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The Birth of Tragedy

Friedrich Nietzsche

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Contents

An Attempt at Criticizing Myself 4
Foreword to Richard Wagner 17

Friedrich Nietzsche

The Birth of Tragedy

An Attempt at Criticizing Myself

1.

Whatever lies at the bottom of this questionable book, it must have been a question of the highest importance and fascination. It must also have been a deeply personal question. The proof is the time when the book was written, and written in spite of that time: the exciting, troubled time of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870 and 1871. While the thunder of the Battle of Wörth was rolling across Europe, the man who would become the father of this book sat somewhere in a corner of the Alps. He was a brooder and a lover of riddles. He was lost in thought and tangled up in riddles, and so he was very worried and not worried at all, both at the same time. There he wrote down his thoughts about the Greeks. Those thoughts became the core of this strange and hard-to-approach book, which this late preface, or afterword, is meant for. A few weeks later he found himself under the walls of Metz, where the army was laying siege. He still had not got free of the question marks he had placed beside the so-called "cheerfulness" of the Greeks and of Greek art. Then came that month of the greatest tension, when people in Versailles were discussing the peace. In that month he finally made peace with himself too. Slowly recovering from an illness he had brought home from the battlefield, he settled for good, in his own mind, the idea of "The Birth of Tragedy out of the Spirit of Music." Out of music? Music and tragedy? The Greeks and the music of tragedy? The Greeks and the work of art that expresses pessimism, the belief that life is bad? The Greeks were the most successful kind of human being so far, the most beautiful, the most envied, the kind that most tempts us to love life. And they, of all

people, needed tragedy? More than that, they needed art? Why? What was Greek art for?

You can guess where this put the big question mark about the value of being alive. Is pessimism always a sign of decline, of decay, of things gone wrong, of instincts that are tired and weak? That is what it was among the people of ancient India, and from all appearances that is what it is among us "modern" people and Europeans. But is there such a thing as a pessimism that comes from strength? Could a mind be drawn toward the hard, horrifying, evil and troubling sides of life because it feels well, because it is overflowing with health, because it is full of life? Is there perhaps a kind of suffering that comes from having too much? Is there a bold, tempting kind of courage, the courage of the sharpest eye, that actually wants to face the terrible? It would want the terrible as an enemy, a worthy enemy, on which it can test its strength and from which it wants to learn what "fear" really is. What did the tragic myth mean to the Greeks, and especially to the Greeks of their best, strongest and bravest period? And what did the huge phenomenon of the wild, ecstatic force mean? And what did tragedy mean, which was born from it? And then there is the other side: the thing that tragedy died of. That was the Socratic way of thinking in morals, with its clever arguing, its contentment and the cheerfulness of the thinking, science-minded person. Now what if this very Socratic way of thinking was a sign of decline, of tiredness, of sickness, of instincts falling apart into chaos? And what if the "Greek cheerfulness" of the later Greeks was only a sunset glow, the last light before night? What if the Epicurean will to fight against pessimism was only the caution of someone who was suffering? And what about science itself, our science? Yes, what does all science mean at all, if we look at it as a symptom of life? What is all science for, and, even worse, where does it come from? What? Is being scientific perhaps only a fear of pessimism and a way of running from it?

A clever way of defending ourselves against the truth? And, to speak in moral terms, is it something like cowardice and dishonesty? Or, to speak without morals, is it a kind of cunning? Oh Socrates, Socrates, was that perhaps your secret? Oh mysterious master of irony, was this perhaps your irony?

2.

What I got hold of back then was something terrible and dangerous. It was 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. For the first time science was seen as a problem, as something open to doubt. But the book in which my young courage and suspicion let themselves loose back then: what an impossible book had to grow out of a task so unsuited to a young man! It was built entirely out of my own experiences, which came too early and were still too green and unripe, and which all lay right at the edge of what can be put into words. The book stood on the ground of art, because the problem of science cannot be understood on the ground of science. It was perhaps a book for artists who also happen to have a gift for analysis and for looking back. That means it was for an exceptional kind of artist, the kind you have to search for and would not even want to search for. It was full of new psychological ideas and artists' secrets, with an artist's view of the universe in the background. It was a young man's work, full of young courage and young sadness. It was independent, stubbornly standing on its own, even where it seems to bow to an authority and to someone it honored. In short, it was a first work in every bad sense of the word. In spite of its very old, grey-haired problem, it had every fault of youth, above all youth's habit of going on "far too long" and its "storm and stress," its restless overexcitement. On the other hand, considering the success it had, it was a book that had proved itself. This was especially true with the great

artist to whom it spoke as if in a conversation between two people, Richard Wagner. I mean it was a book that, in any case, satisfied "the best people of its time." For that reason alone it ought to be treated with some respect and with silence about its faults. Even so, I do not want to hide completely how unpleasant it seems to me now, and how strange it looks to me now, after sixteen years. It stands before an older eye, an eye a hundred times more picky and spoiled, but one that has not grown any colder. Nor has this eye grown any more distant from the task that this daring book took on for the first time: to look at science through the eyes of the artist, and to look at art through the eyes of life...

3.

Let me say it again: today I find it an impossible book. I call it badly written, clumsy, embarrassing, mad about images and muddled by images, overly emotional, here and there sugary to the point of being girlish, uneven in its pace, with no wish for logical neatness. It is so very sure of itself that it does not bother to prove anything, and it even distrusts whether proving things is proper at all. It is a book for insiders. It is "music" for those who were baptized into music, for people who have been bound together from the very beginning by shared and rare experiences of art. It is a secret sign by which blood relatives in the arts can recognize one another. It is a proud and frenzied book, which shuts itself off from the common crowd of the "educated" even more than from the ordinary "people." And yet, as its effect proved and still proves, it must also know well enough how to find fellow enthusiasts and lure them onto new hidden paths and dance floors. In any case, people admitted to themselves, with curiosity as well as dislike, that a strange voice was speaking here. It was the voice of a follower of a god who was still "unknown." For now this follower had hidden himself under the hood of a scholar, under the

heaviness and joyless arguing of the Germans, and even under the bad manners of a Wagner fan. Here was a mind with strange needs that had no name yet. It had a memory bursting with questions, experiences and hidden things, and the name Dionysus was written beside them like one more question mark. People said to themselves, with suspicion, that here was speaking something like a mystical soul, almost like one of the wild women who followed Dionysus. This soul stammered with effort and at random, as if in a foreign language, almost unable to decide whether it wanted to share itself or hide itself. It should have sung, this "new soul," and not talked! What a pity that I did not dare to say what I had to say back then as a poet. Perhaps I could have done it! Or at least I could have said it as a scholar of ancient languages and texts. After all, even today almost everything in this field is still waiting to be discovered and dug up by such scholars! Above all, the problem that there is a problem here at all. And that as long as we have no answer to the question "What is the wild, ecstatic force?", the Greeks remain just as completely unknown and unimaginable as ever...

4.

Yes, what is Dionysian? What is the wild, ecstatic force? This book gives an answer. The one speaking in it is someone who "knows", someone initiated into the secrets, a follower of his god. Today I might speak more carefully, and with fewer fine words, about such a hard question of human psychology as the origin of tragedy among the Greeks. One basic question is how the Greeks related to pain. How sensitive were they? Did this relationship stay the same, or did it turn around over time? Here is the question: did their ever-growing hunger for beauty, for festivals, for pleasures, for new religious cults, really grow out of lack, out of going without, out of sadness, out of pain? Suppose that is exactly true. Pericles (or Thucydides, who wrote

the speech down) hints at it in the great funeral speech. If so, where would the opposite hunger have come from, the one that appeared earlier in time? I mean the hunger for the ugly. I mean the good, tough will of the older Greeks to face pessimism, to face tragic myth, to face the picture of everything terrible, evil, puzzling, destructive and doomed that lies at the bottom of existence. Where, then, would tragedy have come from? Maybe from joy, from strength, from overflowing health, from too much fullness of life? And then, asking as a doctor of the body would ask: what does that madness mean, the madness out of which both tragic and comic art grew, the madness of Dionysus? What? Is madness perhaps not always a sign of decay, of decline, of a culture that has grown too old? Are there perhaps, and this is a question for doctors of the mind, sicknesses of the nerves that come from health? From the youth and youthfulness of a people? What does it mean that the satyr (goat-man) joins god and goat in one being? What experience of their own, what inner urge, made the Greeks picture the frenzied worshipper of Dionysus, the earliest kind of human, as a satyr? And about where the tragic chorus came from: in those centuries when the Greek body was in full bloom and the Greek soul was bubbling over with life, were there perhaps waves of ecstasy that spread through whole populations? Visions and hallucinations that passed through entire communities, entire gatherings of worshippers? What if the Greeks, right in the richness of their youth, had the will to face tragedy, and were pessimists? What if it was exactly madness, to use a phrase of Plato's, that brought the greatest blessings to Greece? And what if, on the other hand and the other way round, the Greeks became more and more optimistic, shallow and play-acting exactly in their times of falling apart and weakness? What if they grew more eager for logic and for making the world logical, and so became at the same time more "cheerful" and more "scientific"? What? Could it be, in spite of all "modern ideas" and all the prejudices of democratic taste, that the victory of optimism, the rule

of reason that took over, the focus on usefulness in practice and in theory, just like democracy itself, which arose at the same time, is a sign of fading strength, of approaching old age, of the body's tiredness? And that pessimism is not such a sign at all? Was Epicurus an optimist exactly because he was a sufferer? You can see that this book has loaded itself with a whole bundle of hard questions. Let us add its hardest question of all! Seen from the point of view of life, what does morality mean?...

5.

Already in the foreword to Richard Wagner, art, and not morality, is presented as the truly deepest activity of human beings, the one that reaches beyond the physical world. In the book itself, the provocative sentence comes back several times: life and the world make sense only as a work of art. In fact, the whole book knows only an artist's meaning behind everything that happens, and an artist's hidden meaning behind that. Call it a "god" if you like, but certainly only a god who is an artist, completely free of worries and without morals. This god wants to feel his own joy and his own power equally in building and in destroying, in the good and in the bad. By creating worlds, he frees himself from the pressure of his own fullness and overfullness, and from the suffering of all the opposites crowded together inside him. In this view, the world, at every moment, is God's release that he has achieved. It is the forever changing, forever new vision of the one who suffers most, who is most full of opposites and contradictions, who knows no other way out than being saved by beautiful illusion. You may call this whole artist's view of the universe random, idle, fantastic. What matters is that it already reveals a mind that will one day defend itself, whatever the risk, against explaining existence in moral terms and against giving it a moral meaning. Here, perhaps for the first time, a pessimism "beyond good and evil" an-

nounces itself. Here that "perverse way of thinking" finds its words and its formula, the one Schopenhauer never tired of attacking in advance with his angriest curses and thunderbolts. It is a philosophy that dares to place morality itself in the visible world, to drag it down there. And it places morality not only among the "appearances", in the technical sense the idealist philosophers use, but among the "deceptions": as beautiful appearance, illusion, error, interpretation, something touched up, art. Maybe the depth of this anti-moral leaning can best be measured by the careful and hostile silence with which the whole book treats Christianity. Christianity is the most extreme and over-the-top working-out of the moral theme that humanity has ever had to listen to. In truth, there is no greater opposite to the purely artistic way of explaining and justifying the world taught in this book than the Christian teaching. That teaching is only moral and wants to be only moral. With its absolute standards, for example its claim that God is truthful, it banishes art, every kind of art, to the kingdom of lies. That means it denies art, damns it, condemns it. Behind such a way of thinking and judging, which must be hostile to art as long as it is in any way genuine, I always sensed something hostile to life as well: a grim, vengeful dislike of life itself. For all life rests on beautiful appearance, art, deception, points of view, and the need for perspective and for error. From the very beginning, Christianity was, deep down and through and through, life's disgust and weariness with life. It only disguised this, hid it, dressed it up, behind a belief in an "other" or "better" life. The hatred of the "world", the curse on the passions, the fear of beauty and of the senses, an afterlife invented to slander this life more effectively, and at bottom a longing for nothingness, for the end, for rest, for the "Sabbath of Sabbaths": all of this always seemed to me, just like Christianity's absolute will to accept only moral values, the most dangerous and creepiest of all possible forms of a "will to destruction". At the very least it seemed a sign of the deepest illness, tiredness, bad mood, exhaustion and poverty of

life. For in front of morality, especially Christian morality, which means absolute morality, life must always and unavoidably be found guilty, because life is something deeply immoral. In the end, crushed under the weight of contempt and of an eternal "No", life must come to feel unworthy of being wanted, worthless in itself. Morality itself: what? Might morality not be a "will to deny life", a secret instinct for destruction, a principle of decay, of making things smaller, of slander, the beginning of the end? And so, the danger of all dangers?... So, back then, with this questionable book, my instinct turned against morality. It acted as an instinct that speaks up for life. It invented for itself a basic counter-teaching and a counter-valuing of life, one that was purely artistic and anti-Christian. What to call it? As a scholar of language and a man of words, I named it, not without taking some liberty, since who knows the true name of the Antichrist?, after a Greek god. I called it the Dionysian, the teaching of the wild, ecstatic force.

6.

Do you see what task I already dared to touch with this book?... How much I regret now that back then I did not yet have the courage (or was it the boldness?) to allow myself a language of my own for such personal views and risky ideas. Instead, I struggled to express strange new values with the formulas of Schopenhauer and Kant, values that went completely against the spirit of Kant and Schopenhauer, and against their taste as well! What did Schopenhauer actually think about tragedy? In his book The World as Will and Representation, volume two, page 495, he says: "What gives everything tragic its special power to lift us up is the dawning insight that the world and life cannot truly satisfy us, and so are not worth our attachment. That is what the tragic spirit is. It therefore leads us toward resignation," meaning toward giving up. Oh, how differently Dionysus spoke to

me! Oh, how far from me, back then, was this whole habit of giving up! But there is something much worse about the book, something I regret even more than having clouded and spoiled my hunches about the wild, ecstatic force with Schopenhauer's formulas. It is this: I spoiled the grand Greek problem, as it had opened up to me, by mixing in the most modern matters! I tied hopes to things where there was nothing to hope for, where everything pointed all too clearly to an end! Based on the latest German music, I started spinning fairy tales about the "German character", as if it were just about to discover itself and find itself again. And I did this at a time when the German spirit, which not long before had had the will to rule Europe and the strength to lead Europe, was stepping down, finally and for good. Under the showy excuse of founding an empire, it was making its move toward mediocrity, toward democracy and toward "modern ideas"! In fact, since then I have learned to think hopelessly and mercilessly enough about this "German character", and also about today's German music. That music is Romantic through and through, and the least Greek of all possible kinds of art. On top of that, it wrecks the nerves like nothing else. It is doubly dangerous for a people who love to drink and who honor unclear thinking as a virtue, because it works in two ways at once: as a drug that both intoxicates you and fogs your mind. Of course, if we set aside all the rushed hopes and the wrong applications to the present day that spoiled my first book back then, the big question mark of the wild, ecstatic force, as the book puts it down, still stands, and goes on standing, also when it comes to music: what would music have to be like if it no longer came from Romantic roots, as German music does, but from the wild, ecstatic force? . . .

7.

"But, sir, what in the world is Romanticism, if your book is not Romanticism? Can deep hatred of 'the present age', of 'reality' and of

'modern ideas' be pushed any further than it is in your artist's view of the universe? A view that would rather believe in nothingness, would rather even believe in the devil, than in the 'now'? Isn't there a deep bass note of anger and of the urge to destroy, rumbling underneath all your clever weaving of voices and your seducing of the ears? A furious determination against everything that exists 'now', a will that is not very far from practical nihilism, from wanting to wipe everything out, and that seems to say: 'Better that nothing be true than that you should be right, than that your truth should win!' Listen for yourself, my dear Mr. Pessimist and worshipper of art, with a more open ear, to one single chosen passage from your book. It is that rather eloquent passage about the dragon-slayers, which may sound tempting to young ears and hearts, like the Pied Piper luring children away. What? Isn't that the true, genuine confession of a Romantic from 1830, wearing the mask of the pessimism of 1850? And behind it you can already hear the usual Romantic ending warming up: a break, a collapse, a turning back, and a falling down before an old faith, before the old God . . . What? Isn't your pessimist's book itself a piece of anti-Greek thinking and of Romanticism, itself something 'that both intoxicates and fogs the mind', a drug in any case, even a piece of music, German music? Just listen:"

"Let us imagine a generation growing up with this fearless gaze, with this heroic pull toward the enormous. Let us imagine the bold stride of these dragon-slayers, the proud daring with which they turn their backs on all the weakling teachings of optimism, so that they can live fully, wholly and with determination. Wouldn't it be necessary for the tragic person of this culture, while training himself to face seriousness and horror, to long for a new art, the art of deep comfort beyond this world? Wouldn't he have to long for tragedy as his very own Helen, the most beautiful woman of legend, and cry out with Faust:

And should I not, with all the power of my longing, bring that one and only figure to life?"

"Wouldn't it be necessary?" . . . No, three times no, you young Romantics: it should not be necessary! But it is very likely that it ends this way, that you end this way. That is, "comforted", just as it is written, in spite of all your training yourselves to face seriousness and horror. "Comforted by something beyond this world". In short, you end the way Romantics end: Christian. No! First you should learn the art of comfort in this world, here and now. You should learn to laugh, my young friends, if you really insist on staying pessimists. Perhaps then, as people who laugh, you will someday send all comforting from beyond this world to the devil, and the whole idea of a world beyond first of all! Or, to say it in the words of that wild monster of the wild, ecstatic force who is called Zarathustra:

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

"This crown of the one who laughs, this crown of roses: I myself put this crown on my head, I myself declared my laughter holy. Today I found no one else strong enough to do it."

"Zarathustra the dancer, Zarathustra the light one, who waves with his wings, ready to fly, waving to all the birds, ready and prepared, blissfully light-hearted:" -

"Zarathustra the truth-teller, Zarathustra the truth-laugher, not an impatient one, not one who demands everything or nothing, but one who loves leaps and leaps to the side: I myself put this crown on my head!"

"This crown of the one who laughs, this crown of roses: to you, my brothers, I throw this crown! I have declared laughter holy. You higher people, learn, I beg you, to laugh!"

Foreword to Richard Wagner

The ideas gathered in this book will probably cause all kinds of doubts, upsets and misunderstandings, given the odd character of the people who talk publicly about art in our time. I want to keep all that away from me. I also want to write these opening words with the same calm, deep joy that shows on every page of the book itself, since the book is like a fossil left behind by good and uplifting hours. So I picture the moment when you, my deeply respected friend, will receive this book. I imagine you, perhaps after an evening walk in the winter snow, looking at the picture of Prometheus set free on the title page. You read my name, and right away you are sure that, whatever this book may contain, its author has something serious and urgent to say. You are also sure that, in everything he thought up, he was talking with you as if you were in the room with him, and that he could only write down things worthy of your being there. You will remember that I was gathering myself to work on these ideas at the very same time your wonderful celebration essay on Beethoven was being written. That was during the horrors and the grandeur of the war that had just broken out. But some people might think that this work stands in contrast to the war: patriotic excitement on one side and indulging in art on the other, brave seriousness on one side and cheerful play on the other. Those people would be wrong. If they really read this book, they may be surprised to see clearly what a seriously German problem we are dealing with here. We place this problem right at the center of German hopes, as a whirlpool and a turning point. Yet these same people might find it offensive to see a question about art taken so seriously. That is, if all they can see in art is a fun extra on the side, a jingling of bells next to the "seriousness of life" that we could easily do without. As if nobody knew what this so-

called "seriousness of life" really amounts to when it is set against art like that. Let these serious people learn this: I am convinced that art is the highest task of this life and its truly deepest activity, the one that reaches beyond the physical world. I believe this in the sense meant by the man to whom I want to dedicate this book, as my great champion who has fought ahead of me on this path.

Basel, end of the year 1871.

1.

We will have gained a lot for the study of beauty and art once we understand something not just through logic, but see it directly and know it for certain: that art keeps developing because of two forces, the calm, image-making force and the wild, ecstatic force. It works in a similar way to how new life depends on there being two sexes, which are always struggling with each other and only now and then make peace. We borrow these names from the Greeks. The Greeks did not explain the deep secret teachings of their view of art in ideas and concepts. Instead, they showed them, for anyone wise enough to notice, in the strong, clear figures of their gods. Our understanding is tied to their two gods of art, Apollo and Dionysus. Through them we learn that in the Greek world there was a huge contrast, in both where they came from and what they aimed at, between two kinds of art. One is the art of the sculptor, which belongs to the calm, image-making force. The other is music, an art without images, which belongs to Dionysus. These two very different urges run side by side. Mostly they are in open conflict with each other, and they keep pushing each other to give birth to new and ever stronger works. In those works the struggle between them goes on and on, and the shared word "art" only seems to bridge the gap. But at last, through a kind of miracle beyond nature, worked by the Greek "will (the blind life-drive)", the two appear joined together like a couple. And from this union they finally give birth to Athenian tragedy, a work of art that belongs just as much to the wild, ecstatic force as to the calm, image-making force.

To understand these two urges better, let us first think of them as two separate worlds of art: the world of dream and the world of wild frenzy. Between these two states of the body and mind we can see a contrast that matches the one between the calm, image-making force

and the wild, ecstatic force. According to the Roman poet Lucretius, it was in dream that the glorious figures of the gods first appeared to people's souls. It was in dream that the great sculptor saw the beautiful bodies of beings greater than humans. And if someone had asked a Greek poet about the secrets of how poems are born, he too would have pointed to dream. He would have taught something like what Hans Sachs teaches in Wagner's opera The Mastersingers:

"My friend, this is exactly the poet's job: to notice his dreams and work out what they mean. Believe me, a person's truest illusion is opened up to him in a dream. All poetry and all the art of verse is nothing more than explaining dreams that tell the truth."

The beautiful illusion of dream worlds, which every person creates as a complete artist, is the starting point of all visual art. And, as we will see, it is also the starting point of an important half of poetry. In dreams we enjoy understanding shapes directly. Every form speaks to us. Nothing is unimportant, and nothing is there for no reason. Yet even when this dream reality feels most alive, we still have a faint feeling shining through that it is only a beautiful appearance. At least, that is my experience. I could bring plenty of evidence, and quotes from poets, to show how common, even how normal, this is. The philosophical person even has a hunch that beneath this reality we live in, there is a second, completely different one hidden away. So this reality, too, would be just a beautiful appearance. Schopenhauer even says plainly that if, at times, people and all things seem to you like mere ghosts or dream pictures, that is the sign of a gift for philosophy. Now, the way a philosopher relates to the reality of life is the way an artistically sensitive person relates to the reality of dreams. He watches closely, and he enjoys watching. From these pictures he works out what life means, and through these events he practices for life. And it is not only the pleasant, friendly pictures that he experiences with such complete understanding. The serious, gloomy, sad

and dark things also pass before him: the sudden blocks, the tricks of chance, the anxious waiting. In short, the whole "Divine Comedy" of life, hell included, passes by him. It is not just like a shadow play, because he lives and suffers along with these scenes. And yet he never quite loses that fleeting feeling that it is only a beautiful appearance. Maybe some people, like me, remember times when, in the dangers and terrors of a dream, they called out to themselves to be brave, and it worked: "It's a dream! I want to keep dreaming it!" I have also been told about people who could carry the story of one and the same dream on, with cause leading to effect, over three or more nights in a row. These facts clearly show that our innermost being, the shared ground underneath all of us, experiences dreams with deep pleasure and a joyful sense that they are necessary.

The Greeks also expressed this joyful necessity of dreaming in their god Apollo. Apollo is the god of all the powers that make images, and at the same time he is the god who foretells the future. His name at root means "the shining one". He is the god of light, and so he also rules over the beautiful illusion of our inner world of imagination. Dream states have a higher truth and a perfection, compared with everyday reality, which we only understand in bits and pieces. On top of that, we know deep down that nature heals and helps us through sleep and dream. All this is at the same time a symbol of the gift of seeing the future, and of the arts in general, which make life possible and worth living. But there is also a fine line that the dream picture must not cross, or it becomes sick and harmful, and the beautiful appearance would fool us as if it were crude reality. This line must also be part of the picture of Apollo: that sense of limits and moderation, that freedom from wilder urges, that wise calm of the god who makes images. As fits where he comes from, his eye must be "like the sun". Even when it looks angry and displeased, the sacred glow of beautiful illusion still rests on it. So, in an unusual sense, we could apply to

Apollo what Schopenhauer says about the person trapped in the veil of illusion. In The World as Will and Representation, volume one, page 416, he writes: "Picture a stormy sea, endless in every direction, howling as it raises and drops mountains of waves. On it a sailor sits in a small boat, trusting his weak little craft. In the same way, in the middle of a world full of suffering, the single person sits calmly, supported by and trusting in the rule that splits us into separate selves." Indeed, we could say that in Apollo this unshaken trust in that rule, and the calm sitting of the person caught up in it, found its noblest expression. We might even call Apollo the glorious divine image of the rule that splits us into separate selves. From his gestures and his looks, all the joy and wisdom of "beautiful appearance", together with its beauty, would speak to us.

In the same passage, Schopenhauer described the enormous horror that grips a person when he suddenly loses faith in the ways he normally understands the visible world. This happens when the rule that everything has a cause seems, in one of its forms, to break down. Now add to this horror the blissful rapture that rises up from deep inside a person, and even from deep inside nature, when that same rule that splits us into separate selves shatters. Then we catch a glimpse of what the wild, ecstatic force really is. The closest comparison that helps us understand it is wild frenzy. These ecstatic feelings wake up in one of two ways. Either it happens through drinking an intoxicating drink, which all early peoples and nations praise in their hymns. Or it happens when spring arrives with all its power, filling the whole of nature with pleasure. As these feelings grow stronger, the sense of being a separate self fades away until a person forgets himself completely. In Germany in the Middle Ages, too, the same ecstatic power drove ever-growing crowds from town to town, singing and dancing. In these dancers of Saint John and Saint Vitus we can recognize the wild choruses that worshipped Bacchus, or Dionysus,

among the Greeks. Those choruses had an earlier history in Asia Minor, going all the way back to Babylon and its wild Sacaea festivals. There are people who, because they lack experience or because they are dull, turn away from such things as if they were "epidemics". They mock them or pity them, feeling proud of their own health. Those poor people have no idea how deathly pale and ghostly this "health" of theirs looks when the burning life of the frenzied worshippers of Dionysus roars past them.

Under the spell of the wild, ecstatic force, it is not only the bond between one person and another that comes together again. Nature too, which had become a stranger to us, hostile or held down, celebrates a feast of making peace with her lost son, the human being. The earth gives her gifts of her own free will, and the wild beasts of the rocks and the desert come near in peace. The chariot of Dionysus is heaped with flowers and wreaths, and panthers and tigers walk under its yoke. Imagine turning Beethoven's joyful song, the "Ode to Joy," into a painting. Let your imagination keep up when the millions sink into the dust, trembling with awe. That is how you can begin to get close to the wild, ecstatic force. Now the slave is a free man. Now all the stiff, hostile walls that need, unfairness, or "shameless fashion" have set up between people break apart. Now, with this good news of the whole world in harmony, each person feels not just joined with their neighbor, made peace with, melted together, but truly one with them. It is as if the veil of illusion had been torn, and only rags of it still fluttered in front of the mysterious original oneness of all things. Singing and dancing, a person shows that they belong to a higher community. They have forgotten how to walk and how to talk, and they are about to dance their way up into the air. Their movements show the spell, how they have been transformed. Just as the animals now speak, and the earth gives milk and honey, something beyond nature now sounds out of the person too. They feel like a god. They

themselves now walk about as thrilled and lifted up as they once saw the gods walk in a dream. The human being is no longer an artist; they have become a work of art. Here, in the shivers of wild frenzy, the art-making power of all of nature shows itself, to give the greatest delight to the original oneness of all things. The finest clay, the most precious marble, is being kneaded and carved here, and that clay and marble is the human being. And to the chisel blows of the Dionysian world-artist, the cry of the secret rites of Eleusis rings out: "Do you fall to your knees, you millions? Do you sense your Creator, world?"

