
Preface (F. Golffing)

N uses style to create delight in the reader viii
he exhorts, rather than argues viii
N is a forerunner of psychoanalysis ix

*The Birth of Tragedy* (1870)

A Critical Backward Glance (Nietzsche, 1886)

I
This work is personal, and not perfect 3
the Dionysian spirit fights against Socratic ethics -- dialectics, temperance, reason 4
the are not sources of strength, they are symptoms of illness 4
in this “Greek serenity” we see the glow of a sun about to set 4
did Socrates exist entirely in irony? 5

II
this is the work of a young man; courageous, careless 5
the goal was to view scholarship from the vantage of the artist 6

III
the author is so sure of his message that he dispenses with proof 6
the idea is rather to enlist fellow revelers, to tempt them into dancing on mysterious grounds 6
Dionysos is an unrecognized god 7
the message must be sung, not spoken [against logos] 7

IV
what role does tragedy play in the Greek mind? it offers frenzy, which we should learn to see as a strength 8
pessimism is a sign of strength, optimism (ala Socrates) is a sign of decline 8
optimism, rationalism, democracy, utilitarianism...all signs of decline, of senility and “somatic exhaustion” 9

V
we should not focus on ethics, but on art as our essential activity 9
at any rate it is wrong to think of ethics as the search for eternal, absolute Truth [cf. Euthyphro or Gorgias]; this is hatred of life 10
cursing affective urges, beauty, sensuality -- in short, cursing and denying life 11
N’s book is a counterdoctrine to Socrates, which he named “Dionysos” 11

VI
using Kant and Schopenhauer’s terms to articulate Dionysos 12
mediocrity = democracy = modern ideas 13
against Romanticism as well 13

VII

not nihilism; but a “rising...undaunted” 14
Zarathustra was a Dionysian monster; one who knew how to laugh 15

START OF ORIGINAL BOOK

Preface to Richard Wagner (1871)

book was composed during the recent war [Franco-Prussian?] 16
N is convinced that art is the highest human task 17

The Birth of Tragedy and the Spirit of Music

I
art evolves via the Apollonian-Dionysian duality 19
Apollo: plastic/visual arts; Dionysian: music 19
they are locked in an agon, a discordant concord; they need each other 19
art: dream; philosophy: existence 20
dreams are the source of deep delight; they are perfect, our waking reality is not; they have a
soothsaying role 21
we are in an immense, raging sea sitting calmly in in a little rowboat, which is Apollo’s principium
individuationis (this image is from Schopenhauer) 22
the Dionysian brings rapture, intoxication, but it is not something we can live in entirely 22
it is also a connection with nature; connection to each other 23
we feel a primordial productive power, like a God 24

II
the Dionysian ecstatic reality seems to dissolve the individual and connect him to a deeper collective
power [i.e. to die and be born again in the swarm] 24
art not as an imitation of nature, but a connection to the essence of the universe 25
the possible excesses of this path are kept in check by Apollo 26
the aesthetic triumph is this overcoming the individual 26
nature bemoans the fact that its whole was decomposed into individuals 27
we have a desire to sink back into the original oneness of nature 27
Apollo throws a veil over this desire 28

III
Olympians as model: triumphant, overflowing life 29
Greeks distrusted the forces of nature; used the fantasy of the gods to hide those forces 30
remaining on earth, as a living individual, becomes what it means to exist 31
Apollonian illusions, appearances, hide the forces of nature 31
IV
an original Oneness, ground of being, full of suffering 32
an original pain is the sole ground of being 33
this is covered over with the illusion of the individual [I think] 33-4
and mastering and controlling this individual [through reason/temperance] becomes the key to
the good life 34
Dionysos is barbaric to the Socratic; but the former’s spirit penetrates the Apollonian illusion
34-5
the Apollonian artist tries with his monotonous harp to drown out “the demoniac chant of the
multitude” 35
the individual forgets himself in the Dionysian vortex 35
[of course the Dionysian is the Id, the desiring element churning away inside the Platonic soul,
the beast to be tamed by right reason, the beast utterly to be feared because it is the largest and
strongest part of the soul – this is all there in The Republic]

