

NOTES ON THE BIRTH OF TRAGEDY

John Protevi / LSU French Studies / www.protevi.com/john / protevi@lsu.edu / Not for citation in any publication / Classroom use only

SECTION 1

THE APOLLINE AND THE DIONYSIAC AS NATURAL ARTISTIC DRIVES.

Evolution of art is tied up with duality of the Apolline and Dionysiac; comparison to reproduction: two sexes in perpetual conflict brought together periodically in reconciliation.

The opposition is between the art of image making and the imageless art of music. These are different natural *drives* “stimulating and provoking each other to give birth to ever-new, more vigorous offspring.” Eventually, these two drives will engender an equally Dionysiac and Apolline art: Attic tragedy. This generation is a “metaphysical miracle of the Hellenic ‘Will’”.

Note that the Apolline and Dionysiac are “artistic powers which erupt from nature itself, without the mediation of any human artist” (Sect 2).

Analogy: dream is to intoxication as the Apolline drive is to the Dionysiac.

We are image-creating artists when we dream; but we still know that dreams are “semblances.” Philosophical types feel that behind everyday reality there is another reality, IOW, that everyday reality is also semblance. Thus you’re a philosopher if every once in a while you think everyday reality is a dream, a semblance hiding another reality

Artist and philosophers relate to semblance-images as helps in interpreting life. Not just pleasant images, but gloomy ones too. You have to live in the world and share joy and suffering while still having a fleeting sense of it being semblance.

Our innermost being experiences dreaming with great pleasure and “joyous necessity.” Apollo is the Greek expression of this joyous necessity of dream experience. But Apolline images must never deceive us totally that they are crude reality; they must be protected from the wild “Will” that is deep reality. Thus Apollo is the expression or image of the *principium individuationis* (the principle of individuation): the pleasure, wisdom, and beauty of semblance (as belief in individuated being).

| Dreamer | Philosopher |
|------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Dream images are semblance of everyday reality | Everyday reality is semblance of another reality The Will as restless, formless striving = deep reality Everyday reality (individuated being) = semblance |

When the PI breaks down, the human or ego in us is seized with horror as its world of individuated beings dissolves, but a blissful ecstasy arises from the inmost ground of man and of nature (“the Will”).

These must be understood as asubjective “affects” rather than subjective “emotions.”

Horror and blissful ecstasy together give us a glimpse of the Dionysiac, which is analogous to intoxication (vs dreams as believing in individuated being). The Dionysiac surpasses subjectivity, as in narcotic drink (not alcohol but psychoactives) or spring fever. Popular dance frenzies attest to the Dionysiac as well.

The Dionysiac frenzy renews the bond between individuated humans and between humanity and nature. Class divisions are dissolved: a “gospel of universal harmony.” The unity with the neighbor in the dance frenzy is like the rending of the veil of maya, with only shreds of it fluttering before the “mysterious primordial unity.”

With the dissolution of the PI and the expression of sense of belonging to “higher community” (man with man and man with nature), humans feel themselves to be gods, just like the gods we see in our dreams. “Man is no longer an artist, he has become a work of art.” That is, man feeling himself to be a god is the revelation of nature’s artistic power.

The Dionysiac world-artist, the primordial unity itself as it creates man feeling himself to be a god, feels ultimate blissful pleasure at this creation. So, man’s dreaming of gods is an artistic activity like that of the primordial unity, which creates man feeling like a god at the dissolution of PI and reuniting of man with man and man with nature.

So man is to dream as Dionysus / nature is to man. We are nature’s dream-images.

SECTION 2

THE APOLLINE AND THE DIONYSIAC IN GREEK CULTURE

N clarifies that the preceding discussion was of natural artistic drives, w/o mediation by human artists. These provide an “immediate satisfaction.” The image-world of dream has no relation to intellectual or artistic ability of the dreamer, nor does intoxicated reality, which actually destroys the individual and imparts sense of unity.

Human artists only imitate these natural artistic states. The artist breaks away from the chorus in Dionysiac self-abandon and dreams his unity with the world in a “symbolic dream-image.”

How did these drives manifest themselves in the Greeks?

Greek dreams were probably logical and cleanly outlined, as if dreaming Greeks were like Homer.

But there's an important difference btw the barbarian Dionysians and the Greek Dionysians. The barbarians: "an excess of sexual indiscipline," a "repulsive mixture of sensuality and cruelty," a "regression to the condition of tigers and monkeys."

The Greeks appear protected from barbarian Dionysus at first by Apollo, who rejects him with severe lines of Doric art.

But then Dionysus appears in Greece, from Greek roots, and Apollo had to reconcile with Dionysus, whose revels were then transformed from violent orgies to "festivals of universal release and redemption and days of transfiguration." [= Attic tragedy]

Redemption is a key concept in all Nietzsche's work: can life be redeemed? Is it worth living? This is the "value of life" question to which "pessimism" and "affirmation" are answers.