2.

So far we have looked at the calm, image-making force and its opposite, the wild, ecstatic force, as artistic powers. They burst out of nature itself, without any human artist in between, and through them nature's urge to make art is satisfied first and directly. On one side they appear as the world of images in dreams. How perfect these dreams are has nothing to do with how clever or how artistically educated the dreamer is. On the other side they appear as a reality of wild frenzy. This, too, pays no attention to the single person. In fact, it even tries to destroy the individual and set them free through a mystical feeling of oneness. Compared with these direct art-states of nature, every artist is an "imitator." An artist is either a dream artist of the calm, image-making kind, or a frenzy artist of the wild, ecstatic kind, or finally, as in Greek tragedy, for example, both frenzy artist and dream artist at once. We might picture such an artist like this: in drunken Dionysian ecstasy and mystical loss of self, he sinks down, alone and apart from the frenzied, dancing choruses. And then, through the effect of an Apollonian dream, his own state is shown to him in a dream image that works like a parable. That is, he is shown his oneness with the deepest ground of the world.

After these general starting points and comparisons, we now turn to the Greeks. We want to see how far and how high these urges of nature to make art had developed in them. This will help us understand and value more deeply how the Greek artist related to his original models, or, as Aristotle put it, "the imitation of nature." About the dreams of the Greeks we can only make guesses, even though they left many writings about dreams and many stories about them. Still, we can guess with fair certainty. Their eyes had an amazingly sharp and sure gift for seeing shapes, and they had a bright and honest love of color. So we can hardly avoid assuming, to the shame of everyone born later, that their dreams too had a logical order of lines and outlines, colors and groups, and a sequence of scenes like their best carved reliefs. If we could compare, the perfection of these dreams would surely give us the right to call the dreaming Greeks Homers, and Homer a dreaming Greek. And we would mean this in a deeper sense than when a modern person dares to compare himself to Shakespeare when it comes to his dreams.

On the other hand, we do not have to guess when we want to reveal the huge gap that separates the Dionysian Greeks from the Dionysian barbarians. From every corner of the ancient world, leaving aside the modern one, from Rome to Babylon, we can prove that Dionysian festivals existed. At best, these festivals relate to the Greek ones the way the bearded satyr (goat-man), who got his name and his features from the goat, relates to Dionysus himself. Almost everywhere, the center of these festivals was wild, unlimited sexual freedom, whose waves flooded over every family and all its honored rules. Here the very wildest beasts in nature were let loose, right up to that disgusting mix of lust and cruelty that has always seemed to me like the real "witches' brew." News of these feverish festivals reached the Greeks by every road over land and sea. Yet for a while, it seems, the Greeks were fully safe and protected from their feverish pull. What protected

them was the figure of Apollo, standing up here in all his pride. Apollo could hold up the head of Medusa, which turns enemies to stone, against no power more dangerous than this grotesque, crude Dionysian one. It is in Doric art that this majestic, rejecting stance of Apollo has been made to last forever. This resistance became harder and finally impossible when similar urges broke through from the deepest root of the Greek people themselves. Now the god of Delphi could only try to take the deadly weapons out of his mighty opponent's hands by making peace with him at just the right moment. This peace is the most important moment in the history of Greek religion. Wherever you look, you can see the great changes this event caused. It was a peace between two opponents, with clearly marked borders that each had to respect from then on, and with gifts of honor sent back and forth from time to time. But deep down, the gap had not been bridged. Yet if we look at how the Dionysian power showed itself under the pressure of this peace treaty, we see something new. Compared with those Babylonian Sacaea festivals, where humans slid back into tigers and apes, the Dionysian orgies of the Greeks take on the meaning of festivals that save the world and days of glorifying transformation.

Only with the Greeks does nature reach its full artistic joy. Only with them does the tearing apart of the rule that splits us into separate selves become something artistic. That disgusting witches' brew of lust and cruelty had no power here. There is only one thing that still reminds us of it, the way a medicine can remind us of a deadly poison: the strange mixture and doubleness in the feelings of the frenzied worshippers of Dionysus. In them, pain awakens pleasure, and joy tears cries of agony out of the chest. Out of the highest delight comes a scream of horror, or a longing cry of grief over a loss that can never be replaced. In those Greek festivals it is as if a tender, mournful side of nature breaks out, as though nature had to sigh over being cut up

into separate individuals. The singing and the body language of these worshippers, torn between two moods at once, were something new and unheard of for the Greek world of Homer. Above all, the music of the wild, ecstatic force filled that world with fear and horror. It might seem that music was already known as an art of the calm, image-making force. But strictly speaking it was known only as the steady beat of rhythm, whose shaping power had been developed to show calm, Apollo-like states. The music of Apollo was like Doric architecture made of sound, but only in hinted, light tones, like the tones of the kithara, a kind of harp. The very element that makes up the character of the wild, ecstatic music, and so of music in general, was carefully kept away, because it did not belong to Apollo. That element is the shattering power of sound, the single flowing stream of melody, and the completely unique world of harmony. In the wild hymn to Dionysus, a person is driven to push all their powers of expression to the very highest point. Something never felt before forces its way out: the tearing of the veil of illusion, and the feeling of being one with the whole human race, and even with nature itself, as if you were its very spirit. Now the inner being of nature wants to express itself in symbols. A new world of symbols is needed. First comes the whole body as a symbol: not just the mouth, the face, and words, but full dance movement that sets every limb moving in rhythm. Then the other powers of expression, those of music, suddenly grow wild: rhythm, loudness and softness, and harmony. To understand this total unleashing of every power of expression, a person must already have reached that height of losing themselves which these powers are trying to express. So the worshipper of Dionysus, singing his wild hymn, is understood only by people like himself! How amazed the Apollo-minded Greek must have been when he looked at him! And his amazement was even greater because it was mixed with horror: the horror of sensing that all of this was not really so foreign to him after

all. In fact, his calm Apollo-like mind was only a veil hiding this wild, ecstatic world from his eyes.

3.

To understand this, we have to take apart the skillfully built structure of Apollo's culture, stone by stone, until we see the foundations it stands on. The first thing we notice are the splendid figures of the Olympian gods. They stand on the gables of this building, and their deeds, shown in brightly shining carvings, decorate its walls. Apollo stands among them too, as just one god next to the others, without any claim to be the most important. But we must not let that mislead us. The same urge that took shape in Apollo gave birth to that whole Olympian world. In that sense, we can think of Apollo as its father. So what was the enormous need that gave rise to such a shining company of Olympian beings?

Imagine someone who comes to these Olympian gods with a different religion in their heart. They look for moral greatness, even holiness, for a pure spirit free of the body, for loving and merciful looks. Such a person will soon turn their back on these gods, annoyed and disappointed. Nothing here reminds us of self-denial, of spiritual life, or of duty. Here only a rich, overflowing, even triumphant way of living speaks to us, in which everything that exists is made divine, no matter whether it is good or evil. And so the onlooker may stand quite stunned before this fantastic overflow of life. He may ask himself what magic potion these high-spirited people must have had inside them to enjoy life so much. Wherever they looked, Helen smiled back at them, the perfect picture of their own existence, "floating in sweet sensual pleasure." But this onlooker, who is already turning away, we must call back: "Don't leave! First listen to what Greek folk wisdom says about this very same life that spreads out before you with such puzzling cheerfulness. There is an old legend. King Midas

hunted for a long time in the forest for the wise Silenus, the companion of Dionysus, but could not catch him. When Silenus finally fell into his hands, the king asked him what was the very best and most excellent thing for human beings. The spirit stayed silent, stiff and motionless. At last, forced by the king, he burst out with a shrill laugh and said: 'Miserable creatures who live for only a day, children of chance and of hardship, why do you force me to tell you what it would be best for you never to hear? The very best thing is completely out of your reach: not to be born, not to exist, to be nothing. But the second best thing for you is this: to die soon.'"

How does the world of the Olympian gods relate to this folk wisdom? The same way that the blissful vision of a tortured martyr relates to his torments.

Now it is as if the magic mountain of Olympus opens up and shows us its roots. The Greek knew and felt the terrors and horrors of existence. Just to be able to live at all, he had to place in front of them the shining dream-creation of the Olympian gods. Think of all the dark things behind them: that huge distrust of the giant-like, rebellious powers of nature; Fate, sitting mercilessly on its throne above all human knowledge; the vulture that tore at Prometheus, the great friend of humankind; the terrible destiny of wise Oedipus; the family curse of the house of Atreus, which forces Orestes to murder his mother. In short, the whole philosophy of the forest god Silenus, together with its examples from myth, the philosophy that destroyed the gloomy Etruscans. All of this the Greeks overcame again and again through that artistic in-between world of the Olympian gods. At the very least, they covered it up and hid it from view. To be able to live, the Greeks had to create these gods out of the deepest necessity. We should probably picture it like this: out of the original giant-like order of gods, an order of terror, Apollo's urge for beauty slowly, step by step, developed the Olympian order of gods, an order of joy, the

way roses burst out of a thorny bush. How else could this people have endured existence? They felt everything so sharply, desired everything so fiercely, and were so uniquely able to suffer. They could only bear life because their gods showed them that same life surrounded by a higher glory. The same urge that calls art into being, as something that completes and perfects existence and tempts us to go on living, also created the Olympian world. In it, the Greek "will (the blind life-drive)" held up a glorifying mirror to itself. In this way the gods justify human life by living it themselves. That is the only answer that is truly enough to the question of why the world, with all its suffering, is acceptable! Life under the bright sunshine of such gods is felt to be worth striving for in itself. The real pain of Homer's people is about leaving it, and above all about leaving it soon. So now you could say about them, turning Silenus's wisdom upside down: "The very worst thing for them is to die soon, and the second worst is to have to die at all." When they do lament, the lament is again about short-lived Achilles, about how the human race changes and passes away like leaves on a tree, and about the end of the age of heroes. Even for the greatest hero it is not shameful to long to keep on living, even if only as a poor day laborer. At this Apollo-like stage, the "will (the blind life-drive)" longs so fiercely for this existence, and Homer's people feel so at one with it, that even their lament turns into a song of praise for life.

Here something has to be said plainly. Modern people look back with great longing at the harmony, even the oneness, between human beings and nature. Schiller made this idea famous with the word "naive." But this state is not simple at all. It does not just happen by itself, as if it could not be avoided, and it is not something we are bound to find at the doorway of every culture, like a paradise of humankind. Only an age could believe that if it tried to imagine Rousseau's Emile, the boy raised by nature, as an artist too, and fancied it had found in

Homer just such an artist Emile, brought up close to the heart of nature. Wherever we meet natural simplicity in art, we should see in it the highest achievement of the culture of the calm, image-making force. This culture always first has to overthrow a kingdom of Titans and kill monsters. Through powerful fantasies and joyful illusions, it must have won a victory over a terrifying, deep view of the world and an extremely sensitive capacity for suffering. But how rarely natural simplicity is reached, that state of being completely swallowed up in the beauty of beautiful appearance! That is why Homer is so great, beyond words. As a single person, he stands in relation to the image-making culture of his people the way a single dream-artist stands to the dreaming power of a whole people and of nature in general. Homer's "naivety" can only be understood as the complete victory of the calm, image-making illusion. It is the kind of illusion that nature uses so often to reach its goals. The real goal is hidden behind a mirage. We reach out our hands for the mirage, and nature reaches its real goal by fooling us. In the Greeks, the will (the blind life-drive) wanted to look at itself, in the glorifying transformation of genius and of the world of art. To glorify itself, its creatures had to feel that they themselves were worth glorifying. They had to see themselves again in a higher realm, without this perfect world of images working on them as a command or as a reproach. This is the realm of beauty, where they saw their own mirror images: the gods of Olympus. With this mirror of beauty, the Greek will fought against the talent for suffering, and for the wisdom that suffering brings, which always goes hand in hand with artistic talent. And as a monument to its victory, Homer stands before us: the naive artist, the artist of natural simplicity.

4.

Comparing this to dreams teaches us something about this naive artist. Picture someone dreaming who, in the middle of the dream's illusion and without breaking it, calls out to himself: "It's a dream, I want to keep dreaming it." From this we must conclude that there is a deep inner joy in watching dreams. On the other hand, to be able to dream with this inner joy in watching at all, we must have completely forgotten the day and the terrible way it pushes in on us. Keeping all this in mind, we may explain these things roughly as follows, with Apollo, the god who explains dreams, as our guide. Life has two halves, the waking half and the dreaming half. The waking half surely seems to us far more favored, more important, more worthy, more worth living; in fact it seems to be the only half we really live. And yet, even though it sounds like a paradox, I want to claim the exact opposite about dreams, when it comes to that mysterious ground of our being, which shows itself in us as the visible world. For the more I notice in nature those all-powerful urges to make art, and in them a burning longing for beautiful appearance, for being saved by beautiful appearance, the more I feel pushed toward a belief about what lies beyond the world we see. I come to think that what truly exists, the original oneness of all things, which suffers forever and is full of contradiction, also needs the delightful vision, the joyful beautiful appearance, to save itself again and again. We are completely caught up in this appearance, and we are made out of it. So we are forced to experience it as what truly does not exist, that is, as an endless becoming in time, space, and cause and effect. In other words, we experience it as everyday reality. So let us set aside our own "reality" for a moment. Let us understand our everyday existence, and that of the whole world, as a picture that the original oneness of all things produces at every moment. Then the dream must count for us as the appearance of an appearance, and so as an even higher fulfillment of

the deepest craving for beautiful appearance. For this same reason, the innermost core of nature takes an indescribable joy in the naive artist and in the naive work of art, which is likewise only an "appearance of an appearance." Raphael, himself one of those immortal "naive" artists, showed us this in a painting that works like a parable: how appearance is turned down into a further appearance, which is the basic process of the naive artist and also of the culture of the calm, image-making force. In his painting The Transfiguration, the lower half shows us the possessed boy, the despairing men carrying him, and the helpless, frightened disciples. This is the mirror image of the eternal original pain of being, the only ground of the world. The "beautiful appearance" here is a reflection of the eternal contradiction, the father of all things. Out of this appearance now rises, like a heavenly fragrance, a new, vision-like world of appearance, which those caught up in the first appearance cannot see at all. It is a shining, floating presence in the purest bliss, a painless gazing that beams out of wide-open eyes. Here, in the highest symbolism of art, we see before our eyes that calm, image-making world of beauty and what lies underneath it, Silenus's grim wisdom. And we grasp by instinct that each one needs the other. Apollo, however, appears to us once again as the rule that splits us into separate selves, turned into a god. Only in this rule is the forever-reached goal of the original oneness of all things fulfilled: being saved by beautiful illusion. With noble gestures, Apollo shows us why the whole world of torment is necessary. It is needed to push the individual to create the saving vision. Then, lost in gazing at that vision, the individual can sit calmly in his rocking little boat in the middle of the sea.

This turning of individuality into a god, if we think of it as giving commands and rules at all, knows only one law: the individual. That means keeping within the limits of the individual, which is moderation in the Greek sense. Apollo, as a god of right behavior, demands

moderation from his followers, and, so that they can keep to it, he demands self-knowledge. And so, alongside the artistic need for beauty, there run the demands "Know yourself" and "Nothing too much!" Meanwhile, arrogance and going too far were seen as the true enemy demons of the realm outside the calm, image-making force. So they were seen as traits of the time before Apollo, the age of the Titans, and of the world beyond Apollo, that is, the world of the barbarians. Because of his giant-like, rebellious love for human beings, Prometheus had to be torn apart by vultures. Because of his excessive wisdom, which solved the riddle of the Sphinx, Oedipus had to plunge into a bewildering whirlpool of terrible deeds. This is how the god of Delphi explained the Greek past.

The Greek who lived by the calm, image-making force also saw the effect stirred up by the wild, ecstatic force as "giant-like" and "barbaric." But he could not hide from himself that, deep inside, he was also related to those fallen Titans and heroes. He had to feel even more than that. His whole life, with all its beauty and moderation, rested on a hidden layer of suffering and knowledge underneath, and the wild, ecstatic force uncovered that layer for him again. And look! Apollo could not live without Dionysus! In the end, the "giant-like, rebellious" side and the "barbaric" side were just as necessary as the calm, image-making force! Now let us imagine this world, which was built on beautiful appearance and moderation and held back as if by artificial dams. Imagine how the ecstatic sound of the Dionysus festival rang into it, in magic tunes that grew more and more tempting. Imagine how, in those tunes, all of nature's going too far became loud, in joy, in pain, and in knowledge, until it rose to a piercing scream. Let us imagine what Apollo's artist, chanting his solemn hymns to the ghostly sound of his harp, could possibly mean next to this wild, possessed singing of the people! The Muses of the arts of "beautiful appearance" grew pale before an art that spoke the truth in its wild

frenzy. Silenus's grim wisdom cried out "Woe! Woe!" against the cheerful gods of Olympus. Here the individual person, with all his limits and measures, went under. He forgot himself in the states brought on by the wild, ecstatic force, and he forgot Apollo's rules. Going too far turned out to be the truth. The contradiction, the bliss that is born out of pain, spoke for itself straight from the heart of nature. And so, wherever the wild, ecstatic force broke through, the calm, image-making force was cancelled and destroyed. But it is just as certain that wherever the first attack was held off, the authority and majesty of the god of Delphi showed itself more rigid and more threatening than ever. In fact, the only way I can explain the Dorian state and Dorian art is as a permanent war camp of the calm, image-making force. Only by constantly fighting back against the giant-like, barbaric nature of the wild, ecstatic force could such things last for long: an art so defiant and stiff, walled in by fortifications; an upbringing so military and harsh; and a state so cruel and ruthless.

Up to this point, I have spelled out in more detail what I mentioned at the start of this essay. I showed how the wild, ecstatic force and the calm, image-making force ruled the Greek spirit, being born again and again, one after the other, each pushing the other to greater heights. I showed how, out of the "bronze" age, with its battles of the Titans and its harsh folk wisdom, the world of Homer grew up under the rule of Apollo's urge for beauty. I showed how this glory of natural simplicity was then swallowed up by the flood of the wild, ecstatic force breaking in. And I showed how, facing this new power, the calm, image-making force rose up into the rigid majesty of Dorian art and the Dorian way of seeing the world. In this way, early Greek history, through the struggle between those two hostile principles, falls into four great stages of art. So now we are pushed to ask further about the final plan behind all this growing and striving, unless we are supposed to see the last stage we reached, Dorian art, as the peak and

the purpose of those urges to make art. And here, before our eyes, appears the noble and highly praised artwork of Athenian tragedy and the dramatic wild hymn to Dionysus. This is the shared goal of both urges. After a long struggle, their secret marriage was celebrated in such a child, a child who is at the same time Antigone and Cassandra.

5.

We are now getting close to the real goal of our investigation. It aims to understand the genius that combines the wild, ecstatic force with the calm, image-making force, and the art that this genius creates. Or at least it aims to get a feeling for the mystery of how the two become one. So first we ask: where in the Greek world does that new seed first show up, the seed that later grows into tragedy and into the dramatic wild hymn to Dionysus? The ancient world itself gives us the answer in pictures. On sculptures, carved gems and so on, it places Homer and Archilochus side by side as the forefathers and torch-bearers of Greek poetry. It did this because it felt sure that only these two should be seen as equally and completely original natures, and that from them a river of fire flowed on to all later generations of Greeks. Homer is the old dreamer, lost in himself, the model of the calm, image-making, naturally simple artist. He now looks in amazement at the passionate head of Archilochus, the warlike servant of the Muses, who was driven wildly through life. And modern thinkers about art could only add, by way of explanation, that here the first "subjective" artist is set against the "objective" one. This explanation does not help us much. To us, the subjective artist is simply a bad artist. In every kind of art and at every level, we demand first and above all that the subjective be conquered. The artist must be freed from his "I", and every personal wish and craving must fall silent. In fact, without objectivity, without pure looking that wants nothing for itself, we can never believe that even the smallest truly artistic work

has been created. That is why our theory of art must first solve this problem: how can the "lyric poet" be an artist at all? After all, as people in every age have found, he always says "I". He sings out in front of us the whole scale of his passions and desires, every note of it, step by step. This very Archilochus, standing next to Homer, frightens us with his screams of hatred and mockery and with the drunken outbursts of his lust. So isn't he, the first artist to be called subjective, really a non-artist? But if so, where does the honor come from that was paid to him as a poet in some very remarkable sayings, even by the oracle at Delphi, the very home of "objective" art?

Schiller shed light on how he wrote poetry through an observation about his own mind. He could not explain it himself, but it does not seem doubtful. He admits that the state that prepared him for the act of writing was not a series of pictures, with thoughts neatly linked by cause and effect, in front of him and inside him. Instead, it was a musical mood. In his words: "At first my feeling has no definite, clear object; that only takes shape later. A certain musical mood of the mind comes first, and only after it does the poetic idea follow." Now let us add the most important fact about all ancient lyric poetry. Everywhere it was taken as natural that the lyric poet and the musician were joined together, in fact that they were one and the same person. Compared with that, our modern lyric poetry looks like a statue of a god without a head. With this in mind, and based on our earlier theory of art and the world, we can now explain the lyric poet like this. First, as an artist of the wild, ecstatic force, he has become completely one with the original oneness of all things, with its pain and its inner conflict. He produces a copy of this original oneness in the form of music, if music has rightly been called a repetition of the world, a second casting of it, like a second statue poured from the same mold. But now, under the dream-influence of the calm, image-making force, this music becomes visible to him again, as if in a

dream picture that works like a comparison. In music, the original pain of being is reflected without any pictures or ideas, and along with it comes being saved by beautiful illusion. Now this reflection produces a second mirror image, in the form of a single comparison or example. The artist already gave up his personal self during the process of the wild, ecstatic force. The picture that now shows him his oneness with the heart of the world is a dream scene. It makes the basic conflict at life's core and the original pain of being visible to the senses, together with the deepest joy of existence that lies in beautiful appearance. So the "I" of the lyric poet sounds up from the bottomless depths of being. His "subjectivity", in the sense modern art theorists mean, is only something they imagine. When Archilochus, the first lyric poet of the Greeks, declares his raging love and at the same time his contempt for the daughters of Lycambes, it is not his own passion that dances before us in a wild, drunken whirl. Instead, we see Dionysus and the Maenads, his wild women followers. We see the drunken, frenzied worshipper Archilochus sunk down into sleep, just as Euripides describes it in his play The Bacchae: sleep on a high mountain meadow, in the midday sun. And now Apollo walks up to him and touches him with the laurel. The sleeper is under the musical spell of the wild, ecstatic force, and now this spell, this being transformed, seems to throw off sparks of images all around him. These sparks are lyric poems, and at their fullest development they are called tragedies and dramatic wild hymns to Dionysus.

The sculptor, and the epic poet who is related to him, are lost in pure looking at images. The musician of the wild, ecstatic force has no image at all. He simply is the original pain of being itself, and its original echo. The lyric genius is in a mystical state where he has given up his own self and become one with everything. Out of that state he feels a world of images and comparisons growing up. This world has a completely different coloring, different links of cause and

effect, and a different speed from the world of the sculptor and the epic poet. The epic poet lives in his images, and only in them, with joyful contentment. He never gets tired of looking at them lovingly, down to the smallest details. Even the image of the angry Achilles is just an image for him, and he enjoys its angry expression with that dream-like delight in beautiful appearance. In this way the mirror of beautiful appearance protects him from becoming one with his characters and melting together with them. The lyric poet's images, on the other hand, are nothing but himself. They are, so to speak, just different shapes that his own self takes on. That is why he, as the moving center of that world, has the right to say "I". Only this "I" is not the same as the "I" of the awake, everyday, real person. It is the only "I" that truly exists at all, the eternal one that rests at the very bottom of things. Through its copies, the lyric genius sees all the way down to that bottom of things. Now let us imagine that among these copies he also sees himself as a non-genius. That means he sees his "subject": the whole swarm of personal passions and stirrings of the will, all aimed at some particular thing that seems real to him. It may now look as if the lyric genius and the non-genius tied to him were one and the same, and as if the genius were saying that little word "I" about himself. But this appearance can no longer fool us, even though it certainly fooled those who called the lyric poet the subjective poet. In truth, Archilochus, the man burning with passion, loving and hating, is only a vision seen by the genius. That genius is no longer Archilochus but the genius of the whole world. He expresses his original pain of being in symbols, through that comparison: the man Archilochus. Meanwhile, Archilochus the man, who personally wants and craves things, can never, ever be a poet at all. But the lyric poet does not have to see only this one appearance, the man Archilochus, as the reflection of eternal being. And tragedy proves how far the lyric poet's world of visions can move away from that appearance, even though, of course, it is the one that stands closest to him at first.

Schopenhauer did not hide from himself how hard the lyric poet is to explain when you think about art in a philosophical way. He believed he had found a way out, but I cannot follow him down that path. And yet he alone, in his deep thinking about what music really is, held the tool that could have cleared away that difficulty for good. I believe I have used that tool here, in his spirit and to honor him. Instead, he describes the special nature of the song like this (in The World as Will and Representation, volume one, page 295): "What fills the mind of the singer is the self that wants things, that is, his own wanting. Often this wanting has been set free and satisfied, and then it is joy. Even more often it has been blocked, and then it is sadness. But it is always a feeling, a passion, a stirred-up state of mind. Next to this, and at the same moment, the singer looks at the nature around him and becomes aware of himself as someone who simply sees and knows, without wanting anything. The calm, blissful peace of this pure seeing now stands in contrast to the pushing of his wanting, which is always limited and always still needy. The feeling of this contrast, this back-and-forth play, is really what the whole song expresses, and it is what makes up the lyric mood in general. In this mood, pure seeing comes up to us, as it were, to free us from wanting and its pressure. We follow it, but only for moments. Again and again our wanting, the memory of our personal goals, tears us away from calm looking. But again and again the lovely surroundings nearby lure us away from wanting, because there pure seeing, free of will, is offered to us. That is why, in the song and in the lyric mood, wanting (our personal interest in our goals) and the pure looking at the surroundings are wonderfully mixed together. People look for links between the two and imagine them. The inner mood, the stirring of the will, passes its color on to the scene being looked at, and the scene passes its color back, like a reflection. The true song is the imprint of this whole mixed and divided state of mind."

