Original edition | Faithful translation

The Dionysian Worldview

Friedrich Nietzsche

Read and listen to this book on SUN.

Open the book page

sunapp.ai/books/the-dionysian-worldview-by-friedrich-nietzsche

Full text, credits and source notices follow.

SUN | sunapp.ai

FRIEDRICH
NIETZSCHE

The Dionysian Worldview



sun | *Intelligent Audio*



sunapp.ai/download

The Dionysian Worldview

Friedrich Nietzsche

Faithful translation

Translated from the German by Blue Energy People, Inc. (SUN), with AI assistance from Claude Opus 5.5.

Nietzsche Source, eKGWB/DW (German original, 1870)

Contents

The Dionysian World-View..... 3

The Dionysian World-View

1.

The Greeks, who in their gods both utter and at the same time keep silent the secret doctrines of their world-view, set up two deities as the twofold source of their art, Apollo and Dionysus. In the realm of art these names represent opposites of style, which almost always go side by side, in struggle with one another, and only once, at the moment of flowering of the Hellenic "Will", appear fused into the artwork of Attic tragedy. For in two states does man attain the blissful feeling of existence, in *dream* and in *intoxication*. The beautiful semblance of the dream-world, in which every man is a full artist, is the father of all plastic art and, as we shall see, of an important half of poetry as well. We take delight in the immediate understanding of *form*; all shapes speak to us; there is nothing indifferent and unnecessary. Even in the highest life of this dream-reality we still have the shimmering-through sensation of its *semblance*; only when this ceases do the pathological effects begin, in which the dream no longer refreshes and the healing natural power of its states ceases. Within that limit, however, it is by no means only the pleasant and friendly images that we seek out within ourselves with that all-comprehension: the grave, the sad, the gloomy, the dark too is gazed upon with the same pleasure, only that here too the veil of semblance must be in fluttering motion and must not wholly cover the fundamental forms of the real. Thus while the dream is the play of the individual man with the real, the art of the sculptor (in the wider sense) is *play with the dream*. The statue as a block of marble is something very real, but the reality of the statue *as dream-figure* is the living person of the god. So long as the statue still hovers as an image of fancy before the eyes

of the artist, he is still playing with the real: when he translates this image into the marble, he plays with the dream.

In what sense, then, could *Apollo* be made the god of *art*? Only insofar as he is the god of dream-representations. He is the "shining one" through and through: at his deepest root a god of sun and light, who reveals himself in radiance. "Beauty" is his element: eternal youth is his companion. But the beautiful semblance of the dream-world is also his realm: the higher truth, the perfection of these states in contrast to the only fragmentarily intelligible reality of day, raise him to the soothsaying god, but just as surely to the artistic god. The god of beautiful semblance must at the same time be the god of true knowledge. But that delicate limit which the dream-image must not overstep, lest it work pathologically, where semblance not only deceives but cheats, must not be lacking in the nature of Apollo either: that measured limitation, that freedom from the wilder stirrings, that wisdom and calm of the sculptor-god. His eye must be "sunlike" calm: even when it is wrathful and looks with displeasure, the consecration of beautiful semblance lies upon it.

Dionysian art, on the other hand, rests on play with intoxication, with rapture. Two powers above all raise naive natural man to the self-forgetting of intoxication: the spring urge and the narcotic drink. Their effects are symbolised in the figure of Dionysus. The principium individuationis is broken through in both states; the subjective vanishes entirely before the erupting force of the generally human, indeed of the universally natural. The festivals of Dionysus not only seal the bond between man and man, they also reconcile man and nature. Of its own free will the earth brings its gifts, the wildest beasts draw near in peace: the flower-garlanded chariot of Dionysus is drawn by panthers and tigers. All the caste-like boundaries that need and caprice have set between men vanish: the slave is a free man, the noble and the lowborn unite in the same Bacchic choruses. In ever-

growing throngs the gospel of "world-harmony" rolls from place to place: singing and dancing, man expresses himself as a member of a higher, more ideal community: he has unlearned walking and speaking. More still: he feels himself enchanted, and he has truly become something other. As the beasts speak and the earth gives milk and honey, so too something supernatural sounds forth from him. He feels himself a god; what once lived only in his imagination he now feels in himself. What are images and statues to him now? Man is no longer an artist, he has become a work of art; he walks as enraptured and exalted as he saw the gods walk in dream. The artistic power of nature, no longer that of a man, reveals itself here: a nobler clay, a costlier marble is here kneaded and hewn: man. This man, formed by the artist Dionysus, stands to nature as the statue stands to the Apollonian artist.

If, now, intoxication is the play of nature with man, then the creating of the Dionysian artist is play with intoxication. This state can be grasped only by way of likeness, if one has not experienced it oneself: it is something similar to dreaming and at the same time sensing the dream as dream. Thus the servant of Dionysus must be in intoxication and at the same time lie in wait behind himself as an observer. Not in the alternation of sober-mindedness and intoxication, but in their side-by-side, does Dionysian artistry show itself.