The key is that for the Greeks, the "jubilation of nature becomes art," that is, the destruction of the PI is done in art, not in reality. So the terrible affects of barbarian D, sensuality and cruelty, are rendered into dual affects of Greek D, pain and pleasure. This is a "pharmakon," that is, a poison-medicine.

Dionysian music elicited horror from the Greeks, used to Apolline music, which was a "wave-like rhythm with an image-making power." Apolline music was like Doric architecture in sound; it keeps Dionysiac power at a distance. Dionysiac music includes melody and harmony, which can "shake us to our very foundations."

I'm confused here. I would think rhythm is more primordially powerful?

In any case, Dionysian music stimulates man to highest expression of symbolic power; he feels need to express destruction of PI and "one-ness as the genius of humankind, indeed of nature itself." So the essence of nature wants to express itself through man, and the symbolism of the whole body is needed in the "full gesture of dance with its rhythmical movement of every limb."

I'd probably say dance is the trigger for releasing deep affects of unity with others, rather than the expression of that unity. The unity doesn't pre-exist the dance, which "expression" seems to imply.

Apolline Greeks would regard the Dionysian dance with astonishment and horror that their consciousness was only hiding Dionysian reality from them by a veil.

SECTION 3

APOLLINE CULTURE

Moving from the top-down in dismantling Apolline culture to find its foundations, we first see the Olympian gods, all of whom were created by the drive to art-images that it takes the form of Apollo. What was the “need” that gave rise to the Olympians?

As figures of “superabundant life,” they are answers to a deep popular pessimism in Greek culture, the “wisdom of Silenus.” The Greeks needed the amazing beauty of the Olympians to bear life at all, so keenly did they feel the “terrors and horrors of existence.” The Olympian victory over the horrible Titans is the symbol of the need for artistic beauty in the face of horrible existence. There was a series of slow transitions as the Apolline drive for beauty created the Olympian “divine order of joy” out of the terrors of the Titans.

The Olympians are a transfiguring mirror for the Hellenic Will; they provide a theodicy, they justify human existence by living it in amplified, beautified form. So Homeric man has reversed the wisdom of Silenus: the real pain is leaving such a beautiful life; hence Achilles’s shade in the Odyssey.

So we see that the famed Greek “naïve” artistry is not so simple, and is not universal, as romantics might wish. Rather, Greek naïve art is the “supreme effort of Apolline culture” to overthrow the horrors of the Titans (that is, real life). So Homer is the complete victory of Apolline *illusion*; it is like “natural” illusion. The Homeric Greeks were the result of the Will’s desire to see itself transfigured in art; in order for that to work, the Greeks had to feel themselves worthy of being glorified.

SECTION 4

DREAMS AND THE NAÏVE ARTIST; RECAP OF 4 STAGES OF GREEK CULTURE

Following up on the analogy with dreams, we see that for the most part and for most people, waking life seems the most important; but N will say that for “the mysterious ground of our being, of which we are an appearance,” the opposite holds. So, on the basis of learning about natural artistic drives and their longing for semblance, N risks the “metaphysical assumption” that true inner being, the Will, which although a “primordial unity” is also “eternally suffering and contradictory,” needs for its redemption an ecstatic vision, that is, “intensely pleasurable semblance.”

This is complex, and Han-Pile’s perspective is necessary. Both A and D are drives that long for semblance. A’s semblance is the Olympian world, that is, glorified human life. D’s semblance is the affect of oneness with the world in the destruction of PI. But the key

here is the difference between barbarian and Greek D. Greek D is artistic vision leading to symbolic dance, not real frenzy.

Now we normal everyday humans feel our everyday life, which really is a semblance, to be “empirical reality” [instead of being the illusion generated by nature for its redemptive pleasure as release from its “eternal suffering and contradiction.”]. But if we take our “reality” as a “representation generated at each moment by the primordial unity,” then dreams are a semblance of that semblance, and so a still higher satisfaction for nature’s desire for semblance.

So we have 3 (or 4) levels of reality

1. Deep reality = nature as contradictory, suffering, primordial being = Will. Deified as Dionysus.
2. Everyday reality as semblance generated by deep reality for its pleasure and redemption = representation = PI. Wisdom of Silenus says this is not worth living. Titans. Horror of earthly existence. Excess.
3. Dreams / art as semblance of semblance
 - a. Dreams as semblance of everyday reality = semblance of semblance of deep reality = greater pleasure for nature / deep reality than even #2
 - b. Naïve artist = expression of natural image-art = semblance of semblance = also a greater pleasure for nature / deep reality than #2. Apollo and Apolline world of beauty as deification of PI. Olympians. Measure.

We see a symbol of this “primal process” of naïve artist / Apolline culture in Raphael’s *Transfiguration*. This is very important: the PI, deified in Apollo, is the release and redemption through semblance of the primordial unity. We need the world of agony (#2) to compel us to generate the beautiful image that we transfixedly contemplate; we can thereby live calmly in that contemplation.

