especially an opera chorus, we could not grasp at all how that tragic chorus of the Greeks could be older, more ori-

ginal, indeed more important than the "action" proper—though tradition told us so plainly that it was. Nor could we reconcile that traditional high importance and originality with the fact that the chorus was composed only of lowly serving beings, indeed at first only of goatlike satyrs. And the orchestra in front of the stage always remained a riddle to us. Now we have come to realize that the stage, together with the action, was at bottom and originally conceived only as a *vision*; that the only "reality" is precisely the chorus, which generates the vision out of itself and speaks of it with the whole symbolism of dance, tone and word. In its vision this chorus beholds its lord and master Dionysus, and is therefore eternally the *serving* chorus: it sees how he, the god, suffers and is glorified, and therefore does not itself *act*. Yet in this position of complete service toward the god, it is the highest—that is, the Dionysian—expression of *nature*, and therefore, like nature, it utters oracles and words of wisdom in its inspiration: as the one who *suffers with* the god, it is at the same time the *wise* one, proclaiming the truth from the heart of the world. So arises that fantastic and seemingly so offensive figure of the wise and inspired satyr, who is at the same time "the simple fool" in contrast to the god: an image of nature and her strongest drives, indeed a symbol of them, and at the same time the herald of her wisdom and art—musician, poet, dancer, seer of spirits in *one* person.[29]

According to this insight and according to tradition, *Dionysus*, the actual stage hero and center of the vision, is at first, in the very oldest period of tragedy, not really present but only imagined as present: that is, originally tragedy is only "chorus" and not "drama." Later the attempt is made to show the god as real and to present the visionary figure, together with its transfiguring frame, as visible to every eye: with this, "drama" in the narrower sense begins. Now the dithyrambic chorus is given the task of exciting the mood of the listeners to such a Dionysian pitch that, when the tragic hero appears on the stage, they do

29 Nietzsche uses the old German word "tumb" (simple, guileless), familiar from medieval poetry such as Wolfram's *Parzival*.

not see the awkwardly masked man but a visionary figure born, as it were, of their own rapture. Let us imagine Admetus, lost in deep thought, remembering his recently departed wife Alcestis and wholly consumed in contemplating her in his mind—when suddenly a veiled female figure of similar form and similar gait is led toward him. Let us imagine his sudden trembling unrest, his stormy comparing, his instinctive conviction—and we have an analogue to the feeling with which the spectator in Dionysian excitement saw the god approaching on the stage, the god with whose suffering he had already become one. Involuntarily he transferred the whole image of the god, trembling magically before his soul, onto that masked figure, and dissolved its reality, as it were, into a ghostly unreality.[30] This is the Apollinian dream state, in which the world of day is veiled and a new world—clearer, more intelligible, more moving than that one, and yet more shadowlike—is born anew before our eyes in constant change. Accordingly we recognize in tragedy a thoroughgoing contrast of styles: language, color, mobility and dynamics of speech separate into completely distinct spheres of expression, in the Dionysian lyric of the chorus on the one hand and in the Apollinian dream world of the stage on the other. The Apollinian appearances in which Dionysus objectifies himself are no longer "an eternal sea, a changing weaving, a glowing life," as the music of the chorus is; no longer those forces, only felt and not condensed into an image, in which the inspired votary of Dionysus senses the nearness of the god. Now, from the stage, the clarity and firmness of epic form speak to him; now Dionysus no longer speaks through forces but as an epic hero, almost in the language of Homer.[31]

30 In Euripides' *Alcestis*, Heracles brings the veiled Alcestis back from death to her husband Admetus.

31 The words of the Earth Spirit in Goethe's *Faust*, Part One ("Night").

OEDIPUS AND PROMETHEUS

The myths behind Sophocles' Oedipus and Aeschylus' Prometheus treat wisdom and sacrilege as the source of suffering.

[9] Everything that comes to the surface in the Apollinian part of Greek tragedy, in the dialogue, looks simple, transparent, beautiful. In this sense the dialogue is an image of the Hellene, whose nature reveals itself in the dance, because in the dance the greatest strength is only potential, yet betrays itself in the suppleness and exuberance of movement. So the language of Sophocles' heroes surprises us with its Apollinian definiteness and brightness, so that we imagine we are looking straight into the innermost ground of their being—somewhat astonished that the way to this ground is so short. But suppose we set aside the hero's character as it comes to the surface and becomes visible—which is at bottom nothing more than a light-image cast on a dark wall, that is, appearance through and through. Suppose we penetrate instead into the myth that projects itself in these bright reflections: then we suddenly experience a phenomenon that stands in an inverse relation to a familiar optical one. When, after a strenuous attempt to look straight at the sun, we turn away dazzled, we have dark colored spots before our eyes, as a remedy, so to speak. Conversely, those light-image appearances of the Sophoclean hero—in short, the Apollinian quality of the mask—are the necessary products of a glance into the inner, terrible depths of nature: luminous spots, as it were, to heal the gaze wounded by gruesome night. Only in this sense may we believe we are rightly grasping the serious and significant concept of "Greek cheerfulness"; whereas the misunderstood concept of this cheerfulness, as a state of untroubled comfort, is admittedly something we meet everywhere we turn in the present day.

The most sorrowful figure of the Greek stage, the unhappy *Oedipus*, was understood by Sophocles as the noble human being who, despite his wisdom, is destined for error and misery, but

who in the end, through his enormous suffering, exerts around him a magical, beneficent power that remains effective even beyond his death. The noble human being does not sin, the profound poet wants to tell us: through his action every law, every natural order, indeed the moral world itself may perish, yet precisely through this action a higher magic circle of effects is drawn, which found a new world on the ruins of the old one that has been overthrown. That is what the poet wants to tell us, insofar as he is at the same time a religious thinker. As a poet, he first shows us a wonderfully tied knot of a trial, which the judge slowly unties, link by link, to his own ruin. The genuinely Hellenic delight in this dialectical solution is so great that a trait of superior cheerfulness passes over the whole work, everywhere breaking the point off the dreadful premises of that trial. In *Oedipus at Colonus* we meet this same cheerfulness, but raised into an infinite transfiguration. Facing the old man struck by an excess of misery, who is abandoned purely as a *sufferer* to everything that befalls him—there stands the unearthly cheerfulness that descends from the divine sphere and intimates to us that the hero, in his purely passive conduct, attains his highest activity, one that reaches far beyond his life, whereas his conscious striving and scheming in his earlier life led him only to passivity. Thus the knot of the Oedipus story, inextricably tangled to mortal eyes, is slowly unraveled—and the deepest human joy comes over us at this divine counterpart of dialectic. If we have done justice to the poet with this explanation, it may still be asked whether it exhausts the content of the myth. And here it turns out that the poet's whole conception is nothing but that very light-image which healing nature holds up before us after a glance into the abyss. Oedipus the murderer of his father, the husband of his mother, Oedipus the solver of the Sphinx's riddle! What does the mysterious triad of these fateful deeds tell us? There is an ancient popular belief, especially Persian, that a wise magus can be born only of incest. In view of Oedipus, who solves the riddle and marries his mother, we must at once interpret this as follows: wherever prophetic and magical powers

have broken the spell of present and future, the rigid law of individuation and indeed the very magic of nature, an enormous violation of nature—like incest in that case—must have preceded it as its cause. For how could one force nature to surrender her secrets, if not by triumphantly resisting her, that is, through the unnatural? I see this insight imprinted in that terrible triad of the fates of Oedipus: the same man who solves the riddle of nature—that double-natured Sphinx—must also, as murderer of his father and husband of his mother, shatter the most sacred orders of nature. Indeed, the myth seems to want to whisper to us that wisdom, and precisely Dionysian wisdom, is an abomination against nature; that whoever plunges nature into the abyss of annihilation through his knowledge must also experience in himself the dissolution of nature. "The point of wisdom turns against the wise; wisdom is a crime against nature": such terrible sentences the myth calls out to us. But the Hellenic poet touches the sublime and fearful Memnon's column of the myth like a ray of sunlight, so that it suddenly begins to sound—in Sophoclean melodies![32]

Against the glory of passivity I now set the glory of activity that shines around the *Prometheus* of Aeschylus. What the thinker Aeschylus had to tell us here, but what as a poet he only lets us sense through his allegorical image, the young Goethe managed to reveal to us in the bold words of his "Prometheus":[33]

> "Here I sit, forming men
> In my own image,
> A race that shall be like me,
> To suffer, to weep,
> To enjoy and to rejoice,
> And to pay no heed to you,
> As I do!"

Man, rising to titanic stature, wins his own culture by struggle and forces the gods to ally themselves with him,

32 The Colossi of Memnon near Thebes in Egypt; one of the statues was said to sing when struck by the rays of the rising sun.
33 Goethe's ode "Prometheus" (1774), in which the Titan defies Zeus.

because in his own wisdom he holds their existence and their limits in his hand. But the most wonderful thing about that Prometheus poem, which in its basic idea is the veritable hymn of impiety, is the profoundly Aeschylean yearning for *justice*. On the one hand, the immeasurable suffering of the bold "individual"; on the other, the plight of the gods, indeed a presentiment of a twilight of the gods; the power of those two worlds of suffering, compelling them to reconciliation, to metaphysical oneness—all this recalls most strongly the center and main tenet of the Aeschylean view of the world, which sees Moira enthroned above gods and men as eternal justice. Given the astonishing boldness with which Aeschylus places the Olympian world on the scales of his justice, we must remember that the profound Greek had an immovably firm foundation of metaphysical thought in his mysteries, and that all his skeptical moods could be discharged upon the Olympians. The Greek artist in particular had an obscure feeling of mutual dependence with regard to the gods, and precisely in the *Prometheus* of Aeschylus this feeling is symbolized. The titanic artist found in himself the defiant belief that he could create men and at least destroy Olympian gods—and this through his higher wisdom, for which, to be sure, he was compelled to atone by eternal suffering. The glorious "ability" of the great genius, for which even eternal suffering is too small a price, the bitter pride of the *artist*—that is the content and soul of Aeschylus' poetry, while Sophocles in his *Oedipus* strikes up, as a prelude, the victory song of the *saint*. But even the interpretation Aeschylus gave the myth does not fathom its astonishing depth of terror. Rather, the artist's joy in becoming, the cheerfulness of artistic creation that defies every calamity, is only a bright image of clouds and sky mirrored in a black lake of sadness. The Prometheus legend is an original possession of the entire Aryan community of peoples and a document of their gift for the profoundly tragic. Indeed, it would not be improbable that this myth holds for the Aryan character the same characteristic significance that the myth of the Fall holds for the Semitic, and that the two myths

are related in the degree of brother and sister. The presupposition of the Prometheus myth is the extravagant value that a naive humanity attaches to *fire* as the true palladium of every rising culture. But that man should freely command fire, and not merely receive it as a gift from heaven, as the kindling lightning bolt or the warming blaze of the sun, seemed to those contemplative primordial men a sacrilege, a robbery committed against divine nature.[34] And so the very first philosophical problem at once sets up a painful, insoluble contradiction between man and god and rolls it like a boulder before the gate of every culture. The best and highest that humanity can partake of it wins through a sacrilege, and must then accept the consequences in turn: namely, the whole flood of sufferings and sorrows with which the offended heavenly powers afflict—must afflict—the nobly aspiring human race. This is a bitter thought, and through the *dignity* it confers on sacrilege it contrasts strangely with the Semitic myth of the Fall, in which curiosity, deceptive pretense, susceptibility to seduction, lasciviousness—in short, a series of predominantly feminine affects—were regarded as the origin of evil. What distinguishes the Aryan conception is the sublime view of *active sin* as the genuinely Promethean virtue. With this the ethical foundation of pessimistic tragedy has also been found: as the *justification* of human evil, that is, of human guilt as well as of the suffering it incurs. The calamity in the essence of things—which the contemplative Aryan is not inclined to explain away—the contradiction at the heart of the world reveals itself to him as a tangle of different worlds, for instance a divine and a human one, each of which is in the right as an individual, but which, as a single world beside another, must suffer for its individuation. In the heroic urge of the individual toward the universal, in the attempt to stride beyond the spell of individuation and to want to be the one essence of the world oneself, the individual suffers in himself the primordial contradiction hidden in things: that is, he commits sacri-

34 "Aryan" is the 19th-century philologists' term for the Indo-European peoples; "Semitic" likewise names a family of languages and their peoples.

lege and suffers. Thus the Aryans understand sacrilege as a man, the Semites understand sin as a woman, just as the original sacrilege is committed by man and original sin by woman. Incidentally, the chorus of witches says:[35]

> "We don't take it so exactly:
> The woman does it in a thousand steps;
> But however she may hurry,
> The man does it in a single leap."[36]

Whoever understands that innermost core of the Prometheus legend—namely, the necessity of sacrilege imposed on the titanically striving individual—must also feel at once how un-Apollinian this pessimistic conception is. For Apollo wants to bring individual beings to rest precisely by drawing boundary lines between them, and by reminding them again and again, with his demands for self-knowledge and measure, of these lines as the most sacred laws of the world. But lest this Apollinian tendency freeze form into Egyptian stiffness and coldness, lest the movement of the whole lake die away in the effort to prescribe to each wave its course and its domain, the high tide of the Dionysian destroyed from time to time all those little circles in which the one-sidedly Apollinian "will" sought to confine the Hellenic world. That suddenly swelling tide of the Dionysian then takes the little wave crests of individuals on its back, as Prometheus' brother, the Titan Atlas, carries the earth. This titanic urge to become, as it were, the Atlas of all individuals, and to carry them on a broad back ever higher and ever farther, is what the Promethean and the Dionysian have in common. In this respect the Aeschylean Prometheus is a Dionysian mask, while in that profound yearning for justice mentioned a moment ago Aeschylus betrays to the discerning his paternal descent from Apollo, the god of individuation and of the boundaries of justice. And so the double nature of Aeschylus' Prometheus, his nature at once Dionysian and Apollinian, might be

35 The play is on grammatical gender: German "der Frevel" (sacrilege) is masculine, "die Sünde" (sin) feminine.
36 Goethe, *Faust*, Part One, "Walpurgis Night."

expressed in a conceptual formula thus: "Everything that exists is just and unjust, and equally justified in both."

That is your world! That is what they call a world! —[37]

DIONYSUS BEHIND THE MASKS

Every tragic hero is a mask of the suffering Dionysus; with Euripides, myth and music die.

[10] It is an incontestable tradition that Greek tragedy in its oldest form had as its subject only the sufferings of Dionysus, and that for a long time the only stage hero was Dionysus himself. But it may be claimed with equal certainty that until Euripides, Dionysus never ceased to be the tragic hero, and that all the celebrated figures of the Greek stage, Prometheus, Oedipus and so on, are only masks of that original hero, Dionysus. That a deity lies hidden behind all these masks is the one essential reason for the typical "ideality," so often marveled at, of those celebrated figures. Someone—I don't know who—has claimed that all individuals, as individuals, are comic and thus untragic; from which one might infer that the Greeks simply *could* not bear individuals on the tragic stage. And indeed they seem to have felt this way, just as in general that Platonic distinction and valuation of the "Idea" as opposed to the "idol," the copy, is deeply rooted in the Hellenic character. But to use Plato's terminology, one would have to speak of the tragic figures of the Hellenic stage roughly as follows: the one truly real Dionysus appears in a multiplicity of figures, in the mask of a struggling hero, and entangled, as it were, in the net of the individual will.[38] As the god who appears now speaks and acts, he resembles an erring, striving, suffering individual. And that he *appears* at all with this epic definiteness and clarity is the work of Apollo, the interpreter of dreams, who interprets to the chorus its Dionysian

37 Faust's bitter words about his cramped study in Goethe's *Faust*, Part One ("Night").

38 "Idol" here renders the Greek *eidōlon*, an image or copy, as opposed to the Platonic Idea.

state through this allegorical appearance. In truth, however, that hero is the suffering Dionysus of the mysteries, the god who experiences in himself the sufferings of individuation. Wonderful myths tell how as a boy he was torn to pieces by the Titans and is now worshiped in this state as Zagreus. This suggests that this dismemberment, the genuinely Dionysian *suffering*, is like a transformation into air, water, earth and fire, and so that we are to regard the state of individuation as the source and primordial ground of all suffering, as something reprehensible in itself. From the smile of this Dionysus the Olympian gods arose, from his tears human beings. In that existence as the dismembered god, Dionysus has the double nature of a cruel, savage demon and a mild, gentle ruler.[39] But the hope of the epopts was directed toward a rebirth of Dionysus, which we must now, full of presentiment, understand as the end of individuation: it was to this coming third Dionysus that the roaring hymn of jubilation of the epopts rang out. And only in this hope is there a ray of joy on the face of the world, torn apart and shattered into individuals. The myth depicts this through Demeter, sunk in eternal mourning, who *rejoices* again for the first time when she is told that she can give birth to Dionysus *once more*.[40] In the views just set forth we already have all the components of a profound and pessimistic view of the world, and with it *the mystery doctrine of tragedy*: the basic insight into the unity of all that exists, the view of individuation as the primordial ground of evil, and art as the joyful hope that the spell of individuation can be broken, as the presentiment of a restored unity. —

It was suggested earlier that the Homeric epic is the poetry of Olympian culture, in which that culture sang its own song of victory over the terrors of the battle with the Titans. Now, under the overwhelming influence of tragic poetry, the Homeric myths are born anew, and in this metempsychosis they show that

39 In Orphic myth, Zagreus is the child Dionysus torn apart by the Titans and reborn.

40 Epopts ("beholders") were initiates of the highest grade in the Eleusinian mysteries.

Olympian culture, too, has meanwhile been vanquished by a still deeper view of the world. The defiant Titan Prometheus announced to his Olympian tormentor that one day the gravest danger would threaten his rule unless he allied himself with the Titan in good time. In Aeschylus we recognize the alliance of the frightened Zeus, fearful of his end, with the Titan. Thus the earlier age of the Titans is belatedly brought back from Tartarus into the light. The philosophy of wild and naked nature looks with the unveiled face of truth at the myths of the Homeric world as they dance past: they grow pale, they tremble before the lightning eye of this goddess—until the mighty fist of the Dionysian artist forces them into the service of the new deity. Dionysian truth takes over the entire domain of myth as the symbolism of *its* insights, and expresses them partly in the public cult of tragedy, partly in the secret rites of dramatic mystery festivals, but always under the old mythical veil. What power was it that freed Prometheus from his vultures and transformed myth into a vehicle of Dionysian wisdom? It is the Heraclean power of music, which, having reached its highest manifestation in tragedy, knows how to interpret myth with a new and most profound significance—as we already had occasion to characterize this earlier as music's mightiest faculty. For it is the fate of every myth to creep gradually into the narrow confines of a supposedly historical reality and to be treated by some later age as a unique fact with historical claims. And the Greeks were already well on their way to restamping, with ingenuity and arbitrariness, their whole mythical dream of youth into a historical-pragmatic *history of their youth*. For this is the way religions usually die: when, namely, the mythical presuppositions of a religion are systematized, under the strict, rationalistic eyes of an orthodox dogmatism, into a finished sum of historical events, and people begin anxiously to defend the credibility of the myths while resisting any natural further life and growth on their part—when, that is, the feeling for myth dies away and its place is taken by the religion's claim to historical foundations. This dying myth was now seized by the newborn genius of

Dionysian music, and in its hands the myth blossomed once more, with colors such as it had never yet shown, with a fragrance that stirred a longing presentiment of a metaphysical world. After this last flare it collapses, its leaves wilt, and soon the mocking Lucians of antiquity snatch at the faded and ravaged flowers carried off by every wind. Through tragedy myth attains its most profound content, its most expressive form; once more it rises up like a wounded hero, and the whole surplus of strength, together with the wise calm of the dying, burns in its eye with a last, mighty radiance.[41]

What did you want, sacrilegious Euripides, when you tried once more to force this dying hero into your servitude? He died under your violent hands; and now you needed a counterfeit, masked myth, which, like the ape of Heracles, only knew how to deck itself out in the old pomp. And just as myth died on you, so did the genius of music: though you might plunder all the gardens of music with greedy hands, even so you managed only a counterfeit, masked music.[42] And because you had abandoned Dionysus, Apollo abandoned you too. Rouse all the passions from their lairs and conjure them into your circle, sharpen and file a sophistical dialectic for the speeches of your heroes—your heroes, too, have only imitated, masked passions and speak only imitated, masked speeches.