This side-by-side marks the summit of Hellenism: originally Apollo alone is a Hellenic god of art, and it was his power that so far tempered Dionysus, storming in from Asia, that the most beautiful bond of brotherhood could arise. Here one most easily grasps the incredible idealism of the Hellenic nature: out of a nature-cult which among the Asiatics signifies the crudest unchaining of the lower drives, a panhetaeric animal life that for a fixed time bursts all social bonds, there arose among them a festival of world-redemption, a day

of transfiguration. All the sublime drives of their nature revealed themselves in this idealisation of the orgy.

Never, however, was Hellenism in greater danger than at the stormy approach of the new god. Never, again, did the wisdom of the Delphic Apollo show itself in a fairer light. At first reluctant, he wove about his mighty adversary the finest web, so that the latter could scarcely notice that he was walking along in half captivity. Because the Delphic priesthood saw through the new cult in its profound effect upon processes of social regeneration and furthered it in accordance with its political-religious purpose, because the Apollonian artist learned with deliberate moderation from the revolutionary art of the Bacchic service, because finally the year's dominion in the Delphic order of worship was divided between Apollo and Dionysus, both gods had emerged, as it were, as victors from their contest: a reconciliation upon the field of struggle. If one wishes to see quite clearly how mightily the Apollonian element held down the irrationally supernatural in Dionysus, let one recall that in the older period of music the γένος διθυραμβικόν was at the same time the ἡσυχαστικόν. The more vigorously, now, the Apollonian spirit of art grew up, the more freely did the brother-god Dionysus develop: at the same time as the former attained to the full, as it were motionless, vision of beauty, in the age of Phidias, the other interpreted in tragedy the riddles and terrors of the world and uttered in tragic music the innermost thought of nature, the weaving of the "Will" in and above all appearances.

Though music, too, is an Apollonian art, strictly speaking it is only rhythm whose *sculptural* power was developed for the representation of Apollonian states: the music of Apollo is architecture in tones, and moreover in merely suggested tones, such as are proper to the kithara. Precisely that element is cautiously kept at a distance which makes up the character of Dionysian music, indeed of music as such: the shattering power of tone and the altogether incomparable world

of harmony. For this the Greek had the finest sensibility, as we must infer from the strict characterisation of the *modes*, even if the need for a *fully worked-out*, actually sounding harmony was far slighter among them than in the modern world. In the succession of harmonies, and already in their abbreviation, in so-called melody, the „Will" reveals itself wholly immediately, without having first entered into an appearance. Every individual can serve as a likeness, as it were as a single case of a general rule: conversely, however, the Dionysian artist will set forth the essence of what appears in a manner immediately intelligible: for he commands the chaos of the Will that has not yet become form, and out of it, in every creative moment, he can create a new world, *but also the old one*, known as appearance. In the latter sense he is a tragic musician.

In Dionysian intoxication, in the impetuous racing through all the scales of the soul under narcotic excitements or in the unfettering of the spring urges, nature expresses itself in its highest power: it binds individual beings to one another once more and lets them feel themselves as one; so that the principium individuationis appears, as it were, as an enduring state of weakness of the Will. The more degenerate the Will is, the more everything crumbles into the particular; the more selfishly, arbitrarily the individual is developed, the weaker is the organism it serves. In those states, therefore, there breaks forth as it were a sentimental trait of the Will, a „sighing of the creature" for what has been lost: out of the highest pleasure sounds the cry of horror, the yearning laments over an irreplaceable loss. Luxuriant nature celebrates its Saturnalia and its funeral rites at once. The affects of its priests are most wondrously mingled, pains awaken pleasure, jubilation wrests tormented tones from the breast. The god ὁ λύσιος has delivered everything from itself, transformed everything. The song and the mimicry of masses thus aroused, in whom nature gained voice and motion, was something wholly new and unheard-of

for the Homeric-Greek world; to it this was something Oriental, which it first had to subdue with its tremendous rhythmic and sculptural power, and which it did subdue, as at the same time it subdued the Egyptian temple style. It was the Apollonian people that cast the overpowering instinct into the fetters of beauty: it yoked the most dangerous elements of nature, its wildest beasts. One admires the idealistic might of Hellenism most highly when one compares its spiritualisation of the Dionysian festival with what arose from the same origin among other peoples. Similar festivals are primeval and demonstrable everywhere, most famously in Babylon under the name of the Sacaea. Here, throughout a five-day festival, every civic and social bond was torn asunder; but the centre lay in sexual licentiousness, in the annihilation of every family tie through unrestricted hetaerism. The counterpart to this is offered by the picture of the Greek Dionysian festival which Euripides sketches in the Bacchae: from it streams the same charm, the same musical intoxication of transfiguration, which Scopas and Praxiteles condensed into the statue. A messenger relates that in the midday heat he had driven the herds up to the mountain peaks: it is the right moment and the right place to see the unseen; now Pan sleeps, now the sky is the motionless background of a glory, now the day *blossoms*. On an alpine pasture the messenger notices three choirs of women, lying scattered over the ground and in a seemly posture: many women have leaned against the trunks of fir trees: all are slumbering. Suddenly the mother of Pentheus begins to shout for joy, sleep is chased away, all leap up, a model of noble manners; the young girls and the women let their locks fall down upon their shoulders, the fawnskin is put in order where in sleep its ribbons and bows have come undone. They gird themselves with snakes that lick their cheeks familiarly, some women take young wolves and fawns in their arms and suckle them. All adorn themselves with wreaths of ivy and bindweed; a blow of the thyrsus against the rock and water gushes forth: a thrust of the staff into the ground,