Now Apollo as deification of PI requires measure; as interpreted by Apollo, excess is the trait of the Titans. So the Apolline Greek had to feel Dionysian affect as Titanic and barbaric, though he also had to admit his inward relation to the overthrown Titans, and beyond and deeper than that, he had to feel deep reality (“a hidden ground of suffering and knowledge”) when contacted by D.

So let’s imagine the effect of D popular music on severe Apolline culture of measure: here an “unmeasurable excess in nature” comes through. Now “excess revealed itself as truth” and contradiction as “bliss born of pain” speaks out from nature. So the Dionysiac annuls the Apolline. But if the first onslaught was resisted, then Apollo’s measure was even more firmly expressed, as the Doric, “a permanent military encampment of the Apolline.”

There is fascinating stuff here about the phalanx as measured Apolline war and the heroic frenzy of Achilles as Dionysian war.

Four stages of Greek culture as evolution / dialectic of A and D: mutual intensification.

1. Titanic age of wisdom of Silenus.
2. Homeric age of naïve art as Apolline
3. Dionysian music sweeps over naïve art
4. Doric art as Apolline response

The stage is now set for the appearance of Attic tragedy as child of both drives, A and D.

SECTION 5 LYRIC POETRY AS DOUBLED NATURAL CREATION

The new germ that will evolve into tragedy is seen in the juxtaposition of Homer, the naïve image-artist, and Archilochus, the lyric poet / musician.

19th C aesthetic theory claims Archilochus as a “subjective” artist, but for N this makes no sense, as for him, art requires the “conquest of subjectivity” to allow “pure, disinterested contemplation” (i.e., “objectivity”). But what will N make of the lyric poet’s constant use of “I” and constant reference to “his” passions and desires?

Schiller’s reference to a musical mood preceding his poetic composition is a clue. When we remember that ancient lyric poets were musicians, then the “artist’s metaphysics” of sections 1-4 can explain the lyric poet in a three step process:

1. The lyric poet becomes one with Dionysus / nature / primordial unity / deep reality (pain and contradiction); this is a giving up of subjectivity.
2. He produces a copy of nature in his (image-less) music; this music is the release and redemption of nature in semblance / illusion
3. Under the influence of Apolline dream, the music becomes visible to him as a symbolic dream-image of unity with nature; this lyric poetry is thus a second reflection of nature; it “gives sensuous expression to the primal contradiction and pain.” So the “I” of this third stage, the “I” of the lyric poet, is an expression of nature; any “subjectivity” in the sense of singular existence is “illusory.”

So lyric poetry is Apolline images of Dionysian music. This music is not nature / deep reality, but the “release and redemption” of nature / deep reality in semblance. What distinguishes the

image-making of the sculptor and epic poet from the lyric poet is that the latter “feels a world of images and symbols growing out of the mystical state of self-abandonment and one-ness.” So the images of the lyric poet are “objectifications” of the poet (who has merged with nature). So if the poet seems himself in his image world, what he sees is just an image created by “the genius of the world which expresses its primal pain symbolically in the likeness of the man.”

So, empirical human beings are only pleasurable visions / images of natural primal unity / deep reality. We are the result of the process by which nature finds release and redemption in artistic creation. The creations of human artists (image-less music and image-laden poetry) are “second reflections” of this primary natural artistic process.

N disagrees with Schopenhauer’s interpretation of lyric poetry, which sees it as an “imperfectly achieved art.” N rejects S’s distinction of subjective and objective arts. For N, the “subject” of art is only “a medium” or “channel” of nature, that through which nature achieves release and redemption in semblance.

This is the amazing inversion N proposes: we are only images of nature as the “true creator of art.” We are nature’s artworks, and it is only as an “aesthetic phenomenon” that the world is justified – to nature, which enjoys the very spectacle (our world) it produces as release and redemption of its primal pain and contradiction. The problem is that our “knowledge,” our aesthetic philosophy, keeps us from understanding this, because it’s our “knowledge,” our consciousness, which divides us from nature. It’s only the creative genius, in the act of merging with nature as “original artist of the world,” who catches a glimpse of the essence of art. In this case, the lyric poet-musician is at once “subject and object ... poet, actor, and spectator.”

To recap: there are two artistic processes at work

1. Nature / deep reality is the original artist, who creates the empirical world of everyday reality as a semblance that brings it release and redemption from its inherent pain and contradiction.
2. The lyric poet, who is himself a created semblance of nature, is the secondary artist, who doubles his own creation by himself creating art, via a merging with nature as artistic creative process.
 - a. At first, the lyric poet produces music as image-less copy of nature. (D)
 - b. Then, the lyric poet produces poetry as images of music. (A)

Can we then say that human art is even more pleasurable to nature than everyday reality, insofar as it is a second layer of semblance, a “semblance of semblance”?