Who could fail to see what this description really says? It treats lyric poetry as an art that only half succeeds, one that reaches its goal only in leaps and rarely gets there at all. It even treats it as a half-art, whose nature is supposed to be that wanting and pure looking, that is, the state that is not artistic and the state that is artistic, are strangely mixed together. We claim the opposite. The whole contrast between the subjective and the objective, which even Schopenhauer still uses like a measuring stick to sort the arts, does not belong in the study of art at all. That is because the subject, the person who wants things and pushes his own selfish goals, can only be thought of as the enemy of art, not as its source. But as far as the subject is an artist, he has already been freed from his own personal will. He has become something like a channel, and through him the one subject that truly exists celebrates being saved by beautiful illusion. Above all, one thing must be clear to us, and it both humbles us and lifts us up. The whole comedy of art is not performed for us at all, say, to make us better or to give us education and culture. And we are just as little the real creators of that world of art. But we may assume this about ourselves: to the true creator of that world, we are already pictures and artistic projections, and our highest worth lies in being works of art. For life and the world make sense only as a work of art. Yet our awareness of what we mean in this way is hardly greater than the awareness that soldiers painted on a canvas have of the battle painted on it. So all our knowledge about art is, at bottom, a complete illusion. As people who know things, we are not one and the same with that being who, as the only creator and the only audience of that comedy of art, gives himself endless enjoyment. Only when the genius, in the act of artistic creation, melts together with that original artist of the world does he know anything about the eternal nature of art. For in that state he is, in a wonderful way, like the eerie figure in the fairy tale that can turn its eyes around and look at itself. Now he

is at once the one who sees and the one who is seen, at once the poet, the actor and the audience.

6.

About Archilochus, scholars have discovered that he brought the folk song into written literature, and that this deed is why the Greeks in general gave him his unique place right next to Homer. But what is the folk song, compared with the epic, which belongs completely to the calm, image-making force? What else is it but the lasting trace of a union between the calm, image-making force and the wild, ecstatic force? The folk song has spread enormously across all peoples, and it keeps growing with ever new births. That shows us how strong this double urge to make art is in nature. This urge leaves its marks in the folk song in the same way that a people's wild, frenzied movements are preserved forever in its music. In fact, it should also be possible to prove from history that every period rich in new folk songs was at the same time stirred up most strongly by currents of the wild, ecstatic force. We must always see those currents as the ground beneath the folk song and the thing it depends on.

But first and foremost, we see the folk song as a musical mirror of the world, as an original melody. This melody now looks for a matching dream image and expresses it in the poem. So the melody comes first and is general. That is why it can take shape in more than one way, in several different sets of words. In the simple judgment of ordinary people, it is also by far the more important and necessary part. The melody gives birth to the poem out of itself, and does so again and again. That is exactly what the verse form of the folk song is telling us, with its repeated stanzas. I always looked at this with amazement, until I finally found this explanation. Take a collection of folk songs, for example the one called The Boy's Magic Horn, and look at it with this theory in mind. You will find countless examples of how the

melody, which keeps on giving birth, sprays sparks of images all around it. These images, with their bright mix, their sudden changes, and even their wild tumbling over one another, reveal a power that is completely foreign to the beautiful appearance of the epic and its calm, steady flow. From the point of view of the epic, this uneven and irregular world of images in lyric poetry simply has to be condemned. And that is surely what the solemn epic reciters did at the festivals of Apollo in the time of Terpander.

So in the poetry of the folk song, we see language straining as hard as it can to imitate music. That is why a new world of poetry begins with Archilochus, a world that goes against Homer's poetry at its very root. With this, we have named the only possible relationship between poetry and music, between word and sound: the word, the image, the idea looks for a way of speaking that is like music, and now it feels the power of music pressing on it. In this sense, we can tell apart two main streams in the history of the Greek language, depending on whether the language imitated the world of images and the visible world, or the world of music. Just think a little more deeply about the differences in language between Homer and Pindar: the color of the words, the way the sentences are built, the choice of words. Then you will grasp how important this contrast is. In fact, it becomes clear enough to touch that between Homer and Pindar, the wild, frenzied flute tunes of Olympus must have been heard. Even in Aristotle's time, surrounded by music that had become far more developed, those tunes still swept people away into drunken excitement. And when they were new, they surely stirred all the poetic tools of the people of that time to try to imitate them. Here I want to point to a well-known thing that happens in our own day, one that our experts on art only find offensive. Again and again we see how a Beethoven symphony forces each listener to talk in pictures. It's true that if you put together all the different worlds of images that one piece of music

produces, the result looks wildly colorful and even contradictory. But to make cheap jokes about such collections, and to overlook something that truly deserves to be explained, is exactly the style of those art experts. And even when the composer himself has talked about a piece in pictures, for example when he calls a symphony the 'Pastoral' and names one movement 'Scene by the Brook' and another 'Merry Gathering of Country Folk', these too are only pictures, like comparisons, that were born out of the music. They are not the things the music is copying. These pictures cannot teach us anything at all about the wild, ecstatic force inside the music, and they are worth no more than any other images. Now we have to imagine this same process, music pouring itself out in images, happening in a young, fresh crowd of people who are creative with language. Then we can start to sense how the folk song, with its repeating verses, comes into being, and how the whole power of language is stirred up by this new principle of imitating music.

So if we may think of lyric poetry as music shining out, imitating itself in images and ideas, we can now ask: 'What does music look like when it is reflected in the mirror of images and ideas?' It shows up as will (the blind life-drive), in the sense that Schopenhauer used the word. That means it shows up as the opposite of the artistic mood, which is calm, purely watching, and free of wanting. Here we have to separate, as sharply as we can, the idea of what something really is from the idea of how it appears in the visible world. Music, in its true nature, cannot possibly be will (the blind life-drive). If it were, it would have to be thrown out of the world of art completely, because the will is, in itself, the very thing that is not artistic. But music appears as will. The reason is this: to express how music appears in images, the lyric poet needs every stirring of passion, from the whisper of affection to the roar of madness. Driven by the urge to speak about music in the comparisons of the calm, image-making force, he

understands all of nature, and himself within it, as something that forever wants, desires, and longs. But insofar as he explains the music in images, he himself rests in the still, sea-like calm of the calm, image-making force's way of looking, even though everything he sees through the music is pushing and rushing around him. In fact, when he looks at himself through the same music, his own picture shows him in a state of unsatisfied feeling. His own wanting, longing, groaning, and cheering become a comparison he uses to explain the music to himself. This is what happens with the lyric poet: as a genius of the calm, image-making force, he interprets the music through the image of the will, while he himself is completely free of the will's greed. He is a pure, clear eye, like the sun.

This whole discussion holds firmly to one point: lyric poetry depends on the spirit of music, while music itself, being completely unlimited, does not need images or ideas. It only puts up with them beside it. The lyric poet's poetry cannot say anything that was not already in the music, in the most enormous, universal, and all-embracing form. It was that music that forced him to speak in pictures. That is exactly why language can never fully capture the way music stands for the whole world. Music points, as a symbol, to the basic conflict at life's core and the original pain of being in the heart of the original oneness of all things. So it stands for a realm that is above all of the visible world and comes before all of it. Compared with music, everything in the visible world is only a comparison, a likeness. That is why language, which is the tool and the symbol of the visible world, can never, anywhere, turn the deepest inside of music outward. As soon as language tries to imitate music, it only ever touches music on the surface. The deepest meaning of music cannot be brought even one step closer to us, no matter how well a lyric poet speaks.

7.

Now we must call on all the principles of art we have discussed so far, to help us find our way through the maze that the origin of Greek tragedy really is. I don't think I am saying anything foolish when I say that the problem of this origin has not even been seriously set out yet, let alone solved. And this is true even though the tattered, scattered scraps of what the ancient writers handed down have been stitched together over and over, and then torn apart again. These old reports tell us with complete certainty that tragedy grew out of the tragic chorus, and that at first it was only a chorus and nothing but a chorus. From this we take on the duty of looking right into the heart of this tragic chorus as the real, original drama. We must not be satisfied in any way with the usual art phrases, such as that the chorus is the perfect audience member, or that it stands for the common people against the royal world on stage. That last explanation sounds noble to some politicians. It says that the democratic people of Athens showed the unchanging moral law in the chorus of the people, which is always right in the end, against the passionate excesses and wild behavior of the kings. Aristotle may have said something that points in that direction, but it does not matter. This idea has nothing to do with how tragedy was first formed, because its origins were purely religious, and they leave out the whole contrast between people and prince, and in fact any political or social matters at all. But even when it comes to the classic form of the chorus we know from Aeschylus and Sophocles, we would think it an insult to holy things to speak here of some early hint of a 'constitutional people's parliament'. Other people have not been afraid of making that insult. In practice, the ancient forms of government knew nothing of a constitutional people's parliament, and hopefully they did not even 'have a hint' of one in their tragedy.

Much more famous than this political explanation of the chorus is an idea from A. W. Schlegel. He suggests that we see the chorus as a kind of summary and essence of the whole crowd watching the play, as the "perfect audience member." Take this view together with the old historical report that tragedy at first was nothing but a chorus, and it shows itself for what it is: a crude, unscientific, but dazzling claim. Its shine comes only from how neatly it is phrased, from the typically German love for anything called "ideal," and from the brief surprise it gives us. We are surprised because we compare the theater audience we know so well with that chorus, and we ask ourselves whether you could ever turn that audience, by making it ideal, into something like the tragic chorus. Quietly, we say no. And now we wonder just as much at how bold Schlegel's claim is as at how completely different the Greek audience must have been. After all, we had always believed that a proper audience member, whoever he is, must always stay aware that he is looking at a work of art, not at real life. But the tragic chorus of the Greeks is forced to see the figures on stage as living, flesh-and-blood beings. The chorus of the Oceanids, the sea nymphs, truly believes that it sees the Titan Prometheus in front of it, and it takes itself to be just as real as the god on the stage. And is that supposed to be the highest and purest kind of audience member, to think, like the Oceanids, that Prometheus is physically there and real? Would it be the mark of the perfect audience member to run onto the stage and free the god from his torture? We had believed in an audience that responds to art as art, and we had thought that each viewer was more gifted the better he could take the work of art as art, that is, aesthetically. And now Schlegel's phrase hinted to us that the complete, perfect audience member does not take in the world of the stage as art at all, but as real, physical experience. "Oh, these Greeks!" we sigh. "They turn our whole theory of art upside down!" But we got used to it, and we repeated Schlegel's saying every time the chorus came up.

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But that very clear historical report speaks against Schlegel here. The chorus on its own, without a stage, which was the earliest form of tragedy, does not fit with a chorus of perfect audience members. What kind of art form would that be, one drawn out of the mere idea of a spectator, whose true form would be "the spectator in himself"? A spectator without a play to watch is a nonsense idea. We fear that the birth of tragedy cannot be explained either by great respect for the moral intelligence of the crowd or by the idea of a spectator with no play. We think this problem is far too deep to be even touched by such shallow ways of looking at things.

Schiller had already shown a far, far more valuable insight into what the chorus means, in his famous preface to his play The Bride of Messina. He saw the chorus as a living wall that tragedy builds around itself. With this wall it shuts itself off completely from the real world and keeps safe its own ideal ground and its freedom as poetry.

With this, his main weapon, Schiller fights against the common idea of what is "natural," and against the illusion of real life that people usually demand from plays. Schiller says that even though daylight on the stage is only artificial, the buildings there are only symbols, and the verse language has an ideal, unreal character, people still get the whole thing wrong. It is not enough, he says, to merely put up with as a "poetic freedom" what is in fact the very heart of all poetry. Bringing in the chorus, he says, is the decisive step by which war is openly and honestly declared on every kind of realism in art. It seems to me that this is exactly the kind of view that our age, which thinks itself so superior, dismisses with the scornful label "fake idealism." I fear that we, with our present worship of the natural and the real, have instead arrived at the exact opposite of all idealism: the world of wax museums. There is a kind of art in those too, just as in certain popular novels of today. Only, let nobody torment us with the claim that this

kind of art has defeated the so-called "fake idealism" of Schiller and Goethe.

It is true, as Schiller rightly saw, that the Greek chorus of satyrs, the chorus of the earliest tragedy, usually walks on "ideal" ground. This ground is raised high above the real road that ordinary mortals travel. For this chorus, the Greek built himself a floating scaffold, a made-up state of nature, and set made-up nature beings on it. Tragedy grew up on this foundation, and for that reason alone it was free from the very start from painfully copying reality. Still, it is not a world dreamed up at random, hanging somewhere between heaven and earth. Rather, it is a world just as real and believable as Mount Olympus and all the gods living on it were for the believing Greek. The satyr (goat-man), as a dancer and singer in Dionysus's chorus, lives in a reality that religion accepted, backed by myth and worship. That tragedy begins with him, and that the wisdom of the wild, ecstatic force speaks through him, seems to us just as strange as the fact that tragedy came out of the chorus at all. Maybe we can find a starting point if I put forward this claim: the satyr, the made-up nature being, relates to the civilized person in the same way that the music of the wild, ecstatic force relates to civilization. Richard Wagner says of civilization that music cancels it out the way daylight cancels out the glow of a lamp. In the same way, I believe, the civilized Greek felt himself cancelled out when facing the chorus of satyrs. And this is the first effect of Dionysian tragedy: the state and society, and in general all the gaps between one person and another, give way to an overwhelming feeling of oneness that leads back to the heart of nature. There is a deep comfort beyond this world, and, as I am hinting already here, every true tragedy sends us home with it: the comfort that, deep down beneath everything, life is indestructibly powerful and full of joy, no matter how the visible world keeps changing. This comfort appears in solid, physical form as the chorus of satyrs, a chorus of nature beings

who live on, as it were, behind all civilization and can never be wiped out, and who stay forever the same, no matter how the generations change and how the history of nations moves on.

With this chorus the Greek comforts himself. He is deep-thinking and uniquely able to feel the most delicate and the heaviest suffering. With a sharp eye he has looked straight into the terrible destruction of what people call world history, and just as straight into the cruelty of nature. And he is in danger of longing for a Buddhist-style denial of the will, of turning his back on life itself. Art saves him, and through art, life saves him for itself.

Here is why. The ecstasy of the wild, ecstatic state breaks down the usual limits and borders of life. But while it lasts, it also holds a kind of numbness, a deep sleepiness, and everything a person has lived through in the past sinks down into it. So a gap of forgetting opens up, and it separates the world of everyday reality from the world of the wild, ecstatic reality. But as soon as that everyday reality comes back into the mind, it is felt for what it is, and it fills the person with disgust. The result of those states is a mood that turns away from the world, gives up comforts, and says no to the will (the blind life-drive). In this sense the person gripped by the wild, ecstatic force is like Hamlet. Both have once taken a true look into the real nature of things. They have understood, and now they feel disgust at the idea of taking action. After all, nothing they do can change the eternal nature of things. They find it ridiculous, or even shameful, that anyone expects them to put right a world that is "out of joint", as Hamlet says. Knowing kills doing. To act, you need to be wrapped in a veil of illusion. That is the real lesson of Hamlet. It is not the cheap wisdom about "Jack the Dreamer", the man who thinks too much and never gets around to acting because he sees too many possibilities. No, it is not too much thinking! It is true knowledge, a look into the horrible truth, and that outweighs every reason that might push someone to

act, both for Hamlet and for the person of the wild, ecstatic force. Now no comfort works anymore. The longing reaches past any world after death, even past the gods themselves. Life itself is rejected, together with its glittering reflection in the gods or in some immortal life beyond. Aware of the truth he has once seen, the person now sees only the horror or the absurdity of existence wherever he looks. Now he understands what Ophelia's fate stands for. Now he recognizes the truth of Silenus's grim wisdom, the wisdom of that god of the forest: he is filled with disgust.

Here, at this moment when the will is in the greatest danger, art comes near, like a magician who rescues and heals. Art alone can bend those disgusted thoughts about the horror and absurdity of life into ideas that a person can live with. These ideas are the sublime, which is art taming what is horrible, and the comic, which is art releasing us from the disgust we feel at what is absurd. The chorus of satyrs in the wild hymn to Dionysus is the act of rescue performed by Greek art. Those dark moods described a moment ago used themselves up on the in-between world of these companions of Dionysus.

8.

The satyr, and the dreamy, idyllic shepherd of our more recent times, both grew out of the same longing: a longing for what is original and natural. But look at the difference. How firmly and fearlessly the Greek took hold of his man of the woods! And how shyly and softly modern people have played around with their flattering picture of a tender, flute-playing, gentle shepherd! What the Greek saw in his satyr was nature that no knowledge had yet worked on, nature where the locks of civilization had not yet been broken open. That is why, for him, the satyr was not the same thing as an ape. Quite the opposite: the satyr was the original model of the human being. He expressed humanity's highest and strongest feelings. He was the frenzied wor-

shipper, thrilled by being near the god. He was the companion who suffered along with the god, so that the god's suffering happened again in him. He was the one who announced wisdom straight from the deepest heart of nature. And he was a symbol of nature's all-powerful sexual force, which the Greek was used to looking at with awe and wonder. The satyr was something lofty and godlike. That is especially how he must have seemed to the Dionysian person, whose gaze had been broken by pain. Such a person would have been insulted by the dressed-up, fake shepherd. Instead, his eye rested with deep satisfaction on nature's great handwriting, uncovered and unspoiled. Here the illusion of civilization had been wiped away from the original image of the human being. Here the true human being showed himself: the bearded satyr, shouting with joy to his god. Next to him, the civilized person shrank into a lying cartoon of himself. Schiller is right about these early beginnings of tragic art too: the chorus is a living wall against reality as it storms in. It is a wall because the chorus of satyrs shows existence more truthfully, more really, and more completely than the civilized person does, who usually thinks of himself as the only reality. Poetry does not live outside the world, as some fantastic impossibility dreamed up in a poet's brain. It wants to be exactly the opposite: the honest, unpainted expression of truth. And for that very reason it has to throw off the lying decorations of what the civilized person thinks is reality. The contrast between this real truth of nature and the lie of civilization, which acts as if it were the only reality, is much like the contrast between the eternal core of things, things as they really are, and the whole of the visible world. Tragedy, with its deep comfort beyond this world, points to the eternal life of that core of existence, even while the things of the visible world keep on perishing. In the same way, the symbolism of the chorus of satyrs already expresses, as a kind of picture, that basic relationship between things as they really are and the visible world. The idyllic shepherd of modern people is only a

portrait of all the illusions of education and culture that they mistake for nature. The Dionysian Greek wants truth and nature at their greatest strength, and so he sees himself transformed, as if by a spell, into a satyr.

In moods like these, and with insights like these, the frenzied crowd of Dionysus's followers shouts with joy. The power of these moods and insights transforms them even in their own eyes, so that they believe they see themselves as nature spirits brought back to life: as satyrs. The later setup of the tragic chorus is an artistic copy of this natural event. Now, of course, it became necessary to separate the Dionysian spectators from the Dionysian people who were under the spell. But we must always keep in mind that the audience of Athenian tragedy found itself again in the chorus down in the orchestra, the dancing area. At bottom, there was no opposition between audience and chorus. Everything is just one great, lofty chorus of dancing and singing satyrs, or of people who let these satyrs stand in for them. Here the phrase from Schlegel has to open up to us in a deeper sense. The chorus is the "perfect audience member" because it is the only one who truly sees: the one who sees the world of visions on the stage. An audience of spectators like the one we know was unknown to the Greeks. In their theaters, the seats rose up in curved terraces, one ring above another. So everyone could truly look out over the whole civilized world around him, and, lost in full, deep watching, could imagine himself to be a member of the chorus. With this insight, we may call the chorus, in its early, primitive stage in the very first tragedy, a reflection of the Dionysian person seeing himself. This can be made clearest by looking at what an actor goes through. A truly gifted actor sees the character he is going to play floating in front of his eyes, so real he could almost touch it. The chorus of satyrs is, first of all, a vision of the Dionysian crowd, just as the world of the stage is, in turn, a vision of this chorus of satyrs. The power of this

vision is strong enough to make the eye dull and blind to the impression of "reality", blind to the educated people sitting all around on the rows of seats. The shape of the Greek theater is like a lonely mountain valley. The buildings of the stage look like a shining picture made of clouds, seen from above by the followers of Bacchus as they roam wildly through the mountains. It is the splendid frame in whose middle the image of Dionysus is revealed to them.

The basic artistic event we are talking about here to explain the tragic chorus seems almost shocking, given our scholarly way of looking at the basic processes of art. And yet nothing could be more certain than this: a poet is a poet only because he sees himself surrounded by figures who live and act in front of him, and into whose innermost being he can look. Because of a strange weakness in modern talent, we tend to imagine this basic event of art as too complicated and abstract. For the true poet, a metaphor is not a figure of speech. It is a picture that stands in for an idea, a picture that really floats before his eyes in place of a concept. For him, a character is not a whole put together from details collected here and there. It is a living person who presses in on him, right before his eyes. It differs from a painter's similar vision only because it keeps on living and keeps on acting. Why does Homer describe things so much more vividly than all other poets? Because he sees so much more. We talk about poetry in such an abstract way because most of us tend to be bad poets. At bottom, the artistic event is simple. If you just have the ability to keep seeing a living play and to live constantly surrounded by crowds of spirits, then you are a poet. If you just feel the urge to transform yourself and to speak out of other bodies and other souls, then you are a playwright.

The wild, ecstatic force can pass this artistic gift on to a whole crowd: the gift of seeing itself surrounded by such a crowd of spirits, and of knowing that it is one with them deep inside. This process of the

tragic chorus is the basic event of drama: to see yourself transformed in front of yourself, and then to act as if you had really entered another body and another character. This process stands at the very beginning of how drama developed. It is something different from the rhapsode, the traveling reciter of poems, who does not melt into his images, but, like a painter, sees them outside himself with a watching eye. Here we already have the giving up of the individual self by entering into a stranger's nature. And this happens like an epidemic, spreading from person to person: a whole crowd feels itself transformed in this way, as if by a spell. That is why the wild hymn to Dionysus is basically different from every other choral song. Think of the young women who walk solemnly to the temple of Apollo with laurel branches in their hands, singing a procession song. They stay who they are and keep their everyday names. But the chorus of the wild hymn to Dionysus is a chorus of transformed people, who have completely forgotten their past as ordinary citizens and their place in society. They have become timeless servants of their god, living outside every part of society. All the other choral poetry of the Greeks is just an enormous heightening of the single singer of the calm, image-making force. In the wild hymn to Dionysus, though, we have before us a community of actors who do not know they are acting, and who see one another as transformed.

Being under a spell, being transformed, is the starting point of all drama. Under this spell, the frenzied worshipper of the wild, ecstatic force sees himself as a satyr (goat-man). And as a satyr, he in turn sees the god. In other words, while he is transformed, he sees a new vision outside himself, and this vision is the calm, image-making force bringing his state to completion. With this new vision, the drama is complete.

Knowing this, we have to understand Greek tragedy as a chorus filled with the wild, ecstatic force, which keeps pouring itself out, again and

again, into a world of images shaped by the calm, image-making force. So the choral songs that are woven all through a tragedy are, in a way, the mother's womb that gives birth to the whole so-called dialogue, that is, to everything that happens on stage, the actual drama. In several bursts, one after the other, this deep source of tragedy sends out the vision of the drama. This vision is entirely a dream image, and in that sense it is like an epic story. But on the other hand, because it gives outward form to a state of the wild, ecstatic force, it does not show being saved by beautiful illusion. Instead, it shows the very opposite: the individual breaking apart and becoming one with the original being of all things. So drama is the calm, image-making force making the insights and effects of the wild, ecstatic force visible to the senses. And because of this, it is separated from the epic as if by a huge gulf.

The chorus of Greek tragedy stands for the whole crowd stirred up by the wild, ecstatic force, and our way of seeing things fully explains it. We are used to the place a chorus has on the modern stage, especially an opera chorus. So we could not understand at all how the tragic chorus of the Greeks could be older, more original, even more important than the actual "action", even though old sources clearly say so. And we could not square that high importance and originality with the fact that the chorus was made up only of lowly servants, and at first only of goat-like satyrs. The orchestra, the dancing space in front of the stage, also always remained a puzzle to us. But now we have come to see that the stage and the action were, at bottom and in the beginning, thought of only as a vision. The only "reality" is the chorus itself, which creates the vision out of itself and speaks about it using all the symbolic language of dance, music and words. In its vision, this chorus sees its lord and master Dionysus, and that is why it is forever the serving chorus. It watches the god suffer and be glorified, and so it does not act itself. Even though it stands completely as a

servant before the god, it is still the highest expression of nature, the expression of the wild, ecstatic force. And so, like nature, it speaks in a state of inspiration, uttering prophecies and wise sayings. Because it suffers along with the god, it is also the wise one, announcing the truth from the very heart of the world. This is how we get that fantastic and seemingly shocking figure of the wise and inspired satyr, who at the same time is "the simple fool" compared to the god. He is a picture of nature and its strongest drives, even a symbol of them, and at the same time he announces nature's wisdom and art. He is musician, poet, dancer and seer of spirits all in one person.

Dionysus is the real hero of the stage and the center of the vision. But according to what we now understand, and according to the old sources, in the very earliest period of tragedy he is not actually there. He is only imagined as being there. In other words, at first tragedy is only "chorus" and not "drama". Later, an attempt is made to show the god as real, and to make the vision figure, together with its glorifying frame, visible to every eye. That is where "drama" in the narrower sense begins. Now the chorus singing the wild hymn to Dionysus is given a new job. It has to stir up the mood of the audience with the wild, ecstatic force so strongly that, when the tragic hero appears on stage, they do not see a clumsy man in a mask. Instead, they see a vision figure that seems to be born out of their own rapture. Imagine Admetus, deep in thought, remembering his wife Alcestis, who has just died, and wasting away as he pictures her in his mind. Then suddenly a veiled woman is led toward him, with a shape like hers and a walk like hers. Imagine his sudden trembling restlessness, how wildly he compares her to his wife, his gut feeling that it is her. That gives us something like the feeling with which the spectator, stirred by the wild, ecstatic force, saw the god walking onto the stage, the god whose suffering he had already become one with. Without meaning to, he transferred the whole image of the god, which was trembling

magically before his soul, onto that masked figure. In a way, he dissolved the figure's reality into a ghostly unreality. This is the dream state of the calm, image-making force, in which the everyday world is veiled and a new world is born again and again before our eyes, always changing. This new world is clearer, easier to understand and more moving than the everyday one, and yet more like a shadow. So we can see a sharp contrast of style running through tragedy. Language, color, movement and the force of speech split into two completely separate areas of expression: on one side, the songs of the chorus, shaped by the wild, ecstatic force, and on the other side, the dream world of the stage, shaped by the calm, image-making force. The visible forms, made by the calm, image-making force, in which Dionysus takes shape are no longer "an endless sea, a shifting weave, a glowing life", as the music of the chorus is. They are no longer those forces that can only be felt and do not harden into images, through which the inspired servant of Dionysus senses that the god is near. Now, from the stage, the clearness and firmness of epic figures speak to him. Now Dionysus no longer speaks through forces, but as an epic hero, almost in the language of Homer.

9.

Everything that comes to the surface in the part of Greek tragedy shaped by the calm, image-making force, that is, in the dialogue, looks simple, clear and beautiful. In this sense the dialogue is a picture of the Greek himself, whose nature shows itself in dance. In dance, the greatest strength is only held in reserve, but it gives itself away in how smooth and rich the movement is. In the same way, the language of Sophocles' heroes surprises us with how definite and bright it is, in the manner of the calm, image-making force. It makes us think we can see straight down to the deepest core of who they are, and we are a little amazed that the path to that core is so short.

But suppose we set aside the hero's character, the part that comes to the surface and becomes visible. At bottom, that character is nothing more than a picture of light thrown onto a dark wall, that is, the visible world through and through. Suppose instead we go deep into the myth that is projected in these bright reflections. Then we suddenly experience something that works the opposite way from a well-known trick of the eyes. When we try hard to look straight at the sun and turn away dazzled, we see dark colored spots before our eyes, as if they were there to heal them. It is the reverse with those bright light pictures of Sophocles' hero, in short, with the mask shaped by the calm, image-making force. They are what we necessarily produce after looking into the inner, terrible depths of nature. They are like glowing spots meant to heal eyes that have been hurt by a horrible night. Only in this sense can we believe that we truly grasp the serious and important idea of "Greek cheerfulness". Meanwhile, of course, we run into the misunderstood version of this cheerfulness, as a state of safe and easy comfort, everywhere we turn in today's world.