and a spring of wine wells up. Sweet honey drips from the branches; if anyone so much as touches the ground with his fingertips, snow-white milk springs out. — This is a wholly enchanted world; nature celebrates its festival of reconciliation with man. The myth says that Apollo put the torn Dionysus back together again. This is the image of Dionysus newly created by Apollo, rescued from his Asiatic dismemberment. —

2.

The Greek gods, in the perfection in which they already confront us in Homer, are surely not to be understood as births of distress and need: such beings were surely not devised by a mind shaken with fear: it was not in order to turn away from life that a gifted imagination projected its images into the blue. From them speaks a religion of life, not of duty or of asceticism or of spirituality. All these figures breathe the triumph of existence; an exuberant feeling of life accompanies their cult. They make no demands: in them what is present is deified, no matter whether it be good or evil. Measured against the earnestness, the holiness and the severity of other religions, the Greek religion is in danger of being underestimated as a fantastic trifling — unless one calls to mind an often misunderstood trait of the profoundest wisdom, through which that Epicurean existence of the gods suddenly appears as the creation of that incomparable people of artists, and almost as its highest creation. It is the philosophy of the *people* that the fettered forest god reveals to mortals: „the best is not to be, the second best to die soon“. It is this same philosophy that forms the background of that world of gods. The Greek knew the terrors and horrors of existence, but he veiled them in order to be able to live: a cross hidden beneath roses, according to Goethe's symbol. That radiant Olympian order came to dominion only because the dark sway of μοῖρα, which decrees early death for Achilles and the abominable

marriage for Oedipus, was to be hidden by the shining figures of Zeus, of Apollo, of Hermes and so on. Had anyone taken away the artistic *semblance* of that *middle world*, one would have had to follow the wisdom of the forest god, the *Dionysian* companion. It was this *need* out of which the artistic genius of this people created these gods. A theodicy was therefore never a Hellenic problem: they took care not to impute to the gods the existence of the world and thereby the responsibility for its condition. The gods too are subject to ἀνάγκη: this is a confession of the rarest wisdom.

To see one's existence, such as it simply is, in a transfiguring mirror, and to shield oneself with this mirror against the Medusa — that was the ingenious strategy of the Hellenic „Will" in order to be able to live at all. For how else could that infinitely sensitive people, so splendidly gifted for *suffering*, have endured existence, had not *that very same existence*, bathed in a higher glory, been revealed to it in its gods! The same urge that calls art into being, as the complement and consummation of existence that seduces one into living on, also gave rise to the Olympian world, a world of beauty, of repose, of enjoyment.

Out of the effect of such a religion, life in the Homeric world is understood as that which is worth striving for in itself: life beneath the bright sunshine of such gods. The *pain* of the Homeric men concerns departure from this existence, above all early departure: if lament sounds at all, it rings again of the "short-lived Achilles", of the swift passing of the race of men, of the vanishing of the age of heroes. It is not unworthy of the greatest hero to long to go on living, be it even as a day-labourer. Never has the "Will" expressed itself more openly than in Hellenism, whose very lament is still its song of praise. That is why modern man yearns for that age in which he believes he hears the full accord between nature and man; that is why the Hellenic is the watchword for all who must look about for shining models for their conscious affirmation of the Will; that is why, finally, at the

hands of pleasure-seeking writers the concept of "Greek cheerfulness" arose, so that, irreverently, a dissolute idler's life dares to excuse, indeed to honour itself with the word "Greek".

In all these notions, which stray from the noblest into the most vulgar, Hellenism has been taken too crudely and simply and fashioned, as it were, after the image of unambiguous, so to speak one-sided nations (the Romans, for instance). One ought surely to suspect the need for artistic semblance even in the world-view of a people that is wont to turn to gold whatever it touches. And indeed, as already intimated, we do encounter a tremendous illusion in this world-view, the same illusion that nature so regularly employs to attain its ends. The true goal is concealed by a phantom of delusion: toward this we stretch out our hands, and that goal nature attains through this deception. In the Greeks the Will wished to behold itself transfigured into a work of art: in order to glorify itself, its creatures had to feel themselves worthy of glorification, they had to see themselves again in a higher sphere, lifted up, as it were, into the ideal, without this perfected world of contemplation acting as an imperative or as a reproach. This is the sphere of beauty, in which they behold their mirror images, the Olympians. With this weapon the Hellenic Will fought against the talent correlative to the artistic one, the talent for *suffering* and for the wisdom of suffering. Out of this struggle, and as a monument to its *victory*, tragedy was born.