SECTION 6 MUSIC AND LANGUAGE

Archilochus brought the folk song into literature. The folk song testifies to the double natural artistic drive (D and A). Folk song is the “musical mirror” of the world; melody is the key, which gives birth to poetry as its expression, with “sparks of imagery” thrown off by those births. So in poetry, language tries to imitate music; the symbols in poetry are NOT alternate means of expressing objects represented in music. Music is non-representational; it is affective, though it “discharges itself in images.”

Now music is not the Will, but it appears as Will in poetry. The poet is impelled by the Apolline drive to speak in images of music, and he thereby understands all of nature as “that which eternally wills, desires, longs.” But he himself, as image-interpreter of the image-less, is calm and at rest. But when he sees his empirical self, he sees it as passionate and willing.

So while poetry depends on music, music merely tolerates poetry; it has no need of images. Music already refers symbolically to the pain and contradiction of natural primal unity / deep reality; language can never exhaust the meaning of that symbolism. Language is the “organ and symbol of phenomena,” but phenomena (the world of everyday reality) are only a semblance created by the primary artistic drive of nature for its release and redemption.

SECTION 7 THE CHORUS AS THE ORIGIN OF GREEK TRAGEDY

N rejects two interpretations of the chorus: (1) as ideal spectator; (2) as representative of the people or of the moral law, as that which disapproves of the hubris of the aristocratic figures represented on the stage.

N shows a problem in Schlegel’s chorus as “ideal spectator” interpretation: we moderns think of spectators as retaining an aesthetic consciousness (we know it’s “only art”), but the Greek chorus really believes that, say, the Titans are really there on stage: the “spectator” then is not aesthetic, but affected empirically by the action on the stage; but that doesn’t make sense to modern thought. Nor can “spectator” really be applied to the chorus w/o a stage! You can’t be a spectator when you’re a singer-dancer w/o a spectacle in front of you.

Schiller is a better guide: the chorus is a “living wall which tragedy draws about itself to shut itself off in purity from the real world.” The tragic chorus is not realist: the satyrs of the chorus are “fictitious creatures of nature.” But this fiction is not mere fancy, but “religiously acknowledged reality”; the satyrs are just as real and the Olympian gods.

N proposes an analogy. Satyr : civilized man :: Dionysian music : civilization. Civilized man is *aufgehoben* [absorbed, elevated, extinguished] by the chorus, so that divisions among men are dissolved and man feels unity with fellows and with nature. This feeling of unity provides a

“metaphysical solace” from tragedy: the feeling that even though individuals are destroyed, “life is indestructibly mighty and powerful.” This is shown by the way the natural satyrs go on behind and beyond civilization, remaining eternally the same despite historical change.

So art saves the sensitive, suffering, Greek from the danger of giving up in the face of the horrors of existence. Thus life saves man through art.

1. Horror at existence in everyday reality
2. Dionysian experience destroys limits and causes forgetting of personal experience
3. Re-entry into daily life causes revulsion, asceticism, will-negating mood
 - a. Through Dionysus, they have seen distance btw primal unity and everyday reality
 - b. They know they can never change nature, only history, so why try?
 - c. So “knowledge kills action”; action requires illusion
4. Art is the healing power that can rescue us from will-destroying knowledge / disgust
 - a. Sublime = taming of the terrible
 - b. Comedy = discharge of disgust at the absurd

SECTION 8 THE SATYR’S VISION

The satyr is not the fictional idyllic shepherd of modern times but the “original image of mankind,” the revelation of “man’s true nature” as “enthusiastic celebrant, ecstatic at the closeness of his god.” He thus puts the “deceitful finery” of civilized man to shame. So we have another analogy: satyr as natural man : civilized man :: truth : lie.

The power of Dionysian inspiration is so great that the mass of celebrants sees itself as transformed into satyrs; the constitution of the chorus is an “artistic imitation of that natural phenomenon.” Now the audience of Attic tragedy identified with the chorus; there is just one unity, a sublime chorus. So the deeper meaning of Schlegel appears: the spectator sees the visionary world of the stage. So the chorus is the “self-mirroring of Dionysian man,” just as the world of the stage is a vision of the chorus.

We have to simplify our view of metaphor: the poet plainly and simply sees something in front of him, an image substituting for a concept. Dionysiac excitement turns a mass of people into artists seeing images, in this case, images of themselves transformed into satyrs. There is an “epidemic” here, a contagion, as the crowd is transformed from cultured, historical, individuated persons into “timeless servants of the god.”

D and A work together: Dionysian enchantment turns crowd into visionary seers of themselves as satyrs who in turn see Dionysus. Now this visionary image of Dionysus is due to Apollo, the god of images. So Greek tragedy = “Dionysian chorus which discharges itself over and over

again in an Apolline world of images.” The chorus is the womb of the action on the stage. Now tragedy is not a simple Apolline process of creating images, whereby the artist sits in peaceful contemplation. Rather, the individuals are FIRST dissolved and become one with primal unity AND THEN give birth to Apolline images (of themselves as satyrs seeing Dionysus).