41 Lucian of Samosata (2nd century AD), satirist who mocked the gods and myths.
42 Proverbial for a poor imitator dressed in borrowed grandeur, like an ape in Heracles' lion skin.

Sections 11–15: The Death of Tragedy

Die Geburt der Tragödie aus dem Geiste der Musik, 11–15
Tragedy dies at the hands of Euripides and his daemon, Socrates, the type of theoretical man.

[11] Greek tragedy perished differently from all the older sister genres of art: it died by suicide, as the result of an insoluble conflict—that is, tragically—while all those others passed away in ripe old age, dying the most beautiful and peaceful of deaths. For if it accords with a happy state of nature to depart from life leaving fine offspring and without convulsions, then the end of those older genres shows us such a happy state of nature: they sink slowly out of sight, and before their dying eyes their fairer progeny already stands, impatiently lifting its head with a bold gesture. With the death of Greek tragedy, on the other hand, there arose an immense void, deeply felt everywhere. Once, in the time of Tiberius, Greek sailors heard on a lonely island the harrowing cry "Great Pan is dead"; just so, a painful lament now rang through the Hellenic world: "Tragedy is dead! Poetry itself has perished with her! Away, away with you, you stunted, emaciated epigones! Away to Hades, so that there, for once, you can eat your fill of your former masters' crumbs!"[1]

But when a new art form did after all come into bloom, one that revered tragedy as its predecessor and mistress, it was noticed with horror that it did indeed bear its mother's features—but the ones she had shown in her long death struggle. It was *Euripides* who fought this death struggle of tragedy; that later art

1 The story is told by Plutarch (*On the Obsolescence of Oracles*); Tiberius reigned AD 14–37.

form is known as *New Attic Comedy*. In it the degenerate form of tragedy lived on, as a monument to its exceedingly laborious and violent passing.[2]

Given this connection, the passionate affection that the poets of New Comedy felt for Euripides is easy to understand. Nor are we any longer surprised by the wish of Philemon, who would gladly have been hanged then and there just to be able to visit Euripides in the underworld, if only he could be sure that the dead man was still in his right mind even now. But if we want to say, very briefly and without claiming to be exhaustive, what Euripides has in common with Menander and Philemon, and what made him so excitingly exemplary for them, it is enough to say that Euripides brought *the spectator* onto the stage.[3] Anyone who has recognized what material the Promethean tragedians before Euripides used to form their heroes, and how far it was from their intention to put a faithful mask of reality on the stage, will also be clear about Euripides' entirely different tendency. Through him the man of everyday life pushed his way out of the auditorium and onto the stage. The mirror that had formerly shown only the great and bold features now showed that painstaking fidelity which conscientiously reproduces even nature's botched lines. Odysseus, the typical Hellene of the older art, now sank in the hands of the newer poets to the figure of the Graeculus [little Greek], who from then on stands at the center of dramatic interest as the good-natured, crafty house slave.[4] What Euripides, in Aristophanes' *Frogs*, counts to his credit—that with his household remedies he freed the tragic art from its pompous corpulence—is felt above all in his tragic heroes. In essence the spectator now saw and heard his double on the Euripidean stage, and was delighted that this double knew how to talk so well. But it did not stop at delight: people learned to talk from Euripides themselves. He boasts of this in his contest with

2 New Attic Comedy: the comedy of manners of the late 4th and 3rd centuries BC, with stock characters and intrigue plots.

3 Philemon (c. 362–262 BC) and Menander (c. 342–290 BC) were the leading poets of New Comedy; Philemon's wish survives as a fragment.

4 Graeculus: Roman diminutive, used with contempt for the clever, servile Greek.

Aeschylus: through him, he says, the people have now learned to observe, to debate and to draw conclusions artfully and with the slyest sophistries. Through this revolution in public language he made New Comedy possible in the first place.[5] For from now on it was no longer a secret how, and with what maxims, everyday life could represent itself on the stage. Middle-class mediocrity, on which Euripides built all his political hopes, now had its say, whereas until then the character of the language had been set in tragedy by the demigod and in comedy by the drunken satyr or the half-man. And so Aristophanes' Euripides stresses, in his own praise, that he portrayed common, familiar, everyday life and doings, which everyone is competent to judge. If the whole mass of people now philosophized, managed land and property with unheard-of shrewdness and conducted their own lawsuits, this was his doing, the result of the wisdom he had inoculated into the people.

It was to a mass prepared and enlightened in this way that New Comedy could now address itself, and for it Euripides became, as it were, the chorus master—only this time it was the chorus of spectators that had to be trained. As soon as this chorus had been drilled in singing in the Euripidean key, there arose that chess-like genre of drama, New Comedy, with its perpetual triumph of cunning and slyness. But Euripides—the chorus master—was praised without end: indeed, people would have killed themselves to learn still more from him, had they not known that the tragic poets were just as dead as tragedy. But with tragedy the Hellene had given up his belief in his immortality: not only the belief in an ideal past, but also the belief in an ideal future. The line from the well-known epitaph, "as an old man, frivolous and crotchety," applies to Hellenism in its old age as well. The moment, wit, levity, whim are its highest deities; the fifth estate, that of the slave, now comes to power, at least in its cast of mind. And if one may still speak of "Greek cheerfulness" at all, it is the cheerfulness of the slave, who has nothing

5 In Aristophanes' comedy *Frogs* (405 BC), Dionysus goes down to Hades and judges a contest between Aeschylus and Euripides.

weighty to answer for, nothing great to strive for, and knows of nothing past or future that he values more highly than the present.[6] It was this semblance of "Greek cheerfulness" that so outraged the profound and fearsome natures of the first four centuries of Christianity: to them this soft flight from seriousness and terror, this cowardly contentment with comfortable pleasure, seemed—not only contemptible, but the truly anti-Christian cast of mind. And it is to their influence that we must attribute the fact that the view of Greek antiquity, which lived on through the centuries, clung with almost insuperable tenacity to that pale pink color of cheerfulness—as if there had never been a sixth century BC with its birth of tragedy, its Mysteries, its Pythagoras and Heraclitus; indeed, as if the artworks of the great age did not exist at all. Yet each of these works, taken by itself, simply cannot be explained from the soil of such a senile and slavish pleasure in existence and cheerfulness, and each points to an entirely different view of the world as the ground of its existence.

If it was just claimed that Euripides brought the spectator onto the stage so as, at the same time, to make the spectator truly capable of judging drama for the first time, it may look as if the older tragic art had never emerged from a false relation to the spectator. And one might be tempted to praise Euripides' radical tendency to achieve a proper relation between artwork and public as an advance beyond Sophocles. But "public" is only a word, and by no means a homogeneous and constant quantity. Why should the artist be obliged to accommodate himself to a power whose strength lies only in numbers? And if, in his gifts and his aims, he feels himself above every single one of these spectators, how could he feel more respect for the collective expression of all these capacities beneath him than for the relatively most gifted individual spectator? In truth no Greek artist, throughout a long life, treated his public with greater audacity and self-sufficiency than Euripides. Even when the masses

6 The epitaph is Goethe's short poem "Grabschrift" ("Epitaph"), which runs through the ages of a man's life.

threw themselves at his feet, he publicly, in sublime defiance, slapped his own tendency in the face—the very tendency with which he had conquered the masses. Had this genius had the slightest reverence for the pandemonium of the public, he would have collapsed under the cudgel blows of his failures long before the middle of his career. Considering this, we see that our formulation—that Euripides brought the spectator onto the stage in order to make the spectator truly capable of judgment—was only provisional, and that we must look for a deeper understanding of his tendency. Conversely, it is common knowledge that Aeschylus and Sophocles enjoyed the full favor of the people throughout their lives, and indeed long after; so that with these predecessors of Euripides there can be no question of a false relation between artwork and public. What drove this richly gifted artist, ceaselessly impelled to create, so forcibly off the path above which shone the sun of the greatest poets' names and the cloudless sky of popular favor? What strange regard for the spectator set him against the spectator? How could he, out of too great a respect for his public—disrespect his public?

Euripides—this is the solution to the riddle just posed—felt himself as a poet to be above the masses, but not above two of his spectators. The masses he brought onto the stage; those two spectators he revered as the only competent judges and masters of all his art. Following their directions and admonitions, he transferred into the souls of his stage heroes the whole world of feelings, passions and experiences that until then had turned up on the spectators' benches at every festival performance as an invisible chorus. He yielded to their demands when he sought a new word and a new tone for these new characters as well. In their voices alone he heard the valid verdicts on his work, and also the encouragement that promised victory whenever he saw himself condemned once again by the public's tribunal.

Of these two spectators, one is—Euripides himself, Euripides *as thinker*, not as poet. Of him one could say that the extraordinary abundance of his critical talent, as with Lessing, had, if not produced, then at least continually fertilized a productive

artistic side-drive. With this gift, with all the clarity and agility of his critical thinking, Euripides had sat in the theater and strained to make out again, feature by feature and line by line, the masterpieces of his great predecessors, as one might with paintings that have darkened. And here he had met with something that cannot come as a surprise to anyone initiated into the deeper mysteries of Aeschylean tragedy: he perceived something incommensurable in every feature and every line, a certain deceptive definiteness and at the same time a mysterious depth, indeed an infinity, in the background.[7] Even the clearest figure still trailed a comet's tail that seemed to point into the uncertain, the impenetrable. The same twilight lay over the structure of the drama, especially over the meaning of the chorus. And how doubtful the solution of the ethical problems remained to him! How questionable the treatment of the myths! How uneven the distribution of good and bad fortune! Even in the language of the older tragedy he found much that was offensive, or at least puzzling; in particular he found too much pomp for simple situations, too many tropes and monstrosities for the plainness of the characters. So he sat in the theater, brooding restlessly, and he, the spectator, admitted to himself that he did not understand his great predecessors. But since he regarded the intellect as the true root of all enjoyment and all creation, he had to ask and look around to see whether anyone else thought as he did and likewise admitted that incommensurability. But the many, and with them the best individuals, had only a mistrustful smile for him; and none of them could explain to him why the great masters were nevertheless in the right against his doubts and objections. And in this tormented state he found *the other spectator*, who did not comprehend tragedy and therefore did not respect it. Allied with him, he could venture out of his isolation and begin the tremendous struggle against the works of Aeschylus and Sophocles—not with

7 Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729–1781), German dramatist and critic, who said that his plays owed more to criticism than to genius.

polemical pamphlets, but as a dramatic poet who sets *his* conception of tragedy against the traditional one. —

EURIPIDES AND AESTHETIC SOCRATISM

Euripides drives Dionysus from tragedy, and his ally, the other spectator, is Socrates.

12 Before we call this other spectator by name, let us pause here for a moment to recall the impression, described earlier, of something divided and incommensurable in the very nature of Aeschylean tragedy. Let us think of our own bewilderment before the *chorus* and the *tragic hero* of that tragedy, neither of which we could reconcile with our habits any more than with tradition—until we rediscovered that very duality as the origin and essence of Greek tragedy, as the expression of two interwoven artistic drives, *the Apollinian and the Dionysian*.

To cut that original and all-powerful Dionysian element out of tragedy, and to rebuild tragedy purely and afresh on un-Dionysian art, custom and view of the world—this is the tendency of Euripides that now reveals itself to us in full light.

In the evening of his life Euripides himself put the question of the value and meaning of this tendency to his contemporaries, with the greatest emphasis, in a myth. Should the Dionysian be allowed to exist at all? Must it not be forcibly rooted out of Hellenic soil? Certainly, the poet tells us, if only it were possible: but the god Dionysus is too powerful. The most intelligent opponent—like Pentheus in the *Bacchae*—is unexpectedly bewitched by him, and afterward, under this spell, runs headlong to his doom.[8] The judgment of the two old men, Cadmus and Tiresias, seems also to be the judgment of the old poet: the reflection of the cleverest individuals does not overturn those ancient popular traditions, that eternally self-perpetuating worship of Dionysus. Indeed, in the face of such marvelous powers

8 In Euripides' *Bacchae* (staged after his death, c. 405 BC), Pentheus, king of Thebes, resists the new god and is torn apart by the maenads, his own mother among them.

it is fitting to show at least a diplomatically cautious participation—though it is still possible that the god will take offense at such lukewarm involvement and in the end turn the diplomat—as he does Cadmus here—into a dragon.[9] This is what we are told by the poet who had resisted Dionysus with heroic strength throughout a long life—only to end his career with a glorification of his adversary and a suicide, like a man seized by vertigo who throws himself from a tower just to escape the horrible whirling he can no longer bear. That tragedy is a protest against the feasibility of his tendency; alas, and it had already been carried out! The marvel had happened: when the poet recanted, his tendency had already triumphed. Dionysus had already been chased from the tragic stage, and by a daemonic power speaking through Euripides. In a certain sense Euripides too was only a mask: the deity that spoke through him was not Dionysus, nor Apollo, but an altogether newborn daemon called *Socrates*. This is the new opposition: the Dionysian and the Socratic; and the artwork of Greek tragedy perished of it. Euripides may try to console us with his recantation, but he does not succeed: the most splendid temple lies in ruins. What use to us is the destroyer's lament, and his confession that it was the most beautiful of all temples? And even the fact that Euripides has been turned into a dragon, as punishment, by the critics of every age—whom could this miserable compensation satisfy?

Let us now approach that *Socratic* tendency with which Euripides fought and defeated Aeschylean tragedy.

What goal—so we must now ask ourselves—could the Euripidean intention of founding drama solely on the un-Dionysian possibly have had, if carried out in its highest ideality? What form of drama was left, if it was not to be born from the womb of music, in that mysterious twilight of the Dionysian? Only *the dramatized epic*: an Apollinian domain of art in which, to be sure, the *tragic* effect is unattainable. The content of the events por-

9 Cadmus, Pentheus' grandfather, and the seer Tiresias join the god's rites out of prudence; at the end Dionysus foretells that Cadmus will become a *drakōn*, a serpent or dragon.

trayed is not what matters here. Indeed, I would claim that Goethe, in his projected "Nausicaa," would have found it impossible to make the suicide of that idyllic creature—which was to fill the fifth act—tragically moving. So extraordinary is the power of the epic-Apollinian that it transfigures the most terrible things before our eyes with that delight in illusion and redemption through illusion. The poet of the dramatic epic can no more fuse completely with his images than the epic rhapsode can: he remains calm, unmoved contemplation, gazing with wide eyes, which sees the images *before* it.[10] The actor in his dramatized epic still remains, at bottom, a rhapsode; the consecration of inner dreaming lies on all his actions, so that he is never wholly an actor.

How, then, does the Euripidean play relate to this ideal of Apollinian drama? As the solemn rhapsode of old relates to that younger one who describes his nature thus in Plato's *Ion*: "When I say something sad, my eyes fill with tears; but when what I say is terrible and dreadful, the hair on my head stands on end with horror, and my heart pounds." Here we no longer notice anything of that epic self-loss in illusion, of the passionless coolness of the true actor, who, precisely at the height of his activity, is wholly illusion and delight in illusion. Euripides is the actor with the pounding heart and the hair standing on end; as a Socratic thinker he designs the plan, as a passionate actor he carries it out.[11] He is a pure artist neither in the designing nor in the carrying out. So Euripidean drama is a thing at once cool and fiery, equally able to freeze and to burn. It cannot achieve the Apollinian effect of the epic, while on the other hand it has cut itself loose from the Dionysian elements as far as possible; and now, in order to have any effect at all, it needs new stimulants, which can no longer lie within the only two artistic drives, the Apollinian and the Dionysian. These stimulants are cool,

10 Goethe planned a tragedy on Nausicaa, the princess of *Odyssey* 6, in 1787 but left only fragments.

11 *Ion*: Plato's dialogue in which Socrates questions the rhapsode Ion, a reciter of Homer, about poetic inspiration.

paradoxical *thoughts*—in place of Apollinian visions—and fiery *emotions*—in place of Dionysian raptures; and they are thoughts and emotions imitated with the utmost realism, in no way dipped in the ether of art.