The *intoxication* of *suffering* and the *beautiful dream* have their different worlds of gods: the first, in the omnipotence of its being, penetrates into the innermost thoughts of nature; it recognizes the fearful urge toward existence and at the same time the perpetual death of all that has entered into existence; the gods it creates are good and evil, resemble chance, terrify through a suddenly emerging design, are pitiless and without delight in the beautiful. They are akin to truth and approach the concept: rarely and with difficulty do they condense into

shapes. To look upon them turns one to stone: how is one to live with them? But one is not meant to: this is their teaching.

From this world of gods, if it cannot be wholly veiled like a culpable secret, the gaze must be drawn away by the shining dream-birth of the Olympian world set beside it: therefore the glow of its colours, the sensuousness of its shapes, rises the higher, the more forcefully truth or its symbol asserts itself. But never was the struggle between truth and beauty greater than at the invasion of the cult of Dionysus: in it nature unveiled itself and spoke of its secret with dreadful clarity, with the *tone* before which seductive semblance almost lost its power. From Asia this spring arose: but in Greece it had to become a torrent, because here for the first time it found what Asia had not offered it, the most excitable sensibility and capacity for suffering paired with the lightest prudence and keenness of sight. How did Apollo save Hellenism? The newcomer was drawn over into the world of beautiful semblance, into the world of the Olympians: much of the honours of the most esteemed deities, of Zeus, for instance, and of Apollo, was sacrificed to him. Never was more ceremony made over a stranger: but then he was a fearful stranger too (hostis in every sense), mighty enough to shatter the hospitable house. A great revolution began in all the forms of life: everywhere Dionysus penetrated, into art as well.

Seeing, the beautiful, semblance, bound the domain of Apollonian art: it is the transfigured world of the eye, which creates artistically in dream, with eyelids closed. Into this dream state the *epic* too wishes to transport us: with open eyes we are to see nothing and to feast upon the inner images which the rhapsode seeks to stir us to produce by means of concepts. The effect of the plastic arts is here attained by a detour: whereas the sculptor leads us through the hewn marble to the *living* god he has beheld as in a dream, so that the shape that actually hovers before him as τέλος becomes clear both to the sculptor and to the spectator, and the former moves the latter, through the *in-*

termediate shape of the statue, to behold it after him: so the epic poet sees the same living shape and likewise wishes to present it to others for beholding. But he no longer places a statue between himself and men: rather he narrates how that shape proves its life, in movement, tone, word, deed; he compels us to trace a multitude of effects back to their cause, he constrains us to an artistic composition. He has reached his goal when we see the shape or the group or the picture clearly before us, when he imparts to us that dreamlike state in which he himself first produced those representations. The epic's summons to *plastic* creation proves how absolutely different lyric is from epic, since the former never has the forming of images as its goal. What the two have in common is only something material, the word, or more generally the concept: when we speak of poetry, we thereby have no category coordinate with plastic art and music, but a conglutination of two artistic means wholly different in themselves, of which the one signifies a path to plastic art, the other a path to music: both, however, are only *paths* to artistic creation, not arts themselves. In this sense painting and sculpture too are, of course, only artistic means: art proper is the capacity to create images, regardless of whether this is a creating-before or a creating-after. On this faculty — a universally human one — rests the *cultural significance* of art. The artist — as the one who compels toward art through artistic means — cannot at the same time be the absorbing organ of artistic activity.

The image-worship of Apollonian *culture*, whether it expressed itself in the temple, in the statue or in the Homeric epic, had its sublime aim in the ethical demand for *measure*, which runs parallel to the aesthetic demand for beauty. Measure set up as a demand is possible only where measure, the limit, is held to be *knowable*. In order to keep within one's limits, one must know them: hence the Apollonian admonition γνῶθι σεαυτόν. The mirror, however, in which alone the Apollonian Greek could see, that is, know himself, was the Olympian

world of gods: but here he recognised his own innermost being, enveloped in the beautiful semblance of the dream. The measure under whose yoke the new world of gods moved (as against an overthrown world of Titans) was that of beauty: the limit which the Greek had to observe was that of beautiful semblance. The innermost purpose of a culture turned towards semblance and measure can indeed only be the veiling of truth: to the untiring researcher in *its* service, just as to the overmighty Titan, the warning μηδὲν ἄγαν was called out. In Prometheus, Hellenism is shown an example of how the excessive furthering of human knowledge works equally ruinously for the one who furthers and the one who is furthered. Whoever would stand before the god with his wisdom must, like Hesiod, *μέτρον* ἔχειν *σοφίης*.