The chorus is not the raw Dionysian mass, but the symbol of the mass. The chorus shares the suffering of the god and wisely proclaims “truth from the heart of the world.”

As tragedy develops, Dionysus appears on stage and the opposition becomes the Dionysian chorus and the Apolline dream-world on stage. Dionysus now longer is expressed in image-less music, but comes to speak as an epic hero, almost in the language of Homer.

SECTION 9 TRAGEDY AND MYTH

The beautiful Apolline images of tragedy (the speeches of the hero, revealing their character) are radiant patches “to heal a gaze seared by gruesome night,” that is, hurt by gazing into the “inner, terrible depths of nature.”

Consider Oedipus: compared to the horror of the myth, Sophocles’s treatment of him as redemptive is “nothing other than one of those images of light held out to us by healing nature after we have gazed into the abyss.” With Oedipus we see knowledge is unnatural; the old Oedipus is passive, a saint.

On the other hand, Prometheus is active, an artist. But here too Aeschylus doesn’t plumb the depths of the myth. For the Aryans, Prometheus’s action was a crime, a theft of fire, rather than waiting for it to come from heaven. Thus culture is the conflict of man and the gods; we must commit an offense against the gods who will then punish us. So with the Aryans we see “active sin,” and the pessimistic justification for human suffering; we also see the curse in life as a mixture of divine and human worlds. The heroic individual strives to cross the boundaries of individuation and to become the one world-being; as a result, he suffers in himself “the primal contradiction hidden within the things of this world.”

Contrast this with the Semitic myth of the Fall, where origin of evil is seen as feminine curiosity. Aryan active masculine crime vs Semitic feminine sin.

Looking at the Prometheus myth we see the necessity of suffering for the striving individual as un-Apolline pessimism. Apollo teaches self-constraint and measure. But the danger here is a freezing into “Egyptian stiffness and coldness”; Apolline form needs Dionysian energy, which seeks to carry all Apolline individuals on its swelling tide; here D and Prometheus are similar.

So in Aeschylus, the striving Prometheus is a mask of Dionysus, while the demand for justice and individuation is Apolline. So we have an affirmed contradiction: “all that exists is just and unjust and is equally justified in both respects.”

SECTION 10 DIONYSUS, HEROES, AND THE FATE OF TRAGEDY

There were no “individuals” on stage in Greek tragedy; Prometheus, Oedipus, et al, were only masks of Dionysus. The one here, D, manifests himself in a multiplicity of figures and masks, as entangled in individual will. The god appears AS a striving individual; that he APPEARS is due to Apollo who allows the chorus to see the hero as the symbol of Dionysus. In truth, though, he IS Dionysus, who “experiences the sufferings of individuation in his own person.”

IOW, Dionysus is the symbol of the Will as primal unity, which suffers by being torn apart into individuated beings but which might be restored to unity.

So in seeing D’s suffering we are to “regard the state of individuation as the source and primal cause of all suffering.” But the enthusiasts see in the suffering, individuated Dionysus the hope of “unity restored.” So D is dual: from his smile, the Olympian gods; from his tears, mortals. And he is both savage demon and gentle ruler. So we see the Mysteries as taught by tragedy:

1. Recognition that deep reality is unity
2. Individuation is suffering and source of evil
3. Art is joyous hope that “spell of individuation can be broken” and unity restored

Via the power of music, Dionysus takes over Greek myth, reinterpreting the previous Titans vs Olympians struggle. This reinvigoration enables Greeks to avoid the death of religion via conversion to historical fact guarded by dogmatism. But then after its flowering in Attic tragedy, myth dies, via Euripides. So we see form and content coincide, as tragedy itself meets a tragic end: “it raises itself up once more, like a wounded hero, and all its excess of strength, together with the wise calm of the dying, burns in its eyes with a last, mighty gleam.”

SECTION 11 EURIPIDES, REASON, AND TRAGEDY

Greek tragedy died by suicide, as the result of irresolvable conflict; tragedy dies tragically. Out of its death throes with Euripides rises only Attic New Comedy, in which tragedy lived on in “degenerate form.”

Euripides killed tragedy by bringing the spectator on stage, allowing realism of character and the depiction of everyday life by degrading the heroes into Everyman. “The spectator now heard and saw his double on the Euripidean stage, and was delighted that the latter knew how to speak so well.” With E’s influence on the New Comedy we see “bourgeois mediocrity” having its chance to speak. In the New Comedy “slyness and cunning are always triumphant.” The decadence here is only the “cheerfulness of slaves,” which “outraged” the fierce spirits of early Christianity.

Now you could say that Euripides reformed tragedy’s relation to the public by making drama realistic. But “the public” is a changeable thing, and which great artist really cares about that which is “strong only by virtue of its number”? In fact, Euripides was quite unpopular; it was Aeschylus and Sophocles who won all the prizes.

