

NOTES ON THE BIRTH OF TRAGEDY 1-4

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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.