Into a world thus built up and artificially protected there now pressed the ecstatic tone of the Dionysian festival, in which the whole *excess* of nature revealed itself at once in pleasure and suffering and knowledge. Everything that until now had counted as limit, as determination of measure, proved itself here to be an artificial semblance: "excess" unveiled itself as truth. For the first time the demonically fascinating folk song roared forth in all the drunkenness of an overmighty feeling: what, against this, did the psalmodising artist of Apollo signify, with the merely timidly suggestive sounds of his κιθάρα? That which formerly had been propagated caste-wise in poetic-musical guilds and at the same time kept away from all profane participation, that which by the force of the Apollonian genius had had to remain at the stage of a simple architectonics, the musical element, here threw off all barriers: the rhythmics that formerly moved only in the simplest zigzag loosened its limbs for the bacchantic dance: the *tone* sounded, no longer as before in ghostly thinness, but in the thousandfold intensification of the mass and accompanied by deep-sounding wind instruments. And the most mysterious thing happened: harmony came into the world here, which in its movement brings the

Will of nature to immediate understanding. Now things became loud in the surroundings of Dionysus that in the Apollonian world had lain artificially hidden: the whole radiance of the Olympian gods paled before the wisdom of Silenus. An art which in its ecstatic intoxication spoke the truth chased away the Muses of the arts of semblance; in the self-forgetting of the Dionysian states the individual with its limits and measures went under: a twilight of the gods stood close at hand.

What was the intention of the Will, which after all is ultimately *one*, in granting admission to the Dionysian elements contrary to its own Apollonian creation?

It was a matter of a new and higher μηχανή of existence, the birth of the *tragic thought*. —

3.

The rapture of the Dionysian state, with its annihilation of the ordinary barriers and limits of existence, contains, while it lasts, a *lethargic* element in which everything experienced in the past is submerged. Thus, through this chasm of oblivion, the world of everyday and the world of Dionysian reality are separated from one another. But as soon as that everyday reality enters consciousness again, it is felt as such with *nausea*: an *ascetic*, Will-negating mood is the fruit of those states. In thought the Dionysian is set, as a higher world order, against a common and wretched one: the Greek wanted absolute flight from this world of guilt and fate. He scarcely consoled himself with a world after death: his longing went higher, beyond the gods; he negated existence together with its gaudily glittering mirroring in the gods. In the consciousness of awakening from intoxication he sees everywhere the horrible or absurd in human being: it fills him with nausea. Now he understands the wisdom of the forest god.

Here the most dangerous limit is reached that the Hellenic Will, with its Apollonian-optimistic fundamental principle, could permit. Here it at once went to work with its natural healing power to bend that negating mood back again: its means is the tragic work of art and the tragic idea. Its intention could by no means be to damp down or even to suppress the Dionysian state: a direct subjugation was impossible, and, were it possible, yet all too dangerous: for the element checked in its outpouring would then have broken a path elsewhere and pervaded all the veins of life.

Above all it was a matter of transforming those thoughts of nausea about the horrible and the absurd in existence into representations with which one can live: these are the *sublime* as the artistic taming of the horrible, and the *ridiculous* as the artistic discharge of the nausea of the absurd. These two elements, intertwined with one another, are united into a work of art that imitates intoxication, that plays with intoxication.

The sublime and the ridiculous are a step beyond the world of beautiful semblance, for in both concepts a contradiction is felt. On the other hand they by no means coincide with the truth: they are a veiling of the truth which, though more transparent than beauty, is nonetheless still a veiling. In them, then, we have a *middle world* between beauty and truth: in it a union of Dionysus and Apollo is possible. This world reveals itself in a play with intoxication, not in a complete being-devoured by it. In the actor we recognise again the Dionysian man, the instinctive poet singer dancer, but as the *played* Dionysian man. He seeks to attain his model in the shock of sublimity, or else in the shock of laughter: he goes beyond beauty and yet he does not seek the truth. He remains hovering in the middle between the two. He strives not for beautiful semblance, but indeed for semblance, not for truth, but for *verisimilitude*. (Symbol, sign of truth). The actor was at first, naturally, no single individual: it was, after all,

the Dionysian mass, the people, that was to be represented: hence the dithyrambic chorus. Through the play with intoxication he himself, as well as the surrounding chorus of spectators, was to be, as it were, discharged of intoxication. From the standpoint of the Apollonian world, Hellenism had to be *healed* and *atoned*: Apollo, the true god of healing and atonement, rescued the Greek from *clear*-seeing ecstasy and from nausea at existence — through the work of art of the tragic-comic thought.

The new world of art, that of the sublime and the ridiculous, that of "verisimilitude", rested upon a different view of gods and a different world-view from the older one of beautiful semblance. The knowledge of the terrors and absurdities of existence, of the disturbed order and the irrational planfulness, indeed of the most monstrous *suffering* in the whole of nature, had unveiled the so artificially shrouded figures of Μοῖρα and the Erinyes, of Medusa and the Gorgon: the Olympian gods were in the gravest danger. In the tragic-comic work of art they were rescued, in that they too were plunged into the sea of the sublime and the ridiculous: they ceased to be merely "beautiful"; they absorbed into themselves, as it were, that older order of gods and its sublimity. Now they divided into two groups; only a few hovered in between, as deities now sublime, now ridiculous. Above all, Dionysus himself received that divided nature.