Having recognized this much—that Euripides did not succeed at all in founding drama solely on the Apollinian, and that his un-Dionysian tendency instead went astray into a naturalistic and inartistic one—we may now come closer to the nature of *aesthetic Socratism*. Its supreme law runs roughly: "To be beautiful, everything must be intelligible"—as the parallel to the Socratic "Only the knower is virtuous." With this canon in hand Euripides measured every single element and corrected it according to this principle: the language, the characters, the dramatic structure, the choral music. What we, comparing him with Sophoclean tragedy, so often count against Euripides as poetic deficiency and regression is for the most part the product of that penetrating critical process, that audacious rationality. Let the Euripidean *prologue* serve as an example of the productivity of that rationalistic method. Nothing could be more at odds with our stage technique than the prologue in Euripides' plays. That a single character should come on at the start of the play and tell us who he is, what precedes the action, what has happened so far, and even what will happen in the course of the play—a modern playwright would call this a wanton and unforgivable renunciation of the effect of suspense. After all, we know everything that is going to happen; who will want to wait around for it actually to happen? — since here there is certainly none of the exciting relation between a prophetic dream and a reality that arrives later. Euripides reasoned quite differently. The effect of tragedy, he thought, never rested on epic suspense, on the tantalizing uncertainty about what will happen now and next, but rather on those great rhetorical-lyrical scenes in which the passion and dialectic of the protagonist swelled into a broad and mighty stream. Everything prepared for pathos, not for action; and whatever did not prepare for pathos was considered objectionable. But what most hinders the pleasurable surrender

to such scenes is a link the listener is missing, a gap in the fabric of the backstory. As long as the listener still has to work out what this or that character signifies, what lies behind this or that conflict of inclinations and intentions, his full absorption in the suffering and doing of the main characters—the breathless pity and fear—is not yet possible. Aeschylean-Sophoclean tragedy used the most ingenious artistic means to put into the spectator's hand in the first scenes, as if by chance, all the threads needed for understanding: a trait that proves that noble artistry which, as it were, masks what is formally *necessary* and makes it appear accidental. Nevertheless Euripides thought he noticed that during those first scenes the spectator was in a peculiar state of unrest, trying to do the arithmetic of the backstory, so that the poetic beauties and the pathos of the exposition were lost on him. So he placed the prologue even before the exposition and put it in the mouth of someone who could be trusted: a deity often had, as it were, to guarantee the course of the tragedy to the audience and remove any doubt about the reality of the myth—much as Descartes could prove the reality of the empirical world only by appealing to God's truthfulness and his inability to lie. Euripides needs the same divine truthfulness once more at the end of his play, to assure the audience of his heroes' future: this is the task of the notorious *deus ex machina* [god from the machine]. Between the epic look ahead and the look beyond lies the dramatic-lyrical present, the "drama" proper.

Thus Euripides as a poet is above all the echo of his conscious insights; and it is precisely this that gives him so memorable a place in the history of Greek art. With regard to his critical-productive work, he must often have felt as if he were meant to bring to life for drama the opening of Anaxagoras' book, whose first words run: "In the beginning all things were together; then mind came and created order." And if Anaxagoras with his "Nous" [mind] appeared among the philosophers like the first sober man among a crowd of drunkards, Euripides too may have understood his relation to the other tragic poets under a

similar image.[12] As long as the sole orderer and ruler of the universe, Nous, was still excluded from artistic creation, everything was still jumbled together in a chaotic primeval mush. So Euripides had to judge; so he, the first "sober" one, had to condemn the "drunken" poets. What Sophocles said of Aeschylus—that he does what is right, though unconsciously—was certainly not said in Euripides' spirit. He would have granted only this much: that Aeschylus, *because* he created unconsciously, created what was wrong.[13] The divine Plato, too, speaks of the poet's creative faculty, insofar as it is not conscious insight, almost always ironically, and puts it on a par with the gift of the soothsayer and the dream interpreter: for, he says, the poet cannot compose until he has lost consciousness and no understanding dwells in him any longer. Euripides undertook, as Plato also did, to show the world the counterpart of the "unreasoning" poet. His aesthetic principle, "To be beautiful, everything must be conscious," is, as I said, the parallel to the Socratic "To be good, everything must be conscious." Accordingly, we may regard Euripides as the poet of aesthetic Socratism. Socrates, however, was that *second spectator* who did not comprehend the older tragedy and therefore did not respect it; allied with him, Euripides dared to be the herald of a new kind of artistic creation. If the older tragedy perished of this, then aesthetic Socratism is the murderous principle. But insofar as the struggle was directed against the Dionysian element in the older art, we recognize in Socrates the adversary of Dionysus, the new Orpheus who rises up against Dionysus and, though destined to be torn apart by the maenads of the Athenian court, nevertheless forces the overpowering god himself to flee. And the god, as once when he fled from Lycurgus, king of the Edonians, saved himself in the depths of the sea—that is, in the mystical floods of a secret cult that gradually spread over the whole world.[14]

12 Anaxagoras (c. 500–428 BC), philosopher in Periclean Athens; Aristotle said he seemed like a sober man beside those who spoke at random.
13 Sophocles' remark on Aeschylus is reported by Athenaeus.
14 In myth Orpheus was torn apart by Thracian maenads; in the *Iliad* (Book 6) Dionysus, pursued by the Edonian king Lycurgus, took refuge in the sea.

SOCRATES, THE NON-MYSTIC

Socrates condemns art and ethics as mere instinct and goes calmly to his death.

13 That Socrates was closely akin to Euripides in tendency did not escape his contemporaries; and the most eloquent expression of this happy instinct is the story, current in Athens, that Socrates used to help Euripides write his plays. The adherents of the "good old days" named both men in one breath whenever they listed the present-day misleaders of the people. It was their influence, they said, that made the old, sturdy Marathonian soundness of body and soul fall more and more victim to a dubious enlightenment, while the powers of body and soul steadily withered.[15] In this key, half indignant and half contemptuous, Aristophanes' comedy tends to speak of these men—to the horror of the moderns, who are quite willing to give up Euripides but cannot get over their amazement that Socrates appears in Aristophanes as the first and foremost *Sophist*, as the mirror and epitome of all sophistic endeavors. Their only consolation is to pillory Aristophanes himself as a dissolute, lying Alcibiades of poetry.[16] Without defending Aristophanes' deep instincts against such attacks here, I will go on to show, from the way the ancients themselves felt, how closely Socrates and Euripides belong together. In this connection it should be recalled above all that Socrates, as an opponent of tragic art, stayed away from the tragedies and turned up among the spectators only when a new play by Euripides was being performed. Most famous, however, is the pairing of the two names in the Delphic oracle, which called Socrates the wisest of men but at the same time declared that the second prize in the contest of wisdom was due to Euripides.

15 The victory over the Persians at Marathon (490 BC) made the "men of Marathon" the model of old-fashioned Athenian virtue.

16 Aristophanes caricatured Socrates in *Clouds* (423 BC); Alcibiades, Socrates' brilliant and unscrupulous follower, was a byword for dissolute ambition.

Third on this ladder Sophocles was named—he who could boast, against Aeschylus, that he did what was right, and did so because he *knew* what was right. Evidently it is precisely the degree of clarity of this *knowing* that sets these three men apart, together, as the three "knowers" of their time.

But the sharpest word for this new and unheard-of esteem for knowledge and insight was spoken by Socrates when he found that he was the only one who admitted to *knowing nothing*; whereas on his critical wanderings through Athens, calling on the greatest statesmen, orators, poets and artists, he everywhere came upon the conceit of knowledge. He recognized with astonishment that all these celebrities lacked correct and sure insight even into their own professions and practiced them only by instinct. "Only by instinct": with this phrase we touch the heart and center of the Socratic tendency. With it Socratism condemns existing art and existing ethics alike: wherever it turns its probing gaze, it sees lack of insight and the power of delusion, and from this lack it concludes that what exists is inwardly wrong and objectionable. From this one point Socrates believed he had to correct existence. He, the lone individual, with an air of disdain and superiority, as the forerunner of an utterly different kind of culture, art and morality, steps into a world whose very hem we would count ourselves supremely fortunate to catch hold of in reverence.

This is the enormous misgiving that seizes us each time we face Socrates, and that spurs us again and again to grasp the meaning and purpose of this most questionable phenomenon of antiquity. Who is this who dares, as a lone individual, to negate the Greek character—which, as Homer, Pindar and Aeschylus, as Phidias, as Pericles, as Pythia and Dionysus, as the deepest abyss and the highest height, is assured of our astonished worship? What daemonic power is it that dares to pour this magic potion into the dust? What demigod is it to whom the spirit chorus of the noblest of mankind must cry out: "Woe! Woe! You

have destroyed it, the beautiful world, with mighty fist; it falls, it crumbles!"[17]

A key to the nature of Socrates is offered by that remarkable phenomenon known as the "daimonion of Socrates." In special situations, when his tremendous intellect began to waver, he found firm support in a divine voice that spoke up at such moments. This voice, when it comes, always *warns* him *off*. In this wholly abnormal nature, instinctive wisdom shows itself only in order to *obstruct* conscious knowing here and there. Whereas in all productive people it is precisely instinct that is the creative-affirmative force, and consciousness that behaves critically and dissuasively, in Socrates instinct becomes the critic and consciousness the creator—a true monstrosity *per defectum* [through deficiency]![18] And indeed we perceive here a monstrous *defectus* [deficiency] of any mystical disposition, so that Socrates might be called the specific *non-mystic*, in whom the logical nature has been developed, through superfetation, as excessively as instinctive wisdom has in the mystic. On the other hand, the logical drive that appears in Socrates was completely denied the ability to turn against itself; in this unfettered onrush it displays a force of nature such as we meet, to our shuddering surprise, only in the very greatest instinctive powers. Anyone who has caught even a breath, in Plato's writings, of that divine naïveté and certainty of the Socratic way of life also feels how the enormous driving wheel of logical Socratism is turning, as it were, *behind* Socrates, and how it must be seen through Socrates as through a shadow. That he himself had an inkling of this relation is expressed in the dignified seriousness with which he everywhere asserted his divine calling, even before his judges. To refute him on this was at bottom as impossible as to approve his influence, which dissolved the instincts. Given this insoluble conflict, once he had been

17 The lament of the spirit chorus from Goethe's *Faust*, Part One, after Faust's great curse.

18 In Plato's *Apology*, Socrates describes his daimonion as a divine sign that always turned him back from something and never urged him on.

brought before the forum of the Greek state, only one form of condemnation was called for: banishment. As something thoroughly enigmatic, unclassifiable, inexplicable, he might have been shown across the border without any posterity having the right to accuse the Athenians of a shameful deed. But that death, and not merely banishment, was pronounced on him seems to have been brought about by Socrates himself, with complete clarity and without the natural dread of death. He went to his death with the same calm with which, in Plato's account, he leaves the symposium at dawn, the last of the drinkers, to begin a new day; while behind him, on the benches and on the floor, his sleepy companions stay behind to dream of Socrates, the true lover. *The dying Socrates* became the new ideal of noble Greek youth, never seen before: above all, the typical Hellenic youth, Plato, threw himself down before this image with all the fervent devotion of his enthusiast's soul.[19]

PLATO AND THE OPTIMISM OF DIALECTIC

Socratic optimism drives the chorus out of tragedy, yet Socrates dreams he should make music.

[14] Let us now imagine the one great Cyclops eye of Socrates turned on tragedy, that eye in which the sweet madness of artistic enthusiasm never glowed—let us imagine how that eye was denied the ability to gaze with pleasure into the Dionysian abysses—what, really, must it have seen in the "sublime and highly praised" tragic art, as Plato calls it? Something quite unreasonable, with causes that seemed to have no effects and effects that seemed to have no causes; and the whole of it so motley and varied that it was bound to be repugnant to a level-headed disposition, while for excitable and sensitive souls it was dangerous tinder. We know the only kind of poetry he understood: the *Aesopian fable*; and he surely did so with the same

19 Plato's *Symposium* ends with Socrates walking out at daybreak, leaving the other drinkers asleep.

smiling accommodation with which the honest, good Gellert sings the praise of poetry in the fable of the bee and the hen:[20]

"You see from me what it is for:
To one who has not much understanding
To tell the truth by way of an image."

But to Socrates tragic art did not even seem to "tell the truth"—quite apart from the fact that it addresses the one who "has not much understanding," and so not the philosopher: a twofold reason to keep away from it. Like Plato, he counted it among the flattering arts, which portray only the pleasant, not the useful, and he therefore required of his disciples abstinence and strict separation from such unphilosophical temptations. He did so with such success that the young tragic poet Plato first of all burned his poems in order to become a pupil of Socrates. But where invincible talents fought against the Socratic maxims, the force of those maxims, together with the weight of that tremendous character, was still great enough to push poetry itself into new and hitherto unknown positions.

An example of this is Plato, just mentioned. In condemning tragedy and art in general he certainly did not lag behind the naive cynicism of his master; and yet, out of sheer artistic necessity, he had to create an art form inwardly related precisely to the existing art forms he rejected. The chief reproach Plato had to make against the older art—that it is the imitation of a semblance, and so belongs to a sphere even lower than the empirical world—could above all not be leveled at the new artwork. And so we see Plato striving to go beyond reality and to represent the idea that underlies that pseudo-reality. But with this the thinker Plato had arrived by a detour at the very place where he had always been at home as a poet, and from which Sophocles and the whole of the older art solemnly protested against that reproach. If tragedy had absorbed all earlier art forms into itself, the same may be said again, in an eccentric

20 Christian Fürchtegott Gellert (1715–1769), a hugely popular German writer of moral fables.

sense, of the Platonic dialogue. Produced by mixing all the available styles and forms, it hovers midway between narrative, lyric and drama, between prose and poetry, and so also broke the strict older law of a unified linguistic form. The *Cynic* writers went still further along this path: in the most motley variety of style, in their wavering back and forth between prose and verse, they also achieved in literature the image of the "raving Socrates" that they used to act out in life.[21] The Platonic dialogue was, as it were, the boat in which the shipwrecked older poetry saved itself together with all its children. Crowded into a narrow space and anxiously obedient to the one helmsman, Socrates, they now sailed into a new world, which could never see enough of the fantastic spectacle of this procession. Plato has indeed given all posterity the model of a new art form, the model of the *novel*—which may be described as the Aesopian fable raised to infinity, in which poetry stands in the same rank relation to dialectical philosophy as that same philosophy stood for many centuries to theology: namely, as *ancilla* [handmaid]. This was the new position of poetry, into which Plato pushed it under the pressure of the daemonic Socrates.

Here *philosophical thought* overgrows art and forces it to cling tightly to the trunk of dialectic. The *Apollinian* tendency has withdrawn into the chrysalis of logical schematism—just as with Euripides we had to observe something corresponding, and in addition a translation of the *Dionysian* into naturalistic emotion. Socrates, the dialectical hero of Platonic drama, reminds us of the kindred nature of the Euripidean hero, who has to defend his actions with argument and counterargument and so often runs the risk of forfeiting our tragic pity. For who could fail to recognize the *optimistic* element in the nature of dialectic, which celebrates a jubilee with every conclusion and can breathe only in cool clarity and consciousness—the optimistic element which, once it has penetrated tragedy, must gradually overgrow its Dionysian regions and necessarily drive it to self-destruction

21 Plato reportedly called Diogenes of Sinope, founder of the Cynic way of life, "a Socrates gone mad"; Cynic satire mixed prose and verse.

—all the way to the death leap into bourgeois drama. Just consider the consequences of the Socratic propositions: "Virtue is knowledge; one sins only out of ignorance; the virtuous man is the happy man." In these three basic forms of optimism lies the death of tragedy. For now the virtuous hero must be a dialectician; now there must be a necessary, visible link between virtue and knowledge, faith and morality; now Aeschylus' transcendent solution of justice is degraded to the shallow and insolent principle of "poetic justice," with its usual *deus ex machina*.

Faced with this new Socratic-optimistic stage world, how do the *chorus*, and the whole musical-Dionysian foundation of tragedy, now appear? As something accidental, as a reminder of tragedy's origin that could well be done without; whereas we have seen that the chorus can be understood only as the *cause* of tragedy and of the tragic as such. Already in Sophocles that embarrassment about the chorus shows itself—an important sign that already with him the Dionysian ground of tragedy is beginning to crumble. He no longer dares to entrust the chorus with the main share of the effect, but restricts its domain so far that it now seems almost on a level with the actors, as if it were lifted out of the orchestra onto the stage. This, of course, completely destroys its nature, even though Aristotle approves precisely this conception of the chorus. That shift in the chorus's position, which Sophocles in any case recommended by his practice and, according to tradition, even in a treatise, is the first step toward the *annihilation* of the chorus, whose phases follow one another with frightening speed in Euripides, Agathon and New Comedy. Optimistic dialectic, with the whip of its syllogisms, drives *music* out of tragedy: that is,[22] it destroys the essence of tragedy, which can be interpreted only as a manifestation and imaging of Dionysian states, as the visible symbolization of music, as the dream world of a Dionysian intoxication.

If, then, we must assume an anti-Dionysian tendency already at work even before Socrates, which merely finds an unheard-of,

magnificent expression in him, we must not shrink from the question of what a phenomenon like Socrates points to—a phenomenon that we, with the Platonic dialogues before us, cannot comprehend as a merely dissolving, negative force. And as surely as the most immediate effect of the Socratic drive was the decomposition of Dionysian tragedy, a profound experience in Socrates' own life forces us to ask whether there is *necessarily* only an antipodal relation between Socratism and art, and whether the birth of an "artistic Socrates" is something self-contradictory at all.

For that despotic logician had, now and then, a feeling toward art of a gap, a void, a half-reproach, a duty perhaps neglected. As he tells his friends in prison, the same dream apparition often came to him, always saying the same thing: "Socrates, make music!" Up to his last days he reassures himself with the view that his philosophizing is the highest art of the Muses, and does not really believe that a deity would remind him of that "common, popular music." Finally, in prison, in order to unburden his conscience completely, he brings himself to practice that music he held in low esteem. And in this frame of mind he composes a prelude to Apollo and puts some of Aesop's fables into verse.[23] It was something like the daemonic warning voice that drove him to these exercises: it was his Apollinian insight that, like a barbarian king, he did not understand a noble image of a god and was in danger of sinning against his deity—by failing to understand. That word of the Socratic dream apparition is the only sign of any misgiving about the limits of the logical nature. Perhaps—so he had to ask himself—what is not intelligible to me is not necessarily unreasonable? Perhaps there is a realm of wisdom from which the logician is banished? Perhaps art is even a necessary correlative and supplement of science?