The key is that Euripides only cared for two spectators. One was himself, as thinker, not as poet. Following the orders of these thinking spectators, he transferred into the souls of his characters all the passions that had been in the chorus. As a thinker, E was dissatisfied with myth and tragedy, with its “twilight” and its mysteries, its dubious solutions to ethical problems. The key is E’s standard: he “held reason to be the real root of all enjoyment and creation.” From this perspective, classic tragedy “made no sense” and had to be reformed, which he could do in league with “the other spectator.”

SECTION 12 EURIPIDES THE ANTI-DIONYSIAN: AESTHETIC SOCRATISM

Euripides seeks to expel the Dionysian from tragedy and rebuild it as non-Dionysian art, morality, and world view. We see the posing of the question of the value of the Dionysian in his last work, the *Bacchae*. It would be good to be rid of the Dionysian, but it is too powerful, enchanting even the most rational of his opponents (Pentheus). So while the message of the *Bacchae* is that the most rational individuals cannot resist the Dionysian traditions of the people, the damage had been done already by Euripides’s other works: “Dionysus had already been chased from the tragic stage.” The victor here was a daimon, using E as a mask: the daimon was Socrates. The opposition is now the Dionysian versus the Socratic.

After Socratic / rationalist purging, what’s left is the dramatic epic, an Apolline art in which tragedy is not possible. The Apolline is so strong here that the poet doesn’t merge with the images, but remains a calm spectator of what is before him. The actor is then a rhapsode, a dreamer (rather than an ecstatic celebrant possessed by visions).

What we have with Euripides is a strange dual affect: reason and passion, “simultaneously fiery and cool.” Euripides doesn’t lose himself in the action; he is there with a pounding heart. So it can not be Apolline epic, but he’s divested himself of Dionysus as well. What’s left is a search

for “new means of stimulation to have any effect at all.” Instead of Apolline images and Dionysian ecstasies as natural artistic drives, we substitute cool thoughts and fiery affects, which are realistically imitated.

So what we have in Euripides is “aesthetic Socratism,” which states, “in order to be beautiful, everything must be rational,” a saying that parallels “only he who knows is virtuous.” We see this rationalism in E’s prologues, which give away the story up front. But this is a remedy for a non-existent fault: tragedy never relied on suspense, since the goal was pathos, not description of action.

E’s poetry was only the “echo of his conscious perceptions.” He’s thus dramatizing the appearance of *nous* as Anaxagorus puts it: the creation of order by reason. For E, w/o *nous* there is only chaos; to him, the other poets are “drunks.” Like Plato, E condemns unconscious inspiration in poets; conscious reason is everything; E is thus the poet of “aesthetic Socratism,” the opponent of Dionysus. Although victorious over D, Socrates has to pay the price of being torn apart by the Athenian court; D has to flee into “the mystical waters of a secret cult which gradually spread across the entire world.”

SECTION 13 SOCRATES AND KNOWLEDGE

Socrates was praised as a wise man on the basis of his knowledge, but he was famous for saying the only thing he knew is that he knew nothing, compared to the knowledge claims of the Athenians he interrogates in the dialogues. But these men only performed by instinct, without being able to explain how they perform. So Socrates had to reform Athenian culture, art, and morality, insisting on the standard of self-aware rationality.

What’s odd about Socrates is that his daimon, his instinct, works against his consciousness, telling him to stop. Socrates is the inverse of most creative people, in which it is instinct which is creative and consciousness which warns and criticizes. But with Socrates, instinct is the critic and consciousness the creator. IOW, Socrates is a “non-mystic,” in which logic is as overdeveloped as instinct is in the mystic. Socratic logic was itself sort of a natural flow at work behind Socrates the man. After the trial, the dying Socrates becomes a new ideal for Greek youth; Plato came then to devote himself to this image.

SECTION 14 SOCRATES AND TRAGEDY, PLATO AND THE NOVEL

Socrates couldn't take pleasure from tragedy; it was too irrational, and too dangerous for sensitive souls [this concern for cultural-political aesthetics is shared by N]. Socrates could only understand the Aesopian fable.

Plato created a new art form, the dialogue, which mixed all available forms together, "midway between narrative, lyric and drama, between prose and poetry." In this way he anticipates the novel, defined as "an infinitely intensified Aesopian fable." With Plato, "art becomes overgrown with philosophical thought"; the Apolline becomes logic and the Dionysian is replaced with "naturalistic affects." Socrates as character in Plato's dialogues recalls the Euripidean rational hero, who risks losing our tragic sympathy through the inherent optimism of dialectics, which "celebrates at each conclusion."

The death of tragedy ensues, a suicide by descent into "domestic tragedy." The optimistic linkage of virtue, knowledge and happiness is the death of tragedy; the "transcendental justice" of Aeschylus becomes mere "poetic justice" with the *deus ex machina*. The chorus becomes merely a "reminiscence of the origins of tragedy." Sophocles had himself begun the restriction of the role of the chorus, but it's the optimism of the dialectic that drives music and Dionysus away and destroys the essence of tragedy.