How one could now live again in the tragic period of Greekdom is best shown in two types, in Aeschylus and Sophocles. To the first, as a thinker, the sublime appears most of all in magnificent justice. With him man and god stand in the closest subjective communion: the divine, the just, the moral and the *happy* are for him intertwined in unity with one another. By this balance the individual being, man or Titan, is measured. The gods are reconstructed according to this norm of justice. Thus, for example, the popular belief in the blinding demon who seduces to guilt — a remnant of that primeval world of gods de-

throned by the Olympians — is corrected, in that this demon becomes an instrument in the hand of the justly punishing Zeus. The likewise primeval thought — equally foreign to the Olympians — of the curse upon a lineage is stripped of all its harshness, since in Aeschylus there is no *necessity* to sacrilege for the individual, and everyone can escape it.

Whereas Aeschylus finds the sublime in the sublimity of Olympian justice, Sophocles sees it — wondrously — in the sublimity of the impenetrability of Olympian justice. He restores the popular standpoint in every point. The undeservedness of a terrible fate seemed to him sublime; the truly insoluble riddles of human existence were his tragic muse. Suffering attains its transfiguration with him; it is conceived as something sanctifying. The distance between the human and the divine is immeasurable; therefore the deepest submission and resignation are fitting. The true virtue is σωφροσύνη, properly a negative virtue. Heroic humanity is the noblest humanity without that virtue; its fate demonstrates that infinite chasm. There is scarcely any *guilt*, only a lack of knowledge concerning the worth of man and his limits.

This standpoint is in any case deeper and more inward than the Aeschylean; it approaches the Dionysian truth considerably and utters it without many symbols — and yet! we recognize here the ethical principle of Apollo woven into the Dionysian world-view. In Aeschylus the nausea is dissolved into sublime awe before the wisdom of the world order, which is *hard* to recognize only because of man's weakness. In Sophocles this awe is still greater, because that wisdom is wholly unfathomable. It is the pure mood of piety, which is without struggle, whereas the Aeschylean has continually the task of justifying divine justice and therefore always remains standing before new problems. The "limit of man", which Apollo commands us to search out, is knowable for Sophocles, but it is narrower and more confined than

Apollo meant it to be in the pre-Dionysian age. Man's lack of knowledge about himself is the Sophoclean problem; man's lack of knowledge about the gods, the Aeschylean.

Piety, most wondrous mask of the life-drive! Surrender to a perfected *dream world*, upon which the highest moral *wisdom* is bestowed! Flight from truth, so as to be able to worship it from afar, wrapped in clouds! Reconciliation with reality *because* it is enigmatic! Aversion to unriddling, because we are not gods! Joyful casting down into the dust, happy repose in unhappiness! Highest self-relinquishment of man in his highest self-expression! Glorification and transfiguration of the terrors and horrors of existence as the remedies *for* existence! Joyous life in the contempt of life! Triumph of the Will in its negation!

At this stage of knowledge there are only two paths, that of the *saint* and that of the *tragic artist*: both have in common that, with the clearest knowledge of the nothingness of existence, they can nonetheless live on without feeling a rift in their world-view. The nausea at living on is felt as a means to creation, be it a sanctifying or an artistic one. The terrible or the absurd is elevating, because it is only *seemingly* terrible or absurd. The Dionysian power of enchantment proves itself here even at the highest summit of this world-view: everything real dissolves into semblance, and behind it the unitary *nature of the Will* makes itself known, wholly wrapped in the glory of wisdom and truth, in dazzling radiance. *The illusion, the delusion is at its height*. —

Now it will no longer seem incomprehensible that the same Will which, as Apollonian, ordered the Hellenic world, took into itself its other form of appearance, the Dionysian Will. The struggle of the two forms of appearance of the Will had an extraordinary goal: to create a *higher possibility of existence* and within this, too, to attain an even *higher glorification* (through art). No longer the art of semblance but tragic art was the form of glorification: in it, however, that art of semblance

is completely absorbed. Apollo and Dionysus have united. Just as the Dionysian element has penetrated into Apollonian life, just as semblance has established itself here too as limit, so the Dionysian-tragic art is no longer "truth". No longer is that singing and dancing instinctive natural intoxication: no longer is the Dionysianly aroused mass of the chorus the mass of the people unconsciously seized by the spring urge. Truth is now *symbolized*; it makes use of semblance, and it can and must therefore also employ the arts of semblance. But already a great difference from the earlier art shows itself, in that now all the artistic means of semblance are called upon *together* for aid, and further in that the statue walks, the paintings of the periaktoi shift, now the temple, now the palace is presented to the eye by means of the same rear wall. We thus notice at the same time a certain *indifference toward semblance*, which must here give up its eternal claims, its sovereign demands. Semblance is by no means any longer enjoyed as *semblance*, but as *symbol*, as a sign of truth. Hence the — in itself offensive — fusion of the artistic means. The clearest indication of this disdain for semblance is the *mask*.