The most suffering figure on the Greek stage is the unlucky Oedipus. Sophocles understood him as a noble man who is doomed to make mistakes and to fall into misery, even though he is wise. But in the end, through his enormous suffering, he gives off a magical power that brings blessings to those around him, and this power keeps working even after he dies. The deep-thinking poet wants to tell us that the noble man does not sin. His actions may destroy every law, every natural order, even the whole moral world. Yet through these very actions, a higher, magical circle of effects is drawn, and these effects build a new world on the ruins of the old one that was knocked down. That is what the poet wants to tell us, since he is also a religious thinker. But as a poet, he first shows us a wonderfully tangled knot, like a court case. The judge slowly unties it, one piece at a time, and in doing so brings about his own ruin. The truly Greek joy in this

step-by-step, logical untangling is so great that a feeling of calm, superior cheerfulness spreads over the whole play. This cheerfulness takes the sting out of the horrible facts the case is built on. In "Oedipus at Colonus" we meet this same cheerfulness, but lifted up into an endless glorifying transformation. On one side stands the old man, struck by misery that goes too far, who simply has to suffer whatever happens to him. On the other side stands a cheerfulness from beyond this earth, which comes down from the world of the gods. It hints to us that the hero, by being completely passive, reaches his highest form of action, an action that stretches far beyond his own life. Meanwhile, all his conscious plans and efforts in his earlier life only led him to be passive and helpless. In this way, the knot of the Oedipus story, which looks impossible to untie for human eyes, is slowly untangled. And the deepest human joy comes over us at this godly counterpart to logic. If this explanation does justice to the poet, we can still ask whether it covers everything the myth contains. And here it turns out that the poet's whole view is nothing but that bright image which healing nature holds up in front of us after we have looked into the abyss. Oedipus, the murderer of his father! Oedipus, the husband of his mother! Oedipus, who solved the riddle of the Sphinx! What does this mysterious set of three fateful deeds tell us? There is an ancient folk belief, especially among the Persians, that a wise magician can only be born from incest, that is, from sex between close family members. Thinking of Oedipus, who solves riddles and marries his mother, we must read this right away as follows. Wherever the spell of present and future, the rigid law that splits us into separate selves, and in fact the real magic of nature have been broken by powers of prophecy and magic, something hugely against nature, like incest in this case, must have come first as the cause. For how could anyone force nature to give up her secrets, except by fighting her and winning, that is, by doing something unnatural? I see this insight stamped into that terrible set of three fates of Oedipus. The

same man who solves the riddle of nature, that two-natured Sphinx, must also smash the holiest orders of nature by murdering his father and marrying his mother. Yes, the myth seems to whisper to us that wisdom, and especially the wisdom of the wild, ecstatic force, is a horror against nature. It seems to say that whoever uses his knowledge to throw nature into the abyss of destruction must also feel nature falling apart inside himself. "The sharp point of wisdom turns against the wise man: wisdom is a crime against nature." The myth shouts such terrible sentences at us. But the Greek poet touches the grand and frightening myth like a ray of sunlight touches the ancient statue of Memnon, which was said to sing at sunrise. And so the myth suddenly begins to make sound, in the melodies of Sophocles!

Now, against the glory of passivity, I set the glory of action, which shines around the Prometheus of Aeschylus. Aeschylus the thinker had something to tell us here. But as a poet, he only lets us sense it through an image that works like a parable. The young Goethe managed to reveal this meaning to us in the daring words of his poem "Prometheus":

"Here I sit, shaping humans in my own image, a race that will be like me: to suffer, to weep, to enjoy and to be glad, and to pay no attention to you, just like me!"

Man rises up until he becomes giant-like and rebellious. He wins his own culture by fighting for it, and he forces the gods to join with him, because his own wisdom puts their existence, and the limits of their power, in his hands. But the most wonderful thing about that Prometheus poem, which at its core is really a hymn against piety, is Aeschylus's deep hunger for justice. On one side there is the endless suffering of the bold "individual." On the other side there is the trouble of the gods, even a sense that the gods' own end, their twilight, is coming. And there is a power that forces these two worlds of

suffering to make peace and to become one at a deep level. All of this strongly reminds us of the center and main idea of how Aeschylus saw the world: above gods and humans alike, he saw Moira, Fate, sitting on a throne as eternal justice. Aeschylus is amazingly bold in putting the whole world of the Olympian gods on his scales of justice. To understand this, we must remember that the deep-thinking Greek had a firm, unshakable foundation for his thinking about the ultimate questions in his mystery religions. So all his moods of doubt could be let out on the Olympian gods instead. The Greek artist in particular had a dim feeling that he and these gods depended on each other. And this very feeling is turned into a symbol in Aeschylus's Prometheus. The giant-like, rebellious artist found inside himself a defiant belief that he could create human beings, and that he could at least destroy the Olympian gods. He could do this through his higher wisdom, though he was forced to pay for it with endless suffering. The splendid "ability" of the great genius, which would be cheap even if it cost eternal pain, and the bitter pride of the artist: that is the content and the soul of Aeschylus's poetry. Sophocles, by contrast, in his Oedipus, begins to sing, like an opening tune, the victory song of the saint. But even the meaning that Aeschylus gave to the myth does not reach the bottom of its astonishing depth of horror. Rather, the artist's joy in creating, the cheerfulness of artistic work that stands up to every disaster, is only a bright picture of clouds and sky reflected on a black lake of sadness. In other words, the joy floats on top of a deep sorrow. The Prometheus legend belongs from the very beginning to the whole family of Aryan peoples, and it is proof of their gift for deep, tragic thinking. In fact, it seems quite likely that this myth has the same defining meaning for the Aryan character that the myth of the Fall of Man has for the Semitic character, and that the two myths are related to each other like brother and sister. The Prometheus myth starts from the enormous value that a simple, early humanity placed on fire, seeing it as the true sacred protector of every growing culture. But to

those early, thoughtful people, it seemed a crime, a theft from divine nature, that man should freely control fire, and not just receive it as a gift from heaven, as a lightning bolt that sets things ablaze or as the warming heat of the sun. And so the very first philosophical problem sets up a painful, unsolvable conflict between man and god, and rolls it like a huge boulder in front of the gate of every culture. The best and highest thing that humanity can share in, it wins through a crime. And then it must accept the consequences: the whole flood of suffering and sorrow with which the insulted gods must punish the noble human race that is striving upward. This is a harsh thought. Because it gives dignity to the crime, it stands in strange contrast to the Semitic myth of the Fall. In that myth, curiosity, lying pretense, being easily tempted, lust, in short a series of feelings seen mainly as female, were taken to be the origin of evil. What sets the Aryan idea apart is the lofty view that active sin is the true Promethean virtue. And with this we also find the moral foundation of pessimistic tragedy: it justifies human evil, both human guilt and the suffering that guilt brings on. The thoughtful Aryan does not like to explain away the disaster built into the nature of things. To him, the conflict at the heart of the world shows itself as a tangle of different worlds, for example a divine world and a human world. Each of them, taken on its own, is in the right. But each, standing as a separate world next to another, has to suffer for being separate. The individual has a heroic urge to reach out into the whole. He tries to step beyond the spell of being a separate self and to become the one being of the world itself. When he does this, he suffers in himself the basic conflict at life's core that lies hidden in things. That is, he commits a crime and he suffers. So the Aryans understand crime as male, and the Semites understand sin as female, just as the original crime is committed by a man and the original sin by a woman. By the way, the chorus of witches says:

"We don't take it so exactly: The woman needs a thousand steps; But however fast she hurries on, The man does it in a single leap."

Whoever understands the innermost core of the Prometheus legend, that is, that the individual striving to be giant-like and rebellious has no choice but to commit a crime, must also feel at the same time how un-Apollonian this pessimistic idea is. It goes against the calm, image-making force. For Apollo wants to bring individual beings to rest precisely by drawing border lines between them. Again and again he reminds them of these borders as the holiest laws of the world, with his demands for self-knowledge and moderation. But this Apollonian tendency could have frozen form into Egyptian stiffness and coldness. In trying to give each single wave its own path and space, it could have killed the movement of the whole lake. To stop that from happening, the high tide of the wild, ecstatic force broke in from time to time and destroyed all those little circles in which the one-sided Apollonian "will (the blind life-drive)" tried to trap the Greek world. That suddenly swelling tide of the wild, ecstatic force then lifts up the little crests of the individual waves onto its back, the way Prometheus's brother, the Titan Atlas, carries the earth. This giant-like, rebellious urge to become, so to speak, the Atlas of all individuals, and to carry them on its broad back higher and higher, farther and farther, is what the Promethean and the wild, ecstatic force have in common. In this sense, Aeschylus's Prometheus is a mask of Dionysus. But in that deep hunger for justice mentioned earlier, Aeschylus shows, to anyone who looks closely, that he is descended on his father's side from Apollo, the god of separate selves and of the boundaries of justice. And so the double nature of Aeschylus's Prometheus, his nature that belongs both to the wild, ecstatic force and to the calm, image-making force, could be summed up in a single formula like this: "Everything that exists is just and unjust, and is equally justified in both."

That is your world! That's what you call a world! -

10.

There is a tradition that no one can dispute: in its oldest form, Greek tragedy dealt only with the sufferings of Dionysus, and for a long time the only hero on the stage was Dionysus himself. But we can say with the same certainty that, right up until Euripides, Dionysus never stopped being the tragic hero. All the famous figures of the Greek stage, such as Prometheus, Oedipus and the rest, are only masks of that first hero, Dionysus. The fact that a god is hiding behind all these masks is one main reason why those famous figures seem so "ideal", so larger than life, which people have so often marveled at. Someone, I don't remember who, once claimed that all individuals, simply because they are individuals, are comic and therefore not tragic. From this we could conclude that the Greeks could not stand to see mere individuals on the tragic stage at all. And in fact they seem to have felt exactly that way. In general, Plato's way of separating the "Idea" from the "idol", the true form from its mere copy, and of valuing the one above the other, is rooted deep in the Greek character. If we borrow Plato's terms, we might describe the tragic figures of the Greek stage like this: the one truly real Dionysus appears in many different shapes, wearing the mask of a struggling hero, as if caught in the net of a single person's will. When the god appears on stage and speaks and acts, he looks like an individual who makes mistakes, strives and suffers. And the reason he appears so clearly and sharply, like a character in an epic story, is the work of Apollo, the interpreter of dreams. Apollo explains to the chorus their own wild, ecstatic state by showing it to them in this picture, this likeness. But in truth that hero is the suffering Dionysus of the secret religious rites, the god who feels in his own body the pain of being split into separate individuals. Wonderful myths tell how, as a boy, he was torn to pieces by the Ti-

tans, and how in this torn state he is worshipped as Zagreus. These myths hint that this tearing apart, which is the true suffering of Dionysus, is like being turned into air, water, earth and fire. So they suggest that we should see the state of being a separate individual as the source and deepest root of all suffering, as something bad in itself. From the smile of this Dionysus the Olympian gods were born, and from his tears, human beings. In this life as a torn-apart god, Dionysus has a double nature: he is both a cruel, savage demon and a mild, gentle ruler. But the people who had been let into the secret rites hoped for a rebirth of Dionysus, which we can now sense means the end of being split into individuals. It was to this coming, third Dionysus that those initiates sang their roaring song of joy. And only because of this hope is there a ray of joy on the face of a world that has been torn apart and smashed into separate individuals. The myth shows this through Demeter, who is sunk in endless grief, and who feels joy again for the first time only when she is told she could give birth to Dionysus once more. In the ideas we have just described, we already have all the parts of a deep and pessimistic view of the world, and with it the secret teaching of tragedy. First, the basic insight that everything that exists is one. Second, the view that being split into individuals is the deepest root of evil. And third, art as the joyful hope that the spell of being separate selves can be broken, as a sense that the lost oneness will be restored. -

We hinted earlier that Homer's epic poetry is the poetry of the Olympian culture, the song in which that culture celebrated its own victory over the horrors of the war with the Titans. Now, under the overpowering influence of tragic poetry, Homer's myths are born again in a new form. And in this rebirth, like a soul moving into a new body, they show that the Olympian culture has in the meantime also been defeated, this time by an even deeper view of the world. The defiant Titan Prometheus had warned his Olympian torturer, Zeus,

that one day his rule would face the greatest danger, unless he joined forces with Prometheus in time. In Aeschylus we see that alliance: Zeus, frightened and afraid of his own end, makes a pact with the Titan. In this way the earlier age of the Titans is brought back up into the light, out of Tartarus, the dark underworld. The philosophy of wild, naked nature looks with the unveiled face of truth at the myths of Homer's world as they dance by. They turn pale and tremble before the lightning-like gaze of this goddess, until the mighty fist of the artist of the wild, ecstatic force forces them to serve the new god. The truth of the wild, ecstatic force takes over the whole realm of myth and uses it as a set of symbols for what it knows. It speaks this knowledge partly in the public worship that tragedy was, and partly in the secret ceremonies of dramatic religious festivals, but always wrapped in the old cloak of myth. What power was it that freed Prometheus from his vultures and turned myth into a vehicle for the wisdom of Dionysus? It is the power of music, strong as Hercules. In tragedy, music reaches its highest form and knows how to give myth a new and very deep meaning. We already described this earlier as music's mightiest ability. For it is the fate of every myth to slowly creep into the narrow box of a supposedly real history, and to be treated by some later age as a one-time event that claims to be historical fact. And the Greeks were already well on their way to cleverly and freely relabeling their whole youthful dream of myth as a practical, historical story of their early years. Because this is how religions usually die. It happens when the myths a religion is built on are organized by the strict, rational eyes of rigid, orthodox belief into a finished list of historical events. Then people start anxiously defending whether the myths are believable, while fighting against any natural further life and growth of those myths. In other words, it happens when the feeling for myth dies and is replaced by the religion's claim to rest on historical facts. It was this dying myth that the newborn genius of Dionysian music now took hold of. And in its hands the myth bloomed one more time, with

colors it had never shown before, and with a scent that stirred a longing sense of a world beyond this one. After this last bright flash, it collapses. Its leaves wither, and soon the mocking Lucians of the ancient world, satirists like the writer Lucian, grab at the faded, ruined flowers that are being blown away by every wind. Through tragedy, myth reaches its deepest meaning and its most expressive form. It rises up one more time, like a wounded hero, and all its extra strength, together with the wise calm of the dying, burns in its eyes with a last, powerful glow.

What did you want, you wicked Euripides, when you tried to force this dying one into your slave labor one more time? It died under your violent hands. And now you needed a fake, masked myth, which, like Hercules's monkey, only knew how to dress itself up in the old finery. And just as the myth died on you, the genius of music died on you too. Even though you greedily grabbed at and robbed every garden of music, all you managed to make was fake, masked music. And because you abandoned Dionysus, Apollo abandoned you as well. Go ahead and chase every passion out of its hiding place and trap it in your circle, sharpen and polish a tricky, clever style of arguing for your heroes' speeches. Even so, your heroes have only copied, masked passions, and they speak only copied, masked speeches.

11.

Greek tragedy died in a different way from all the older art forms that were its sisters. It died by suicide, because of a conflict it could not solve. In other words, it died tragically. The others all faded away in old age, with the most beautiful and peaceful death. Think of it like this: if a happy, natural life ends with fine children left behind and no painful struggle at the end, then the death of those older art forms shows exactly that kind of happy, natural state. They slowly sink out of sight, and before their fading eyes their finer offspring already

stands there, impatiently raising its head with a brave gesture. But when Greek tragedy died, it left a huge emptiness that people felt deeply everywhere. Once, in the days of the Roman emperor Tiberius, Greek sailors passing a lonely island heard a shattering cry: "The great Pan is dead!" In the same way, a painful cry of grief now rang out through the whole Greek world: "Tragedy is dead! Poetry itself has been lost along with it! Away with you, you stunted, starving followers who came too late! Go down to Hades, the land of the dead, so that for once you can eat your fill of the crumbs left by the old masters!"

Still, a new art form did spring up after all, one that honored tragedy as its forerunner and its teacher. But people noticed with horror that, yes, it had its mother's features, but they were the features she had shown during her long death struggle. The one who fought out this death struggle of tragedy was Euripides. That later art form is known as the New Attic Comedy. In it, tragedy lived on in a degenerate, worn-down shape, as a monument to its extremely hard and violent death.

Given this connection, it is easy to understand why the poets of the newer comedy felt such a passionate love for Euripides. So it is not strange at all that the poet Philemon said he would gladly be hanged on the spot, just so he could go and find Euripides in the underworld, as long as he could be sure that the dead man still had his wits about him. Now, suppose we want to say very briefly, without claiming to cover everything, what Euripides had in common with the comic poets Menander and Philemon, and what made him such an exciting model for them. Then it is enough to say this: Euripides brought the audience member up onto the stage. Before Euripides, the tragic poets were like Prometheus, shaping their heroes out of grand material, and they had no wish at all to put a faithful mask of everyday reality on the stage. Anyone who sees that will also clearly understand how

completely different Euripides' aim was. Through him, the ordinary man of everyday life pushed his way out of the seats and onto the stage. The mirror that used to show only great and bold features now showed a painful accuracy, carefully copying even nature's failed and ugly lines. Odysseus, the typical Greek hero of the older art, now sank, in the hands of the newer poets, into the figure of the "Graeculus," the sly little Greek. From then on, this figure stood at the center of the drama's interest as a good-natured but crafty house slave. In Aristophanes' comedy "The Frogs," Euripides takes credit for slimming tragedy down with his home remedies, freeing it from its puffed-up, pompous fatness. You can feel this most of all in his tragic heroes. Basically, the audience member now saw and heard his own double on Euripides' stage, and he was pleased that this double knew how to talk so well. But it did not stop at this pleasure. People actually learned to speak from Euripides. He boasts about this himself in his contest with Aeschylus: thanks to him, he says, the people have now learned to observe, to argue, and to draw conclusions skillfully, using the cleverest tricks of reasoning. By changing the way people talked in public like this, he made the newer comedy possible in the first place. For from then on it was no secret anymore how ordinary everyday life could be shown on stage, and with what kinds of sayings. The average middle-class citizen, on whom Euripides built all his political hopes, now got to speak. Until then, it was the demigod in tragedy, and the drunken satyr (goat-man) or the half-human in comedy, who had set the way characters talked. And so the Euripides of Aristophanes' play praises himself for showing ordinary, well-known, everyday life and business, which anyone can judge. If the whole crowd now does philosophy, runs its land and property with amazing cleverness, and fights its own lawsuits, then, he says, that is his achievement and the result of the wisdom he injected into the people.

The newer comedy could now speak to a crowd that had been prepared and "enlightened" in this way. In a sense, Euripides had become its chorus teacher, except that this time it was the chorus of spectators that had to be trained. As soon as this audience had practiced singing in Euripides' key, a kind of play arose that was like a game of chess: the newer comedy, with its endless victories of cleverness and cunning. And Euripides, the chorus teacher, was praised without end. In fact, people would have killed themselves to learn even more from him, if they had not known that the tragic poets were just as dead as tragedy. But along with tragedy, the Greek had given up his belief in his own immortality. He gave up not only the belief in an ideal past but also the belief in an ideal future. A well-known gravestone says of someone: "as an old man, careless and full of whims." Those words also fit the Greek world in its old age. The passing moment, the joke, carelessness, and mood were now its highest gods. The fifth class of society, the slaves, now came to rule, at least in their way of thinking. And if we can still speak of "Greek cheerfulness" at all at this point, it is the cheerfulness of the slave. The slave has nothing heavy to answer for, nothing great to strive for, and he values nothing in the past or the future more highly than the present. It was this outward show of "Greek cheerfulness" that so outraged the deep and fearsome people of the first four centuries of Christianity. To them, this weak, soft running away from seriousness and terror, this cowardly contentment with easy pleasure, seemed not only contemptible but the true anti-Christian attitude. And it is because of their influence that the picture of ancient Greece, which lived on for centuries, held on with almost unbeatable stubbornness to that pale pink color of cheerfulness. It was as if there had never been a sixth century B.C., with its birth of tragedy, its secret religious rites, its Pythagoras and its Heraclitus. It was even as if the artworks of that great age did not exist at all. Yet each one of those works, on its own, cannot possibly be explained as growing out of such an old, slave-like pleasure in

living and such cheerfulness. Each one points to a completely different way of seeing the world as the reason it exists.

Earlier we claimed that Euripides brought the audience member onto the stage, and that he did this so the audience could truly judge the play for the first time. That makes it look as if the older tragic art never managed to get along properly with its audience. And you might be tempted to praise Euripides' radical aim, to build a fitting relationship between the work of art and the public, as a step forward beyond Sophocles. But "the public" is only a word. It is not one single thing that stays the same. Why should an artist feel he has to bend himself to fit a force whose only strength is its numbers? And if he feels, because of his talent and his aims, that he stands above every single one of these audience members, why should he respect the combined voice of all these lesser minds more than he respects the single most gifted person in the audience? In fact, no Greek artist treated his audience with more daring and more self-confidence, over a long life, than Euripides did. Even when the crowd threw itself at his feet, he proudly and defiantly slapped his own aims in the face, in public, the very aims that had won him the crowd. If this genius had had the slightest respect for the noisy chaos of the public, he would have collapsed under the hammer blows of his failures long before the middle of his career. Thinking about this, we see that our phrase, that Euripides brought the audience onto the stage to make it truly able to judge, was only a temporary one. We need to look for a deeper understanding of what he was aiming at. On the other hand, everyone knows that Aeschylus and Sophocles enjoyed the full favor of the people all their lives, and long after their deaths. So with these forerunners of Euripides, there can be no talk at all of a bad relationship between the work of art and the public. So what drove this richly gifted artist, who felt a constant need to create, so forcefully off the road? That road was lit by the sun of the greatest poets' names and by

the cloudless sky of the people's favor. What strange concern for the audience led him to turn against the audience? How could he, out of too much respect for his public, end up looking down on his public?

Here is the answer to the riddle we just described. As a poet, Euripides did feel above the crowd, but not above two members of his audience. He brought the crowd onto the stage. But those two audience members he honored as the only judges able to judge, and as the masters of all his art. He followed their instructions and warnings. Up to then, a whole world of feelings, passions and experiences had shown up at every festival performance, sitting on the audience benches like an invisible chorus. Following these two, Euripides moved that whole world into the souls of his stage heroes. He gave in to their demands when he looked for a new way of speaking and a new tone for these new characters. Only in their voices did he hear the real verdicts on his work. And from them alone he heard encouragement that promised victory, whenever the court of the public had once again found him guilty.

Of these two audience members, the first one is Euripides himself: Euripides the thinker, not Euripides the poet. You could say about him that his huge critical talent, much like the German writer Lessing's, kept feeding a side urge to create art, even if it did not create that urge in the first place. With this gift, with all the clarity and quickness of his critical thinking, Euripides had sat in the theater. He had worked hard to make out the masterpieces of his great forerunners, feature by feature, line by line, as if they were paintings that had grown dark with age. And there something happened to him that should not surprise anyone who knows the deeper secrets of Aeschylus' tragedies. In every feature and every line he noticed something that could not be measured or fully grasped. There was a kind of clearness that fooled you, and at the same time a puzzling depth, even an endless background. Even the clearest figure still trailed something

like a comet's tail, which seemed to point off into the unknown, into something that could never be made clear. The same twilight hung over the way the play was built, and above all over the meaning of the chorus. And how doubtful the solutions to the moral problems seemed to him! How questionable the handling of the myths! How unfair the way good and bad fortune were handed out! Even in the language of the older tragedy, he found much that bothered him, or at least puzzled him. Above all, he found too much grandness for simple situations, and too many fancy figures of speech and monstrous images for characters who were plain and simple. So he sat in the theater, restlessly brooding. And he, the audience member, admitted to himself that he did not understand his great forerunners. But since he believed that understanding with the mind was the true root of all enjoying and all creating, he had to ask and look around: did no one else think as he did, and also admit that these works could not be grasped? But the many, and with them the best individuals too, only gave him a suspicious smile. Yet no one could explain to him why the great masters were still right, despite his doubts and objections. And in this tormented state he found the other audience member, the one who did not understand tragedy and therefore did not respect it. Allied with him, Euripides could dare to step out of his loneliness and begin the enormous fight against the works of Aeschylus and Sophocles. He did not fight with essays and pamphlets, but as a playwright, setting his own idea of tragedy against the traditional one.

12.

Before we name this other audience member, let us pause here for a moment. Let us remind ourselves of the impression we described earlier: that there is something split and impossible to grasp in the very nature of Aeschylus' tragedy. Let us think of how strange we ourselves found the chorus and the tragic hero of that kind of tragedy.

We could not fit either of them with our own habits, nor with what tradition told us. That lasted until we discovered that this very doubleness is the origin and the essence of Greek tragedy. It is the expression of two urges to make art woven into each other: the calm, image-making force and the wild, ecstatic force.

To cut that original, all-powerful element of the wild, ecstatic force out of tragedy, and to rebuild tragedy, pure and new, on art, customs and a view of the world that have nothing of that wild, ecstatic force in them: this is Euripides' aim, which now stands revealed to us in bright light.

Near the end of his life, Euripides himself put the question of what this aim was worth, and what it meant, to the people of his time. He did it through a myth, and he pressed the question as hard as he could. Should the wild, ecstatic force be allowed to exist at all? Shouldn't it be torn out of Greek soil by force? Yes, the poet tells us, if only that were possible. But the god Dionysus is too powerful. Even the most sensible enemy, like Pentheus in "The Bacchae," is suddenly put under the god's spell, and afterwards, still under that spell, he runs straight to his doom. The two old men, Cadmus and Tiresias, seem to speak for the old poet himself. Their view is this: the thinking of even the cleverest individuals cannot overturn those old traditions of the people, that worship of Dionysus which keeps passing down forever. In fact, when facing such wondrous powers, it is only proper to take part at least in a careful, diplomatic way. And yet, they say, it is still possible that the god will be offended by such lukewarm involvement, and in the end turn the diplomat into a dragon, as he does here with Cadmus. This is what we are told by a poet who fought Dionysus with heroic strength for his whole long life. And then, at the very end of it, he finished his career by praising his enemy and by destroying himself. He was like someone overcome by dizziness who throws himself off a tower just to escape the horrible spinning he can

no longer bear. That tragedy is a protest against the idea that his plan could ever be carried out. But oh, it had already been carried out! The amazing thing had already happened: by the time the poet took back his views, his plan had already won. Dionysus had already been chased off the tragic stage, and it was done by a demon-like power speaking through Euripides. In a certain sense, Euripides too was only a mask. The god who spoke through him was not Dionysus, and not Apollo either, but a brand-new demon called Socrates. This is the new conflict: the wild, ecstatic force against the Socratic. And the great art of Greek tragedy was destroyed by it. Euripides may try to comfort us by taking back what he said, but it does not work. The most glorious temple lies in ruins. What good to us are the destroyer's cries of grief, and his confession that it was the most beautiful temple of all? And even the fact that critics of every age have punished Euripides by turning him into a dragon, who could be satisfied with such a pitiful payback?

Let us now take a closer look at that Socratic aim, the one Euripides used to fight and defeat the tragedy of Aeschylus.