V
the point of the book is to understand the spirit that is imbued with both Apollo and Dionysos 36
Homer is Apollo’s artist 36
the lyrical poet is Dionysian, connected to the original Oneness 38
he can help us abrogate our subjectivity and become one with the heart of the world,
with original pain 38
he helps with the process of “unselving” 39
getting away from the subjectively willing and desiring human being 40
Schopenhauer: released willing is joy; inhibited willing is sadness 40
our personal objectives distract us from contemplation 41
an artist cannot be an individual subject; he must lose this to be an artist 41
knowing [via reason, I assume] is not art; it cannot be creation 42

VI
epic poetry: Apollo; folk song: Dionysos 42
former is even, calm, and mathematical; latter is irregular, uneven 43
the latter rouses men to wild enthusiasm 44
the latter can manifest itself as will 45
Apollonian uses images to represent music 45
nature is the source of volition, desire, appetite [i.e. not the individual] 45
N uses the stormy sea as image for Dionysos; calm shore for Apollo [which is stolen from A’s
urging us to “hold the ship out beyond the surf and sea...”] 45
we can turn into the pure eye of the sun, utterly detached from the will 46
what is primordial is contradiction and pain 46

VII
he wants to dig around in Greek history to find where tragedy came from 46
the chorus was important 47
the birth of tragedy is not about a reverence for the moral intelligence of the multitude, or about
the idea of a spectator without drama 49
tragedy is not supposed to copy reality

the chorus helps us see beyond state and society, beyond all that separates us, back into the heart of nature, where we are One

there we learn that life is joyful and powerful

the quotidian experience of the individual is drowned

we see into the true nature of things, and we understand that we can do nothing to change this true nature

we are like Hamlet: understanding kills action; and so we need a veil of illusion to live, to act

understanding creates a supreme jeopardy of the will, and art heals us, turns our nausea into imaginations that allow us to live

VIII

the satyr is our true prototype, authentic, connected to god, expressing the truth of nature, things as they really are, plugged into our highest power

the tragic chorus is an aesthetic imitation of [or attempt to capture] that dynamic

the satyr chorus is a vision of the Dionysian multitude

for the poet, image and metaphor are not copies of the real, but the real itself

the chorus of those who have forgotten their civic life and social mores

enchantment is a precondition to dramatic art

again, the Dionysian condition is one in which the individual is shattered, and we are returned to the original Oneness

the chorus attends their god, Dionysos; it is the highest expression of nature

the chorus is a spectator that is connected to Dionysos and is alive in that connection

IX

we cannot look directly into the horror of nature; Apollo helps soothe the experience

Greek serenity (ala Socrates) is a dampening of life; it is passive endurance of life

we must aim at the joy of knowing nature; to do so, we must shed the principium individuationis that Apollo/society has given us

we must aim at action, become Titans, regain the power to do, regain our creative joy

Prometheus as model(?) who did not wait to receive the gift of fire, but took it and used it as he willed

Apollo tranquillizes the individual by drawing boundaries, enjoining self-knowledge, norms

the Dionysian destroys the limits Apollo places on us

X

individuation is a kind of dismemberment of the One that we are originally; it is the source of all suffering

the Dionysian is a beam of joy on a fragmented world; reintegration is a goal

we need a philosophy of naked nature, with the bold face of truth

a religion is dead when it becomes dogmatic; when certainty replaces myth, the latter of which unsettles certainty and begins again the process of becoming
XI
Euripides: art as replica of reality, a way for the common man to see himself on the stage; this is utterly different from the original Greek dramatists 70

- His is a formulaic drama in which all could learn the rules and participate on the same (rational) basis 71
- this was art appropriate to the democratic polis 71
- the retreat to serenity and easy pleasure, instead of seriousness and awe 72
democracy’s power is a strength merely in numbers, not the strength of people who are superior in talent and perception, just lots of people with some amount of talent and perception 73

in his predecessors’ plays [Aeschylus and Sophocles, the older tragedies, which N. favors] Euripides perceived a frightening depth, an infinite background, and so he rationalized drama so as to make that infinity finite and understandable [to everyone] 75

XII
previous Greek tragedy tied the Apollonian and the Dionysian together, but Euripides tries to eliminate the Dionysian 76