Upon the spectator, then, the Dionysian demand is made that everything present itself to him as enchanted, that he always see more than the symbol, that the whole visible world of the stage and the orchestra be the *realm of wonders*. But where is the power that places him in the mood of believing in wonders, through which he sees everything enchanted? Who conquers the power of semblance and depotentiates it into a symbol?

This is *music*. —

4.

What we call "feeling", the philosophy that walks in Schopenhauer's paths teaches us to comprehend as a complex of unconscious repres-

entations and states of the Will. The strivings of the Will, however, express themselves as pleasure or displeasure and show therein only quantitative difference. There are no kinds of pleasure, but there are indeed degrees and a countless number of accompanying representations. By pleasure we are to understand the satisfaction of the *one* Will, by displeasure its non-satisfaction.

In what manner, now, does feeling communicate itself? Partly, but only very partly, it can be converted into thoughts, that is, into conscious representations; this holds, of course, only of the part made up of accompanying representations. But always, even in this domain of feeling, an indissoluble remainder is left. It is the dissoluble part alone with which language, that is, the concept, has to do: by this the limit of "*poetry*" in its capacity to express feeling is determined.

The two other modes of communication are wholly instinctive, working without consciousness and yet purposively. They are the language of *gesture* and the language of *tone*. The language of gesture consists of universally intelligible symbols and is produced by reflex movements. These symbols are visible: the eye that sees them immediately conveys the state which brought forth the gesture and which it symbolises: for the most part the beholder feels a sympathetic innervation of the same parts of the face or limbs whose movement he perceives. Symbol here means a wholly imperfect, fragmentary likeness, an intimating sign whose understanding must be agreed upon: only that in this case the general understanding is an *instinctive* one, and so has not passed through bright consciousness.

What, then, does the *gesture* symbolise in that twofold being, in feeling?

Evidently the *accompanying representation*, for only it can be intimated, imperfectly and fragmentarily, by the visible gesture: an image can be symbolised only by an image.

Painting and sculpture represent man in gesture: that is, they imitate the symbol and have achieved their effects when we understand the symbol. The pleasure of the beholder consists in understanding the symbol, in spite of its semblance.

The actor, on the other hand, represents the symbol in reality, not merely in semblance: but his effect upon us does not rest on our understanding of it: rather we immerse ourselves in the symbolised feeling and do not stop at pleasure in semblance, at beautiful semblance.

Thus in drama the scenery does not arouse the pleasure of semblance at all; rather we take it as a symbol and understand the reality it intimates. Wax dolls and real plants are quite admissible to us here alongside things wholly painted, in proof that here we make present to ourselves reality, not artful semblance. Verisimilitude, no longer beauty, is the task here.

But what is beauty? — "The rose is beautiful" means only: the rose has a good semblance, it has something pleasingly radiant. Nothing is meant to be said thereby about its essence. It pleases, it arouses pleasure, as semblance: that is, the Will is satisfied by its appearing, the pleasure in existence is thereby furthered. It is — in its semblance — a faithful likeness of its Will: which is identical with this form: in its semblance it corresponds to the determination of its species. The more it does so, the more beautiful is <it>: if in its essence it corresponds to that determination, then it is "good".

"A beautiful painting" means only: the representation we have of a painting is here fulfilled: but when we call a painting "good", we designate our representation of a painting as the one corresponding to the *essence* of the painting. For the most part, however, a beautiful painting is understood to be a painting that represents something beautiful: this is the judgement of laymen. They enjoy the beauty of the subject matter; *thus* we are to enjoy the plastic arts in drama, only

that here it cannot be the task to represent only what is beautiful: it is enough if it seems *true*. The represented object is to be grasped with the greatest possible sensuous vividness; it is to act as truth: a demand whose *opposite* is claimed by every work of beautiful semblance. —

But if gesture symbolises the accompanying representations in feeling, under what symbol are the stirrings of the *Will* itself *communicated* to us for our understanding? What is the instinctive mediation here?

The *mediation* of *tone*. More precisely, it is the various modes of pleasure and displeasure — without any accompanying representation — that tone symbolises.

All that we can say to characterise the various sensations of displeasure are images of the representations made distinct by the symbolism of gesture: for example, when we speak of sudden fright, of the "throbbing, pulling, twitching, stabbing, cutting, biting, tickling" of pain. Certain "forms of intermittence" of the Will seem to be expressed thereby, in short — in the symbolism of the language of tone — *rhythmics*. The fullness of the Will's intensifications, the changing quantity of pleasure and displeasure, we recognise again in the *dynamics* of tone. But its true essence hides itself, without letting itself be expressed in similitudes, in *harmony*. The Will and its symbol — harmony — both at bottom *pure logic*! While rhythmics and dynamics are in a certain sense still outer sides of the Will made manifest in symbols, almost still bearing the type of appearance upon them, harmony is the symbol of the pure essence of the Will. In rhythmics and dynamics, accordingly, the individual appearance can still be characterised as appearance; *from this side music can be developed into an art of semblance*. The indissoluble remainder, harmony, speaks of the Will outside and within all forms of appearance, and is thus not

merely a symbolism of feeling but a *world-symbolism*. In *its* sphere the concept is wholly powerless.