Now we have to ask ourselves this: Euripides wanted to build drama only on things that have nothing to do with the wild, ecstatic force. If that plan were carried out perfectly, what goal could it possibly reach? What kind of drama was left, if it was not going to be born from the womb of music, in that mysterious twilight of the wild, ecstatic force? Only the epic turned into a play. But in that area of art, which belongs to the calm, image-making force, the effect of tragedy simply cannot be reached. The content of the events shown does not matter here. In fact, I would argue that Goethe, in the play he planned called "Nausicaa," could not have made the suicide of that gentle, idyllic girl, which was meant to fill the fifth act, truly tragic and moving. The power of the epic, calm, image-making force is so enormous that even the most terrible things are transformed before our eyes, through that

joy in beautiful appearance and that rescue through beautiful appearance. The poet of the epic-turned-play can no more merge completely with his images than the old epic reciter could. He always remains a calm, unmoved watcher, looking out with wide eyes, seeing the images in front of him. The actor in this kind of play is, deep down, still a reciter. The holy mood of inner dreaming lies over everything he does, so he is never fully an actor.

So how does the play of Euripides compare with this ideal of a drama made by the calm, image-making force? It compares the way the younger kind of reciter compares with the solemn reciter of the old days. In Plato's dialogue "Ion," this younger reciter describes himself like this: "When I say something sad, my eyes fill with tears. But when what I say is terrible and horrifying, the hair on my head stands on end with fear, and my heart pounds." Here we no longer notice anything of that epic state of being lost in beautiful appearance. Nor do we see the cool, unemotional calm of the true actor, who, at the very peak of his work, is nothing but beautiful appearance and joy in beautiful appearance. Euripides is the actor with the pounding heart and the hair standing on end. As a Socratic thinker, he draws up the plan; as a passionate actor, he carries it out. He is not a pure artist, either in planning or in performing. So the drama of Euripides is something both cold and fiery at once, just as able to freeze you as to burn you. It cannot reach the calm, image-making effect of the epic. On the other hand, it has cut itself off as much as possible from the parts that belong to the wild, ecstatic force. And now, just to have any effect at all, it needs new ways of stirring people up, ways that can no longer come from the only two urges to make art, the calm, image-making one and the wild, ecstatic one. These new ways of stirring people are cold, surprising, paradoxical ideas, in place of the images of the calm, image-making force, and fiery emotions, in place of the raptures of the wild, ecstatic force. And these are ideas and emotions copied very

realistically from real life, not at all lifted up and dipped into the pure air of art.

So we have now seen this much: Euripides did not manage to build drama on the calm, image-making force alone. Instead, his turn away from the wild, ecstatic force led him astray into something realistic and artless. With that in mind, we can now come closer to understanding Socrates' reason-first rule applied to art. Its highest law goes roughly like this: "Everything must make sense in order to be beautiful." It matches the Socratic saying, "Only the person who knows is good." With this rule in his hand, Euripides measured every single part of his plays and corrected it according to this principle: the language, the characters, the way the play was built, and the music of the chorus. When we compare him with Sophocles, we often count certain things against Euripides as poetic weaknesses and steps backward. But most of these come from that sharp, probing, critical process, from that bold insistence on making sense. Let us take the Euripidean prologue as an example of what this reason-based method produced. Nothing could go more against the way we stage plays today than the prologue in a play by Euripides. At the very start of the play, a single character walks on and tells us who they are, what happened before the story begins, what has happened so far, and even what will happen during the play. A modern playwright would call that a reckless and unforgivable way of throwing away suspense. After all, you already know everything that is going to happen. Who would want to sit and wait for it to actually happen? Here we do not even have the exciting link between a dream that predicts the future and the real events that come later. But Euripides thought about it quite differently. In his view, the power of tragedy never rested on the kind of suspense you get in a long story, on the thrilling uncertainty about what will happen now and next. Instead, it rested on those great scenes of speech and song, in which the passion and the arguing of

the main hero swelled into a wide and mighty river. Everything was meant to prepare for strong emotion, not for action. And anything that did not prepare for strong emotion was thrown out. Now, what makes it hardest for the audience to give themselves over to such scenes and enjoy them is a missing piece, a gap in the woven fabric of the backstory. As long as the listener still has to work out what this or that character stands for, and what lies behind this or that clash of feelings and goals, he cannot fully sink into the suffering and actions of the main characters. He cannot yet feel that breathless pity and fear along with them. The tragedies of Aeschylus and Sophocles used the cleverest artistic tricks to hand the audience, in the first scenes, all the threads they needed to understand the story, as if by chance. This shows a noble kind of artistry, one that hides the necessary structure, as if behind a mask, and makes it look accidental. Still, Euripides believed he noticed that during those first scenes the audience felt a strange restlessness, trying to solve the math problem of the backstory. Because of this, the poetic beauty and emotion of the opening scenes were lost on them. So he put the prologue even before the opening scenes and gave it to a character the audience could trust. Often a god had to guarantee to the audience, so to speak, how the tragedy would turn out, and remove any doubt that the myth was real. This is similar to the way the philosopher Descartes could only prove that the world we experience is real by pointing to God's truthfulness and the fact that God cannot lie. Euripides needs this same godly truthfulness once more at the end of his play, to assure the audience about what the future holds for his heroes. That is the job of the infamous god from the machine. Between this look ahead at the beginning and this look beyond at the end, told like a story, lies the present moment of speech and song, the actual "drama."

So Euripides, as a poet, is above all an echo of what he consciously knew and thought. And it is exactly this that gives him such a remarkable place in the history of Greek art.

Looking at his critical yet creative work, Euripides must often have felt as if his task was to bring to life, for the stage, the opening of a book by the philosopher Anaxagoras. Its first words are: "In the beginning everything was mixed together; then came the mind and created order." Anaxagoras, with his idea of "Nous," meaning the mind, seemed among the philosophers like the first sober man among a crowd of drunks. In the same way, Euripides may have seen his own place among the other writers of tragedy through a similar picture. As long as the mind, the one thing that orders and rules the universe, was still kept out of making art, everything was still mixed together in a chaotic, primeval soup. That is how Euripides had to judge it. That is why, as the first "sober" one, he had to condemn the "drunken" poets. Sophocles once said of Aeschylus that he did the right thing, even though he did it without knowing why. Euripides would certainly not have agreed. He would only have admitted that Aeschylus, because he created without knowing what he was doing, created the wrong thing. Even the godlike Plato, when he talks about the poet's creative power, as long as it is not conscious understanding, speaks of it mostly with irony. He puts it on the same level as the gift of a fortune-teller or someone who explains dreams. After all, he says, the poet cannot write poetry until he has lost his senses and no reason lives in him anymore. Euripides set out, just as Plato did, to show the world the opposite of this "senseless" poet. His basic rule for art, "everything must be conscious in order to be beautiful," is, as I said, the match to the Socratic rule, "everything must be conscious in order to be good." So we can rightly call Euripides the poet of Socrates' reason-first rule applied to art. And Socrates was that second spectator, the one who did not understand the older tragedy and therefore

did not respect it. Allied with him, Euripides dared to be the herald announcing a new way of making art. If the older tragedy was destroyed by this, then Socrates' reason-first rule applied to art is the murdering principle. And since the fight was aimed at the wild, ecstatic force in the older art, we recognize Socrates as the enemy of Dionysus. He is the new Orpheus, rising up against Dionysus. Like Orpheus, who was torn apart by the wild women who followed Dionysus, Socrates was fated to be torn apart by the Athenian court, which acted like those frenzied women. Yet he still forced the all-powerful god himself to flee. And the god, just as he once did when he fled from Lycurgus, king of the Edonians, saved himself by diving into the depths of the sea. That sea was the mysterious flood of a secret religion that slowly spread over the whole world.

13.

People in ancient times, living back then, did not miss the fact that Socrates and Euripides were pulling in the same direction. The clearest sign of this sharp instinct is a rumor that went around Athens: people said Socrates used to help Euripides write his plays. Fans of the "good old days" named the two men in the same breath whenever they listed the people who were leading the public astray in their own time. They blamed these two for a slow decline. The old, sturdy strength of body and soul, the kind the Athenians had shown at the battle of Marathon, was giving way more and more to a doubtful kind of "enlightenment," while the powers of body and mind kept wasting away. This is the tone, half outraged and half scornful, that the comedies of Aristophanes usually take when they talk about these men. Modern readers are shocked by it. They are happy enough to let Euripides be attacked, but they cannot get over the fact that Aristophanes shows Socrates as the first and greatest Sophist, as the mirror and perfect example of everything the Sophists stood for. Their only

comfort is to put Aristophanes himself on trial in public, calling him a wild, lying Alcibiades of poetry, a brilliant but shameless troublemaker. I will not stop here to defend Aristophanes' deep instincts against such attacks. Instead I will go on proving, from the way people felt in ancient times, how closely Socrates and Euripides belonged together. On this point it is worth remembering that Socrates, being an enemy of tragic drama, stayed away from tragedies. He only showed up in the audience when a new play by Euripides was being performed. But the most famous time the two names were placed side by side was in a saying of the oracle at Delphi. The oracle called Socrates the wisest of all people, and at the same time declared that Euripides deserved second prize in the contest of wisdom.

Third place on this ladder went to Sophocles. He was the one who could boast, compared with Aeschylus, that he did the right thing, and did it because he knew what the right thing was. Clearly, it is exactly how clear and sharp this knowing was that set these three men apart, together, as the three "knowing ones" of their time.

But it was Socrates who put this new and never-before-heard-of worship of knowledge and understanding most sharply. He found that he was the only person who admitted that he knew nothing. Meanwhile, as he wandered through Athens questioning people, he visited the greatest politicians, speakers, poets and artists, and everywhere he found people who only imagined they knew things. He was amazed to see that all these famous people had no correct and solid understanding even of their own work, and did it only by instinct. "Only by instinct": with these words we touch the heart and center of what Socrates was after. With this phrase, the Socratic way of thinking condemns both the art and the morals of its day. Wherever it turns its testing eyes, it sees a lack of understanding and the power of illusion. And from this lack, it concludes that everything that exists is wrong at its core and should be thrown out. Starting from this one point,

Socrates believed he had to correct life itself. He, a single man, steps forward with a look of disrespect and superiority, as the forerunner of a completely different culture, art and morality. And he steps into a world that we would count it our greatest luck to catch even the hem of, with deep respect.

This is the huge doubt that grips us every time we face Socrates. It pushes us again and again to try to understand the meaning and purpose of this most questionable figure of the ancient world. Who is this man who dares, all alone, to say no to the Greek spirit? That spirit, in the form of Homer, Pindar and Aeschylus, of Phidias, of Pericles, of the priestess at Delphi and of Dionysus, is sure to receive our amazed worship, as both the deepest depth and the highest height. What demon-like power dares to pour this magic potion into the dust? What half-god is this, to whom the ghostly chorus of humanity's noblest people must cry out: "Woe! Woe! You have destroyed it, the beautiful world, with your mighty fist; it falls, it crumbles!"

A key to understanding who Socrates really was is that strange thing known as "the daimonion of Socrates," his inner divine voice. In certain situations, when his enormous mind began to waver, he found firm footing in a godlike voice that spoke up at such moments. Whenever this voice came, it always warned him against doing something. In this completely abnormal person, instinctive wisdom shows up only to block his conscious thinking now and then. In all creative people, instinct is the very force that creates and says yes, while conscious thought acts as the critic that warns and holds back. But in Socrates, instinct becomes the critic and conscious thought becomes the creator. He is a true monster, made monstrous by something missing! What we see here is a monstrous lack of any gift for the mystical. So Socrates could be called the perfect non-mystic. In him, the logical side has grown far too much, as if something extra had been piled on top, just as much as instinctive wisdom has grown too much

in the mystic. On the other hand, the logical drive that showed itself in Socrates was completely unable to turn against itself. In this unchained, unstoppable flow, it shows a force of nature that we otherwise meet only in the very greatest instinctive powers, and it surprises and frightens us. Anyone who has felt even a breath, from Plato's writings, of the godlike simplicity and certainty with which Socrates lived, also feels something else. He feels how the giant driving wheel of logical Socratic thinking is turning, so to speak, behind Socrates, and how we must look at it through Socrates as if through a shadow. That Socrates himself sensed this connection shows in the dignified seriousness with which he insisted everywhere, even in front of his judges, that he had a calling from the gods. Proving him wrong about this was basically just as impossible as approving of his influence, which broke down people's instincts. With this conflict that could not be solved, once he had been brought before the court of the Greek state, only one form of sentence made sense: exile. He could have been sent over the border as something completely puzzling, something that fit no category and could not be explained. And no later generation would have had the right to accuse the Athenians of a shameful act. But it seems that Socrates himself made sure he was sentenced to death and not just to exile. He did this with complete clarity and without the natural fear of death. He went to his death with the same calm with which, as Plato describes it, he leaves the drinking party at dawn, the last of the drinkers still standing, to begin a new day. 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 a new ideal for noble Greek young people, one never seen before. Above all, Plato, the typical young Greek, threw himself down before this image with all the passionate devotion of his frenzied worshipper's soul.

14.

Now let us picture Socrates turning his one great Cyclops eye on tragedy. This was an eye that had never glowed with the sweet madness of artistic inspiration. Let us picture how that eye was unable to look with pleasure into the deep abysses of the wild, ecstatic force. So what, really, was it bound to see in the "lofty and highly praised" art of tragedy, as Plato calls it? It saw something quite unreasonable, full of causes that seemed to have no effects and effects that seemed to have no causes. On top of that, the whole thing was so colorful and so varied that a calm, sensible mind was bound to dislike it, while for easily excited and sensitive souls it was dangerous kindling, like dry wood that catches fire. We know the only kind of poetry he understood: the fables of Aesop. And he surely accepted them with the same smiling, polite condescension with which the honest, good-natured poet Gellert praises poetry in his fable of the bee and the hen:

"You see from me what it is good for: to tell the truth through a picture to someone who does not have much sense."

But to Socrates, tragic art did not even seem to "tell the truth." Besides that, it spoke to the person who "does not have much sense," and so not to the philosopher. That gave him two reasons to stay away from it. Like Plato, he counted it among the flattering arts, the ones that show only what is pleasant and not what is useful. So he demanded that his followers hold back and keep themselves strictly apart from such unphilosophical temptations. He did this so successfully that the young Plato, who was writing tragedies, first of all burned his poems so that he could become a student of Socrates. But where strong natural talents that could not be defeated fought against Socrates' rules, the power of those rules, together with the sheer weight of his enormous personality, was still great enough to push poetry itself into new positions that had never been known before.

One example of this is Plato, whom we just mentioned. In condemning tragedy, and art in general, he certainly went no less far than the blunt, simple-minded scorn of his teacher. And yet, out of a deep artistic need, he had to create a form of art that was closely related, deep down, to the very forms of art that already existed and that he had rejected. Plato's main complaint against the older art was this: that it was only an imitation of a mere appearance, and so belonged to an even lower level than the ordinary world we experience. Above all, this complaint must not be allowed to apply to the new kind of work. And so we see Plato trying to go beyond everyday reality and to show the idea that lies underneath that fake reality. But in doing so, Plato the thinker had reached, by a roundabout path, exactly the place where he had always felt at home as a poet, the very place from which Sophocles and all the older art had solemnly protested against that complaint. If tragedy had soaked up all the earlier kinds of art into itself, then the same can be said, in an odd and lopsided way, of Plato's dialogues. They were made by mixing all the existing styles and forms, so they float in the middle between storytelling, lyric poetry and drama, between prose and poetry. In this way they also broke the strict old rule that a work should stick to one single form of language. The Cynic writers went even further down this path. With the wildest mix of styles, swinging back and forth between prose and verse, they managed to create in writing the picture of the "raging Socrates" that they liked to act out in real life. Plato's dialogue was like a small boat in which the shipwrecked older poetry saved itself, together with all its children. Crowded into a tight space and nervously obeying their one captain, Socrates, they now sailed into a new world, which could never get enough of looking at this fantastic procession. In fact, Plato gave all later ages the model for a new form of art: the model of the novel. The novel can be described as Aesop's fable raised to endless heights. In it, poetry holds the same lower rank under argument-based philosophy that, for many centuries, philo-

sophy itself held under theology: that is, the rank of a servant, an "ancilla." This was the new position of poetry, the one Plato pushed it into under the pressure of the demon-driven Socrates.

Here philosophical thought grows over art, like a plant taking over, and forces art to cling tightly to the trunk of logical argument. The calm, image-making force has wrapped itself up in the cocoon of logical schemes. We saw something similar in Euripides, along with a translation of the wild, ecstatic force into realistic, everyday emotion. Socrates, the arguing hero of Plato's drama, reminds us of the related nature of Euripides' hero, who has to defend his actions with reasons and counter-reasons, and because of that so often risks losing our tragic pity. For who could fail to see the optimistic, hopeful element in the very nature of logical argument? It throws a victory party with every conclusion it reaches, and it can only breathe in cool brightness and full awareness. This optimistic element, once it has got into tragedy, must slowly overgrow its regions of the wild, ecstatic force and drive it, unavoidably, to destroy itself, all the way to its fatal leap into middle-class drama. Just think about what follows from Socrates' statements: "Virtue is knowledge; people do wrong only out of ignorance; the virtuous person is the happy person." In these three basic forms of optimism lies the death of tragedy. Because now the virtuous hero has to be someone who argues logically. Now there has to be a necessary, visible link between virtue and knowledge, between faith and morals. Now Aeschylus's way of solving justice, which reached beyond this world, has been dragged down into the shallow and shameless rule of "poetic justice," where the good are rewarded and the bad punished, with its usual god from the machine.

Faced with this new stage world, built on Socrates and optimism, how does the chorus look now, and how does the whole musical foundation of tragedy, rooted in the wild, ecstatic force, look? It looks like something accidental, like a leftover memory of where tragedy came

from, something we could easily do without. And yet we have seen that the chorus can only be understood as the very cause of tragedy and of the tragic in general. Already in Sophocles we see this awkwardness about the chorus, and that is an important sign that even in his work the ground of the wild, ecstatic force beneath tragedy is starting to crumble. He no longer dares to trust the chorus with the main part of the effect. Instead he limits its role so much that it now seems almost on the same level as the actors, as if it had been lifted out of the dancing area and up onto the stage. This, of course, completely destroys its true nature, even though Aristotle agrees with exactly this view of the chorus. This shifting of the chorus's place, which Sophocles recommended in any case through his own practice and, according to tradition, even in a written essay, is the first step toward destroying the chorus. The stages of that destruction follow one another with frightening speed in Euripides, in Agathon, and in the New Comedy. Optimistic logical argument uses the whip of its reasoning to drive music out of tragedy. In other words, it destroys the true nature of tragedy, which can only be understood as an expression and a picturing of states of the wild, ecstatic force, as music made visible in symbols, as the dream world of a wild frenzy belonging to Dionysus.

So we even have to assume that a tendency against the wild, ecstatic force was already at work before Socrates, and that in him it simply found an amazingly grand way of showing itself. If that is true, we must not shy away from asking what a figure like Socrates actually points to. After all, when we look at Plato's dialogues, we cannot see him as nothing more than a force that tears things down. It is certain that the very first effect of the Socratic urge was to break apart Dionysian tragedy. And yet, a deep experience from Socrates' own life forces us to ask something else. Must the Socratic way of thinking

and art always stand as complete opposites? And would the birth of an "artistic Socrates" really be a contradiction in itself?

Here is why. Now and then, that bossy logician felt something missing when it came to art. He felt a gap, an emptiness, a half-blame, as if he had maybe neglected a duty. As he told his friends while he was in prison, the same figure kept appearing to him in a dream, and it always said the same thing: "Socrates, make music!" Right up to his last days, he calmed himself with the belief that his philosophy was itself the highest art of the Muses. He did not really believe that a god would remind him of that "common, popular music." But in the end, in prison, to clear his conscience completely, he agreed to make that music he had looked down on. In this spirit he wrote an opening hymn to Apollo and turned a few of Aesop's fables into verse. What pushed him to do these exercises was something like his warning inner voice, the spirit that often cautioned him. It was his Apollonian insight: like a barbarian king, he did not understand a noble image of a god, and he was in danger of sinning against a god simply by not understanding. Those words from Socrates' dream figure are the only sign that he ever had doubts about the limits of logic. Perhaps, he must have asked himself, what I cannot understand is not automatically nonsense? Perhaps there is a realm of wisdom from which the logician is shut out? Perhaps art is even a necessary partner and completion of science?

15.

With these last, searching questions in mind, we must now say how the influence of Socrates has spread over all later generations, up to this very moment and on into the whole future. It has spread like a shadow that keeps growing longer in the evening sun. We must say how this influence forces art to be created anew again and again, and art in the widest and deepest sense, the sense that reaches beyond

this world. And because his influence is endless, it also guarantees that art will be endless.

Before this could be recognized, and before it was clearly proven that every art depends at its core on the Greeks, the Greeks from Homer to Socrates, we had to go through with these Greeks what the people of Athens went through with Socrates. Almost every age and every stage of culture has at some point tried, with deep resentment, to break free of the Greeks. The reason is that next to them, everything people had achieved themselves, everything that seemed totally original and was honestly admired, suddenly seemed to lose its color and life. It shrank into a failed copy, even a cartoon. And so, again and again, a heartfelt rage breaks out against that arrogant little people who dared to call everything that was not their own "barbarian" for all time. People ask themselves: who are these Greeks? Their historical glory lasted only a short time. Their institutions were ridiculously narrow. Their morals were of doubtful quality, and they were even marked by ugly vices. And still they claim a special rank and dignity among peoples, the kind that belongs to a genius standing above the crowd. Sadly, no one was lucky enough to find a cup of hemlock, like the poison given to Socrates, that could simply get rid of such a being. All the poison that envy, slander and rage could brew was not enough to destroy that self-satisfied greatness. So people feel ashamed of the Greeks and afraid of them. The exception is someone who values truth above everything, and so dares to admit this truth too: the Greeks hold the reins of our culture, and of every culture, like chariot drivers. But almost always the chariot and the horses are made of poor stuff and do not match the glory of their drivers. And those drivers then think it a joke to race such a team over the edge of a cliff, while they themselves leap clear across the gap, the way the hero Achilles leaps.

To show that Socrates also deserves the dignity of such a leading role, it is enough to see in him the model of a way of living that had never existed before him: the model of the thinking, science-minded person. Our next task is to understand what this type means and what it aims for. Like the artist, the thinking, science-minded person takes endless satisfaction in the world as it is. And like the artist, he is protected by that satisfaction from a pessimism that acts on its conclusions, and from pessimism's sharp eyes that shine only in the dark, like the eyes of Lynceus, the Greek hero who could see through anything. Here is the difference. Whenever truth is uncovered, the artist keeps gazing in delight only at what still stays covered, even after the uncovering. The thinking person, on the other hand, enjoys and is satisfied by the covering that has been thrown off. His highest pleasure lies in the process of uncovering itself, a process that always succeeds and succeeds through his own strength. There would be no science if it cared only about that one naked goddess, the bare truth, and nothing else. Because then its followers would have to feel like people trying to dig a hole straight through the Earth. Each of them would realize that, even with the greatest effort over a whole lifetime, he could dig through only a tiny piece of that enormous depth. And even that piece would be filled in again before his eyes by the work of the next person. So a third person would seem wise to pick a new spot for his own drilling. Now suppose someone proves beyond doubt that the goal on the other side of the world can never be reached this direct way. Who would still want to keep working in those old depths? Only someone who has, in the meantime, become content with finding precious stones or discovering laws of nature. That is why Lessing, the most honest of all thinking, science-minded people, dared to say that he cared more about searching for the truth than about the truth itself. With that, the basic secret of science was revealed, to the amazement and even the annoyance of scientists. Of course, next to this single insight, which was an excess of honesty if not of cockiness,

there stands a deep illusion that first came into the world in the person of Socrates. It is the unshakable belief that thinking, following the thread of cause and effect, can reach down into the deepest pits of existence. And it is the belief that thinking can not only understand existence but even correct it. This grand illusion, which reaches beyond the world we see, is built into science as an instinct. It leads science again and again to its limits, and at those limits it has to turn into art. In fact, that turning into art is what this whole mechanism is really aiming for.

Now let us look at Socrates by the light of this idea, as if holding up a torch. He then appears to us as the first person who could not only live guided by that instinct of science but, what is far more, could also die by it. That is why the picture of the dying Socrates, the man freed from the fear of death by knowledge and reasons, is like a coat of arms hung over the entrance gate of science. It reminds everyone of what science is meant to do: to make existence seem understandable, and therefore justified. Of course, when reasons are not enough, myth must finally serve this purpose too. And I have just called myth a necessary result of science, even its real aim.

Picture this for a moment. After Socrates, who was like a high priest leading people into the mysteries of science, one school of philosophy followed another, like wave after wave. A hunger for knowledge, wider than anyone had ever imagined, spread across the whole educated world. For every truly gifted person, science became the real task in life, and it was carried out onto the open sea, so to speak, from which it has never since been fully driven back. Because this hunger was so universal, a shared net of thought was stretched over the whole globe for the first time, with glimpses even of the laws that govern an entire solar system. Whoever pictures all of this, together with today's astonishingly tall pyramid of knowledge, cannot help seeing Socrates as the one great turning point, the whirlpool, of what

we call world history. Because imagine all that countless energy that has been spent on this worldwide drive. Imagine it used not for the sake of knowing things, but for the practical, which means selfish, goals of individuals and nations. Then, most likely, in endless wars of destruction and constant mass migrations of peoples, the natural, instinctive love of life would have grown so weak that suicide would become a habit. In such a world, a person might feel he was doing his last bit of duty when, like the people of the Fiji Islands, a son strangles his parents or a friend strangles his friend. That would be a practical pessimism, a way of living that expects the worst. It could even produce a horrifying morality of killing whole peoples out of pity. And this kind of pessimism does exist and always has existed, everywhere in the world where art, in some form or other, especially in the form of religion and science, has not appeared as a cure and a shield against that poisonous breath of plague.

Against this practical pessimism, Socrates stands as the original model of the theoretical optimist. He believes, as I described, that the nature of things can be understood all the way down. So he gives knowledge and understanding the power of a cure for everything, and he sees error as evil itself. To dig down into those causes, and to separate true knowledge from beautiful appearance and from error, seemed to the Socratic person the noblest calling, even the only truly human one. In the same way, from Socrates on, the machinery of concepts, judgments and logical conclusions was valued above all other abilities, as the highest activity and the most admirable gift of nature. Even the most noble moral deeds were explained this way: feelings of pity, self-sacrifice and heroism, and also that hard-won calm of the soul, like a sea without wind, which the Greek of the calm, image-making force called Sophrosyne. Socrates and his like-minded followers, right up to today, traced all these back to the logic of knowledge, and so they said these things could be taught. Someone who has

tasted for himself the pleasure of Socratic understanding, and feels how it tries to take in the whole visible world in ever wider circles, will from then on feel no sharper spur driving him to live than the longing to complete that conquest and to spin the net so tight that nothing can get through. To a person in that mood, the Socrates we meet in Plato's writings seems like the teacher of a completely new kind of "Greek cheerfulness" and joy in being alive. This joy wants to pour itself out in action. Mostly it will find that outlet by working on noble young men, like a midwife helping ideas to be born and like a teacher shaping them, with the final goal of producing a genius.