- his prologue tells the audience what is going to happen and thus kills the suspense, the drama, the tension 79
- Socrates follows in Euripides’ wake 77
  - cool reason, knowledge 79
- Euripides’ spectator was supposed to be in on it, so he could participate 80
  - the conscious, not the subconscious 81
- drama as: making sense and order of chaos 81
- instead of the artist who must abandon reason and conscience in order to create, Euripides/Plato wanted to imagine the rational artist who works in the conscious realm 81
- they killed Dionysian tragedy 82
- sent Dionysos into the sea, to be head of a secret cult 82
[ N. sought and found the Dionysian that is there, as minority, in Plato]

XIII
Socrates emerges as the great villain, champion of (rational) knowledge, conscious, intellect, reason...83

- he works stridently against the still-alive Dionysian in his day [e.g. Thrasymachus the wolf] 83
- there is a sureness to Socrates’ affect, almost a smugness, that is hard to miss 85
- he was calm in death as well 85, and essentially became a martyr for the cause 86

XIV
Socrates could not connect us with the Abyss, with the irrational 86

- to him drama was beguiling, not useful for knowing the good 86
- since art was seen as imitation of the sensible world, it was a copy of a copy and thus horribly misleading 87
  - (and yet the dialogues were a kind of drama) 87
- for him art must be subordinate to the dialectic 88
  - the Socratic element “overgrew” the Dionysian elements and stifled them with its success 88

Aristotle endorsed the chorus, but it was lost 89
Socrates, “the despotic logician,” had his regrets, knew he had killed something good in dramatic art 90

XV
we have taken Socrates to be our martyr as well, and taken Greek society as it was, under his sway, to be a lost Atlantis [so to speak] 91-2
the unveiling of truth through reason shows off “theoretical man’s” power – hence the reverence for science 92
the illusion that thought, through chains of causation, could understand all of being is integral to our way of thinking even now 93
freed from the fear of death, by means of reason 93
the wholesale slaughter we have seen in Western Civilization [this is before the 2 WW] is the result of not having art as the antidote to barbarism 94
for S. knowledge is the true panacea and error is the true evil 94
the purpose of man is to increasingly separate knowledge from illusion/error 94
[but what is this other than S putting onto the species in general his own personal project (as N. will say in BGE (or OGM))]

but there is a whole realm we don’t yet “know”, where it may be that illogic reigns – S. saw this as a frontier to be colonized and tamed by reason, rather than a realm whose power we can draw strength from through art 95

XVI
tension between the thirst for knowledge and our need for art 96
Schopenhauer: music does not represent appearance, but is a direct copy of the will [which for him is the blind, irresistible urge] 97
connect to the possible events of life through music 99
music gives us access to the inmost kernel which precedes all forms 100
music is expressive when the composer has been able to express the heart of an event 100
expression must precede from a direct knowledge of nature, without reason 100
music can give birth to myth; it can cause the delight felt at the annihilation of the individual 101
Apollo glosses over and hides the pain of existence 102
Dionysos connects us to the eternal mother who is constantly creating 102

XVII
Dionysian art shows us the eternal delight of existence, and the horror of individual existence 102
in the former, we are becoming the primal being 102
we are amidst the many forms that are constantly pushing into life 102
[i.e. these forms are not Forms, they are constantly being born, growing and changing, and dying]
amidst the life force of procreative lust 103
Socrates killed this art, forced it to become a secret cult; and helped render music no more than a lame attempt to imitate the empirical world 105
Dionysian music is a mirror to the world-will 105
it was not eradicated by Socrates, but it was forced to flee, and it was replaced by Greek serenity [Socrates’ temperance] 107
it believes it can entirely paper over the Abyss with Apollonian appearances 108
XVIII
Socratic idea that appearances cover over Truth 108
   the man of theory who seeks this Truth with intellect is our current ideal 109
   we are beginning to see, though, that we cannot find the Forms, that it is a futile effort 109
   we no longer see ourselves as omnipotent 110
   nothing worse than the slave class that sees its existence as unjust and wants vengeance 110
   we have only begun to think what we will do in the absence of the Socratic search for Truth 110
   some have rejected the idea that science will find universal truths 111
   Kant and Schopenhauer have shown that logic cannot achieve full knowledge of the
   universe 111
   it just gives appearance to the name ‘reality’ 111
when we turn our backs on the Socratic delusion, we prepare to dwell in the fullness of being 111