But, can we think whether an "artistic Socrates" is possible? In prison awaiting death, Socrates tells his friends that his daimon sometimes tells him to make music. Perhaps Socrates gained an Apolline insight that his supreme logical nature might have limits, that art might be a "necessary correlative and supplement of science"?

SECTION 15 SOCRATES, SCIENCE, AND MYTH

Everyone feels rage and shame at the Greeks, who, despite their faults, have a "self-sufficient magnificence." But if we are honest with ourselves and revere truth enough to admit this truth, we see the Greeks "hold the reins of our culture, and every other culture." Thus Socrates, who was after all a Greek, is the archetype of the theoretical man.

What is the significance and goal of this human type? Science actual feeds off the process of discovery of truth, not the contents so discovered, as Lessing put it: the search for truth, not truth itself. Now there is also a profound delusion to science: that thought can not only understand existence, but correct it. This "sublime metaphysical illusion" leads science to its limits, where it

must transform itself into art. Art has actually been the unwitting goal of science, to which it is led by its illusion of correcting existence.

Look at Socrates as theoretical man: he's not just capable of living by science, but also of dying by it, liberated from fear of death by reason. So the image of the dying Socrates is the founding myth of science, reminding us of science's goal to make existence comprehensible and justified.

Socrates is the "mystagogue of science," and given the heights to which a global network of science has reached, "the vortex and turning-point of so-called world history." Without Socrates turning science into the quest to justify existence, mere practical invention would have led to so many wars that a "practical pessimism" would generate a "horrifying ethic of genocide out of pity."

Socrates then is the theoretical optimist who counters this practical pessimism. Even morality, "the stirrings of pity, sacrifice, heroism" and "temperance" are rationalized by Socrates! The key is the "intense pleasure of a Socratic insight" and the way it can provide an incentive to life. Socratic science provides a new "Greek serenity and bliss in existence."

Current science is however hurrying to its limits, where its optimism will founder. The limits of scientific knowledge call up tragic knowledge, which needs art to be endured. So the question of the present is: will we meet a "music-making Socrates"?

SECTION 16 MUSIC AND TRAGIC AFFIRMATION

Forecast: science vs tragic art in the present; conditions for the rebirth of tragedy.

Recap of the analyses so far. Apollo and Dionysus; image-arts vs image-less music, "a direct copy of the Will itself." Music is not a copy of appearances, but represents the metaphysical (deep, noumenal reality) in relation to the physical (appearances). Wagner points out a fault of modern aesthetics, which demands music be beautiful, that it produce pleasure from beautiful forms (images) like other arts. N took this insight back to the Greeks and found the A vs D opposition.

N's question: what happens (in tragedy) when A and D work together? IOW, how does music relate to image and concept? N cites a long passage from Schopenhauer, from which he gets the notion that music is a copy of the Will; we can even call the world "embodied music" as well as embodied will. Melodies are, like concepts, abstractions; particular things are the concrete. But

concepts as forms are properly abstractions, as they begin from perceptions of concrete things. Melodies on the other hand provide the kernel before the form, the “heart of things.”

N resumes his analysis: music stimulates us to contemplate symbolically Dionysian universality (“the heart of things”) and it causes the symbolic image to emerge with highest significance. So music is what gives birth to myth and in particular tragic myth, the image of Dionysian wisdom. In the lyric poet music struggles to inform us of its nature in Apolline images.

The tragic cannot be understood by an aesthetic focused on pleasure in beautiful images, since in the tragic we “feel joy at the destruction of the individual.” Only music lets us see this as the expression of the Will behind the principle of individuation, that is, we feel joy at the “eternal life of the Will” behind the destroyed individual. Tragedy is affirmation of life: “Tragedy calls out: ‘we believe in eternal life,’ whereas music is the immediate idea of this life.” While Apollo produces a beautiful lie that overcomes suffering, that removes pain from nature, tragedy allows nature to speak truly, commanding us to be like nature, enjoying the creation / destruction of appearance: “Be as I am – the primal mother, eternally creative beneath the surface of incessantly changing appearances, eternally forcing life into existence, forever satisfying myself with these changing appearances!”

SECTION 17 THE DEATH OF TRAGEDY AT THE HANDS OF THEORETICAL OPTIMISM

Dionysian art lets us identify, briefly, with “the primordial being itself” and its “unbounded greed and lust for being” behind the destruction of individuals. The agony of destroyed individuals is understood as necessary given the “uncountable excess of forms of existence thrusting and pushing themselves into life ... the exuberant fertility of the world-Will.” We feel both the pain of the destroyed individuals and the pleasure of the natural process. So in tragic Dionysian ecstasy we are happily alive, “not as individuals, but as the *one* living being, with whose procreative lust we have become one.”