But now science, spurred on by its powerful illusion, rushes forward without stopping until it reaches its limits. And there the optimism hidden in the very nature of logic breaks down. For the edge of the circle of science has endlessly many points. No one can yet see how the circle could ever be fully measured. And still the noble and gifted person, even before the middle of his life, cannot avoid running into such points on the edge, where he stares into something that can never be made clear. Here, to his horror, he sees how logic curls around itself at these limits and finally bites its own tail, like a snake. At that moment a new kind of knowledge breaks through: tragic knowledge. To be bearable at all, this tragic knowledge needs art as its protection and its cure.

Let us look, with eyes made stronger and refreshed by the Greeks, at the highest levels of the world that floods around us. Then we notice that the greedy hunger for endless, optimistic knowledge, which first appeared in model form in Socrates, has turned into tragic acceptance and a need for art. It is true, though, that this same hunger, at its lower levels, shows itself as hostile to art. Deep down it must especially hate the tragic art of the wild, ecstatic force. We showed this, for example, in the way the Socratic way of thinking fought against the tragedies of Aeschylus.

So here we are, deeply moved, knocking at the gates of the present and the future. Will that "turning around" lead to ever new forms of genius, and in particular to a Socrates who makes music? Will the net of art that is spread over life, even if it goes by the name of religion or science, be woven ever tighter and finer? Or is it doomed to be torn to shreds in the restless, barbaric bustle and whirl that now calls itself "the present"? Worried, but not without hope, we stand aside for a little while, as onlookers who are allowed to witness those huge struggles and changes. Oh! The magic of these struggles is that whoever watches them must also fight in them!

16.

With this detailed example from history, we have tried to make clear one thing. Tragedy dies just as surely when the spirit of music disappears as it can only be born from that spirit in the first place. To soften how unusual this claim sounds, and also to show where this insight of ours comes from, we must now face the similar things happening in our own time with open eyes. We must step right into the middle of those struggles that, as I just said, are being fought at the highest levels of our present world between endless, optimistic knowledge and the tragic need for art. Here I will leave aside all the other hostile drives that work against art at all times, and especially against tragedy. Even today these drives spread so confidently, sure of winning, that among the theater arts, for example, only farce and ballet are growing at all lushly, putting out their flowers, which perhaps do not smell sweet to everyone. I will speak only of the most distinguished enemy of the tragic view of the world. By that I mean science, which is optimistic at its deepest core, with its forefather Socrates at its head. Soon I will also name the powers that seem to me to promise a rebirth of tragedy, and what other blessed hopes for the German spirit as well!

Before we throw ourselves into the middle of those battles, let us put on the armor of what we have learned so far. Some people work hard to trace all the arts back to one single principle, as if it were the one spring that every work of art must flow from. I disagree with all of them. Instead, I keep my eyes fixed on those two Greek gods of art, Apollo and Dionysus. I see in them the living, visible stand-ins for two worlds of art that differ in their deepest nature and in their highest goals. Apollo stands before me as the glorifying spirit of the rule that splits us into separate selves. Only through him can we truly reach being saved by beautiful illusion. Meanwhile, at the mysterious shout of joy of Dionysus, the spell of being a separate self is shattered, and the path lies open to the mothers of all being, to the innermost core of things. A huge gap opens up between sculpture and the visual arts, which belong to the calm, image-making force, and music, which belongs to the wild, ecstatic force. Only one of the great thinkers saw this enormous contrast so clearly that, even without the guidance of the Greek gods as symbols, he gave music a different character and origin from all the other arts. He said this is because music is not, like all the others, a copy of the visible world. Instead, it is a direct copy of the will (the blind life-drive) itself. So, alongside everything physical in the world, music shows what lies beyond the physical, and alongside all of the visible world, it shows things as they really are. (Schopenhauer, The World as Will and Representation, Volume I, page 310.) This is the most important insight in all of aesthetics, the study of art and beauty. In fact, taken in a serious sense, aesthetics only really begins with it. Richard Wagner put his own stamp on this insight to confirm that it is true forever. In his essay "Beethoven" he states that music must be judged by completely different artistic principles than all the visual arts, and not by the idea of beauty at all. He adds that a mistaken way of thinking about art, led along by a misguided and decayed kind of art, got into the habit of starting from the idea of beauty that applies to the visual arts. From

there, it demanded that music should have an effect like that of paintings and sculptures, namely, that it should make us enjoy beautiful forms. Once I had recognized that enormous contrast, I felt a strong urge to get closer to the true nature of Greek tragedy, and so to the deepest revelation of the Greek genius. For only now did I believe I had the magic power to go beyond the empty phrases of our usual art theory and picture the basic problem of tragedy vividly in my mind, as if it were alive in front of me. Because of this, I was allowed such a strange and unusual view into the Greek world that it had to seem to me as if our classical Greek scholarship, which acts so proud of itself, had so far mostly only managed to entertain itself with shadow plays and surface details.

We might begin to touch that basic problem with this question: what effect on our sense of beauty comes about when those two art forces, the calm, image-making force and the wild, ecstatic force, which are separate in themselves, start working side by side? Or, to put it more briefly: how does music relate to images and to ideas? Schopenhauer dealt with this. Richard Wagner praises him for explaining exactly this point more clearly and more transparently than anyone could. Schopenhauer speaks about it most fully in the following passage, which I will quote here in full. It comes from The World as Will and Idea, volume one, page 309. Schopenhauer writes: "From all this, we can see the visible world, or nature, and music as two different expressions of the same thing. That thing is the only link that explains why the two are alike, and we need to know it in order to understand that likeness. So music, when we see it as an expression of the world, is a language that is general to the highest degree. It is roughly as much more general than ideas as ideas are more general than single things. But its generality is not at all the empty generality of abstract thinking. It is of a completely different kind, and it is also clear and precise in every detail. In this way it is like geometric shapes and

numbers. These are the general forms of every possible object we can experience, and they apply to all of them in advance. Yet they are not abstract; we can picture them, and they are precise through and through. Every possible striving, stirring and outburst of the will (the blind life-drive), all those things that happen inside a person, which reason tosses into the wide, vague, negative idea called 'feeling', can be expressed by the endless number of possible melodies. But they are always expressed only as pure form, without the material. They are always expressed only as they are in themselves, not as they appear in the visible world. Music is, so to speak, their innermost soul, without a body. Music has this close connection to the true nature of all things. That also explains something else. When fitting music sounds along with some scene, action, event or setting, it seems to unlock its most secret meaning for us. It acts as the most accurate and clearest explanation of it. It also explains why a person who gives himself over completely to a symphony feels as if he were watching every possible event of life and of the world pass by in front of him. And yet, when he thinks about it afterwards, he cannot point to any likeness between that play of sounds and the things he pictured. For, as I said, music is different from all the other arts in this way: it is not a copy of the visible world, or, more exactly, of the fitting outward form of the will. Instead, it is a direct copy of the will itself. So for everything physical in the world, it shows what lies beyond the physical, and for everything in the visible world, it shows things as they really are. So we could just as well call the world music made into a body as will made into a body. That explains why music instantly makes every painting, and even every scene of real life and of the world, stand out with greater meaning. Of course it does this all the more, the more its melody matches the inner spirit of what we are looking at. This is why we can set a poem to music as a song, or set a visual performance to music as a mime show, or set both together as an opera. Such single pictures of human life, set to the general lan-

guage of music, are never tied to it or matched with it by strict necessity. They relate to it only the way any chosen example relates to a general idea. They show, in the precise detail of real life, what music says in the generality of pure form. For melodies are, in a certain way, like general ideas: they are something drawn out of reality. Reality, that is, the world of single things, provides what we can see and picture, the particular and individual, the single case. It provides this both for the generality of ideas and for the generality of melodies. But these two kinds of generality are, in a certain sense, opposites. Ideas contain only the forms that were first pulled out of what we see. They are, so to speak, the outer shell peeled off things, so they really are abstractions. Music, on the other hand, gives the innermost core that comes before any shape at all, the heart of things. This relationship could be put very well in the language of the medieval scholars. One could say: ideas are the 'universals after the thing', music gives the 'universals before the thing', and reality gives the 'universals in the thing'. But the fact that there can be any connection at all between a piece of music and something we see depends, as I said, on this: both are just very different expressions of the same inner nature of the world. Now suppose that in a particular case such a connection really exists. That means the composer has managed to express, in the general language of music, the stirrings of the will that form the core of an event. Then the melody of the song, or the music of the opera, is expressive. But the likeness that the composer finds between the two must come from a direct understanding of the nature of the world, without his reason being aware of it. It must not be an imitation made on purpose and worked out through ideas. Otherwise the music does not express the inner nature, the will itself. It only imitates the will's outward appearance, and does it poorly. That is what all music that merely copies things does."

So, following Schopenhauer's teaching, we understand music directly as the language of the will (the blind life-drive). We feel our imagination stirred to give shape to that invisible spirit world, which speaks to us and is yet so lively and full of movement, and to give it a body in a matching example. On the other hand, images and ideas gain a greater meaning when they come under the influence of music that truly fits them. So the art of the wild, ecstatic force usually has two effects on our ability to make art with the calm, image-making force. First, music stirs us to see the general truth of the wild, ecstatic force in the form of pictures and parables. Second, music then makes that parable-like picture stand out with the highest meaning. These facts are easy to understand in themselves, and anyone who looks a little more closely can see them. From them I conclude that music has the power to give birth to myth, that is, to the most meaningful example of all. And in particular, it can give birth to tragic myth: the myth that speaks in parables about the knowledge that comes from the wild, ecstatic force. Earlier, using the example of the lyric poet, I showed how music inside the lyric poet struggles to reveal its own nature in images made by the calm, image-making force. Now let us imagine that music, at its very highest pitch, must also try to reach the very highest form of picturing. Then we must accept that it could also find a symbolic way to express its true wisdom, the wisdom of the wild, ecstatic force. And where else should we look for this expression, if not in tragedy, and in the idea of the tragic in general?

If we think of art the usual way, judging it only by beautiful appearance and beauty, then we cannot honestly explain where tragedy comes from. Only when we start from the spirit of music can we understand how anyone could feel joy when a single person is destroyed. Each example of such destruction simply shows us, more clearly, the timeless working of the wild, ecstatic force in art. This kind of art expresses the will (the blind life-drive) in all its power, as if it stood

behind the rule that splits us into separate selves. It expresses the life that goes on forever, beyond the whole visible world and in spite of every destruction. The deep joy we feel at tragedy is a translation into pictures of a wisdom that belongs to the wild, ecstatic force, a wisdom we know by instinct, without being aware of it. Here is how it works: the hero is the highest form in which the will (the blind life-drive) shows itself, and yet he is denied, struck down, and this gives us pleasure. It does, because he is only part of the visible world, and his destruction does not touch the never-ending life of the will (the blind life-drive). "We believe in life that never ends," tragedy cries out; while music is the direct, unfiltered idea of that life. The art of the sculptor has a completely different goal. In sculpture, Apollo overcomes the suffering of the single person by shining a glorious light on the visible world and making it seem eternal. Here beauty wins out over the suffering that is built into life itself. In a certain sense, the pain is lied away, erased from the face of nature. But in the art of the wild, ecstatic force, and in the symbols of tragedy, that same nature speaks to us in its true voice, without any mask: "Be as I am! Beneath the endless changing of the visible world, I am the first mother of all things. I create forever. I forever push things into existence. And I am forever satisfied by this constant change of forms!"

17.

The art of the wild, ecstatic force also wants to convince us that existence holds an eternal joy. But we are not supposed to look for this joy in the visible world. We are supposed to look for it behind the visible world. We are meant to see that everything that comes into being must be ready to perish in pain. We are forced to look straight into the horrors of living as a single, separate person. And yet we are not supposed to freeze up in fear. A deep comfort beyond this world pulls us, for a moment, out of the endless churning of shapes that

keep changing. For brief moments we really are the original being itself, and we feel its wild, untamed hunger and joy for existence. Now the struggle, the torment, and the destruction of everything visible seem almost necessary to us. After all, countless forms of life are pushing and shoving their way into existence, far too many of them, because the will of the world is so overflowingly fertile. We are stabbed by the furious sting of these torments at the very same moment that we have become one, so to speak, with the boundless deepest joy of existence. In that same moment, in a rapture of the wild, ecstatic force, we sense that this joy can never be destroyed and lasts forever. In spite of fear and pity, we are the happy living ones. We are happy not as separate individuals, but as the one single living thing whose joy in creating new life we have melted into.

The story of how Greek tragedy came about now tells us with bright clarity how the tragic artwork of the Greeks really was born out of the spirit of music. With this idea, we believe that for the first time we have done justice to the original and so astonishing meaning of the chorus. At the same time, though, we have to admit something. The meaning of tragic myth that we laid out a moment ago never became clear to the Greek poets as a plain idea, let alone to the Greek philosophers. Their heroes, in a way, speak more shallowly than they act. The myth does not find a fitting expression in the spoken word at all. The way the scenes are put together and the vivid pictures they show reveal a deeper wisdom than the poet himself can put into words and ideas. The same thing can be seen in Shakespeare. His Hamlet, for example, in a similar way speaks more shallowly than he acts. So the lesson of Hamlet that I mentioned earlier cannot be taken from his words. It can only be found by looking deeply at the whole play and seeing it all at once. As for Greek tragedy, which of course reaches us only as a drama of words, I have even hinted at something more. This mismatch between myth and words could easily trick us into thinking

these plays are flatter and emptier than they really are. It could also make us assume they had a shallower effect on audiences than they must have had, judging by what the ancient writers tell us. For how easily we forget this: what the poet could not achieve as a writer of words, namely raising the myth to its highest spiritual and ideal form, he could achieve at any moment as a creative musician! We, of course, have to rebuild the overwhelming power of the music almost like scholars, piece by piece, just to receive a little of that matchless comfort that true tragedy must offer. But even this overwhelming power of the music would only have felt overwhelming to us if we had been Greeks. Compared with the music we know and are used to, which is so endlessly richer, we seem to hear in the whole development of Greek music only the youthful song of the musical genius, sung with a shy, tentative feeling of its own strength. The Greeks, as the Egyptian priests said, are eternal children. And in tragic art, too, they are only children, who do not know what a magnificent toy has come into being in their hands, and is then smashed to pieces.

The spirit of music struggled to show itself in pictures and myths. This struggle grew stronger and stronger from the beginnings of lyric poetry all the way to the tragedy of Athens. But then, just after it had reached its richest flowering, it suddenly broke off and vanished, as it were, from the surface of Greek art. Meanwhile, the view of the world shaped by the wild, ecstatic force, which was born from this struggle, lived on in the secret religious rites called the mysteries. Through the most amazing transformations and even corruptions, it never stopped drawing more serious-minded people to it. Will it not one day rise up again as art from its mysterious depths?

Here we are concerned with one question. The force that tragedy crashed against and broke on: is it strong enough, for all time, to stop tragedy and the tragic view of the world from waking up again in art? Suppose ancient tragedy was pushed off its track by the urge to argue

things out, by the drive to know, and by the hopeful optimism of science. Then we would have to conclude that there is an eternal battle between the thinking, explaining view of the world and the tragic view of the world. Only after the spirit of science has been pushed all the way to its limits, and only after its claim to be valid everywhere has been destroyed by showing those limits, could we hope for a rebirth of tragedy. For that kind of culture, we would set up as a symbol a Socrates who makes music, in the sense we discussed earlier. In this comparison, by the spirit of science I mean a certain belief that first came to light in the person of Socrates: the belief that nature can be fully understood down to its depths, and that knowledge can cure everything.

Think about what this restless, always-pushing-forward spirit of science led to first. You will see right away how it destroyed myth. And you will see how, once myth was destroyed, poetry was driven out of its natural, ideal home and left homeless. We have said, and rightly, that music has the power to give birth to myth again out of itself. If that is true, then we should also look for the spirit of science at the point where it turns against this myth-making power of music as its enemy. This happens in the growth of the newer Athenian wild hymn to Dionysus. The music of these hymns no longer expressed the inner essence of things, the will (the blind life-drive) itself. Instead, it only copied the visible world, and copied it badly, through an imitation that went by way of ideas and concepts. Truly musical people turned away from this music, which had gone rotten on the inside, with the same disgust they felt for Socrates' urge to kill art. The playwright Aristophanes had a sure instinct, and he surely got it right when he lumped together Socrates himself, the tragedies of Euripides, and the music of the newer hymn-writers, and hated all three with the same feeling. In all three he sniffed out the signs of a culture in decline. Through that newer kind of wild hymn to Dionysus, music was

shamefully turned into an imitation, a portrait copy, of things in the visible world, for example a battle or a storm at sea. And in doing that, it was completely robbed of its power to create myth. Here is why. Suppose music tries to please us only by making us hunt for outward likenesses between some event in life or nature and certain rhythms and typical sounds in the music. Suppose our mind is meant to feel satisfied just by spotting these likenesses. Then we are dragged down into a mood in which we cannot take in anything mythical at all. For a myth wants to be felt directly, as one single example of a truth that is universal and stretches out into infinity. Truly wild, ecstatic music faces us as just such a universal mirror of the world's will. Any concrete event that is reflected and broken up in this mirror at once grows, in our feelings, into the image of an eternal truth. The music that imitates sounds in the newer wild hymn does the opposite: it instantly strips such a concrete event of anything mythical. Now music has become a poor copy of the visible world, and so it is endlessly poorer than the visible world itself. And through this poverty it drags the visible world down even further in our feelings. So now, for example, a battle imitated in music like this boils down to marching noise, bugle calls and so on, and our imagination gets stuck on exactly these surface things. Music that imitates sounds is, then, in every way the opposite of the myth-making power of true music. It makes the visible world even poorer than it already is, while wild, ecstatic music makes a single event grow richer and wider until it becomes a picture of the whole world. It was a huge victory for the spirit opposed to the wild, ecstatic force when, through the growth of the newer wild hymn, it made music a stranger to itself and pushed it down to be the slave of the visible world. Euripides must be called, in a deeper sense, a completely unmusical person. For exactly that reason he was a passionate fan of the newer hymn music, and he helped himself to all its showy tricks and habits as freely as a robber.

We can see the power of this spirit, which is opposed to the wild, ecstatic force and aimed against myth, at work from another angle too. Just look at how, from Sophocles onward, tragedy became more and more taken over by the portrayal of characters and by clever psychological detail. A character was no longer supposed to be able to widen out into an eternal type. On the contrary, it was supposed to come across as a single individual, through added side features and shadings, through the sharpest precision in every line. The goal was that the audience would no longer feel the myth at all, but only the powerful truth to life and the artist's skill at imitation. Here too we notice the visible world winning over the universal, and a delight in the single case, almost like a body prepared for an anatomy lesson. We are already breathing the air of a world of theory, a world that values scientific knowledge more highly than an artistic reflection of a rule that governs the world. The movement toward showing particular characters moves fast. Sophocles still paints whole characters, and he harnesses myth like an ox under a yoke to help those characters unfold in a refined way. Euripides already paints only single big character traits, ones that show themselves in violent passions. And in the newer Athenian comedy there are only masks with one fixed expression: careless old men, cheated pimps, sly slaves, repeated over and over without end. Where has the myth-making spirit of music gone now? What is left of music now is either music to excite or music to remind, that is, either a stimulant for dull and worn-out nerves, or music that imitates sounds. For the first kind, the words set underneath hardly matter anymore. Already in Euripides, once his heroes or choruses start to sing, things get quite sloppy and loose. How far must it have gone with his shameless followers?

But the new spirit opposed to the wild, ecstatic force shows itself most clearly of all in the endings of the newer plays. In the old tragedy, you could feel the deep comfort beyond this world at the end.

Without that comfort, the pleasure we take in tragedy cannot be explained at all. Perhaps the purest example is Oedipus at Colonus, where a peaceful, reconciling sound rings out from another world. But now that the guiding spirit of music had fled from tragedy, tragedy was, strictly speaking, dead. For where could anyone now find that deep comfort beyond this world? So people looked for an earthly way to settle the harsh clash at the heart of tragedy. After fate had tortured the hero enough, he received a well-earned reward: a grand marriage, or honors from the gods. The hero had become a gladiator who, after being properly beaten up and covered with wounds, was now and then given his freedom. The god from the machine had taken the place of the deep comfort beyond this world. I do not mean that the tragic way of seeing the world was destroyed everywhere and completely by the advancing spirit opposed to the wild, ecstatic force. We only know that it had to flee out of art, into the underworld, so to speak, and decline into a secret cult. But across the widest stretch of the surface of Greek life, the burning, consuming breath of that other spirit raged. It shows itself in that form of "Greek cheerfulness" we spoke about earlier: a love of life that is like an old man's, unable to create anything new. This cheerfulness is the opposite of the wonderful "natural simplicity" of the earlier Greeks. As we described it, that natural simplicity should be understood as the flower of the calm, image-making culture, a flower growing up out of a dark abyss. It is the victory the Greek will won over suffering, and over the wisdom that suffering brings, by reflecting everything back as beauty. The noblest version of that other kind of "Greek cheerfulness", the bookish, scholarly kind, is the cheerfulness of the thinking, science-minded person. It shows the same typical signs that I just traced back to the spirit opposed to the wild, ecstatic force. It fights against the wisdom and the art of the wild, ecstatic force. It tries to break myth apart. In place of a deep comfort beyond this world, it puts an earthly harmony, and even its own god from the machine: namely, the god of

machines and melting pots, meaning the forces of nature's spirits, discovered and put to work in the service of a higher selfishness. It believes the world can be corrected by knowledge, and that life can be guided by science. And it really is able to lock the individual person inside a very narrow circle of problems that can be solved. Inside that circle, he cheerfully says to life: "I want you: you are worth knowing."

18.

This is something that happens again and again, forever: the greedy will (the blind life-drive) always finds a way to keep its creatures clinging to life and to force them to go on living. It does this by spreading an illusion over things. One person is held captive by the Socratic pleasure of knowing things, and by the false belief that knowledge can heal the endless wound of existence. Another is caught up in the tempting veil of beauty that art waves in front of his eyes. Yet another is held by the deep comfort beyond this world: the belief that underneath the whirl of the visible world, eternal life keeps flowing on and can never be destroyed. And that is not even to mention the cruder illusions, which are almost even stronger, and which the will keeps ready at every moment. Those three levels of illusion are really only for people with finer natures. These are people who feel the burden and heaviness of existence with a deeper sense of unhappiness, and who have to be tricked past this unhappiness with specially chosen stimulants. Everything we call culture is made of these stimulants. Depending on how they are mixed, we get a culture that is mainly Socratic, or mainly artistic, or mainly tragic. Or, if we may use examples from history: there is either a bookish, scholarly culture like that of Alexandria, or a Greek culture, or a Buddhist culture.

Our whole modern world is caught in the net of bookish, scholarly culture. Its ideal is the thinking, science-minded person: someone armed with the greatest powers of knowledge, who works in the ser-

vice of science. The original model and forefather of this type is Socrates. All our ways of educating people were first designed with this ideal in mind. Every other way of living has to struggle upward on the side, as something that is allowed, but not something that was intended. In a way that is almost frightening, for a long time an educated person could only be found in the form of a scholar. Even our arts of poetry had to grow out of scholarly imitations. In rhyme, the main effect of our poetry, we can still see that our poetic form was born from artificial experiments with a foreign language, a truly scholarly one. Think of Faust, the modern man of culture. We can understand him easily enough, but to a true Greek he would seem baffling. Faust rushes restlessly through every field of study and is never satisfied. Out of his hunger for knowledge, he gives himself over to magic and to the Devil. We only need to put Faust beside Socrates to see the difference. Then we realize that modern people are beginning to sense the limits of that Socratic love of knowledge. Out of the wide, empty ocean of knowledge, they long to reach a shore. Goethe once said to his friend Eckermann, speaking about Napoleon: "Yes, my good fellow, there is also such a thing as being productive through deeds." In a charming and simple way, Goethe was reminding us of something: to modern people, a person who is not a thinker is hard to believe in and astonishing. So it takes the wisdom of someone like Goethe to find such a strange way of living understandable, and even forgivable.

And now we must not hide from ourselves what lies hidden deep inside this Socratic culture: an optimism that believes it has no limits! Now we must not be shocked when the fruits of this optimism ripen. We must not be shocked when a society that has been soaked through by such a culture, right down to its lowest classes, slowly begins to tremble with wild surges of feeling and desire. We must not be shocked when the belief in happiness on earth for everyone, and the belief that such a culture of knowledge for all is possible, slowly turns

into something else: a threatening demand for that kind of earthly happiness, and a calling-down of a god from the machine like the ones in Euripides' plays! We should take note of this: the bookish, scholarly culture needs a class of slaves in order to last. But because it looks at life so optimistically, it denies that such a class is necessary. And so, once its lovely, soothing, tempting words about "the dignity of man" and "the dignity of work" have worn out, it slowly moves toward a horrible destruction. There is nothing more terrifying than a brutal slave class that has learned to see its own existence as an injustice, and that is getting ready to take revenge, not only for itself, but for all generations before it. Facing such threatening storms, who would dare to turn with confident courage to our pale and worn-out religions? Even at their foundations, these religions have decayed into religions for scholars. As a result, myth, which every religion needs in order to exist, is already crippled everywhere. Even in religion, that optimistic spirit has taken control, the same spirit we just described as the seed that will destroy our society.

Meanwhile, the disaster sleeping inside this culture of theory slowly begins to frighten modern people. Uneasy, they reach into their store of experience for ways to avoid the danger, without really believing in those ways themselves. So they begin to sense where their own path is leading. But at the same time, some great minds with a broad vision have, with amazing self-control, managed to use the very tools of science to show the limits of knowledge itself, and how much knowledge depends on conditions. In doing so, they firmly denied science's claim that it is valid everywhere and serves every purpose. With this proof, for the first time, a certain delusion was recognized for what it is: the delusion that, by following cause and effect, we can get to the very heart of things. Kant and Schopenhauer, with enormous courage and wisdom, won the hardest victory of all. They defeated the optimism hidden inside the very nature of logic, which in turn is the found-

ation of our culture. This optimism had believed that every riddle of the world could be known and fully explored, relying on what it took for granted as "eternal truths." It had treated space, time and cause and effect as completely unconditional laws that apply everywhere. But Kant revealed that these laws really only served to raise the mere visible world, the work of illusion, to the rank of the one and highest reality. They put it in place of what things truly and most deeply are, and so made real knowledge of things impossible. In the words of Schopenhauer, they only lulled the dreamer into an even deeper sleep (The World as Will and Representation, Volume I, page 498). With this insight a new culture begins, one that I dare to call a tragic culture. Its most important feature is that wisdom takes the place of science as the highest goal. This wisdom is not fooled by the tempting distractions of the sciences. With a steady gaze, it turns toward the whole picture of the world, and in it, it tries to take hold of the endless suffering with loving sympathy, as if that suffering were its own. Let us imagine a generation growing up with this fearless gaze, with this heroic pull toward the enormous. Let us imagine the bold step of these dragon-slayers, the proud daring with which they turn their backs on all the weak teachings of that optimism, in order to "live resolutely," fully and completely. Wouldn't the tragic person of this culture, while training himself to face seriousness and terror, have to long for a new art, the art of deep comfort beyond this world? Wouldn't he have to long for tragedy as his own Helen, the way Faust longs for Helen of Troy, and cry out with Faust:

"And shouldn't I, with the most longing power, bring that one and only figure to life?"