22 Aristotle (*Poetics* 18) praises Sophocles' integration of the chorus; Agathon was a tragic poet of the generation after Euripides.

23 The episode comes from Plato's *Phaedo*; the Greek *mousikē* covered all the arts of the Muses, poetry included.

THEORETICAL MAN

Socrates is the type of theoretical man, whose science reaches its limits and turns into tragic insight.

15 In the spirit of these last, presentient questions, it must now be said how the influence of Socrates has spread over posterity down to this very moment, and indeed on into all the future, like a shadow that keeps growing longer in the evening sun. It must be said how that influence compels, again and again, the re-creation of *art*, and of art in the already metaphysical, broadest and deepest sense, and how, being itself infinite, it also guarantees the infinity of art.

Before this could be recognized, before the innermost dependence of every art on the Greeks, the Greeks from Homer to Socrates, had been convincingly shown, we were bound to fare with these Greeks as the Athenians fared with Socrates. Almost every age and every stage of culture has at some point sought, in deep ill humor, to free itself from the Greeks. In their presence, everything it had achieved itself, everything apparently quite original and quite sincerely admired, seemed suddenly to lose its color and life and shrank into a botched copy, even a caricature. And so, again and again, a heartfelt rage breaks out against that presumptuous little people who dared to label everything not their own, for all time, as "barbarian." Who are they, one asks oneself? They have only an ephemeral historical splendor to show, only ridiculously narrow institutions, only a dubious soundness of morals, and they are even marked by ugly vices. Yet they claim the dignity and special status among peoples that belongs to the genius among the masses. Unfortunately, no one was lucky enough to find the cup of hemlock with which such a being could simply be disposed of: all the poison that envy, slander and rage produced within themselves was not enough to destroy that self-sufficient splendor. And so people are ashamed of the Greeks and afraid of them. The exception is someone who values truth above everything

and so dares to admit to himself this truth as well: that the Greeks, as charioteers, hold our culture and every culture in their hands, but that the chariot and horses are almost always of too poor a stuff and unworthy of the glory of their drivers. The drivers then think it a joke to drive such a team into the abyss, which they themselves clear with the leap of Achilles.

To demonstrate the dignity of such a leading position for Socrates too, it is enough to recognize in him the type of a form of existence unheard of before him: the type of *theoretical man*, whose meaning and goal it is our next task to understand. Theoretical man, too, like the artist, takes an infinite delight in what exists. Like the artist, he is protected by that contentment from the practical ethics of pessimism and from its lynx eyes, which shine only in the dark.[24] Whenever truth is unveiled, the artist always clings with enraptured eyes only to what still remains veil even now, after the unveiling. Theoretical man, by contrast, enjoys and satisfies himself with the discarded veil, and finds his highest goal of pleasure in the process of an unveiling that always succeeds, and succeeds by his own strength. There would be no science if it cared only about that *one* naked goddess and about nothing else. For then its disciples would have to feel like people trying to dig a hole straight through the earth. Each of them sees that, with the greatest effort sustained over a lifetime, he can dig through only a tiny piece of the enormous depth, and that piece is filled in again before his eyes by the work of the next man. A third, then, seems well advised to choose a new spot for his drilling on his own initiative. Now suppose someone proves conclusively that the goal at the antipodes cannot be reached by this direct route. Who will still want to go on working in the old depths, unless he has meanwhile learned to be content with finding precious stones or discovering laws of nature? That is why Lessing, the most honest of theoretical men, dared to declare that he cared more about the search for truth than about truth itself. This uncovered the fun-

24 The German has "Lynceus eyes": Lynceus was the Argonaut whose sight was said to pierce darkness and even the earth.

damental secret of science, to the astonishment, indeed the annoyance, of the scientific. Beside this isolated insight, to be sure, an excess of honesty if not of high spirits, there stands a profound *delusion* that first came into the world in the person of Socrates. It is the unshakable faith that thought, following the guiding thread of causality, reaches into the deepest abysses of being, and that thought is capable not only of knowing being but even of *correcting* it.[25] This sublime metaphysical delusion accompanies science as an instinct and leads it again and again to its limits, where it must turn into *art*, *which is really what this mechanism is aiming at*.

If we now look at Socrates by the torchlight of this thought, he appears to us as the first who could not only live by the guidance of that instinct of science but also, what is far more, die by it. That is why the image of the *dying Socrates*, the man raised above the fear of death by knowledge and reasons, is the coat of arms above the entrance gate of science. It reminds everyone of the purpose of science, which is to make existence appear comprehensible and therefore justified. For this purpose, to be sure, when reasons do not suffice, *myth* too must ultimately serve. And I have just described myth as the necessary consequence, indeed the intention, of science.

Let us picture what happened after Socrates, the mystagogue of science. One school of philosophers succeeded another, like wave upon wave. A never-suspected universality of the craving for knowledge, across the widest reaches of the educated world, and as the real task for everyone of higher ability, led science out onto the high seas, from which it has never since been entirely driven back. Through this universality a common net of thought was stretched for the first time over the whole globe, even with glimpses of the laws governing an entire solar system. Whoever calls all this to mind, together with the astonishingly high pyramid of knowledge of the present day, cannot help seeing in Socrates the one turning point and vortex of so-called

25 In *Eine Duplik* (1778) Lessing wrote that if God offered him all truth in one hand and the striving for truth in the other, he would choose the striving.

world history. Imagine this whole incalculable sum of energy that has been spent on that world tendency applied *not* in the service of knowledge but to the practical, that is, egoistic, aims of individuals and peoples. Then the instinctive lust for life would probably have been so weakened, amid universal wars of annihilation and constant migrations of peoples, that suicide would have become habitual. The individual might then feel the last remnant of a sense of duty when, like the inhabitant of the Fiji Islands, he strangles his parents as a son, his friend as a friend. This would be a practical pessimism that could even produce a gruesome ethics of genocide out of pity. Such a pessimism, incidentally, is present and has been present everywhere in the world where art, in one form or another, especially as religion and science, has not appeared as a remedy and a defense against that pestilential breath.

In contrast to this practical pessimism, Socrates is the archetype of the theoretical optimist. Believing, as described, that the nature of things can be fathomed, he attributes to knowledge and insight the power of a universal medicine and sees in error evil as such. To penetrate to those grounds and to separate true knowledge from illusion and error seemed to Socratic man the noblest calling, even the only truly human one. Likewise, from Socrates on, that mechanism of concepts, judgments and inferences was prized above all other faculties as the highest activity and the most admirable gift of nature. Even the most sublime moral deeds, the stirrings of pity, of self-sacrifice, of heroism, and that calm sea of the soul, so hard to attain, which the Apollinian Greek called *sophrosyne* [moderation, self-mastery], were derived by Socrates and his like-minded successors, down to the present, from the dialectic of knowledge, and were accordingly declared teachable. Whoever has experienced for himself the pleasure of a Socratic insight feels how it seeks, in ever wider circles, to embrace the whole world of phenomena. From then on he will feel no spur that could urge him to existence more keenly than the craving to complete that conquest and to weave the net impenetrably tight. To someone of this dis-

position, the Platonic Socrates then appears as the teacher of an entirely new form of "Greek cheerfulness" and blissful delight in existence. This form seeks to discharge itself in actions, and it will find these discharges mostly in maieutic and educational influence on noble youths, with a view to the eventual production of genius.

But now science, spurred on by its powerful delusion, hurries unstoppably toward its limits, where the optimism hidden in the essence of logic founders. For the periphery of the circle of science has infinitely many points. There is still no telling how the circle could ever be completely surveyed, and yet the noble and gifted man inevitably comes up against such boundary points of the periphery, even before the middle of his life, and there he stares into what cannot be illuminated. When he sees here, to his horror, how at these limits logic coils around itself and finally bites its own tail, then the new form of knowledge breaks through: *tragic knowledge*, which, merely to be endured, needs art as protection and remedy.

Let us look, with eyes strengthened and refreshed by the Greeks, at the highest spheres of the world that surges around us. There we perceive the greed of insatiable optimistic knowledge, which appears in exemplary form in Socrates, turned into tragic resignation and a need for art. At its lower levels, admittedly, this same greed must show itself hostile to art and must, above all, inwardly abhor Dionysian-tragic art, as we illustrated, for example, with Socratism's struggle against Aeschylean tragedy.

Here, then, with stirred hearts, we knock at the gates of the present and the future. Will that "turning" lead to ever new configurations of genius, and precisely of the *Socrates who practices music*? Will the net of art spread over existence, even under the name of religion or of science, be woven ever tighter and finer? Or is it destined to be torn to shreds amid the restless barbaric bustle and whirl that now calls itself "the present"?—Anxious, yet not disconsolate, we stand aside for a little while, as contemplatives who are permitted to witness those tremendous

struggles and transitions. Alas! It is the magic of these struggles that whoever watches them must also fight them!

Sections 16–25: The Rebirth of Tragedy

Die Geburt der Tragödie aus dem Geiste der Musik, 16–25
Music, myth and the tragic effect; opera and Alexandrian culture; hope for a rebirth of tragedy from German music.

[16] With this historical example, worked out in detail, we have tried to make clear that tragedy perishes as surely from the disappearance of the spirit of music as it can be born from this spirit alone. To soften the strangeness of this claim, and to show the origin of this insight of ours, we must now face, with open eyes, the analogous phenomena of the present. We must step right into the midst of those struggles which, as I just said, are being fought in the highest spheres of our present world between insatiable optimistic knowledge and the tragic need for art. In doing so I will leave aside all the other hostile drives that have worked against art at all times, and against tragedy in particular. In the present, too, they are spreading so confident of victory that, of the theatrical arts, for example, only farce and ballet flourish, with a somewhat rank luxuriance, putting forth blossoms that perhaps do not smell sweet to everyone. I will speak only of the *most illustrious opposition* to the tragic view of the world, and by that I mean science, optimistic in its deepest essence, with its ancestor Socrates at its head. Presently I shall also name the powers that seem to me to guarantee *a rebirth of tragedy*, and what other blissful hopes for the German character!

Before we plunge into the midst of those struggles, let us put on the armor of the insights we have won so far. Unlike all those who are eager to derive the arts from a single principle, as the necessary source of life of every work of art, I keep my eyes

fixed on those two artistic deities of the Greeks, Apollo and Dionysus. I recognize in them the living and vivid representatives of *two* art worlds that differ in their deepest essence and in their highest aims. Apollo stands before me as the transfiguring genius of the *principium individuationis*, through which alone redemption in illusion can truly be attained. Under the mystical cry of jubilation of Dionysus, on the other hand, the spell of individuation is shattered, and the way lies open to the Mothers of Being, to the innermost core of things.[1] This enormous opposition, which yawns between plastic art as the Apollinian art and music as the Dionysian art, became apparent to only one of the great thinkers, and to such a degree that, even without the guidance of the Hellenic symbolism of the gods, he granted music a character and origin different from all the other arts. Music, he said, is not, like all of them, a copy of the phenomenon, but a direct copy of the will itself, and it therefore represents *what is metaphysical to everything physical in the world*, the thing in itself to every phenomenon. (Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation* I, p. 310.) This is the most important insight of all aesthetics; indeed, taken in a more serious sense, aesthetics only begins with it. Richard Wagner set his seal on it, confirming its eternal truth, when he established in his *Beethoven* that music is to be judged by aesthetic principles quite different from those of all the visual arts, and not by the category of beauty at all. A mistaken aesthetics, he adds, led by a misguided and degenerate art, has nevertheless grown accustomed, starting from the concept of beauty that holds in the world of the visual arts, to demanding from music an effect similar to that of works of the visual arts, namely the arousal of *pleasure in beautiful forms*. Once I had recognized that enormous opposition, I felt a strong compulsion to approach the essence of Greek tragedy, and with it the deepest revelation of the Hellenic genius. Only now did I believe I commanded the magic to go beyond the phraseology of our usual aesthetics and to set the primordial problem of

1 The "Mothers" allude to Goethe's *Faust*, Part Two, Act 1, where Faust descends to the mysterious Mothers, the source of all forms.

tragedy bodily before my soul. This granted me so strange and singular a view into the Hellenic world that it could only seem to me as if our classical-Hellenic scholarship, which bears itself so proudly, had so far, in the main, known how to feast only on shadow plays and externals.

We might perhaps touch on that primordial problem with this question: what aesthetic effect arises when the art powers of the Apollinian and the Dionysian, separate in themselves, come into play side by side? Or, more briefly: how is music related to image and concept?—Schopenhauer, whom Richard Wagner praises precisely on this point for an unsurpassable clarity and lucidity of exposition, speaks on this most fully in the following passage, which I shall reproduce here at full length. *The World as Will and Representation* I, p. 309: "According to all this, we can regard the phenomenal world, or nature, and music as two different expressions of the same thing. This thing itself is therefore the only medium of the analogy between the two, and knowledge of it is required in order to understand that analogy. Accordingly, music, when regarded as an expression of the world, is a language of the highest universality, which is even related to the universality of concepts roughly as concepts are related to individual things. Its universality, however, is by no means the empty universality of abstraction, but of an entirely different kind, and it is combined with thoroughgoing, distinct determinateness. In this it resembles geometrical figures and numbers, which are the universal forms of all possible objects of experience and applicable to them all *a priori*, and yet are not abstract but perceptible and thoroughly determinate. All possible strivings, stirrings and expressions of the will, all those processes within man which reason throws into the broad negative concept of feeling, can be expressed by the infinitely many possible melodies. But they are expressed always in the universality of mere form, without the material, always only according to the in-itself, not according to the phenomenon, as it were their innermost soul, without a body. This intimate relation that music has to the true essence of all things also explains why,

when suitable music sounds with any scene, action, event or surrounding, it seems to disclose to us its most secret meaning and appears as the most accurate and distinct commentary on it. It likewise explains why someone who gives himself up entirely to the impression of a symphony feels as if he saw all possible events of life and the world passing by him. Yet when he reflects, he cannot point to any likeness between that play of tones and the things that hovered before his mind. For music, as I said, differs from all the other arts in that it is not a copy of the phenomenon, or, more correctly, of the adequate objectivity of the will, but a direct copy of the will itself, and it therefore represents what is metaphysical to everything physical in the world, the thing in itself to every phenomenon. We could therefore just as well call the world embodied music as embodied will. This explains why music at once makes every painting, indeed every scene of real life and of the world, stand out with heightened significance, and all the more, of course, the more analogous its melody is to the inner spirit of the given phenomenon. This is what makes it possible to set a poem to music as song, or a visual presentation as pantomime, or both as opera. Such individual images of human life, set to the universal language of music, are never bound to it or corresponding to it with thoroughgoing necessity. They stand to it only in the relation of an arbitrary example to a universal concept: they present, in the determinateness of reality, what music states in the universality of mere form. For melodies are, to a certain extent, like universal concepts, an abstraction from reality. Reality, that is, the world of individual things, supplies the perceptible, the particular and individual, the single case, both to the universality of concepts and to the universality of melodies. These two universalities, however, are in a certain respect opposed to each other. Concepts contain only the forms first abstracted from perception, the stripped-off outer shell of things, as it were, and so are quite properly abstractions. Music, on the other hand, gives the innermost kernel that precedes all formation, or the heart of things. This relation could be

expressed quite well in the language of the Scholastics by saying: concepts are the *universalia post rem* [universals after the thing], but music gives the *universalia ante rem* [universals before the thing], and reality the *universalia in re* [universals in the thing]. — That a relation between a composition and a visual presentation is possible at all rests, as I said, on the fact that both are only quite different expressions of the same inner essence of the world. Now when, in a particular case, such a relation actually exists, that is, when the composer has managed to express in the universal language of music the stirrings of the will that make up the core of an event, then the melody of the song, the melody of the opera, is expressive. But the analogy the composer has found between the two must have come from immediate knowledge of the essence of the world, unconscious to his reason. It must not be an imitation mediated by concepts with conscious intention. Otherwise the music does not express the inner essence, the will itself, but only imitates its phenomenon inadequately, as all actually imitative music does." —

Following Schopenhauer's teaching, then, we understand music directly as the language of the will. We feel our imagination stirred to give shape to that spirit world which speaks to us, invisible and yet so vividly in motion, and to embody it for ourselves in an analogous example. On the other hand, image and concept, under the influence of truly corresponding music, attain a heightened significance. Dionysian art, then, usually exerts two kinds of effect on the Apollinian art faculty: music incites to the *symbolic intuition* of Dionysian universality, and music then makes the symbolic image stand out *in supreme significance*. From these facts, which are intelligible in themselves and not inaccessible to deeper observation, I infer that music has the capacity to give birth to *myth*, that is, to the most significant example, and precisely to *tragic* myth: the myth that speaks of Dionysian knowledge in parables. In discussing the phenomenon of the lyric poet, I showed how music in the lyric poet strives to reveal its essence in Apollinian images. If we now imagine that music at its highest intensity must also seek to

attain a supreme embodiment in images, we must consider it possible that it will also know how to find the symbolic expression for its own Dionysian wisdom. And where else shall we have to look for this expression, if not in tragedy and, in general, in the concept of *the tragic*?

From the essence of art as it is commonly understood, according to the single category of illusion and beauty, the tragic cannot honestly be derived at all. Only out of the spirit of music do we understand a joy in the annihilation of the individual. For the particular examples of such annihilation only make clear to us the eternal phenomenon of Dionysian art, which gives expression to the will in its omnipotence, as it were behind the *principium individuationis*, to eternal life beyond all phenomena and in spite of all annihilation. The metaphysical joy in the tragic is a translation of instinctive, unconscious Dionysian wisdom into the language of images. The hero, the highest manifestation of the will, is negated for our pleasure, because he is after all only a phenomenon, and the eternal life of the will is not touched by his annihilation. "We believe in eternal life," tragedy cries, while music is the immediate idea of this life. The art of the sculptor has an entirely different aim. Here Apollo overcomes the suffering of the individual through the radiant glorification of the *eternity of the phenomenon*; here beauty triumphs over the suffering inherent in life; pain is, in a certain sense, lied away from the features of nature. In Dionysian art and its tragic symbolism, the same nature addresses us with its true, undisguised voice: "Be as I am! Amid the ceaseless change of phenomena, I am the primordial mother, eternally creative, eternally compelling to existence, eternally finding satisfaction in this change of phenomena!"