This insight allows us to understand the chorus and the birth of tragedy from the spirit of music. This understanding never reached the Greek poets and philosophers, since their medium is language. Thus the tragic characters “speak more superficially than they act.” As with Shakespeare and Hamlet, you cannot learn the tragic lesson from the words, but only from “an intense contemplation of, and reflection on, the whole.” What we see is the struggle of the spirit of music to be revealed in image and myth; we also see the end of that struggle in the death of tragedy, with the Dionysian world view confined to the Mysteries.

We are now brought back to the struggle between theoretical optimism and tragic wisdom. The only hope for a rebirth of tragedy lies in a music-making Socrates. Science destroyed myth once and also attacked *music*, reducing it, as the new Attic dithyramb, from a copy or expression of the Will to a mere reproduction of appearances mediated by concepts. As counterfeit of phenomena, this “music” is robbed of myth-making power. Similarly, we find anti-Dionysian, anti-mythic theory at work in the growth of psychological realism in the presentation of *character*. Character is now longer representation of an eternal type, but individual idiosyncrasy. The clearest example of anti-tragic theoretical optimism lies in the *endings* of new dramas. The old dramas proposed a metaphysical solace in the very destruction of individuality; the new dramas provide “an earthly resolution of tragic dissonance”: the well-earned reward, the *deus ex machina*.

This struggle within art is replayed in culture as theoretical optimism routs myth and tragic wisdom and sets to work producing its own form of earthly solace through technological advance, a literal god of the machine in the form of industrial production. Instead of confronting him with the grand metaphysical issues, scientific optimist culture confines individuals in small technical problems, in which he can will life as an object to be understood.

SECTION 18 THE LIMITS OF MODERN THEORETICAL OPTIMISM

Three illusions produced by the Will keep us living life: 1) science and Socratic optimism: life can be understood and improved; 2) Apolline image-art and aesthetic enchantment: life can be made worth living in the contemplation of beauty; 3) Dionysian music and metaphysical solace: eternal life surges forth behind the destruction of individuals. These three cultural stimulants are necessary for sensitive natures who feel more strongly aversion to existence.

Modern culture is theoretical / optimistic; in the figure of Faust, who exhausts all earthly knowledge, we see perhaps someone who is beginning to sense the limits of the Socratic lust for knowledge. Socratic optimism is truly dangerous politically, as class society needs (defeated, complaisant) slaves, but slaves who become optimistic about life, who see the possibility of earthly happiness of all -- they are truly dangerous. They may learn to see their existence as injustice and might seek revenge for themselves and all future generations. Modern religion, degenerated into religions of the learned, are not capable of stemming this tide; in fact, myth, the mother of religion, has become optimistic, which only feeds the coming storm.

Kant and Schopenhauer attempt to turn knowledge on itself and establish limits, keeping knowledge to knowledge of appearances and forbidding it access to deep, noumenal reality. Kant showed that science’s pretention to absolute time, space, and causality was actually the generator

of metaphysical illusion. Perhaps here we see the possibility of tragic culture, which will put wisdom in place of science as the highest goal. Such wisdom will look at the whole and will “embrace eternal suffering with sympathetic feelings of love, acknowledging suffering to be its own.” Are there people strong enough to turn away from optimistic science and desire a new form of art providing metaphysical solace? Can there be people who desire tragedy?

Modern scientific cultural is a pitiable thing once it sees its consequences in class war and its limits in Kantianism. It lacks the courage of its convictions, running hither and yon, unable to commit to anything fully, unable to face cruelty and suffering in existence. It knows theoretical optimism is doomed once it becomes illogical and flees from its own consequences. Art is similarly adrift, become pedantic and bibliophilic, gathering a “universal world culture” about itself and commencing to classify and name all the genres and styles, like some mad Linnaeus of culture.

NOTE: I’m going to skip sections 19-23 on opera and Wagner.

SECTION 24 ARTIST’S METAPHYSICS

Tragedy is the interplay of the Apolline and Dionysian. N’s artist’s metaphysics claims that only as an aesthetic phenomenon is life justified, so tragic myth must show that even the ugly and disharmonious is a pleasurable game the Will plays with itself. We have a glimpse of this in the pleasure we feel in musical dissonance. This shows that the Dionysian, as primal pleasure even in pain, is the “common womb from which both music and tragic myth are born.” In music and tragedy, when we listen and look but long to go beyond listening and looking, we see Dionysus / nature as “the playful construction and demolition of the world of individuality as an outpouring of primal pleasure and delight.” This is similar to the divine world-shaping playful child of Heraclitus. So to judge the Dionysian capacity of a people we have to look to their music and their tragic myth together.

SECTION 25 DIONYSUS AND APOLLO

The Dionysian is the “eternal and original power of art which summons the entire world of appearances into existence”; the Apollonian is the beautiful illusion that allows us to live in the world of individuation created by the Dionysian. Only so much awareness of Dionysian reality is allowed into individual consciousness as can be overcome by the protective Apollonian power of transfiguration. The Dionysian and Apollonian drives thus work in strict, reciprocal proportion.