But now this Socratic culture has been shaken from two sides. It can only hold the royal staff of its claim to never be wrong with trembling hands. First, it is afraid of where its own ideas lead, which it is slowly beginning to sense. Second, it no longer believes, with its old simple

trust, that its foundation will hold true forever. So it is a sad sight to watch: the dance of its thinking keeps throwing itself, full of longing, at new shapes in order to hug them. Then suddenly it lets them go again with a shudder, the way Mephistopheles in Goethe's Faust lets go of the tempting she-demons called Lamias. This is the mark of that "break" that everyone likes to talk about as the deepest sickness of modern culture. The thinking, science-minded person gets frightened of where his own ideas lead. He is not satisfied, yet he no longer dares to throw himself into the terrible icy river of existence. Instead he runs nervously up and down along the bank. He no longer wants to have anything completely, including all the natural cruelty of things. That is how soft his hopeful, optimistic way of looking at the world has made him. On top of that, he feels that a culture built on the principle of science must collapse once it starts to become illogical, that is, once it starts running away from where its own ideas lead. Our art shows this general crisis. It is no use leaning on all the great creative ages and great creative people and copying them. It is no use gathering all of "world literature" around modern man to comfort him, and placing him among the art styles and artists of every age, so that he can give them names, the way Adam named the animals. He still remains the one who is forever hungry. He is the "critic" with no joy and no strength. He is the bookish, scholarly person, who deep down is just a librarian and a proofreader, going miserably blind from book dust and printing mistakes.

19.

There is no sharper way to describe the inner heart of this Socratic culture than to call it the culture of opera. For in this field, this culture has spoken openly, with its own kind of innocence, about what it wants and what it knows. And this surprises us when we compare the birth of opera and the facts of how opera developed with the

timeless truths of the calm, image-making force and the wild, ecstatic force. Let me first remind you of how the "stilo rappresentativo", the new acting-out style of singing, and recitative, the half-spoken kind of singing, came about. Can we really believe this? This operatic music was completely on the surface and incapable of true devotion. Yet it was welcomed and cherished with passionate delight, as if it were the rebirth of all true music, by the very age in which the indescribably noble and holy music of Palestrina had just appeared. And on the other hand, who would blame only the pleasure-seeking luxury of those circles in Florence, and the vanity of their stage singers, for the way the love of opera spread so wildly? At the same time, and even among the same people, there stood the great vaulted building of Palestrina's harmonies, which the whole Christian Middle Ages had worked to build. That right beside it a passion woke up for a half-musical way of speaking is something I can only explain by some force at work in recitative that has nothing to do with art.

The listener wants to hear the words clearly through the singing. The singer gives him what he wants by speaking more than singing, and by sharpening the emotional expression of the words in this half-singing. By sharpening the emotion this way, he makes the words easier to understand and overpowers the half of music that is still left. The real danger now facing him is this: at some wrong moment he might let the music take over. If that happened, the emotional force of the speech and the clearness of the words would be lost at once. And yet, on the other hand, he always feels the urge to let the music burst out and to show off his voice like a virtuoso. Here the "poet" comes to his rescue. The poet knows how to give him plenty of chances for emotional cries, repeated words and repeated lines, and so on. At these spots the singer can now rest in pure music without worrying about the words. This back-and-forth is at the very heart of the acting-out style: emotional, forceful, but only half-sung speech

switches with fully sung cries. It is a quickly changing effort to reach the listener, sometimes through his ideas and mental pictures, sometimes through his deep musical feeling. This is something so completely unnatural, and it goes so deeply against both the wild, ecstatic force's urge to make art and the calm, image-making force's urge to make art, that we have to conclude that recitative came from somewhere outside all artistic instincts. Based on this description, recitative can be defined as a mix of storytelling delivery and lyrical, song-like delivery. And it is certainly not a mix that holds together inside, which could never be achieved with things so completely different. Instead it is the most surface-level gluing together, like a mosaic, something that has no model at all anywhere in nature or in experience. But this was not what the inventors of recitative thought. Instead, they themselves, and their whole age with them, believed that this acting-out style had solved the secret of ancient music. They thought this secret alone could explain the enormous power of an Orpheus or an Amphion, the legendary singers, and even of Greek tragedy. The new style was seen as the reawakening of the most powerful music ever, the music of ancient Greece. In fact, since everyone commonly thought of Homer's world as the very first world, people could give themselves over to the dream that they had now climbed back down into the paradise-like beginnings of humankind. In that time, music surely must have had the unbeatable purity, power and innocence that poets described so movingly in their shepherd plays. Here we can see into the deepest roots of how this truly modern kind of art, opera, came to be. A powerful need forces an art into existence here, but a need that has nothing to do with art: the longing for an idyll, a peaceful country paradise, and the belief that long, long ago there existed a human being who was both artistic and good. Recitative was seen as the rediscovered language of that first human. Opera was seen as the rediscovered land of that peaceful or heroic good being, who in everything he does follows a natural urge to make

art. Whatever he has to say, he at least sings a little of it, and at the slightest stir of feeling he bursts right into full-voiced song. It does not matter to us now that the humanists of that time used this newly created picture of the artist in paradise to fight against the old church idea that man is rotten and lost by nature. So opera can be understood as the rebel belief in the good human being. But at the same time it also offered a comfort against the pessimism that the serious-minded people of that time felt most strongly drawn to, because everything in life was so terribly uncertain. It is enough for us to have seen this: the real magic of this new art form, and so its birth, lies in satisfying a need that has nothing to do with art. It lies in the hopeful glorifying of man as he is, and in seeing the first human as naturally good and artistic. This principle of opera has slowly turned into a threatening and terrible demand that, faced with today's socialist movements, we can no longer ignore. The "good first human" wants his rights: what paradise-like prospects!

Next to that, I want to set another proof of my view that is just as clear: opera is built on the same basic ideas as our bookish, scholarly culture. Opera was born from the thinking, science-minded person, the critical amateur, not from the artist. That is one of the strangest facts in the whole history of the arts. It was listeners with no real feel for music who demanded that, above all, you must be able to understand the words. So, they said, music could only be reborn if someone found a way of singing in which the words of the text ruled over the interwoven musical lines the way a master rules over a servant. Their reason was that words are nobler than the harmonies that go with them, just as the soul is nobler than the body. In the early days of opera, the joining of music, images and words was handled with this crude, amateur, unmusical attitude. And it was in this spirit that the first experiments took place, among the elegant amateur circles of Florence, carried out by poets and singers whom those circles paid

and supported. The person who has no power to make art creates a kind of art for himself precisely because he is, at heart, an unartistic person. Because he has no idea of the deep, wild, ecstatic force inside music, he turns the enjoyment of music into a reasoned speech-making of passion, using words and notes, in the so-called "stilo rappresentativo," the new style of sung speech, and into the pleasure of fancy singing. Because he cannot see visions himself, he forces the stage engineer and the scenery painter to work for him. Because he does not understand what an artist truly is, he conjures up for himself an "original artistic human" to suit his own taste, that is, a person who sings and speaks in verse whenever he feels passion. He dreams himself into a time when passion alone was enough to produce songs and poems, as if every strong feeling had been able to create something artistic. Opera rests on a false belief about how art is made, namely that cozy, idyllic belief that really every person who has feelings is an artist. In the light of this belief, opera is the voice of amateurism in art, laying down its rules with the cheerful optimism of the thinking, science-minded person.

If we wanted to bring together under one idea the two notions I have just described, both of which were at work when opera was born, the only thing left would be to speak of opera's idyllic tendency, meaning its longing for a peaceful, perfect paradise. To do this, we would only need to use Schiller's way of putting it and his explanation. Either, Schiller says, nature and the ideal are a cause of sadness, when nature is shown as lost and the ideal as out of reach. Or both are a cause of joy, when they are imagined as real. The first gives us the elegy, the sad poem of loss, in the narrower sense. The second gives us the idyll, the happy picture of paradise, in the widest sense. Here we must point out right away what those two notions in the birth of opera have in common: in them, the ideal is not felt to be out of reach, and nature is not felt to be lost. According to this feeling, there was an

early age of humankind when people lay close to the heart of nature. And in that naturalness they had also reached the ideal of humanity, in a paradise-like goodness and gift for art. We were all supposed to be descended from this perfect first human. In fact, we were supposed to still be his true copy. We would only have to throw off a few things to recognize ourselves again as this first human, by freely giving up our needless learning and our overloaded culture. The educated person of the Renaissance let his opera-style imitation of Greek tragedy lead him back to such a harmony of nature and ideal, to a paradise-like reality. He used this tragedy the way Dante used the poet Virgil as his guide, to be led right up to the gates of paradise. But from there he went on further by himself. He moved from imitating the highest Greek art form to a "restoring of all things," to recreating the original art world of humankind. What confident good nature there is in these bold efforts, right in the lap of a culture built on theory! It can only be explained by the comforting belief that "the human being as such" is the forever virtuous opera hero, the shepherd forever playing the flute or singing, who must always find himself again as such in the end, if he has ever really lost himself for a while. It is purely the fruit of that optimism which rises up here from the depths of Socrates' view of the world, like a sweet, tempting column of perfume.

So the face of opera does not show at all that sad, elegy-like pain over something lost forever. Instead it shows the cheerfulness of finding everything again forever, the easy pleasure in a paradise-like reality that you can at least imagine as real at any moment. Now and then, perhaps, you sense that this supposed reality is nothing but silly, fantastic playing around. Anyone who could measure it against the terrible seriousness of true nature, and compare it with the real first scenes at the start of humankind, would have to cry out at it with disgust: Away with this ghost! Even so, you would be fooling yourself if you thought you could chase away such a playful thing as opera just

by shouting at it hard, as you might a ghost. Whoever wants to destroy opera has to take up the fight against that cheerfulness of bookish, scholarly culture, which speaks out so innocently in opera about its favorite idea, and whose true art form opera actually is. But what can art itself expect from an art form whose roots are not in the world of art at all? This form has instead sneaked over into the field of art from a half-moral area, and it has only now and then managed to hide its mixed-breed origin. What juices does this parasite called opera feed on, if not those of true art? Shouldn't we suspect that, under its idyllic temptations and its flattering scholarly tricks, the highest task of art, the one that truly deserves to be called serious, will sink into an empty urge to entertain and distract? That task is to free the eye from staring into the horror of the night, and to rescue the person, through the healing balm of beautiful appearance, from the cramps of the will's restless urges. What becomes of the eternal truths of the wild, ecstatic force and the calm, image-making force when styles are mixed in the way I have shown in the nature of the "stilo rappresentativo"? Where music is treated as the servant and the words of the text as the master? Where music is compared to the body and the words to the soul? Where the highest goal, at best, will be music that imitates sounds and describes things, just as it was in the later wild hymns to Dionysus in Athens? Where music is completely cut off from its true dignity, which is to be a mirror of the world's wild, ecstatic force, so that all it can still do is serve as a slave to the visible world, copying the shapes of the visible world and stirring up a surface pleasure through the play of lines and proportions? Looked at strictly, this fateful influence of opera on music lines up exactly with the whole development of modern music. The optimism lurking in the birth of opera, and in the nature of the culture it stands for, has managed with frightening speed to strip music of its role as a voice of the wild, ecstatic force in the world, and to stamp on it a pleasant character that just plays with forms. This change can only be com-

pared to the transformation of the person of Aeschylus's time into the cheerful person of bookish, scholarly culture.

We have just pointed to an example of how the wild, ecstatic force faded away, and we linked that fading to a very striking change in the Greek people, a decline that no one has yet explained. If we were right to make that link, then what hopes must rise up in us when the surest signs promise the opposite process: the slow awakening of the wild, ecstatic force in our own world today! The godlike strength of Hercules cannot stay weak forever while he serves Queen Omphale in soft, luxurious slavery. From the wild, ecstatic depths of the German spirit, a power has risen up that has nothing in common with the basic conditions of Socratic culture. That culture can neither explain it nor excuse it. Instead, Socratic culture feels this power as something terrifying and impossible to explain, as something overwhelming and hostile. This power is German music, and above all we mean its mighty path, like the path of the sun across the sky, from Bach to Beethoven, and from Beethoven to Wagner. What can the knowledge-hungry Socratic thinkers of our time do, even at best, with this demon that rises up from endless depths? You cannot find the magic formula that would tame this demon and force it to speak, as if by the threefold power of a spell. You will not find it in the twists and fancy curls of opera melody. Nor will you find it with the counting board of the fugue, or in the clever back-and-forth logic of counterpoint. What a show it is, when our experts on beauty today swing their butterfly nets of their own private idea of "beauty" and try to snatch at the genius of music. That genius romps around in front of them, full of a life they cannot understand, and its movements refuse to be judged by the rules of eternal beauty or of the sublime. Just take a good close look at these music lovers in person, as they tirelessly shout "Beauty! Beauty!" Ask yourself: do they look like nature's favorite children, raised and spoiled in the lap of beauty? Or are they rather looking for

a lying disguise to cover their own crudeness, and an artistic excuse for their own dull, unfeeling dryness? Here I am thinking, for example, of Otto Jahn. But liars and fakes had better watch out around German music. Because in the middle of all our culture, it alone is the pure, clean, and cleansing spirit of fire. As in the teaching of the great Heraclitus of Ephesus, all things move out from this fire and back into it again, in a double circle. Everything we now call culture, education and culture, and civilization will one day have to stand before Dionysus, the judge who cannot be fooled.

Let us also remember German philosophy, which flows from the same sources. Through Kant and Schopenhauer, it was able to destroy the smug, contented love of life found in scientific Socratic thinking, by showing where that thinking reaches its limits. By showing those limits, it opened the way to a far deeper and more serious way of looking at questions of right and wrong, and at art. We can truly call this way of looking the wisdom of the wild, ecstatic force, put into ideas and words. So where does this mysterious unity between German music and German philosophy point us, if not to a new way of living? We can only guess what that new way of living will hold, by comparing it with the ancient Greeks. For us, who stand at the border between two different ways of living, the Greek example keeps a value that cannot be measured. That is because in the Greek story, all these changes and struggles have been shaped into a classic form that teaches us. The only difference is that we seem to be living through the great main ages of Greek life in reverse order. Right now, for example, we seem to be stepping backward, from the bookish, scholarly age of Alexandria toward the age of tragedy. And we have the feeling that the birth of a tragic age would mean, for the German spirit, simply a return to itself, a happy finding of itself again. For a long time, huge powers pushing in from outside had forced the German spirit, which was living in a helpless, shapeless roughness, to become a slave to their way

of shaping things. Now at last, after coming home to the original source of its being, the German spirit may dare to stride out boldly and freely in front of all peoples, without being led on the leash of Latin, Romance civilization. But only if it knows how to keep learning, steadily, from one people, the Greeks. Just being able to learn from them at all is already a great honor and a rare distinction. And when did we ever need these highest of all teachers more than now? Now we are living through the rebirth of tragedy, and we are in danger of knowing neither where it comes from nor where it wants to go.

20.

Someday a fair judge, one who can't be bribed, should weigh up when and in which men the German spirit has struggled hardest so far to learn from the Greeks. We can say with confidence that this special praise would have to go to the noble struggle of Goethe, Schiller and Winckelmann to build true education and culture. But if so, we would also have to add something. Ever since their time, and since that struggle had its first effects, the effort to reach education and culture and the Greeks along the same road has grown weaker and weaker, in a way that is hard to understand. We don't want to give up on the German spirit completely. So shouldn't we conclude that even those fighters failed on some key point? Maybe they did not get through to the heart of what the Greeks really were. Maybe they did not manage to create a lasting bond of love between German and Greek culture. Perhaps, without quite knowing it, even the more serious people sensed this gap. And that made them doubt and lose heart: after such great forerunners, could they ever go further down this path of education and culture than those men had, or even reach the goal at all? That is why, since that time, we have seen opinions about the value of the Greeks for education and culture go badly downhill. In all sorts of

camps, among thoughtful people and thoughtless ones alike, you can hear people talk about the Greeks with pity and a sense of superiority. Elsewhere, people play around with pretty, useless speeches about "Greek harmony," "Greek beauty," and "Greek cheerfulness." And look at the very people whose honor it should be to draw tirelessly from the Greek river for the good of German education and culture: the teachers at the high schools and universities. They, of all people, have learned best how to settle quickly and comfortably with the Greeks and put them aside. Often they even go so far as to doubt the Greek ideal and give it up, and to turn the real purpose of all study of the ancient world completely upside down. Among those teachers, some have not used up all their energy trying to be reliable correctors of old texts, or scientists who peer at language under a microscope. Those few may also try to take in ancient Greece, alongside other ancient cultures, "historically." But they always do it with the methods and the superior airs of today's educated history writing. The real power of the high schools and universities to educate and shape people has probably never been lower and weaker than it is today. The "journalist," that paper slave of the daily news, has beaten the high-school and university teacher in every matter of education and culture. All that is left for the teacher is a change we have seen many times before: he now also starts talking like a journalist, with the "light elegance" of that world, fluttering around like a cheerful, cultured butterfly. So imagine the confused, embarrassed stare with which such educated people of today must look at a strange event. This event could only be understood by comparison with the deepest roots of the Greek genius, which nobody has understood so far. The event is the reawakening of the spirit of the wild, ecstatic force and the rebirth of tragedy. There has never been another period in art when so-called education and culture and real art have faced each other with such strangeness and dislike as we see with our own eyes today. We understand why such a weak education and culture hates true art: it fears that true art

will destroy it. But hasn't a whole kind of culture, the Socratic, bookish, scholarly culture, come to the end of its life, now that it has ended up in such a thin, dainty tip as today's education and culture? Heroes like Schiller and Goethe were not able to break open that enchanted gate that leads into the magic mountain of the Greeks. With all their bravest struggle, they got no further than a longing look, like the look Goethe's Iphigenia sends across the sea toward her homeland from the wild, foreign land of Tauris. If that is so, what could the followers of such heroes hope for? Only this: that the gate might suddenly open by itself, on a completely different side, one untouched by all the efforts of culture so far, to the mysterious sound of the music of tragedy brought back to life.

Let no one try to spoil our belief that a rebirth of ancient Greece is still coming. Because in that belief alone we find our hope that the German spirit will be renewed and made pure by the fiery magic of music. What else could we point to, in the emptiness and tiredness of today's culture, that could give us any comforting hope for the future? We look in vain for a single strong root with healthy branches, for one patch of rich, healthy soil. Everywhere there is only dust, sand, stiffness and things wasting away. A lonely person without comfort could pick no better symbol than the Knight with Death and the Devil, as Dürer drew him. He is the knight in armor with the hard, iron stare. He knows how to ride his terrible road alone, with only his horse and his dog, not thrown off by his horrible companions, and yet without hope. Our Schopenhauer was a knight like Dürer's. He had no hope at all, but he wanted the truth. There is no one else like him.

But look how suddenly that wasteland of our tired culture, which I just described so darkly, changes when the magic of the wild, ecstatic force touches it! A storm wind grabs everything that is worn out, rotten, broken and stunted. It wraps it all up, swirling, in a red cloud of dust and carries it up into the sky like a vulture. Confused, our eyes

search for what has vanished. Because what they now see seems to have risen from a deep pit into the golden light: so full and green, so richly alive, so endless and full of longing. Tragedy sits in the middle of this overflowing life, suffering and joy, in a lofty state of delight. She is listening to a far-off, sad song. It tells of the mothers of all being, whose names are: Illusion, Will, Woe. Yes, my friends, believe with me in the life of the wild, ecstatic force and in the rebirth of tragedy. The time of the Socratic person is over. Crown yourselves with ivy, take the thyrsus, the sacred staff of Dionysus, in your hands, and don't be surprised when tigers and panthers lie down at your knees and nuzzle you. Now just dare to be tragic people, because you will be set free. You are to lead the festival parade of Dionysus from India to Greece! Get ready for a hard fight, but believe in the miracles of your god!

21.

Let me step back from this rousing call and return to the calm mood that suits someone who is thinking things over. I say again: only the Greeks can teach us what such a sudden, almost miraculous awakening of tragedy means for the deepest roots of a people's life. The same people who held the tragic mystery rites also fought the great battles against the Persians. And in turn, the people who fought those wars needed tragedy as a medicine they could not do without, to heal and recover. For several generations, this people had been shaken to the core by the strongest fits of the wild, ecstatic force, as if possessed by the demon of Dionysus. So who would expect that same people to also pour out, so steadily and strongly, the simplest feelings for their state, the most natural love of home, and the original manly eagerness to fight? After all, whenever wild, ecstatic excitement spreads widely, you can always feel the same thing happen. When the wild, ecstatic force frees people from the chains of being separate individuals, the

first thing to suffer is their political instinct. People grow indifferent to the state, and even hostile to it. Just as surely, on the other hand, Apollo, who builds states, is also the guiding spirit of the rule that splits us into separate selves. A state and a love of home cannot survive unless the individual person is accepted and affirmed. From wild religious frenzy, only one road leads onward for a people: the road to Indian Buddhism. Buddhism longs for nothingness, and to make that longing bearable at all, it needs those rare ecstatic states in which a person rises above space, time and the self. These states, in turn, call for a philosophy that teaches people how to get past the indescribable misery of the dull times in between, by means of an idea. In just the same way, a people that gives its political drives absolute power is bound to slide onto a path of extreme worldliness. The grandest, but also the most terrifying, example of this is the Roman Empire.

The Greeks stood between India and Rome, pushed to make a tempting choice between the two. But they managed to invent a third way, in a pure, classic form. True, they did not get to use it for long themselves, but exactly for that reason it became immortal. For it is true in all things that those whom the gods love die young. But it is just as true that they then live forever with the gods. We should not ask the noblest things to be as tough and long-lasting as leather. Rough, sturdy endurance, like the kind the Romans had in their national drive, is probably not one of the qualities that perfection needs. Now let us ask what remedy allowed the Greeks, in their great age, to keep from wearing themselves out. Their wild, ecstatic drives and their political drives were both extremely strong. Yet they did not exhaust themselves either by brooding in ecstasy or by greedily grabbing for world power and world fame. Instead, they reached a wonderful balance, like a fine wine that both fires you up and makes you calm and thoughtful. To answer this, we must remember the enormous power

of tragedy. It stirred up, cleansed and released the whole life of the people. We will only begin to sense its highest value when we see it, as the Greeks did, as the sum of all healing powers that protect a people before illness strikes. We must see it as the go-between that rules between the strongest qualities of a people, qualities that in themselves are the most dangerous.

Tragedy soaks up the most intense frenzy of music, so that, for the Greeks as for us, it actually brings music to its peak. But then it places the tragic myth and the tragic hero beside the music. Like a mighty giant, the hero takes the whole world of the wild, ecstatic force onto his back and lifts that weight off us. At the same time, through that same tragic myth, in the person of the tragic hero, tragedy knows how to free us from our greedy craving for this life. With a warning hand, it reminds us of another kind of being and a higher joy. The struggling hero prepares himself for that joy, sensing it ahead of time, through his downfall and not through his victories. Tragedy places a noble image, the myth, between the universal power of its music and the listener who is open to the wild, ecstatic force. In this way it gives the listener the beautiful appearance that music is only the highest tool for bringing the solid, visible world of the myth to life. Trusting in this noble trick, the music may now move its limbs in the dance of the wild hymn to Dionysus. It can give itself, without worry, to a frenzied feeling of freedom. As pure music on its own, without that trick, it would not dare to revel in such a feeling. The myth protects us from the music, and at the same time it is what first gives the music its highest freedom. In return, as a gift back, music gives the tragic myth a deep meaning beyond this world, so powerful and convincing that words and pictures could never reach it without this one unique help. Above all, through music the tragic audience member is filled with a sure sense, felt in advance, of a highest joy. The road to that joy leads through downfall and denial. So the listener

feels as if the deepest abyss at the heart of things were speaking to him clearly.

With these last sentences I may only have managed to give this difficult idea a first, rough form, one that only a few people will understand right away. So right here I must not stop urging my friends to try once more. I ask them to prepare themselves to grasp the general rule by looking at a single example from experience we all share. For this example, I cannot turn to the people who use the pictures of what happens on stage, and the words and feelings of the characters, as a help to get closer to feeling the music. None of these people speak music as their mother tongue. Even with that help, they get no further than the front halls of hearing music, and they are never allowed to touch its innermost holy rooms. Some of them, like the critic Gervinus, do not even reach the front halls this way. No, I must turn only to those who are directly related to music, for whom music is like their mother's womb, and who connect with things almost only through unconscious musical links. I ask these true musicians a question. Can they imagine a person who could take in the third act of "Tristan and Isolde" purely as a huge symphony, with no help at all from words or pictures, without gasping out his last breath as all the wings of his soul strain in a cramp? Here a person has laid his ear, so to speak, right against the heart chamber of the world's will (the blind life-drive). From there he feels the raging hunger to exist pouring out into every vein of the world, sometimes as a thundering river, sometimes as the gentlest misty stream. Should such a person not suddenly break apart? Should he be able to bear it, inside the poor, fragile glass shell of a human individual, to hear the echo of countless cries of joy and pain from the "wide space of the world's night"? Could he hear this shepherd's dance-tune of the deepest truths without rushing back, unstoppably, to his original home? But if such a work can still be taken in as a whole without the listener's separate existence being

wiped out, and if such a creation could be made without crushing the one who made it, then where do we find the answer to this contradiction?

At this point, the tragic myth and the tragic hero step in between our most intense excitement over the music and the music itself. At bottom they are only a picture, a symbol, of the most universal facts of all, the facts that only music can speak about directly. Now, if we felt purely as creatures of the wild, ecstatic force, this symbol, the myth, would have no effect on us at all. It would just stand beside us, unnoticed, and would not distract us for a single moment from listening to the echo of what philosophers call the "universals before the thing", the deep realities that exist before any single object. But here the calm, image-making force breaks through. Its aim is to put back together the individual person, who has almost been blown apart. It comes like a healing ointment, in the form of a delightful illusion. Suddenly we believe we are seeing only Tristan, lying motionless and numb, asking himself: "That old tune; why does it wake me?" And what used to sound to us like a hollow sigh coming from the very center of existence now only wants to tell us how "bleak and empty the sea" is. And at the moment when we thought we would stop breathing and fade out, as all our feelings stretched to breaking in a kind of cramp, with only a thin thread still tying us to this life, now we hear and see only the hero. He is wounded to death and yet does not die, and he cries out in despair: "Longing! Longing! Dying, still to long, and not to die of longing!" And earlier, after so many tortures, after torment beyond all measure, the joyful blast of the horn cut through our hearts almost like the worst torment of all. But now, between us and this "joy in itself", stands Kurwenal, shouting with joy, turned toward the ship that is bringing Isolde. However powerfully our pity for these characters grips us, in a certain sense that very pity saves us from the original suffering of the world. In the same

way, the picture-symbol of the myth saves us from looking straight at the highest idea of the world, and thought and words save us from the unchecked flood of the unconscious will (the blind life-drive). Thanks to that wonderful illusion created by the calm, image-making force, it seems to us as if even the world of sound stood in front of us like a solid, shaped world. It seems as if, in that world too, only the fate of Tristan and Isolde had been shaped and sculpted, as if out of the most delicate and expressive material there is.

So the calm, image-making force tears us away from the universal, shared experience of the wild, ecstatic force, and makes us fall in love with individual people. It ties our feelings of pity to these individuals. Through them it satisfies our sense of beauty, which thirsts for great and noble forms. It parades pictures of life past us and tempts us to grasp, with our minds, the core of life contained in them. With the enormous power of images, of ideas, of moral lessons, and of sympathetic feeling, the calm, image-making force lifts a person up out of his wild, self-destroying ecstasy. It fools him, so that he overlooks the universal nature of what the wild, ecstatic force is doing. Instead, he falls for the false belief that he is watching one single picture of the world, for example Tristan and Isolde, and that the music is only there to help him see it better and more deeply. What can the healing magic of Apollo not do, if it can even make us believe that the wild, ecstatic force could serve the calm, image-making force and make its effects stronger? It can even make us believe that music is basically an art for portraying something that belongs to the calm, image-making force.