THE DEATH OF MYTH

Tone painting, character portrayal and the deus ex machina take the place of myth and metaphysical comfort.

[17] Dionysian art, too, seeks to convince us of the eternal joy of existence, but we are to seek this joy not in phenomena but behind them. We are to recognize that everything that comes into being must be ready for a sorrowful end. We are forced to look into the terrors of individual existence, and yet we are not to freeze in horror: a metaphysical comfort tears us, for a moment, out of the bustle of changing forms. For brief moments we really are the primordial being itself, and we feel its unbridled greed and lust for existence. The struggle, the agony, the annihilation of phenomena now seem to us necessary, given the excess of countless forms of existence pressing and thrusting into life, given the exuberant fertility of the world will. We are pierced by the furious sting of these agonies in the very moment when we have, as it were, become one with the immeasurable primordial joy in existence, and when, in Dionysian ecstasy, we sense the indestructibility and eternity of this joy. In spite of fear and pity, we are the happy living beings, not as individuals, but as the *one* living being, with whose procreative lust we are fused.

The history of the origin of Greek tragedy now tells us with luminous precision how the tragic artwork of the Greeks really was born out of the spirit of music. With this thought we believe we have, for the first time, done justice to the original and so astonishing meaning of the chorus. At the same time, however, we must admit that the significance of tragic myth set out above never became transparent, with conceptual clarity, to the Greek poets, let alone to the Greek philosophers. Their heroes speak, so to speak, more superficially than they act; myth by no means finds its adequate objectification in the spoken word. The structure of the scenes and the vivid images reveal a deeper wisdom than the poet himself can put into words and concepts. The

same can be observed in Shakespeare, whose Hamlet, for example, in a similar sense speaks more superficially than he acts, so that the lesson of Hamlet mentioned earlier is to be gathered not from the words but from a deeper contemplation and survey of the whole. As regards Greek tragedy, which of course comes down to us only as drama in words, I have even suggested that this incongruity between myth and word could easily lead us to think it shallower and less significant than it is. We might accordingly assume it had a more superficial effect than, according to the testimony of the ancients, it must have had. For how easily we forget that what the poet of words had failed to achieve, the highest spiritualization and ideality of myth, he could achieve at every moment as a creative musician! We, of course, have to reconstruct the overwhelming power of the musical effect almost by way of scholarship, in order to receive something of that incomparable comfort which must belong to true tragedy. Yet even this overwhelming musical power we would have felt as such only if we were Greeks. Compared with the infinitely richer music known and familiar to us, we believe we hear in the whole development of Greek music only the youthful song of musical genius, struck up with a shy sense of its own strength. The Greeks are, as the Egyptian priests say, the eternal children, and in tragic art too they are only children, who do not know what sublime toy has come into being under their hands and—is being smashed.[2]

That striving of the spirit of music for pictorial and mythical revelation, which intensifies from the beginnings of lyric poetry to Attic tragedy, suddenly breaks off just after reaching its luxuriant development, and disappears, as it were, from the surface of Hellenic art. The Dionysian view of the world born of this striving, however, lives on in the mysteries and, in the most wondrous metamorphoses and degenerations, never ceases to attract more serious natures. Will it not one day rise again as art from its mystical depths?

2 An allusion to Plato's *Timaeus* (22b), where an Egyptian priest tells Solon: "You Greeks are always children."

Here we are concerned with the question whether the power whose opposition broke tragedy has strength enough, for all time, to prevent the artistic reawakening of tragedy and of the tragic view of the world. If ancient tragedy was forced off its track by the dialectical drive toward knowledge and by the optimism of science, we might infer from this fact an eternal struggle between *the theoretical* and *the tragic view of the world*. Only after the spirit of science has been led to its limit, and its claim to universal validity has been destroyed by the demonstration of those limits, might we hope for a rebirth of tragedy. For this form of culture we would have to set up the symbol of *the Socrates who practices music*, in the sense discussed earlier. In this contrast, by the spirit of science I mean that faith, which first came to light in the person of Socrates, that nature can be fathomed and that knowledge has a universal healing power.

Whoever recalls the immediate consequences of this restlessly advancing spirit of science will at once realize how *myth* was annihilated by it, and how, through this annihilation, poetry was driven from its natural ideal soil and left homeless. If we have rightly credited music with the power to give birth to myth again from within itself, we shall also have to look for the spirit of science on the path where it confronts this myth-creating power of music with hostility. This happens in the development of the *newer Attic dithyramb*, whose music no longer expressed the inner essence, the will itself, but only rendered the phenomenon inadequately, in an imitation mediated by concepts. From this inwardly degenerate music the truly musical natures turned away with the same aversion they felt toward the art-murdering tendency of Socrates. The sure instinct of Aristophanes certainly grasped the truth when he lumped together Socrates himself, the tragedy of Euripides and the music of the newer dithyrambic poets in the same feeling of hatred, and scented in all three phenomena the marks of a degenerate culture. Through that newer dithyramb, music was sacrilegiously

turned into an imitative portrait of the phenomenon, of, say,[3] a battle or a storm at sea, and was thereby, to be sure, completely robbed of its myth-creating power. For if music seeks to delight us only by forcing us to look for external analogies between some event of life and nature and certain rhythmic figures and characteristic sounds of music, if our understanding is to be satisfied with recognizing these analogies, then we are dragged down into a mood in which receptivity to the mythical is impossible. For myth wants to be felt vividly as a unique example of a universality and truth that stares into infinity. Truly Dionysian music confronts us as just such a universal mirror of the world will: the vivid event refracted in this mirror expands at once, for our feeling, into the image of an eternal truth. Conversely, the tone painting of the newer dithyramb at once strips such a vivid event of all mythical character. Music has now become a meager copy of the phenomenon and is therefore infinitely poorer than the phenomenon itself. Through this poverty it drags down, for our feeling, even the phenomenon itself, so that now, for example, a battle imitated in music in this way exhausts itself in the noise of marching, trumpet signals and so on, and our imagination is held fast precisely by these superficialities. Tone painting is thus in every respect the counterpart of the myth-creating power of true music. Through tone painting the phenomenon becomes even poorer than it is, while through Dionysian music the individual phenomenon is enriched and expanded into an image of the world. It was a mighty victory for the un-Dionysian spirit when, in the development of the newer dithyramb, it had alienated music from itself and forced it down into a slave of the phenomenon. Euripides, who in a higher sense must be called a thoroughly unmusical nature, is for this very reason a passionate adherent of the newer dithyrambic music, and he helps himself to all its showpieces and mannerisms with a robber's generosity.

We see the power of this un-Dionysian spirit, directed against myth, at work from another side when we turn our eyes to the

growing predominance of *character portrayal* and psychological refinement in tragedy from Sophocles on. The character is no longer to be expandable into an eternal type. On the contrary, it is to make an individual effect through artificial secondary traits and nuances, through the finest precision in every line, so that the spectator no longer feels the myth at all, but rather the powerful truth to nature and the artist's power of imitation. Here too we perceive the victory of the phenomenon over the universal, and the pleasure in the individual, as it were anatomical, specimen. We already breathe the air of a theoretical world, in which scientific knowledge counts for more than the artistic reflection of a law of the world. The movement along the line of the characteristic proceeds rapidly. While Sophocles still paints whole characters and yokes myth to their refined unfolding, Euripides already paints only large single traits of character, which know how to express themselves in violent passions. In the newer Attic comedy there are only masks with *one* expression: frivolous old men, cheated procurers, cunning slaves, in tireless repetition. Where now is the myth-forming spirit of music? What is still left of music is either music of excitement or music of recollection, that is, either a stimulant for dull and worn-out nerves, or tone painting. For the former, the text set to it hardly matters any more. Already in Euripides, once his heroes or choruses start singing, things become quite slovenly; what must it have come to with his impudent successors?

But the new un-Dionysian spirit reveals itself most clearly of all in the *endings* of the newer dramas. In the old tragedy the metaphysical comfort had been felt at the end, and without it the pleasure in tragedy cannot be explained at all. The reconciling sound from another world rings out most purely, perhaps, in *Oedipus at Colonus*. Now that the genius of music had fled from tragedy, tragedy is, in the strict sense, dead: for where could that metaphysical comfort now be drawn from? People therefore sought an earthly resolution of the tragic dissonance. The hero,

3 The "New Dithyramb" of the late fifth century BC (Timotheus, Philoxenus and others), notorious for virtuoso display and descriptive musical effects.

after being sufficiently tortured by fate, reaped a well-deserved reward in a splendid marriage or in divine honors. The hero had become a gladiator, who was occasionally granted his freedom after being thoroughly flayed and covered with wounds. The *deus ex machina* [god from the machine] has taken the place of metaphysical comfort. I do not mean to say that the tragic view of the world was everywhere and completely destroyed by the onrushing spirit of the un-Dionysian. We know only that it had to flee from art, as it were into the underworld, degenerating into a secret cult. But over the widest expanse of the surface of Hellenic life raged the consuming breath of that spirit which manifests itself in the form of "Greek cheerfulness" we spoke of earlier as a senile, unproductive lust for existence. This cheerfulness is the counterpart of the splendid "naïveté" of the older Greeks. According to the characterization given, that naïveté is to be understood as the blossom of Apollinian culture growing out of a dark abyss, as the victory that the Hellenic will, through its mirroring of beauty, wins over suffering and the wisdom of suffering. The noblest form of that other form of "Greek cheerfulness," the Alexandrian, is the cheerfulness of *theoretical man*. It shows the same characteristic features that I have just derived from the spirit of the un-Dionysian: it combats Dionysian wisdom and art; it strives to dissolve myth; in place of a metaphysical comfort it puts an earthly consonance, indeed a *deus ex machina* of its own, namely the god of machines and crucibles, that is, the powers of the spirits of nature, recognized and employed in the service of a higher egoism; it believes in a correction of the world through knowledge, in a life guided by science; and it is also really able to confine the individual within the narrowest circle of solvable tasks, within which he cheerfully says to life: "I want you: you are worth knowing."

ALEXANDRIAN CULTURE

Modern culture is Alexandrian, built for theoretical man; Kant and Schopenhauer expose its limits.

[18] It is an eternal phenomenon: the greedy will always finds a means of keeping its creatures in life and forcing them to live on, through an illusion spread over things. One is fettered by the Socratic pleasure in knowledge and the delusion that through knowledge he can heal the eternal wound of existence. Another is ensnared by art's seductive veil of beauty fluttering before his eyes; yet another by the metaphysical comfort that beneath the whirl of phenomena eternal life flows on indestructibly. And this is to say nothing of the more common and almost more powerful illusions that the will holds ready at every moment. These three stages of illusion are in fact only for the more nobly endowed natures, who feel the burden and weight of existence with deeper displeasure and who must be beguiled out of this displeasure by exquisite stimulants. All that we call culture consists of these stimulants. Depending on the proportions of the mixture, we have a predominantly *Socratic* or *artistic* or *tragic* culture; or, if historical examples may be allowed, there is either an Alexandrian or a Hellenic or a Buddhist culture.

Our whole modern world is caught in the net of Alexandrian culture. It recognizes as its ideal *theoretical man*, equipped with the highest powers of knowledge and working in the service of science, whose archetype and progenitor is Socrates. All our means of education originally have this ideal in view; every other form of existence has to struggle up laboriously alongside it, as an existence permitted, not intended. In an almost frightening sense, for a long time the educated person was found here only in the form of the scholar. Even our poetic arts have had to develop out of learned imitations, and in the main effect of rhyme we can still recognize that our poetic form arose from artificial experiments with a language that was not native but thoroughly learned. How incomprehensible a genuine Greek

would find *Faust*, the modern man of culture, who is in himself intelligible enough: Faust, storming unsatisfied through all the faculties, given over to magic and the devil out of his drive for knowledge. We have only to set him beside Socrates for comparison to recognize that modern man is beginning to sense the limits of that Socratic lust for knowledge, and that from the wide, desolate sea of knowledge he longs for a shore.[4] When Goethe once remarks to Eckermann, with reference to Napoleon, "Yes, my good friend, there is also a productivity of deeds," he reminds us, in a charmingly naive way, that the non-theoretical man is something implausible and astonishing to modern man. It takes, once again, the wisdom of a Goethe to find so strange a form of existence comprehensible, even pardonable.[5]

And now let us not hide from ourselves what lies hidden in the womb of this Socratic culture! Optimism, deluding itself that it is unlimited! Now we must not be alarmed when the fruits of this optimism ripen: when society, leavened to its lowest strata by such a culture, gradually trembles with luxuriant surges and desires; when the belief in earthly happiness for all, when the belief in the possibility of such a universal culture of knowledge, gradually turns into the threatening demand for such an Alexandrian earthly happiness, into the conjuring up of a Euripidean *deus ex machina*! Mark this well: Alexandrian culture needs a slave class in order to exist in the long run. But in its optimistic view of existence it denies the necessity of such a class. And so, once the effect of its fine seductive and soothing words about the "dignity of man" and the "dignity of labor" has worn off, it gradually moves toward a horrifying annihilation. There is nothing more terrible than a barbaric slave class that has learned to regard its existence as an injustice and is preparing to take revenge, not only for itself but for all generations. In the face of such threatening storms, who dares to appeal with

4 The hero of Goethe's *Faust*, who in his opening monologue laments having studied philosophy, law, medicine and theology in vain.

5 Johann Peter Eckermann (1792–1854) recorded his talks with the aged Goethe in his *Conversations with Goethe*.

confident courage to our pale and exhausted religions, which have degenerated, even in their foundations, into religions for scholars? Myth, the necessary precondition of every religion, is already paralyzed everywhere, and even in this realm that optimistic spirit has come to power which we have just called the germ of destruction in our society.

The calamity slumbering in the womb of theoretical culture gradually begins to frighten modern man. Uneasy, he reaches into the store of his experience for means to avert the danger, without really believing in these means himself; he begins, that is, to sense his own consequences. Meanwhile great, universally gifted natures, with an incredible clarity of mind, have known how to use the very tools of science to expose the limits and the conditionality of knowledge as such, and thereby decisively to deny science's claim to universal validity and universal ends. In this demonstration, that delusion which, led by the hand of causality, presumes it can fathom the innermost essence of things was for the first time recognized for what it is. The tremendous courage and wisdom of *Kant* and *Schopenhauer* won the hardest victory of all: the victory over the optimism hidden in the essence of logic, which in turn underlies our culture. This optimism had believed that all the riddles of the world could be known and fathomed, relying on the *aeternae veritates* [eternal truths], which it never thought to question, and it had treated space, time and causality as wholly unconditional laws of the most universal validity. Kant revealed that these really served only to raise mere appearance, the work of Maya, to the sole and highest reality, to put it in the place of the innermost and true essence of things, and so to make real knowledge of that essence impossible—that is, in a phrase of Schopenhauer's, to lull the dreamer still more soundly to sleep (*The World as Will and Representation* I, p. 498). With this insight a culture is inaugurated which I venture to call a tragic one. Its most important mark is that wisdom takes the place of science as the highest goal. Undeceived by the seductive diversions of the sciences, this wisdom turns with unmoved gaze toward the total picture of the world,

and seeks, with a sympathetic feeling of love, to grasp the eternal suffering in it as its own suffering. Let us imagine a rising generation with this fearlessness of gaze, with this heroic pull toward the tremendous; let us imagine the bold stride of these dragon-slayers, the proud audacity with which they turn their backs on all the feeble doctrines of that optimism in order "to live resolutely" in the whole and in the full. Would it not be necessary that the tragic man of this culture, in his self-education toward seriousness and terror, should desire a new art, the art of metaphysical comfort, tragedy, as the Helen that belongs to him, and cry out with Faust:

And should I not, by force of utmost longing, / Draw into life that one, most singular form?

But Socratic culture has now been shaken from two sides, and can hold the scepter of its infallibility only with trembling hands: first out of fear of its own consequences, which it is at last beginning to sense, and second because it is no longer convinced, with its former naive confidence, of the eternal validity of its foundation. And so it is a sad spectacle to see how the dance of its thought keeps throwing itself longingly at new forms to embrace them, and then suddenly lets them go again with a shudder, as Mephistopheles does the seductive Lamiae.[6] This, after all, is the mark of that "rupture" which everyone likes to call the root affliction of modern culture: theoretical man is frightened by his own consequences and, dissatisfied, no longer dares to entrust himself to the terrible icy current of existence; he runs anxiously up and down the bank. He no longer wants to have anything whole—whole, with all the natural cruelty of things as well. That is how far the optimistic outlook has pampered him. Besides, he feels that a culture built on the principle of science must perish once it begins to become *illogical*—that is, to flee back from its own consequences. Our art reveals this universal distress. In vain do we lean imitatively on all the

6 In the Classical Walpurgis Night of *Faust*, Part Two, Mephistopheles chases the Lamiae, alluring female spirits who turn into grotesque shapes as soon as he grasps them.

great productive periods and natures; in vain do we gather the whole of "world literature" around modern man for his comfort, and set him in the midst of the artistic styles and artists of every age, so that he may give them names, as Adam did the animals. He remains the eternally hungry one, the "critic" without joy or strength, Alexandrian man, who is at bottom a librarian and proofreader and goes miserably blind from book dust and misprints.

THE CULTURE OF OPERA

Opera grows from an unmusical longing for a good primeval man; German music opposes it.