Now we grasp the significance of the language of gesture and the language of tone for the *Dionysian work of art*. In the primordial spring dithyramb of the people, man seeks to express himself not as an individual but as *generic man*. That he ceases to be an individual man is expressed through the symbolism of the eye, the language of gesture, in this way: that he speaks in gestures as a *satyr*, as a natural being among natural beings, and indeed in the heightened language of gesture, in the *gesture of the dance*. Through tone, however, he utters the innermost thoughts of nature: not only the genius of the species, as in *gesture*, but the genius of existence itself, the Will makes itself immediately understood here. With gesture, then, he remains within the limits of the species, and so of the world of appearance; but with tone he dissolves the world of appearance, as it were, into its original unity; the world of Maya vanishes before its spell.

But when does natural man come to the symbolism of tone? When does the language of gesture no longer suffice? When does tone become music?

Above all in the highest states of pleasure and displeasure of the Will, as Will exulting or Will in mortal dread, in short in the *intoxication of feeling*: in the *cry*. How much mightier and more immediate is the cry than the glance! But the milder excitations of the Will also have their tone-symbolism: in general every gesture has a parallel tone: to heighten it into pure sound is granted only to the intoxication of feeling.

The most intimate and most frequent fusion of a kind of gesture-symbolism with tone is called *language*. In the word, the essence of the thing is symbolised through tone and its cadence, the strength and rhythm of its sounding; through the gesture of the mouth, the accom-

panying representation, the image, the appearance of the essence. The symbols can and must be manifold; but they grow instinctively and with great and wise lawfulness. A symbol retained is a *concept*: since in holding it fast in memory the tone wholly dies away, only the symbol of the accompanying representation is preserved in the concept. What one can designate and distinguish, one "grasps".

In the heightening of feeling, the essence of the word reveals itself more distinctly and more sensuously in the symbol of tone: that is why it sounds more. Recitative song is, as it were, a return to nature: the symbol, blunted through use, regains its original power.

In the sequence of words, that is, through a chain of symbols, something new and greater is now to be symbolically represented: at this power rhythmics, dynamics and harmony again become necessary. This higher circle now governs the narrower one of the single word: a choice of words, a new placement of them, becomes necessary; poetry begins. The spoken song of a sentence is by no means a succession of word-sounds: for a word has only an entirely relative sound, because its essence, its content represented through the symbol, differs according to its placement. In other words: out of the higher unity of the sentence and of the essence symbolized by it, the single symbol of the word is continually determined anew. A chain of concepts is a thought: this, then, is the higher unity of the accompanying representations. The essence of the thing is unattainable for thought: but that it acts upon us as motive, as stimulus of the Will, can be explained by the fact that thought has already become a noted symbol for an appearance of the Will, for stirring and appearance of the Will at once. Spoken, however, and thus with the symbolism of tone, it acts incomparably more powerfully and more directly. Sung — it reaches the height of its effect when the melos is the intelligible symbol of its Will: if this is not the case, then the sequence of tones

acts upon us, and the sequence of words, the thought, remains distant and indifferent to us.

Now according to whether the word is to act predominantly as symbol of the accompanying representation or as symbol of the original stirring of the Will, according, that is, to whether images or feelings are to be symbolized, two paths of poetry part from one another: the epic and the lyric. The first leads to the plastic arts, the other to music: pleasure in appearance governs the epic, the Will reveals itself in the lyric. The former breaks loose from music, the latter remains in league with it.

In the Dionysian dithyramb, however, the Dionysian enthusiast is stirred to the highest intensification of all his symbolic faculties: something never before felt presses toward utterance, the annihilation of the individuatio, the being-one in the genius of the species, indeed of nature. Now the essence of nature is to express itself: a new world of symbols is necessary; the accompanying representations come to symbol in images of an intensified human being, they are represented with the highest physical energy through the entire bodily symbolism, through the gesture of the dance. But the world of the Will, too, demands an unheard-of symbolic expression; the forces of harmony, of dynamics, of rhythmics suddenly grow tempestuous. Divided between both worlds, poetry too attains a new sphere: at once the sensuousness of the image, as in the epic, and the emotional intoxication of tone, as in the lyric. To grasp this total unfettering of all symbolic powers requires the same intensification of being that created it: the dithyrambic servant of Dionysus is understood only by his own kind. Therefore this whole new world of art, in its wildly alien, seductive wondrousness, rolls amid fearful *struggles* through Apollonian Hellenism. —

sun | *Intelligent Audio*



sunapp.ai/download