Between a perfect drama and its music there is a harmony that seems to have been arranged in advance. Because of it, the drama reaches the highest degree of visibility, a vividness that a spoken drama can never otherwise reach. All the living figures on stage are simplified before us into melody lines, each moving on its own, and they become as clear as a sweeping curved line. At the same time, we hear these

lines sounding side by side in the changing harmonies, which follow the action on stage in the most delicate way. Through these harmonies, the relationships between things become something we can perceive directly with our senses, not in some abstract way. And through them we also realize that the true nature of a character, and of a melody line, only shows itself clearly in these relationships. So while the music forces us to see more, and more deeply, than usual, and spreads the action on stage before us like a delicate web, the world of the stage becomes endlessly wider for our spiritualized, inward-looking eye, and it is lit up from the inside. What could the poet who works only with words offer that would be anything like this? He struggles to reach this inner widening and inner lighting of the visible stage world with a far less perfect tool, by an indirect route, starting from words and ideas. It is true that musical tragedy also adds words. But at the same time it can place next to them the ground and birthplace that words grow out of, and make clear to us, from the inside, how words come into being.

But we would have to say just as firmly that this whole process I have described is only a glorious beautiful appearance. It is that illusion of the calm, image-making force I mentioned earlier, whose job is to relieve us of the pressure and the going too far of the wild, ecstatic force. In reality, the relationship between music and drama is exactly the other way around. Music is the true idea of the world, and drama is only a reflection of this idea, a single shadow-picture of it. The match between the melody line and the living figure, and between the harmony and that figure's relationships with others, is true, but in the opposite sense from how it seems to us while we watch a musical tragedy. We may make the figure move as visibly as possible, bring it to life, and light it up from within, but it always remains only the visible world. From there, no bridge leads into true reality, into the heart of the world. Music, however, speaks from inside that heart.

Countless figures of that kind could pass by while the same music plays, and they would never exhaust its essence. They would always be only its outward copies. Of course, the popular and completely wrong contrast between soul and body explains nothing about the difficult relationship between music and drama; it only confuses everything. And yet this crude, unphilosophical contrast seems to have become a favorite article of faith, especially among our experts on art and beauty, for who knows what reasons. Meanwhile, they have learned nothing about the contrast between the visible world and things as they really are, or, again for unknown reasons, they did not want to learn anything about it.

Our analysis might seem to show that, in tragedy, the calm, image-making force, through its illusion, has completely defeated the original wild element of music, the wild, ecstatic force, and has put music to work for its own goals, namely to make the drama as clear as possible. If so, we would have to add a very important limit: on the most essential point of all, that illusion of the calm, image-making force is broken through and destroyed. With the help of the music, the drama spreads out before us with every movement and every figure made clear and lit from within, as if we were watching cloth being woven on a loom, with the threads jerking up and down. And yet the drama as a whole has an effect that lies beyond anything the calm, image-making force can achieve in art. In the overall effect of tragedy, the wild, ecstatic force takes the upper hand again. Tragedy ends with a sound that could never come from the realm of the calm, image-making force. And with that, the illusion of the calm, image-making force shows itself for what it is: a veil that covers the real effect of the wild, ecstatic force for as long as the tragedy lasts. Yet that effect is so powerful that, at the end, it pushes the drama of the calm, image-making force itself into a realm where it begins to speak with the wisdom of the wild, ecstatic force, and where it denies itself and its

own visible images. So the difficult relationship between the calm, image-making force and the wild, ecstatic force in tragedy could truly be pictured as a brotherly bond between the two gods: Dionysus speaks the language of Apollo, but Apollo in the end speaks the language of Dionysus. And with that, the highest goal of tragedy, and of art in general, is reached.

22.

Let the attentive friend now picture for himself, from his own experience, the effect of a true musical tragedy, pure and unmixed. I believe I have described this effect from both sides clearly enough that he will now know how to make sense of his own experiences. He will remember how, as he watched the myth moving before him, he felt lifted up to a kind of all-knowing state. It was as if his eyes no longer saw only the surface of things but could look right inside them. With the help of the music, it was as if he could see, almost with his own senses, the surges of the will (the blind life-drive), the struggle between motives, and the swelling flood of passions, all laid out before him like a mass of living, moving lines and shapes. And so he could dive down into the most delicate secrets of feelings that stir below our awareness. While he becomes aware that his urges toward seeing and toward glorifying transformation are raised to their very highest point, he feels just as clearly that this long series of effects from the calm, image-making force does not produce that happy, lingering state of calm watching, free of all wanting, that the sculptor and the epic poet give him. Those are the true artists of the calm, image-making force, and what they achieve through that calm watching is to make the world of separate individual things seem justified and right. That is the peak and the very heart of the art of the calm, image-making force. But here, he looks at the glorified world on the stage and yet rejects it. He sees the tragic hero in front of him, as clear and beauti-

ful as in an epic poem, and yet he takes joy in the hero's destruction. He understands what happens on stage down to its deepest core, and yet he gladly escapes into what cannot be understood. He feels that the hero's actions are justified, and yet he is lifted up even more when those actions destroy the one who did them. He shudders at the sufferings that are about to strike the hero, and yet he senses in them a higher and far more overpowering joy. He sees more and sees deeper than ever before, and yet he wishes he were blind. Where can this amazing splitting of the self, this breaking-over of the peak of the calm, image-making force, come from, if not from the magic of the wild, ecstatic force? That magic seems to stir up the impulses of the calm, image-making force to the highest degree, and yet it is able to force even this overflowing power of the calm, image-making force to serve it. The tragic myth can only be understood as a way of turning the wisdom of the wild, ecstatic force into images by using the tools of the calm, image-making force. The tragic myth leads the visible world to the very edge, where it rejects itself and tries to flee back into the lap of the true and only reality. And there, together with Isolde, the visible world seems to sing its swan song, its last song before dying into what lies beyond this world, like this:

In the surging swell of the sea of bliss, in the ringing sound of waves of fragrance, in the drifting whole of the world's breath, to drown, to sink, unaware: highest joy!

So, through the experiences of the truly artistic listener, we can picture the tragic artist himself. We see how, like a lavish god of individual things, he creates his figures, and in this sense his work can hardly be understood as an "imitation of nature." But then we see how his enormous urge from the wild, ecstatic force swallows up this whole visible world, so that behind it, and through its destruction, we can sense a highest, original artistic joy in the lap of the original oneness of all things. Of course, our experts on art and beauty have

nothing to say about this return to our first home, about the brotherly bond of the two gods of art in tragedy, or about how the listener is stirred by both the calm, image-making force and the wild, ecstatic force. Instead, they never get tired of saying that what is truly tragic is the hero's fight against fate, or the victory of a moral order in the world, or a release of emotions caused by the tragedy. Their tireless insistence makes me think that perhaps they are not people who can be moved by art at all, and that when they listen to a tragedy, they may only count as moral beings. Never, since Aristotle, has anyone explained the effect of tragedy in a way that would let us conclude anything about artistic states of mind, or about the listener being active as an artistic being. Sometimes we are told that pity and fear are pushed by the serious events on stage toward a release that brings relief. At other times we are told that we should feel lifted up and inspired by the victory of good and noble principles, or by the hero sacrificing himself, in the sense of a moral view of the world. And as surely as I believe that for many people this, and only this, is the effect of tragedy, it is just as clear from this that all of them, along with the art experts who explain them, have never experienced tragedy as the highest art. That release of feelings, which Aristotle called catharsis, and which the scholars of ancient languages cannot quite decide whether to count as a medical thing or a moral thing, reminds me of a remarkable hunch of Goethe's. "Without a lively emotional interest," he says, "I too have never managed to work on any tragic situation, and so I have rather avoided such situations than looked for them. Might it also have been one of the advantages of the ancient Greeks that for them even the most intense emotion was only an artistic game, while for us the truth of nature has to play a part in producing such a work?" Now, after our wonderful experiences, we can answer yes to this very deep last question. For we have seen with amazement, in musical tragedy, how the most intense emotion really can be only an artistic game. That is why we may believe that only

now can the original core of the tragic be described with some success. Anyone who can still only talk about those stand-in effects that come from areas outside art, and who does not feel lifted above that emotional and moral process, may as well give up hope about his own artistic nature. For such a person, we recommend as a harmless substitute explaining Shakespeare in the style of Gervinus and busily hunting for "poetic justice."

So, with the rebirth of tragedy, the true listener who feels art as art is born again too. Until now, in theaters, his seat was usually taken by a strange stand-in, one that made claims that were half moral and half learned: the "critic." In the critic's world so far, everything was artificial, just painted over with a thin coat that made it look alive. The performer honestly no longer knew what to do with a listener like this, who acted so critical. So the performer, along with the playwright or opera composer who inspired him, kept looking around nervously for the last traces of life in this demanding, empty creature who was unable to enjoy anything. Yet until now the audience was made up of "critics" like this. The student, the schoolboy, even the most harmless young woman had already been trained, without knowing it, by schooling and newspapers to take in a work of art in this same way. With an audience like that, the nobler artists counted on stirring up moral and religious feelings. Appeals to "the moral order of the world" stepped in as a substitute, in places where a mighty magic of art should really have thrilled the true listener. Or else the playwright presented some grand, or at least exciting, political or social cause of the day so clearly that the listener could forget how worn out he was from all his criticizing. Then he could give himself over to the same kind of feelings he had in patriotic or warlike moments, or in front of a speaker in parliament, or when crime and vice were being condemned. Drifting this far from what art is really about was bound, here and there, to turn into an outright worship of

the message. But then the same thing happened that has always happened with arts that are forced and fake: these messages went bad very quickly. For example, the idea of using the theater as a way to teach the people morals was taken seriously in Schiller's time. Today it is already counted among the hard-to-believe antiques of an education and culture that we have left behind. While the critic came to rule in the theater and the concert hall, the journalist in the school, and the press in society, art sank into the lowest kind of entertainment. And talk about art was used as the glue for a social life that was vain, scattered, selfish, and on top of that poor and unoriginal. What that kind of social life means is shown by Schopenhauer's little story about the porcupines, who huddle together for warmth but keep pricking each other. The result is that never before has there been so much chatter about art and so little real respect for it. But can you still spend time with a person who is able to make small talk about Beethoven and Shakespeare? Let everyone answer this question by his own feeling. Whatever he answers, he will show what he thinks "education and culture" means, as long as he even tries to answer the question at all, and has not already gone silent from surprise.

On the other hand, there may be some people who were born with a nobler and more sensitive nature, even if, in the way just described, they slowly turned into critical barbarians. Such a person might be able to tell of an effect on him that was as unexpected as it was completely beyond his understanding, for instance from a really successful performance of Wagner's opera Lohengrin. The only trouble was that perhaps there was no hand to take hold of him, to remind him and explain to him what was happening. So that feeling, which shook him at the time and was so strangely different and truly unlike anything else, stayed isolated. Like a mysterious star, it shone for a short while and then went out. Back then, he had sensed what the true listener who feels art as art really is.

23.

Here is a way to test yourself honestly. Do you want to know how close you are to the true, art-loving listener, or whether you belong with the Socratic, critical kind of people? Then just ask yourself, sincerely, what you feel when you watch a miracle happen on stage. Does it offend your historical sense, the part of you that insists everything must have a strict, logical psychological cause? Do you kindly let the miracle pass, as if granting a favor, treating it as something a child might understand but that feels foreign to you? Or do you feel something else entirely? Your answer will show you how far you are able to understand myth at all. A myth is a picture of the whole world squeezed into a small space. It is a shorthand for the visible world, and it cannot do without miracles. But the likely truth is this: almost everyone who looks closely at himself will find that the critical, historical spirit of our education and culture has eaten away at him. He can only make himself believe that myth once really existed by taking a scholarly route, through dry, roundabout ideas. Yet without myth, every culture loses its healthy, natural, creative strength. Only a horizon ringed with myths can hold a whole cultural movement together as one. Only myth can rescue all the powers of imagination and of the calm, image-making force's dream from drifting about aimlessly. The images of myth must be like unseen guardian spirits that are everywhere, though no one notices them. Under their protection the young soul grows up. By their signs the grown man makes sense of his life and his struggles. Even the state has no stronger unwritten laws than its mythical foundation, which guarantees its link to religion and shows that it grew out of mythical beliefs.

Now set beside this the abstract person, guided without any myths. Picture abstract upbringing, abstract customs, abstract law, an abstract state. Picture the artist's imagination wandering without rules, held back by no myth of its own homeland. Imagine a culture that has

no firm and sacred home ground, but is doomed to try out every possibility and to feed itself poorly on scraps from every other culture. That is our present day. It is the result of the Socratic way of thinking, which set out to destroy myth. And now the person without myths stands among all the pasts of history, forever hungry. He digs and scrabbles for roots, even if he has to dig for them in the most distant ancient times. Our modern culture is never satisfied. It has a huge craving for history, it gathers countless other cultures around itself, and it has a consuming urge to know everything. What does all this point to, if not the loss of myth, the loss of a mythical homeland, a mythical mother's womb? Ask yourself whether the feverish and so eerie restlessness of this culture is anything other than a starving person greedily grabbing and snatching at food. And who would still want to give anything to such a culture? Nothing it swallows can fill it. And whenever it touches even the strongest, most healing food, that food usually turns into mere "history and criticism."

We would have to despair painfully about the German character too, if it were already tangled up with its culture so tightly that the two could not be separated, if they had actually become one. We can see that happening, to our horror, in civilized France. For a long time, that very oneness of people and culture was France's great advantage and the reason it towered over others. But seeing it now, we may feel forced to call it lucky that our own very questionable culture has, so far, nothing in common with the noble core of our people's character. Instead, all our hopes reach out with longing toward one discovery. Underneath this restless culture, twitching up and down, underneath this spasm of education and culture, there lies hidden a glorious, ancient strength that is healthy deep inside. True, it only stirs mightily in rare, tremendous moments, and then goes back to dreaming of a future awakening. Out of these depths the German Reformation grew. In its hymns the future sound of German music was first

heard. Luther's hymn rang out so deep, brave and soulful, so overflowing with goodness and tenderness. It was like the first call of the wild, ecstatic force, breaking out of thick bushes as spring draws near. It was answered by an echo that tried to outdo it: that solemn yet high-spirited festive procession of frenzied worshippers of Dionysus. We owe German music to them. And we will owe them the rebirth of German myth!

I know that I must now lead my friend, who has kindly followed me this far, up to a high place where one thinks alone, where he will have only a few companions. I call out to encourage him: we must hold on tight to our shining guides, the Greeks. So far we have borrowed from them those two images of gods, to clear up our understanding of art. Each of these gods rules over its own separate kingdom of art. Through Greek tragedy we got a hint of how the two meet and push each other to greater heights. It seemed to us that Greek tragedy died because these two basic urges to make art were strangely torn apart. At the same time the character of the Greek people decayed and changed. That should make us think seriously about how necessarily and closely art and the people, myth and custom, tragedy and the state, have grown together at their roots. The death of tragedy was also the death of myth. Until then, the Greeks felt an automatic need to link everything they experienced to their myths right away. In fact, they could only understand an experience by making that link. Because of this, even the most recent events had to seem to them, at once, as if seen from the point of view of eternity, and in a certain sense timeless. Both the state and art dipped themselves into this stream of timelessness, to find rest there from the weight and the greed of the passing moment. And a people, just like a single person, is worth exactly as much as its ability to stamp the mark of the eternal onto what it lives through. By doing that, it is lifted out of the merely worldly, so to speak. It shows that deep down, without know-

ing it, it is convinced that time is relative and that life has a true meaning, a meaning beyond this world. The opposite happens when a people starts to understand itself in terms of history and smashes the mythical walls that protect it. Usually this goes hand in hand with a clear turn toward worldly things, a break with the unconscious beliefs about the beyond that shaped its earlier life, with all the moral consequences that follow. Greek art, and above all Greek tragedy, was what mainly held back the destruction of myth. People had to destroy tragedy as well, so that, cut loose from their home soil, they could live without restraint in the wilderness of thought, custom and action. Even now that deep urge reaching beyond this world tries to create a form of glorifying transformation for itself, though a weaker one, in science's Socratic way of thinking, which pushes toward life. But at the lower levels, the same urge only led to a feverish search. That search slowly got lost in a chaotic crowd of myths and superstitions piled together from everywhere. In the middle of it all sat the Greek, his heart still unsatisfied. In the end he learned to hide that fever behind Greek cheerfulness and Greek carelessness, as a cheap, second-rate little Greek, or else to numb himself completely in some dull, foggy superstition from the East.

Since the fifteenth century, when the old culture of Alexandria and Rome was brought back to life, and after a long in-between period that is hard to describe, we have come very close to that same condition. At the top of society we see the same huge hunger for knowledge, the same never-satisfied joy in discovering things, and the same enormous turning toward worldly things. Next to that we see people wandering around without a home, pushing greedily to eat at other people's tables, foolishly worshipping the present moment, or else turning away in a dull, numbed state. Everything is seen only from the point of view of the present age, the "here and now." These same symptoms point to the same thing missing at the heart of this culture:

the destruction of myth. It seems almost impossible to transplant a foreign myth and have it last, without badly and permanently damaging the tree it is grafted onto. Perhaps the tree is sometimes strong and healthy enough to push the foreign part out again after a terrible struggle. But usually it has to waste away, sick and stunted, or eat itself up with diseased, uncontrolled growth. We think so highly of the pure, strong core of the German character that we dare to expect exactly this from it: that it will push out the foreign elements that were forced into it, and we believe it is possible for the German spirit to come back to itself. Some people may think that this spirit should begin its fight by pushing out everything Latin and French. They may see an outward preparation and encouragement for this in the winning bravery and bloody glory of the last war. But the inner drive for it must come from the wish to always be worthy of the great fighters who went ahead on this path, Luther as well as our great artists and poets. But let the German spirit never believe it can fight such battles without its household gods, without its home in myth, without "bringing back" all things German! And if the German, feeling unsure, looks around for a guide to lead him back to the home he lost long ago, whose roads and paths he hardly knows anymore, then let him simply listen to the sweet, tempting call of the bird of Dionysus, the bird of the wild, ecstatic force, which hovers above him and wants to show him the way there.

24.

Among the special artistic effects of musical tragedy, we pointed out an illusion created by the calm, image-making force. This illusion is meant to save us from becoming directly one with the music of the wild, ecstatic force. At the same time, it lets our musical excitement release itself in the realm of the calm, image-making force, onto a visible in-between world placed between us and the music. We be-

lieved we had also noticed something else. Through this very release, that in-between world of the stage action, and the drama as a whole, became visible and understandable from the inside to a degree that no other art of the calm, image-making force can reach. Here, this art was lifted up and carried on wings, so to speak, by the spirit of music. So we had to admit that here its powers reached their highest point. And so, in this brotherly bond of Apollo and Dionysus, we had to recognize the peak of what both the calm, image-making force and the wild, ecstatic force aim for in art.

Of course, when the bright image of the calm, image-making force was lit from within by music, it did not have the special effect that weaker forms of that kind of art have. A long heroic poem, or a statue that seems to have a soul in its stone, can force the watching eye into a calm delight in the world of separate individual things. That effect could not be reached here, even though the image had more soul and more clearness. We watched the drama and looked hard and deep into its inner, moving world of motives. And yet it felt as if only a picture, a symbol, was passing in front of us. We felt we could almost guess its deepest meaning, and we wanted to pull it aside like a curtain to see the original thing behind it. Even the brightest clearness of the image was not enough for us, because it seemed to reveal something and hide something at the same time. With its symbolic way of showing things, it seemed to invite us to tear the veil and uncover the mysterious background. But at the same time, that very brightness, in which everything was visible, held the eye spellbound and kept it from going any deeper.

Anyone who has not felt this, having to look and at the same time longing to go beyond looking, will find it hard to imagine how clearly and definitely these two processes exist side by side and are felt side by side when we watch a tragic myth. But people who truly experience art will agree with me that, among the special effects of tragedy,

this side-by-side feeling is the strangest. Now take this experience of the art-loving audience member and imagine a similar process going on inside the tragic artist, and you will understand how the tragic myth is born. The tragic myth shares with the art of the calm, image-making force the full joy in beautiful appearance and in looking. And at the same time it says no to this joy, and finds an even higher satisfaction in destroying the visible world of beautiful appearance. At first, the content of the tragic myth is a story like an epic, glorifying a hero who fights. But where does this puzzling feature come from? Why are the hero's suffering in his fate, the most painful victories over himself, and the most tormenting clashes between motives, in short, the living examples of Silenus's grim wisdom, or, to say it in terms of art, the ugly and the out-of-tune, shown again and again in so many forms and with such fondness? And why especially in the richest and most youthful time of a people's life? Could it be that a higher joy is felt in all of this?

The fact that life really is so tragic would hardly explain why an art form came about. That is, if art is not just a copy of nature and reality, but a deeper addition to reality, placed next to it in order to overcome it. The tragic myth, as far as it belongs to art at all, takes full part in this deeper aim of art in general: the aim of glorifying transformation. But what does it transform and glorify when it shows the visible world in the image of the suffering hero? Least of all the "reality" of this visible world. Because it tells us exactly this: "Look! Look closely! This is your life! This is the hour hand on the clock of your existence!"

And the myth showed this life in order to glorify it in front of us? But if not, then where does the artistic joy come from that we feel as we let those images pass before us? I am asking about artistic joy. I know very well that many of these images can also sometimes give us a moral pleasure, for example in the form of pity or a feeling of moral victory. But whoever wants to explain the effect of tragedy only from

these moral sources, as was done for far too long in the study of art, should not think he has done anything for art. Art must, above all, demand purity in its own area. To explain the tragic myth, the very first demand is to look for its own special joy purely in the area of art, without crossing over into the area of pity, fear, or moral greatness. How can the ugly and the out-of-tune, which are the content of the tragic myth, give us artistic joy?

Here we have to take a bold leap into a philosophy of art. I will repeat what I said earlier: life and the world make sense only as a work of art. In that sense, tragic myth is meant to convince us that even ugliness and clashing disorder are an artistic game, a game the will (the blind life-drive) plays with itself in the endless overflow of its joy. This basic, original fact of the art of the wild, ecstatic force is hard to grasp. But there is one direct way to understand it and take it in at once: the wonderful meaning of dissonance in music, the sound of notes that clash. In fact, only music, set side by side with the world, can give us an idea of what it means to say the world is justified as a work of art. The pleasure that tragic myth creates comes from the same home as the pleasure we feel when we hear dissonance in music. The wild, ecstatic force, with its deepest joy of existence that can be felt even in pain, is the shared womb that gave birth to both music and tragic myth.

By calling on the way dissonance works in music, haven't we now made that hard problem of how tragedy affects us much easier? We now understand what it means, in tragedy, to want to look and at the same time to long for something beyond looking. With dissonance used in art, we would describe our state in just the same way: we want to listen, and at the same time we long for something beyond listening. That reaching toward the infinite, that wingbeat of longing, while we take the highest pleasure in a reality we see clearly, reminds us that in both cases we are looking at something that belongs to the

wild, ecstatic force. Again and again it shows us that the playful building up and smashing of the world of separate individuals flows out of a deepest joy of existence. It is much like how Heraclitus, the thinker called "the Obscure," compared the force that shapes the world to a child at play, moving stones here and there, building sand piles and knocking them down again.

So, to judge properly how strong the wild, ecstatic force is in a people, we should look not only at that people's music. We must just as surely look at its tragic myth, as the second witness to that ability. Since music and myth are so closely related, we can also guess that when one of them decays and becomes corrupt, the other will wither too, if it is true that a weakening of myth always shows a weakening of the wild, ecstatic power. A look at how the German character has developed should leave us in no doubt about either point. In opera, and in the abstract nature of our life without myths, in an art that has sunk to mere entertainment, and in a life steered by ideas and concepts, we have seen the nature of Socratic optimism laid bare: it is just as unartistic in each case, and it eats away at life. But to comfort us, there were signs that the German spirit, in spite of all this, still lies unharmed, in splendid health, depth and wild, ecstatic strength. Like a knight who has sunk into sleep, it rests and dreams in a deep pit no one can reach. From that pit the song of the wild, ecstatic force rises up to us, letting us know that this German knight is still dreaming his ancient myth of Dionysus, in visions that are both blissful and serious. Let no one believe that the German spirit has lost its home in myth forever, as long as it can still so clearly understand the voices of the birds that tell of that home. One day it will find itself awake, with all the morning freshness that comes after an enormous sleep. Then it will kill dragons, destroy the sly, treacherous dwarfs, and wake Brünnhilde, and not even Wotan's spear will be able to block its way!

My friends, you who believe in the music of the wild, ecstatic force, you also know what tragedy means to us. In it we have tragic myth, reborn out of music, and in it you may hope for everything and forget what hurts most! And what hurts most for all of us is the long humiliation in which the German genius lived, cut off from house and home, serving sly, treacherous dwarfs. You understand what I mean, just as, in the end, you will also understand my hopes.

25.

Music and tragic myth both express, in the same way, a people's ability for the wild, ecstatic force, and they cannot be separated from each other. Both come from a realm of art that lies beyond the calm, image-making force. Both bring a glorifying transformation to a region where, in chords of joy, dissonance fades away beautifully, and so does the terrible picture of the world. Both play with the sting of pain, trusting in their extremely powerful magic. Through this game, both justify the existence even of "the worst of all worlds." Here the wild, ecstatic force, measured against the calm, image-making force, shows itself as the eternal, original power of art, the one that calls the whole visible world into being. And in the middle of that world, a new glow of glorifying transformation is needed to keep the living world of separate individuals holding on to life. If we could imagine dissonance becoming a human being, and what else is a human being? then this dissonance, in order to be able to live, would need a glorious illusion that spreads a veil of beauty over its own true nature. That is Apollo's true purpose as an artist. Under his name we gather all those countless illusions of beautiful appearance that, at every moment, make life worth living at all and push us on to live the next moment.

At the same time, of that foundation of all existence, the wild, ecstatic ground beneath the world, only as much may enter a person's awareness as the calm, image-making power of glorifying transformation

can overcome again. So these two urges to make art are forced to unfold their powers in strict balance with each other, according to a law of eternal justice. Wherever the wild, ecstatic powers rise up as fiercely as we are now seeing, Apollo must also already have come down to us, wrapped in a cloud. The next generation will probably see his richest and most beautiful effects.

Anyone would feel most surely, by instinct, that this effect is needed, if he once felt himself carried back, even in a dream, into the life of the ancient Greeks. Imagine him walking under tall Ionic colonnades, rows of graceful columns, looking up at a skyline cut by pure and noble lines. Beside him he sees his own figure, made glorious, reflected in shining marble. All around him are people who walk with solemn steps or move gently, with harmonious voices and with gestures that follow a rhythm. With beauty flowing into him like this without end, wouldn't he have to raise his hand to Apollo and cry out: "Blessed people of Greece! How great Dionysus must be among you, if the god of Delos thinks such magic is needed to heal your frenzied madness, the madness of your wild hymns to Dionysus!" But to someone in this mood, an old man of Athens might look up at him with the noble eyes of Aeschylus and answer: "Then say this too, you strange visitor: how much this people had to suffer to be able to become so beautiful! But now follow me to the tragedy, and make an offering with me in the temple of both gods!"

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