[19] The innermost content of this Socratic culture cannot be named more sharply than by calling it *the culture of opera*. For in this domain the culture has spoken out, with a naïveté all its own, about what it wills and what it knows—to our astonishment, when we hold the genesis of opera and the facts of its development up against the eternal truths of the Apollinian and the Dionysian. I recall first the origin of the *stilo rappresentativo* [representative style] and of recitative. Is it credible that this wholly externalized music of opera, incapable of devotion, could have been received and cherished with rapturous favor, as if it were the rebirth of all true music, by an age from which the ineffably sublime and sacred music of Palestrina had only just arisen?[7] And who, on the other hand, would blame only the diversion-hungry luxury of those Florentine circles and the vanity of their dramatic singers for the love of opera that spread so impetuously? In the same age, indeed among the same people, alongside the vaulted edifice of Palestrina's harmonies, on which the whole Christian Middle Ages had been building, there awoke this passion for a half-musical manner of speech. I can

7 The *stilo rappresentativo* was the declamatory style of solo singing developed in Florence around 1600, the basis of early opera and recitative. Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (c. 1525–1594) was the great Italian master of sacred polyphony.

explain this to myself only by a *non-artistic tendency* at work in the essence of recitative.[8]

The listener wants to hear the words clearly beneath the singing, and the singer obliges him by speaking more than singing and by sharpening the emotional expression of the words in this half-song. By sharpening the pathos he makes the words easier to understand and overcomes that remaining half of music. The real danger now threatening him is that he may, at the wrong moment, give music the upper hand, whereupon the pathos of the speech and the clarity of the words would at once be lost; while on the other hand he always feels the urge toward musical release and a virtuoso display of his voice. Here the "poet" comes to his aid, with ample opportunity for lyrical interjections, repetitions of words and maxims, and so on — this he knows how to offer; and at these places the singer can now rest in the purely musical element, without regard for the words. This alternation between emotionally urgent but only half-sung speech and fully sung interjection, which lies in the essence of the *stilo rappresentativo*—this rapidly shifting effort to work now on the listener's concepts and images, now on his musical depths—is something so utterly unnatural, and so inwardly at odds with the artistic drives of the Dionysian and the Apollinian alike, that we must infer an origin of recitative lying outside all artistic instincts. According to this description, recitative is to be defined as the mixing of epic and lyric delivery—and by no means an inwardly stable mixture, which could not have been achieved with such utterly disparate things, but the most external, mosaic-like conglutination, something wholly without precedent in the realm of nature and experience. *But this was not the opinion of those inventors of recitative*. On the contrary, they themselves, and their age with them, believed that the *stilo rappresentativo* had solved the secret of ancient music, the only thing that could explain the tremendous effect of an Orpheus, an

8 The Florentine Camerata, a circle of noblemen, scholars and musicians whose attempts around 1600 to revive Greek drama produced the first operas.

Amphion, indeed of Greek tragedy as well.[9] The new style was regarded as the reawakening of the most powerful music there had ever been, that of ancient Greece. Indeed, given the general and thoroughly popular view of the Homeric world *as the primeval world*, people could indulge in the dream of having now descended once more to the paradisal beginnings of humanity, in which music too must necessarily have had that unsurpassed purity, power and innocence of which the poets could tell so touchingly in their pastoral plays. Here we look into the innermost becoming of this thoroughly modern genre, opera. A powerful need forces an art into being here—but a need of an unaesthetic kind: the longing for the idyll, the belief in a primeval existence of the artistic and good human being. Recitative was regarded as the rediscovered language of that primeval human being; opera as the rediscovered land of that idyllically or heroically good being who at the same time follows a natural artistic drive in all his actions, who sings at least a little in everything he has to say, so that at the slightest stirring of feeling he at once bursts into full-throated song. It is of no concern to us now that the humanists of the day used this newly created image of the paradisal artist to combat the old ecclesiastical conception of man as inherently corrupt and lost. Opera, then, is to be understood as the opposing dogma of the good man; but with it there was also found a means of comfort against that pessimism to which precisely the serious-minded of that age, amid the dreadful insecurity of all conditions, were most strongly drawn. Enough if we have recognized that the real magic, and with it the genesis, of this new art form lies in the satisfaction of a wholly unaesthetic need: in the optimistic glorification of man as such, in the conception of primeval man as by nature good and artistic. This principle of opera has gradually turned into a menacing and appalling *demand*, which, in the face of the socialist movements of the present, we can no longer

9 Orpheus and Amphion were mythical Greek singers whose music moved beasts, trees and stones; Amphion's lyre was said to have raised the walls of Thebes.

fail to hear. The "good primeval man" wants his rights: what paradisal prospects!

Alongside this I place another, equally clear confirmation of my view that opera is built on the same principles as our Alexandrian culture. Opera is the birth of theoretical man, of the critical layman, not of the artist: one of the strangest facts in the history of all the arts. It was the demand of thoroughly unmusical listeners that above all the words must be understood; so that a rebirth of music was to be expected only if some manner of singing were discovered in which the words of the text would rule over counterpoint as master over servant. For the words, they said, were as much nobler than the accompanying harmonic system as the soul was nobler than the body. It was with the amateurish, unmusical crudity of these views that the union of music, image and word was handled in the beginnings of opera; and it was in the spirit of this aesthetic that the first experiments took place, in the aristocratic amateur circles of Florence, through poets and singers who enjoyed their patronage. The man who is impotent in art produces a kind of art for himself precisely by being the inartistic man as such. Because he has no inkling of the Dionysian depths of music, he turns the enjoyment of music into the rational rhetoric of passion, in words and notes, of the *stilo rappresentativo*, and into the voluptuousness of vocal artistry. Because he is incapable of beholding a vision, he presses the stage machinist and the scene painter into his service. Because he cannot grasp the true nature of the artist, he conjures up before himself the "artistic primeval man" to suit his own taste—that is, the man who, when in passion, sings and speaks verse. He dreams himself into an age in which passion suffices to produce songs and poems: as if emotion had ever been capable of creating anything artistic. The premise of opera is a false belief about the artistic process—namely that idyllic belief that every feeling person is really an artist. In keeping with this belief, opera is the expression of amateurism in art, which dictates its laws with the cheerful optimism of theoretical man.

Should we wish to unite under one concept the two notions just described, both at work in the origin of opera, we would have no choice but to speak of an *idyllic tendency of opera*; and here we need only use Schiller's terms and explanation. Either, he says, nature and the ideal are an object of mourning, when the former is presented as lost and the latter as unattained. Or both are an object of joy, when they are represented as real. The first gives the elegy in the narrower sense, the second the idyll in the widest sense.[10] Here we must at once draw attention to what those two notions in the genesis of opera have in common: in them the ideal is not felt as unattained, nor nature as lost. According to this feeling, there was a primeval age of man when he lay at the heart of nature and, in this naturalness, had at the same time attained the ideal of humanity, in a paradisal goodness and artistry. From this perfect primeval man we were all supposed to be descended; indeed, we were supposed still to be his faithful image. We had only to cast off a few things in order to recognize ourselves again as this primeval man, by voluntarily renouncing superfluous learning and overabundant culture. The cultivated man of the Renaissance let his operatic imitation of Greek tragedy lead him back to such a harmony of nature and ideal, to an idyllic reality. He used this tragedy as Dante used Virgil, to be led up to the gates of Paradise; while from there he strode on further by himself, passing from an imitation of the highest Greek art form to a "restoration of all things," to a re-creation of man's original world of art. What confident good nature there is in these audacious endeavors, in the very womb of theoretical culture![11] — explicable solely by the comforting belief that "man as such" is the eternally virtuous hero of opera, the eternally piping or singing shepherd, who must always find himself again as such in the end, should he ever really have lost himself for a while; solely the fruit of that optimism which rises

10 Schiller, *On Naive and Sentimental Poetry* (1795–96).

11 "Restoration of all things" is Luther's phrase in Acts 3:21 for the renewal of the world at the end of time.

here, like a sweetly seductive column of fragrance, from the depths of the Socratic view of the world.

So the features of opera by no means bear that elegiac pain of an eternal loss, but rather the cheerfulness of eternal rediscovery, the comfortable delight in an idyllic reality that one can at least imagine as real at every moment. Perhaps one does sometimes suspect that this supposed reality is nothing but fantastic, silly trifling—trifling at which anyone able to measure it against the terrible seriousness of true nature, and to compare it with the actual primal scenes of humanity's beginnings, would have to cry out in disgust: Away with the phantom! Nevertheless, one would be mistaken to think that such a trifling thing as opera could simply be banished by a vigorous shout, like a ghost. Whoever wants to destroy opera must take up the fight against that Alexandrian cheerfulness which speaks out so naively in it about its favorite notion—indeed, whose very art form it is. But what is to be expected for art itself from the working of an art form whose origins do not lie in the aesthetic realm at all, which has rather stolen across into artistic territory from a half-moral sphere, and which has only now and then managed to disguise this hybrid origin? On what sap does this parasitic creature, opera, feed, if not on that of true art? Is it not to be surmised that, under its idyllic seductions and its Alexandrian arts of flattery, the highest task of art, the one that may truly be called serious—to redeem the eye from gazing into the horror of night, and to rescue the subject, by the healing balm of illusion, from the spasm of the will's stirrings—will degenerate into an empty and distracting tendency toward amusement? What becomes of the eternal truths of the Dionysian and the Apollinian in such a mixture of styles as I have shown to be the essence of the *stilo rappresentativo*? where music is regarded as the servant and the words of the text as the master, where music is compared with the body and the words with the soul? where the highest aim will at best be directed toward descriptive tone-painting, much as once in the New Attic dithyramb? where music is wholly estranged from its true dignity, that of being the Dionysian mir-

ror of the world, so that nothing is left for it but, as the slave of appearance, to imitate the formal nature of appearance and to arouse a superficial delight in the play of lines and proportions. Seen strictly, this fateful influence of opera on music virtually coincides with the whole development of modern music. The optimism lurking in the genesis of opera and in the essence of the culture it represents has succeeded, with alarming speed, in stripping music of its Dionysian world-mission and stamping it with a pleasant character of formal play: a change comparable perhaps only to the metamorphosis of Aeschylean man into the man of Alexandrian cheerfulness.

But if, in the example just indicated, we have rightly connected the disappearance of the Dionysian spirit with a most striking but hitherto unexplained transformation and degeneration of Greek man—what hopes must revive in us when the surest auspices vouch for *the reverse process, the gradual awakening of the Dionysian spirit*, in our present world! It is impossible that the divine strength of Heracles should languish forever in voluptuous bondage to Omphale.[12] Out of the Dionysian ground of the German spirit a power has arisen that has nothing in common with the primordial conditions of Socratic culture and can be neither explained nor excused by them. Rather, this culture feels it as something terrible and inexplicable, as something overpowering and hostile: *German music*, as we must understand it above all in its mighty solar course from Bach to Beethoven, from Beethoven to Wagner. What, at best, can the knowledge-hungry Socratism of our day do with this daemon rising from inexhaustible depths? Neither from the jagged fretwork and arabesques of operatic melody, nor with the help of the arithmetical abacus of fugue and contrapuntal dialectic, can the formula be found in whose thrice-mighty light one might subdue that daemon and force it to speak. What a spectacle, when our aestheticians, with the butterfly net of a "beauty" all their own, swat and snatch at the genius of music as it frolics before

12 In Greek myth Heracles was sold as a slave to the Lydian queen Omphale, who made him wear women's clothes and spin wool.

them with incomprehensible life, in movements that will no more be judged by the standard of eternal beauty than by that of the sublime! Just take a close look, in the flesh, at these patrons of music as they so tirelessly cry Beauty! Beauty![13] — and see whether they look like nature's darling children, formed and pampered in the lap of beauty, or whether they are not rather looking for a mendaciously concealing form for their own crudity, an aesthetic pretext for their own emotionally impoverished sobriety: here I am thinking, for example, of Otto Jahn. But let the liar and hypocrite beware of German music: for it is precisely this, amid all our culture, that is the one pure, clear and purifying spirit of fire, from which and toward which, as in the doctrine of the great Heraclitus of Ephesus, all things move in a double orbit. Everything we now call culture, cultivation, civilization will one day have to appear before the unerring judge, Dionysus.[14]

Let us recall, then, how the spirit of *German philosophy*, flowing from the same sources, was enabled through Kant and Schopenhauer to destroy the contented joy in existence of scientific Socratism by demonstrating its limits; and how this demonstration inaugurated an infinitely deeper and more serious consideration of ethical questions and of art, which we may call outright *Dionysian wisdom* grasped in concepts. To what does the mystery of this unity between German music and German philosophy point, if not to a new form of existence, whose content we can only divine, drawing on Hellenic analogies? For to us, who stand on the boundary between two different forms of existence, the Hellenic model retains this immeasurable value: in it all those transitions and struggles, too, are stamped in a classically instructive form. Only we seem, as it were, to be living through the great main epochs of the Hellenic character analogically in *reverse* order, and now, for example, to be step-

13 "Thrice-mighty light" echoes Goethe's *Faust*, Part One, where Faust threatens the spirit hidden in the poodle with "the thrice-glowing light."

14 Otto Jahn (1813–1869), classical philologist and music scholar, author of a celebrated biography of Mozart and a sharp critic of Wagner.

ping backward from the Alexandrian age to the period of tragedy. And we feel as though the birth of a tragic age could mean for the German spirit only a return to itself, a blissful rediscovery of itself—after tremendous powers invading from outside had for a long time forced it, as it lived on in a helpless barbarism of form, into servitude under their form. Now at last, after its homecoming to the primal source of its being, it may dare to stride forth before all peoples, bold and free, without the leading strings of a Latin civilization—if only it knows how to learn steadfastly from one people, from whom merely being able to learn at all is already a high honor and a distinguishing rarity: from the Greeks. And when did we ever need these supreme teachers more than now, when we are experiencing *the rebirth of tragedy* and are in danger of knowing neither where it comes from nor how to interpret where it is going?

THE GERMANS AND THE GREEKS

German cultivation has failed to reach the Greeks; Nietzsche calls his friends to believe in Dionysian life.

[20] Let it one day be weighed, under the eyes of an incorruptible judge, in what age and in which men the German spirit has so far struggled most vigorously to learn from the Greeks. And if we confidently assume that this unique praise must be awarded to the noble struggle for cultivation of Goethe, Schiller and Winckelmann, then it would at any rate have to be added that since that time, and the immediate after-effects of that struggle, the striving to reach cultivation and the Greeks along the same path has grown weaker and weaker in an incomprehensible way. In order not to despair of the German spirit altogether, should we not be allowed to conclude from this that even those champions may, on some essential point, have failed to penetrate to the core of the Hellenic character and to establish a lasting bond of love between German and Greek culture?—so that perhaps an unconscious recognition of this shortcoming awakened even in more serious natures the despondent doubt

whether, after such predecessors, they would get any further than they had along this path of cultivation, or reach the goal at all. That is why, since that time, we have seen judgment on the value of the Greeks for education degenerate in the most worrying way. Expressions of pitying superiority can be heard in the most diverse camps of spirit and of spiritlessness; elsewhere an utterly ineffectual fine talk toys with "Greek harmony," "Greek beauty," "Greek cheerfulness." And precisely in those circles whose dignity it might be to draw tirelessly from the Greek riverbed for the good of German education—in the circles of teachers at the institutions of higher learning—people have learned best how to come to terms with the Greeks early and comfortably, often to the point of skeptically abandoning the Hellenic ideal and utterly perverting the true purpose of all classical studies. Anyone in those circles who has not completely exhausted himself in the effort to be a reliable corrector of old texts or a natural-historical microscopist of language may perhaps also seek to appropriate Greek antiquity "historically," alongside other antiquities—but at any rate according to the method, and with the superior airs, of our present-day educated historiography. If, then, the real formative power of the institutions of higher learning has probably never been lower and feebler than at present; if the "journalist," the paper slave of the day, has triumphed over the higher teacher in every respect concerning education, and nothing is left to the latter but the metamorphosis already witnessed so often—to flit about now in the journalist's idiom as well, with the "light elegance" of that sphere, as a cheerful, cultivated butterfly—in what painful confusion must people so cultivated, in such a present, stare at that phenomenon which could be grasped by analogy only from the deepest ground of the Hellenic genius, hitherto uncomprehended: the reawakening of the Dionysian spirit and the rebirth of tragedy? There has been no other period of art in which so-called cultivation and real art have stood so estranged from and averse to each other as we see with our own eyes in the present. We understand why so feeble a cultivation hates true art: it fears

that art will be its downfall. But should not a whole type of culture, namely the Socratic-Alexandrian, have run its course, once it could taper off into so dainty and slender a point as present-day cultivation! If heroes like Schiller and Goethe were not permitted to break open that enchanted gate leading into the Hellenic magic mountain; if, for all their most courageous struggles, they got no further than that longing gaze which Goethe's Iphigenia sends across the sea toward home from barbarian Tauris—what would be left for the epigones of such heroes to hope for, unless the gate suddenly opened for them of its own accord, on quite another side, untouched by all the efforts of previous culture—amid the mystical sound of the reawakened music of tragedy.[15]

Let no one try to spoil our faith in a still-impending rebirth of Hellenic antiquity; for in it alone we find our hope for a renewal and purification of the German spirit through the fire-magic of music. What else could we name that might awaken any comforting expectation for the future amid the desolation and exhaustion of present culture? In vain we look for a single strongly branching root, for a patch of fertile and healthy soil: everywhere dust, sand, torpor, languishing.[16] Here a disconsolate, solitary man could choose no better symbol than the Knight with Death and the Devil, as Dürer has drawn him for us: the armored knight with the hard, bronze gaze, who knows how to take his path of terror, undeterred by his gruesome companions and yet without hope, alone with horse and hound. Such a Dürer knight was our Schopenhauer: he lacked all hope, but he wanted the truth. There is none like him. —[17]

But how suddenly the wilderness of our exhausted culture, just described in such dark colors, is transformed when the Dionysian magic touches it! A storm wind seizes everything outlived, rotten, broken, stunted, wraps it whirling in a red cloud of

15 Goethe's play *Iphigenia in Tauris* (1787), whose heroine, exiled among the Taurians, stands on the shore "seeking the land of the Greeks with her soul."
16 "Fire-magic" (*Feuerzauber*) recalls the "Magic Fire" music at the close of Wagner's *Die Walküre*.
17 Albrecht Dürer's engraving *Knight, Death and the Devil* (1513).

dust and carries it off into the air like a vulture. Bewildered, our eyes search for what has vanished: for what they see has risen as if from a trapdoor into the golden light, so full and green, so luxuriantly alive, so immeasurably full of longing. Tragedy sits in the midst of this abundance of life, suffering and joy, in sublime rapture; she listens to a distant, melancholy song—it tells of the Mothers of Being, whose names are: Delusion, Will, Woe.—Yes, my friends, believe with me in Dionysian life and in the rebirth of tragedy.[18] The age of Socratic man is over: crown yourselves with ivy, take the thyrsus in your hand, and do not be surprised if tigers and panthers lie down fawning at your knees. Only dare now to be tragic human beings: for you shall be redeemed. You shall escort the Dionysian procession from India to Greece! Arm yourselves for hard combat, but believe in the miracles of your god![19]

MYTH SHIELDS US FROM MUSIC

In Wagner's Tristan, myth protects the listener from the music until the Dionysian prevails at the end.