XIX
two dogmas: man is essentially good; man is essentially evil 115
   opera is Euripidean 116
   imagines a primitive period (state of nature) in which we were at the heart of nature 117
   Socratic optimism 117
the task of art is to be the Dionysian mirror of the universe, not the slave of appearance, as opera has
 become 118
Kant and Schopenhauer destroyed intellectual Socratism, so we could engage a more profound
consideration of ethics and art 120
   the Greek example is instructive, because they were predominantly Dionysian, and were
   ‘Socratified’ 120
   are the Germans effecting a rebirth of tragedy? 121
   [it would be just like a German (N) to think so]

XX
we should learn from the Greeks, learn how to recapture the Dionysian 121-2
Schopenhauer is the great German hope in this project 124

XXI
Apollo is the founder of States 124
   both Commonwealth and patriotism need the affirmation of individuality 125
   the Greeks, at some point, discovered how to not exhaust themselves in ecstatic brooding nor in
   a bid for power and glory 125
tragedy was the key, myth shields us from music’s pure-natural connection, but also connects us to
nature, to “the womb of things” 126
   we feel “the very heartbeat of the world-will” and “the unruly lust for life” 127
problem: when we are connected to nature and life through the intervention of music, we will want to
flee our individuality, and return “home” 127
   Apollo helps avoid a headlong flight into oblivion, cares for our individuality, keeps up the
illusion of this world 128
   myth can be this shield, that keeps us from a too-direct contact with the “cosmic idea” 128
because the Dionysian can bring self-destruction [echoes of D&G's suicidal line of flight] 129
music addresses us from the center of reality [it is the snowstorm calling to us from the center of
Rothko’s Tate paintings] 130
tragedy can make us aware of the illusory nature of the Apollonian, not destroy it, just remind
us that “I” is but an illusion, a way to cope in the world, not something that actually exists in the
world 131
it is when the Dionysian and the Apollonian are intermingled, in what seems like about equal
measure, that tragedy (and art) is at its best 131

XXII
musical tragedy creates affects, one feels it, one does not think it 131
it is not accessible to the understanding 132
the tragic myth is Dionysian and Apollonian at the same time, nature made concrete 132
a sublime aesthetic joy at the connection to original Oneness 133
pathos as a form of aesthetic play 134
a poetic justice [rather than a rational one] 134
we should be connected to all when we experience this justice, in the midst of a common pool of
feeling 136

XXIII
there is a miracle on stage, what emotion do we feel? do we intellectualize it? 136
Socrates [Euripides] would do the latter, and ruin it 137
we need to connect with the “marvelous ancient power” 138
the pre-Socratic Greeks understood their experience through their myth 138
[I think a lot of what N is doing here is observe Socrates struggling to argue for his way of seeing the
world, and the practices he rails against, that he wants to fix with his Socratism, and then N imagines
what that culture must have been like, that S was having to struggle so hard against...Thrasymachus,
Callicles, etc. are just those who give voice to it all]
a nation must connect its experience to the eternal, the metaphysical meaning of life 139
we are still in the grip of Socratism’s feverish search for knowledge, which will not fulfill us
139
we should try to return to the pre-Socratic Greeks, to Dionysius 140

XXIV
Apollo saves us from direct contact with the Dionysian 140
their union is the artistic pinnacle, N seems to say 140
this union is the tragic myth; a higher delight 142
art is not an imitation of nature; it is raised up beside nature in order to overcome it 142
we feel delight in art, aesthetic and moral 142
Dionysius is that spirit that shatters and rebuilds the world of individuals, like a child with a sandcastle
143-4
in Socratic art, art is mere amusement 144
in the Dionysian we are privy to extravagant hopes and bitterest pain 144
we need both the Apollonian and the Dionysian: the latter gives us life and energy, the former protects us; it gives us only as much as we can deal with 145

suffering and beauty are both needed for the fullest life 146