[21] Gliding back from these exhortatory tones into the mood that befits the contemplative man, I repeat that only from the Greeks can we learn what such a miraculous, sudden awakening of tragedy means for the innermost ground of a people's life. It is the people of the tragic mysteries that fights the battles against the Persians; and conversely, the people that waged those wars needs tragedy as a necessary potion of recovery. Who would have expected precisely this people, after it had been stirred to its core for several generations by the most violent convulsions of the Dionysian daemon, still to pour forth so evenly strong an outflow of the simplest political feeling, the most natural instincts of home, the original manly delight in battle? For

18 The German names, *Wahn, Wille, Wehe*, alliterate in the manner of Wagner's verse.

19 The thyrsus, a staff wreathed in ivy and tipped with a pine cone, was carried by Dionysus and his followers; legend told of the god's triumphal return from India.

whenever Dionysian excitement spreads significantly, one can always sense how the Dionysian release from the fetters of the individual makes itself felt first of all in an impairment of the political instincts, heightened to the point of indifference, indeed of hostility—just as surely as, on the other hand, Apollo, the founder of states, is also the genius of the *principium individuationis*, and state and love of home cannot live without the affirmation of the individual personality. From orgiastic frenzy only one path leads onward for a people: the path to Indian Buddhism, which, to be endurable at all with its longing for nothingness, needs those rare ecstatic states with their elevation above space, time and the individual; just as these in turn demand a philosophy that teaches how to overcome, through an idea, the indescribable listlessness of the states in between. Just as necessarily, a people that starts from the unconditional validity of the political drives falls into a course of extreme secularization, whose grandest but also most terrifying expression is the Roman *imperium* [empire].

Placed between India and Rome and pressed to a seductive choice, the Greeks succeeded in inventing a third form in classical purity—not, admittedly, for long use of their own, but precisely for that reason for immortality. For that the favorites of the gods die young holds true in all things; but just as certainly, they then live forever with the gods. Let us not demand of the noblest of all that it have the durable toughness of leather. That sturdy durability which belonged, for example, to the Roman national drive is probably not one of the necessary predicates of perfection.[20] But if we ask by what remedy the Greeks in their great age, given the extraordinary strength of their Dionysian and political drives, were able to exhaust themselves neither in ecstatic brooding nor in a consuming chase after world power and world renown, but to achieve that splendid mixture found in a noble wine that both fires the spirit and disposes it to contemplation—then we must remember the tremendous power of *tragedy*, which stirred, purified and discharged the whole life of

20 The saying "whom the gods love dies young" goes back to Menander.

the people. We shall only sense its highest value when it confronts us, as it did the Greeks, as the epitome of all prophylactic healing forces, as the mediator ruling between the strongest and in themselves most fateful qualities of the people.

Tragedy absorbs the highest musical orgiasm into itself, so that it truly brings music to perfection, among the Greeks as among us. But then it places tragic myth and the tragic hero beside it, and the hero, like a mighty Titan, takes the whole Dionysian world upon his back and relieves us of it. On the other hand, through the same tragic myth, in the person of the tragic hero, tragedy knows how to redeem us from the greedy urge toward this existence, and with an admonishing hand it reminds us of another being and a higher joy, for which the struggling hero prepares himself, full of foreboding, through his downfall, not through his victories. Between the universal validity of its music and the listener who is receptive to the Dionysian, tragedy places a sublime parable, the myth, and awakens in the listener the illusion that music is only the highest means of representation for bringing the plastic world of myth to life. Trusting in this noble deception, music may now move its limbs in the dithyrambic dance and abandon itself without misgiving to an orgiastic feeling of freedom in which, as music in itself, without that deception, it would not dare to revel. Myth protects us from music, just as, on the other hand, it is myth that first gives music its highest freedom. In return, as a counter-gift, music bestows on tragic myth a metaphysical significance so penetrating and convincing as word and image, without this unique help, could never attain. And through music in particular the tragic spectator is overcome by precisely that sure presentiment of a supreme joy, to which the path leads through downfall and negation, so that he seems to hear the innermost abyss of things speaking audibly to him.

If with these last sentences I have perhaps managed to give this difficult idea only a provisional expression, immediately intelligible to few, I must not, at precisely this point, stop urging my friends to one more attempt, and asking them to prepare

themselves for the recognition of the general proposition by way of a single example from our common experience. In this example I must not appeal to those who use the images of the stage action and the words and emotions of the characters to help them approach the feeling of music. For none of these speak music as their mother tongue, and even with that help they get no further than the outer halls of musical perception, without ever being allowed to touch its innermost sanctuaries; some of them, like Gervinus, do not even reach the outer halls by this route. I have to turn only to those who are directly related to music, who have in it, as it were, their mother's womb, and who are connected with things almost exclusively through unconscious musical relations.[21] To these genuine musicians I put the question: can they imagine a human being who could perceive the third act of *Tristan and Isolde* without any help from word and image, purely as a tremendous symphonic movement, without expiring in a convulsive spreading of all the wings of the soul? A human being who has laid his ear, as here, to the very heart-chamber of the world will, as it were, who feels the raging desire for existence pouring from here into all the veins of the world, now as a thundering torrent, now as the gentlest brook dispersed into spray—should he not break apart at once? Should he bear to hear, in the wretched glass casing of the human individual, the echo of countless cries of joy and woe out of the "wide space of the world's night," without fleeing irresistibly, at this shepherd's round of metaphysics, to his primordial home? But if such a work can nevertheless be perceived as a whole without the negation of individual existence, if such a creation could be created without shattering its creator—where do we find the solution to such a contradiction?[22]

Here, between our highest musical excitement and that music, tragic myth and the tragic hero thrust themselves in—at

21 Georg Gottfried Gervinus (1805–1871), literary historian, author of a much-read study of Shakespeare.

22 The quoted phrase adapts Tristan's words on waking in Act 3. The "shepherd's round" recalls both the herdsman's tune proverbial for stirring homesickness and the shepherd's melancholy piping in that act.

bottom only as a parable of the most universal facts of all, of which music alone can speak directly. As a parable, however, myth would, if we felt as purely Dionysian beings, remain beside us wholly ineffective and unnoticed, and would not for a moment keep us from offering our ear to the echo of the *universalia ante rem* [universals before the thing]. Here, however, the *Apollinian* power breaks forth, bent on restoring the almost shattered individual, with the healing balm of a blissful deception. Suddenly we seem to see only Tristan, motionless and dazed, asking himself: "The old tune—why does it wake me?" And what earlier struck us as a hollow sigh from the center of being now only wants to tell us how "waste and empty the sea." And where we imagined we were breathlessly expiring, in the convulsive straining of all our feelings, with only a little still binding us to this existence, we now hear and see only the hero, wounded to death and yet not dying, with his despairing cry: "Longing! Longing! In dying still to long, and not to die of longing!" And if earlier the jubilation of the horn, after such excess and such a multitude of consuming torments, cut through our hearts almost as the highest torment of all, now between us and this "jubilation in itself" stands the exultant Kurwenal, turned toward the ship that carries Isolde. However powerfully pity seizes us, in a certain sense it is pity that saves us from the primordial suffering of the world—just as the parable-image of myth saves us from the immediate intuition of the highest world-idea, and as thought and word save us from the undammed outpouring of the unconscious will. Through that splendid Apollinian deception it seems to us as if the very realm of tones confronted us as a plastic world, as if in it, too, only the fate of Tristan and Isolde had been formed and sculpturally shaped, as in the most delicate and expressive of materials.

Thus the Apollinian tears us out of Dionysian universality and enraptures us with individuals. To these it chains our pity; through these it satisfies our sense of beauty, which thirsts for great and sublime forms. It parades images of life before us and incites us to grasp in thought the kernel of life they contain.

With the tremendous force of image, concept, ethical teaching and sympathetic emotion, the Apollinian lifts man up out of his orgiastic self-annihilation and deceives him about the universality of the Dionysian process, into the delusion that he is seeing a single image of the world—Tristan and Isolde, for example—and that *through the music* he is only meant to *see* it better and more inwardly. What can the healing magic of Apollo not accomplish, if it can even stir up in us the deception that the Dionysian, in the service of the Apollinian, really could heighten its effects—indeed, that music is even essentially an art of representation for an Apollinian content?

Thanks to that pre-established harmony which prevails between the perfect drama and its music, the drama attains a supreme degree of visibility, one otherwise inaccessible to spoken drama. All the living figures on the stage simplify themselves before us, in the independently moving lines of melody, into the clarity of the curved line; and the interplay of these lines sounds for us in the changing harmonies, which move in the most delicate sympathy with the unfolding action. Through these changes the relations of things become immediately perceptible to us in a sensuous, by no means abstract, way; and through them we likewise recognize that only in these relations does the essence of a character, and of a line of melody, reveal itself purely.[23] And while music thus compels us to see more, and more inwardly, than usual, and to spread the stage action out before us like a delicate web, the world of the stage is for our spiritualized, inward-looking eye as infinitely enlarged as it is illuminated from within. What could the poet of words offer that compares with this—he who toils, with a far more imperfect mechanism, indirectly, starting from word and concept, to achieve that inward enlargement of the visible stage world and its inner illumination? It is true that musical tragedy also takes in the word; but at the same time it can set beside it the ground

23 "Pre-established harmony" is Leibniz's term for the accord, set up by God, between soul and body.

and birthplace of the word, and make clear to us, from within, the becoming of the word.

Yet it would have to be said just as firmly that the process described here is only a glorious illusion: that Apollinian *deception* mentioned a moment ago, whose effect is meant to relieve us of the Dionysian onrush and excess. At bottom, after all, the relation of music to drama is exactly the reverse. Music is the true Idea of the world; drama is only a reflection of this Idea, an isolated shadow image of it. That identity between the melodic line and the living figure, between the harmony and that figure's relations of character, is true in a sense opposite to the one it may seem to have while we watch a musical tragedy. We may set the figure in motion as visibly as we like, bring it to life and light it from within, but it always remains mere appearance, and from appearance no bridge leads into true reality, into the heart of the world. It is out of this heart, however, that music speaks. Countless appearances of that kind might pass by to the same music, and they would never exhaust its essence. They would only ever be its externalized copies. The popular and utterly false opposition of soul and body, of course, explains nothing about the difficult relation of music and drama and confuses everything. Yet the unphilosophical crudeness of that opposition seems, who knows for what reasons, to have become an article of faith gladly professed, above all by our aestheticians. Meanwhile they have learned nothing about an opposition between appearance and the thing in itself, or else, for reasons equally unknown, have not cared to learn anything.

Suppose our analysis has shown that the Apollinian in tragedy, through its deception, has won a complete victory over the Dionysian primordial element of music, and has made music serve its own purposes, namely the highest clarification of the drama. Then a very important qualification would admittedly have to be added: at the most essential point of all, that Apollinian deception is broken through and destroyed. With the help of music, the drama unfolds before us with such inwardly illuminated clarity in all its movements and figures that it is as

though we were watching the fabric come into being on the loom as the threads jerk up and down. Yet this drama, taken as a whole, achieves an effect that lies *beyond all Apollinian artistic effects*. In the total effect of tragedy the Dionysian regains the upper hand. Tragedy closes with a sound that could never ring out from the realm of Apollinian art. And with this the Apollinian deception shows itself for what it is: the veil that covers the true Dionysian effect for as long as the tragedy lasts. That effect is so powerful, however, that in the end it drives the Apollinian drama itself into a sphere where it begins to speak with Dionysian wisdom, and where it negates itself and its Apollinian visibility. So the difficult relation of the Apollinian and the Dionysian in tragedy could truly be symbolized by a fraternal bond between the two deities: Dionysus speaks the language of Apollo; and Apollo finally the language of Dionysus. With that the highest goal of tragedy, and of art in general, is attained.

THE AESTHETIC LISTENER

Musical tragedy revives the aesthetic listener, whom critics and moral explanations of tragedy had displaced.

[22] Let the attentive friend call to mind, from his own experience, the effect of a true musical tragedy, pure and unmixed. I believe I have described the phenomenon of this effect from both sides in such a way that he will now know how to interpret his own experiences. He will remember how, watching the myth move before him, he felt himself raised to a kind of omniscience. It was as though the power of his eyes were no longer merely a power over surfaces but could penetrate to the interior. It was as though, with the help of music, he now saw before him the surgings of the will, the struggle of motives and the swelling torrent of the passions, made visible to the senses, as it were, like a wealth of vividly moving lines and figures, and could thereby plunge down into the most delicate secrets of unconscious stirrings. Even as he becomes aware of this supreme heightening of

his drives toward visibility and transfiguration, he feels just as definitely that this long series of Apollinian artistic effects does *not* produce that blissful lingering in will-less contemplation which the sculptor and the epic poet, the truly Apollinian artists, produce in him through their works. That lingering is the justification of the world of *individuatio* [individuation] achieved in such contemplation, which is the summit and quintessence of Apollinian art. He beholds the transfigured world of the stage and yet negates it. He sees the tragic hero before him in epic clarity and beauty and yet rejoices in his destruction. He grasps the action on stage to its innermost core and gladly takes refuge in the incomprehensible. He feels that the hero's actions are justified, and yet he is even more exalted when these actions destroy the one who performs them. He shudders at the sufferings that will befall the hero, and yet in them he senses a higher, far more overwhelming pleasure. He sees more, and more deeply, than ever, and yet wishes he were blind. Where are we to trace this wondrous self-division, this breaking of the Apollinian summit, if not to the *Dionysian* magic? While it seems to stimulate the Apollinian impulses to the utmost, it is still able to force even this overflow of Apollinian power into its own service. *Tragic myth* can be understood only as Dionysian wisdom made into images by Apollinian artistic means. It leads the world of appearance to the limits where it negates itself and seeks to flee back into the womb of the true and only realities. There, with Isolde, it seems to strike up its metaphysical swan song:[24]

> In the sea of bliss's
> surging swell,
> in the fragrant waves'
> resounding peal,
> in the world-breath's
> wafting All—/ to drown—to sink—/ unconscious—highest
> delight!

So, through the experiences of the truly aesthetic listener, we call to mind the tragic artist himself. Like an exuberant deity of

individuatio, he creates his figures, and in this sense his work could hardly be understood as "imitation of nature." But then his tremendous Dionysian drive devours this whole world of appearances, so as to let us sense behind it, and through its destruction, a supreme primordial artistic joy in the womb of the primordial One. Of this return to the primordial home, of the fraternal bond of the two art deities in tragedy, and of the listener's excitement, at once Apollinian and Dionysian, our aestheticians, admittedly, have nothing to report. Yet they never tire of calling the hero's struggle with fate, the victory of the moral world order, or a discharge of the emotions brought about by tragedy the essence of the tragic. Their untiring persistence leads me to think that they may not be aesthetically excitable people at all, and that when they listen to tragedy they perhaps count only as moral beings. Never since Aristotle has anyone offered an explanation of the tragic effect from which artistic states, an aesthetic activity on the part of the audience, could be inferred. At one moment pity and fear are supposed to be pushed by the solemn events toward a relieving discharge. At another we are supposed to feel exalted and inspired by the victory of good and noble principles, by the hero's sacrifice, in the sense of a moral view of the world. I firmly believe that for many people this, and only this, is the effect of tragedy. It follows just as clearly that all of them, together with the aestheticians who interpret them, have experienced nothing of tragedy as a supreme *art*. That pathological discharge, Aristotle's catharsis, which philologists cannot quite decide whether to count among medical or moral phenomena, recalls a remarkable intuition of Goethe's.[25] "Without a lively pathological interest," he says, "I too have never succeeded in working up any tragic situation, and so I have avoided rather than sought them out. Might it also have been one of the advantages of the ancients that for them even the highest pathos was only aesthetic play, whereas

24 The closing lines of Isolde's "Liebestod" in Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde* (1865).
25 In *Poetics* 6, Aristotle says tragedy brings about, through pity and fear, a catharsis (purging or purification) of such emotions.

with us natural truth has to play its part in producing such a work?" This profound final question we may now, after our glorious experiences, answer in the affirmative. We have experienced with astonishment, in musical tragedy itself, how the highest pathos really can be only aesthetic play. That is why we may believe that only now can the primordial phenomenon of the tragic be described with some success.[26] Anyone who still has nothing to tell of but those vicarious effects from spheres outside aesthetics, and does not feel lifted above the pathological-moral process, may as well despair of his aesthetic nature. For him, as an innocent substitute, we recommend interpreting Shakespeare in the manner of Gervinus and diligently tracking down "poetic justice."

So with the rebirth of tragedy the *aesthetic listener* is reborn too. Until now his seat in the theater has usually been occupied by a strange *quid pro quo* [substitute] with half-moral, half-scholarly pretensions: the "critic." In his former sphere everything was artificial and merely whitewashed with an illusion of life. In fact the performing artist no longer knew what to do with such a listener, who put on critical airs. So he, together with the dramatist or opera composer who inspired him, searched anxiously for the last remnants of life in this pretentiously barren being, incapable of enjoyment. Yet it was of such "critics" that the public has consisted until now. The student, the schoolboy, even the most innocent woman had, without knowing it, already been prepared by education and the newspapers to perceive a work of art in the same way. The nobler natures among artists counted, with such a public, on stirring up moral and religious forces, and the invocation of the "moral world order" stepped in by proxy where a mighty artistic magic ought really to have enraptured the genuine listener. Or else the dramatist presented some grander, or at least exciting, tendency of the political and social present so plainly that the listener could forget his critical exhaustion and give himself up to feelings like those of patriotic or warlike moments, or of sitting before the speaker's rostrum in

26 From a letter of Goethe to Schiller, December 1797.

parliament, or of condemning crime and vice. This estrangement from the true aims of art was bound, here and there, to lead to an outright cult of the tendency. But then came what has always come with every artificial art: a breathtakingly rapid degeneration of those tendencies. The tendency to use the theater as an institution for the moral education of the people, for example, which was taken seriously in Schiller's time, is already counted among the implausible antiquities of an outgrown culture.[27] The critic had come to rule in the theater and the concert hall, the journalist in the school, the press in society. Meanwhile art degenerated into an object of entertainment of the lowest kind, and aesthetic criticism was used as the glue of a vain, distracted, selfish and, moreover, shabbily unoriginal sociability, whose meaning is conveyed by Schopenhauer's parable of the porcupines. Never, then, has there been so much chatter about art and so little regard for it. But can one still associate with a person who is capable of making conversation about Beethoven and Shakespeare?[28] Let each answer this question according to his own feeling. In any case his answer will show what he understands by "cultivation," provided he tries to answer the question at all and has not already fallen silent in surprise.

On the other hand, many a person more nobly and delicately endowed by nature, even if he had gradually become a critical barbarian in the way described, might have a tale to tell. He might speak of an effect, as unexpected as it was wholly incomprehensible, that a successful performance of *Lohengrin*, say, had on him. Only perhaps there was no hand to take hold of him, to admonish him and explain. So that incomprehensibly different and utterly incomparable feeling that shook him then remained isolated too, and like an enigmatic star went out after

27 Schiller's lecture "The Stage Considered as a Moral Institution" (1784) argued for the theater as a school of moral and civic education.

28 In *Parerga and Paralipomena* Schopenhauer likens society to porcupines that huddle for warmth, prick one another, and settle at a tolerable distance: politeness.

shining briefly. At that moment he had sensed what the aesthetic listener is.[29]

MYTH AND GERMAN CULTURE

A culture without myth is uprooted; Nietzsche hopes the German spirit will recover its own myth.

[23] Anyone who wants to test himself closely, to learn how near he is to the true aesthetic listener or whether he belongs to the community of Socratic-critical people, need only ask himself sincerely what he feels when he receives the *miracle* represented on the stage. Does he feel his historical sense, attuned to strict psychological causality, offended by it? Does he admit the miracle, as a benevolent concession, as a phenomenon intelligible to childhood but alien to himself? Or does he undergo something else entirely? By this he will be able to measure how far he is capable at all of understanding *myth*, the concentrated image of the world, which, as an abbreviation of appearance, cannot do without the miracle. The likelihood, however, is that almost everyone, on strict examination, will find himself so corroded by the critical-historical spirit of our culture that he can make the former existence of myth credible to himself only by way of scholarship, through mediating abstractions. Without myth, however, every culture loses its healthy, creative natural power. Only a horizon ringed with myths closes off a whole cultural movement into a unity. All the powers of imagination and of Apollinian dream are rescued from their aimless wandering only by myth. The images of myth must be the unnoticed, ever-present daemonic guardians under whose care the young soul grows up, and by whose signs the grown man interprets his life and his struggles. Even the state knows no more powerful unwritten laws than its mythic foundation, which guarantees its connection with religion and its growth out of mythic ideas.

Now set beside this abstract man, guided without myths: abstract education, abstract custom, abstract law, the abstract

29 *Lohengrin* (1850), Wagner's romantic opera of the Grail knight.

state. Picture the lawless roaming of the artistic imagination, unbridled by any native myth. Imagine a culture that has no fixed and sacred primordial seat, but is condemned to exhaust every possibility and to feed wretchedly on all other cultures—that is the present, the result of that Socratism bent on the destruction of myth. And now mythless man stands, eternally hungry, amid all the pasts, digging and burrowing in search of roots, even if he has to dig for them in the most remote antiquities. What does the tremendous historical need of our dissatisfied modern culture point to, its gathering of countless other cultures around itself, its consuming desire to know, if not to the loss of myth, the loss of the mythic home, the mythic mother's womb? Ask yourself whether the feverish and so uncanny restlessness of this culture is anything other than the greedy grabbing and snatching after food of the starving. And who would still want to give anything to such a culture, which cannot be sated by all it devours, and at whose touch the strongest, most wholesome nourishment tends to turn into "history and criticism"?

We would have to despair bitterly of our German character too, if it had already become inextricably entangled with its culture in the same way, indeed become one with it, as we can observe to our horror in civilized France. What was long France's great advantage and the cause of its enormous preponderance, precisely that oneness of people and culture, might, at this sight, compel us to count ourselves fortunate that this so questionable culture of ours has so far had nothing in common with the noble core of our national character. All our hopes, rather, reach out longingly toward the perception that beneath this restlessly convulsing cultural life and spasm of cultivation there lies hidden a glorious, inwardly healthy, age-old power. Admittedly it stirs mightily only at tremendous moments, and then dreams on again toward a future awakening. From this abyss the German Reformation grew, and in its chorale the melody of the future of German music first rang out. So deep, courageous and soulful, so exuberantly good and tender did

Luther's chorale sound, like the first Dionysian luring call that breaks from dense thickets at the approach of spring. It was answered, in rival echo, by that solemnly high-spirited procession of Dionysian revelers to whom we owe German music—and to whom we shall owe *the rebirth of German myth*!

I know that I must now lead the friend who follows me with sympathy up to a high place of solitary reflection, where he will have few companions, and I call out to encourage him that we must hold fast to our shining guides, the Greeks. From them we have so far borrowed, to purify our aesthetic understanding, those two divine images, each of which rules a separate realm of art of its own, and through Greek tragedy we came to have an inkling of their mutual contact and intensification. The downfall of Greek tragedy had to appear to us as brought about by a remarkable tearing apart of these two primordial artistic drives. In keeping with this process there was a degeneration and transformation of the Greek national character, which calls on us to reflect seriously on how necessarily and closely art and people, myth and custom, tragedy and state, have grown together at their foundations. That downfall of tragedy was at the same time the downfall of myth. Until then the Greeks had been involuntarily compelled to link everything they experienced at once to their myths, indeed to understand it only through this link. As a result, even the most immediate present had to appear to them at once *sub specie aeterni* [under the aspect of eternity] and, in a certain sense, timeless. Into this stream of the timeless, however, the state plunged just as art did, to find rest in it from the burden and greed of the moment. And a people, like an individual for that matter, is worth exactly as much as it is able to press the stamp of the eternal on its experiences. For in this way it is, as it were, lifted out of worldliness, and shows its unconscious inner conviction of the relativity of time and of the true, that is, the metaphysical, meaning of life. The opposite happens when a people begins to understand itself historically and to smash the mythic bulwarks around it. This usually goes hand in hand with a decided secularization, a break with the uncon-

scious metaphysics of its earlier existence, with all its ethical consequences. Greek art, and Greek tragedy above all, held back the destruction of myth. They had to be destroyed along with it, so that people could live uprooted from their native soil, unbridled, in the wilderness of thought, custom and action. Even now that metaphysical drive tries to create for itself a form of transfiguration, if a weakened one, in the Socratism of science that presses toward life. But on the lower levels the same drive led only to a feverish search, which gradually lost itself in a pandemonium of myths and superstitions heaped up from everywhere. In its midst the Hellene nonetheless sat with his heart unappeased, until he learned, with Greek cheerfulness and Greek levity, as Graeculus ["little Greek"], to mask that fever, or to numb himself completely in some dull Eastern superstition.

Since the reawakening of Alexandrian-Roman antiquity in the fifteenth century, after a long intermission hard to describe, we have come strikingly close to this condition. At the heights, the same superabundant lust for knowledge, the same insatiable joy of discovery, this tremendous secularization; alongside it, a homeless wandering, a greedy crowding at foreign tables, a frivolous deification of the present or a dull, numbed turning away—all *sub specie saeculi* [under the aspect of the age], of the "present day." These same symptoms point to the same lack at the heart of this culture: the destruction of myth. It seems hardly possible to transplant a foreign myth with lasting success without irreparably damaging the tree in the process. Now and then, perhaps, the tree is strong and healthy enough to expel that foreign element again after a terrible struggle; but usually it must waste away, sickly and stunted, or consume itself in convulsive rank growth. We think so highly of the pure and vigorous core of the German character that we dare to expect from it precisely that expulsion of forcibly implanted foreign elements, and consider it possible for the German spirit to return to itself. Some may think that this spirit must begin its struggle by expelling the Romance element. For this it might see an outward

preparation and encouragement in the victorious bravery and bloody glory of the last war; but it must seek the inner necessity in the ambition to be always worthy of its sublime champions on this path, Luther as well as our great artists and poets. But let it never believe that it can fight such battles without its household gods, without its mythic home, without a "restoration" of all things German![30] And if the German should look around anxiously for a guide to lead him back to his long-lost home, whose paths and byways he hardly knows any more—let him only listen to the blissfully luring call of the Dionysian bird that hovers above him and wants to show him the way there.[31]

MUSICAL DISSONANCE

The pleasure in tragic myth resembles the pleasure in dissonance, justifying the world as an aesthetic phenomenon.

[24] Among the peculiar artistic effects of musical tragedy we had to single out an Apollinian *deception*. It is meant to rescue us from immediate oneness with Dionysian music, while our musical excitement can discharge itself in an Apollinian domain and upon a visible middle world placed in between. We believed we had observed how, precisely through this discharge, that middle world of the stage action, the drama as such, became visible and intelligible from within to a degree unattainable in any other Apollinian art. So here, where Apollinian art was, as it were, given wings and borne aloft by the spirit of music, we had to recognize the highest intensification of its powers, and thus, in that fraternal bond of Apollo and Dionysus, the summit of both Apollinian and Dionysian artistic aims.

Admittedly, the Apollinian image of light, precisely when lit from within by music, did not achieve the peculiar effect of the weaker degrees of Apollinian art. The epic, or the living stone, can compel the contemplating eye to that calm delight in the

30 The "Romance element" means French and Latin influence; the "last war" is the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–71.

31 An allusion to the Woodbird in Wagner's *Siegfried*, which guides the hero.

world of *individuatio*; but here, despite a greater animation and clarity, this could not be achieved. We looked at the drama and penetrated with a piercing gaze into its inner, moving world of motives—and yet it was as though only a symbolic image were passing before us. We almost believed we had guessed its deepest meaning, and we wished to draw it aside like a curtain, to glimpse the primordial image behind it. The brightest clarity of the image did not satisfy us, for it seemed to conceal just as much as it revealed. And while its symbolic revelation seemed to call on us to tear the veil and uncover the mysterious background, that very illuminated all-visibility in turn held the eye spellbound and kept it from penetrating deeper.

Whoever has not experienced this—having to see and at the same time longing to go beyond seeing—will hardly imagine how definitely and clearly these two processes coexist, and are felt side by side, in the contemplation of tragic myth. The truly aesthetic spectators, meanwhile, will confirm for me that among the peculiar effects of tragedy this coexistence is the most remarkable. Now transfer this phenomenon of the aesthetic spectator to an analogous process in the tragic artist, and you will have understood the genesis of *tragic myth*. It shares with the Apollinian sphere of art the full pleasure in illusion and in seeing, and at the same time it negates this pleasure and finds a still higher satisfaction in the destruction of the visible world of illusion. The content of tragic myth is first of all an epic event, glorifying the struggling hero. But where does that inherently enigmatic trait come from? The suffering in the hero's fate, the most painful overcomings, the most agonizing conflicts of motive, in short the exemplification of that wisdom of Silenus, or, in aesthetic terms, the ugly and the disharmonious, is represented again and again, in countless forms, with such evident fondness, and precisely in the most exuberant and youthful age of a people. Why, if not because a higher pleasure is perceived in all this?

For the fact that life really is so tragic would least of all explain the origin of an art form—if indeed art is not merely an

imitation of natural reality but precisely a metaphysical supplement to it, set beside it in order to overcome it. Tragic myth, insofar as it belongs to art at all, fully shares in this metaphysical aim of art in general, to transfigure. But what does it transfigure when it presents the world of appearance in the image of the suffering hero? Least of all the "reality" of this world of appearance, for it tells us precisely: "Look! Look closely! This is your life! This is the hour hand on the clock of your existence!"

And the myth showed us this life in order to transfigure it for us? But if not, where then lies the aesthetic pleasure with which we let those images too pass before us? I am asking about aesthetic pleasure, and I know very well that many of these images can at times also produce a moral delight, in the form of pity, say, or of a moral triumph. But whoever would derive the effect of the tragic from these moral sources alone, as has admittedly been customary in aesthetics for all too long, should not imagine that he has done anything for art by it. For art must above all demand purity within its own domain. For explaining tragic myth, the very first requirement is to seek the pleasure peculiar to it in the purely aesthetic sphere, without trespassing on the territory of pity, of fear, of the morally sublime. How can the ugly and the disharmonious, the content of tragic myth, arouse aesthetic pleasure?

Here it becomes necessary to take a bold run and leap into a metaphysics of art, as I repeat my earlier proposition: that only as an aesthetic phenomenon do existence and the world appear justified. In this sense tragic myth in particular has to convince us that even the ugly and disharmonious is an artistic play that the will, in the eternal abundance of its pleasure, plays with itself. But this primordial phenomenon of Dionysian art, so hard to grasp, becomes intelligible in a direct way, and is immediately grasped, only in the wonderful significance of *musical dissonance*. In general, music alone, placed beside the world, can give us an idea of what is meant by the justification of the world as an aesthetic phenomenon. The pleasure that tragic myth produces has the same home as the pleasurable sensation of disson-

ance in music. The Dionysian, with its primordial pleasure perceived even in pain, is the common womb from which music and tragic myth are born.

Has not that difficult problem of the tragic effect been made considerably easier, meanwhile, by our calling on the musical relation of dissonance for help? For we now understand what it means, in tragedy, to want to see and at the same time to long to go beyond seeing. With regard to artistically employed dissonance we would have to describe this state in just the same way: we want to hear and at the same time long to go beyond hearing. That striving toward the infinite, the wingbeat of longing, alongside the highest pleasure in clearly perceived reality, reminds us that in both states we must recognize a Dionysian phenomenon. Again and again it reveals to us the playful building up and smashing of the world of individuals as the outflow of a primordial pleasure—much as Heraclitus the Obscure compares the world-forming power to a child at play, setting stones here and there and building heaps of sand and knocking them down again.[32]

To gauge the Dionysian capacity of a people rightly, then, we would have to think not only of that people's music but, just as necessarily, of its tragic myth, as the second witness to that capacity. Given this closest kinship between music and myth, it is likewise to be supposed that the degeneration and corruption of the one will go together with the withering of the other—if indeed the weakening of myth expresses a weakening of the Dionysian power as such. On both points, however, a glance at the development of the German character should leave us in no doubt. In opera as in the abstract character of our mythless existence, in an art sunk to mere amusement as in a life guided by concepts, the nature of Socratic optimism had revealed itself to us as both unartistic and life-consuming. Yet to our comfort there were signs that the German spirit, for all that, rests and dreams undestroyed, in glorious health, depth and Dionysian

32 Heraclitus of Ephesus (c. 500 BC), called "the Obscure"; one of his fragments likens time or the world's course to a child at play.

strength, like a knight sunk in slumber, in an inaccessible abyss. From this abyss the Dionysian song rises up to us, to let us know that this German knight is even now dreaming his age-old Dionysian myth in blissfully solemn visions. Let no one believe that the German spirit has lost its mythic home forever, when it still understands so clearly the voices of the birds that tell of that home. One day it will find itself awake, in all the morning freshness of a tremendous sleep. Then it will slay dragons, destroy the treacherous dwarfs and awaken Brünnhilde—and not even Wotan's spear will be able to bar its way![33]

My friends, you who believe in Dionysian music, you also know what tragedy means for us. In it we have tragic myth, reborn from music—and in it you may hope for everything and forget what is most painful! But what is most painful for all of us is—the long humiliation in which the German genius, estranged from house and home, lived in the service of treacherous dwarfs. You understand the word—as you will also, in the end, understand my hopes.

SUFFERING AND BEAUTY

Dionysus and Apollo must stay in balance; an old Athenian says how much the Greeks suffered to become beautiful.

[25] Music and tragic myth are equally expressions of the Dionysian capacity of a people, and they are inseparable from each other. Both spring from a realm of art that lies beyond the Apollinian. Both transfigure a region in whose chords of delight dissonance, like the terrible image of the world, dies away enchantingly. Both play with the sting of displeasure, trusting in their exceedingly powerful magic arts. Both, by this play, justify the existence of even the "worst of worlds." Here the Dionysian, measured against the Apollinian, shows itself to be the eternal and original artistic power that calls the whole world of appearance into being in the first place. In its midst a new transfigur-

33 The deeds of Siegfried in Wagner's *Ring*: he slays the dragon Fafner, overcomes the Nibelung dwarfs, shatters Wotan's spear and wakes Brünnhilde.

ing illusion becomes necessary, to hold the animated world of individuation fast in life. If we could imagine dissonance become human—and what else is man?[34] —, then this dissonance, in order to be able to live, would need a glorious illusion to cast a veil of beauty over its own nature. This is the true artistic aim of Apollo, in whose name we gather all those countless illusions of beautiful semblance that at every moment make existence worth living at all and urge us on to live the next moment.

Of that foundation of all existence, the Dionysian substratum of the world, only as much may enter the consciousness of the human individual as that Apollinian power of transfiguration can overcome again. So these two artistic drives are compelled to unfold their powers in strict mutual proportion, according to the law of eternal justice. Where the Dionysian powers rise up as impetuously as we are now experiencing, Apollo too must already have come down to us, wrapped in a cloud; and the next generation will surely behold his most lavish effects of beauty.

That this effect is necessary, however, anyone would feel most surely, by intuition, if he once felt himself carried back, even in a dream, into an ancient Hellenic existence. Walking beneath lofty Ionic colonnades, looking up at a horizon cut off by pure and noble lines, beside him reflections of his own transfigured form in gleaming marble, all around him people striding solemnly or moving delicately, with harmonious sounds of speech and a rhythmic language of gesture—would he not, amid this ceaseless inflow of beauty, have to raise his hand to Apollo and cry out: "Blessed people of the Hellenes! How great Dionysus must be among you, if the Delian god thinks such spells necessary to heal your dithyrambic madness!"—But to someone in such a mood an aged Athenian, looking up at him with the sublime eye of Aeschylus, might reply: "Say this too, you curious stranger: how much this people must have suffered to be able to become so beautiful! But now follow me to tragedy, and sacrifice with me in the temple of both deities!"

34 Schopenhauer, turning Leibniz's "best of all possible worlds" on its head, called this the worst of all possible worlds.