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The Nietzschean 'Musical South'
– *the Music of Vitality,*
Affirmation and ...

1. The Metaphysical Standpoint

Nietzschean thinking about music springs from Arthur Schopenhauer's metaphysics. The author of *The World as Will and Idea* treats music and philosophy as complementary areas. It follows that true philosophy is able to talk about things that are directly expressed in music or, in other words, it can repeat the notions uttered by music.¹ Schopenhauer makes a travesty of Gottfried W. Leibniz's idea that music is an unconscious mathematical exercise, in which the soul is quite unaware that it is calculating (*exercitium arithmeticae occultum nescientis se numerare animi*). According to Schopenhauer, music is 'an unconscious metaphysical practice of the soul, which is quite unaware that it is philosophising'. In terms of its form and acoustics, music can be decomposed into numerical ratios which, imposing some kind of order on the world of sounds, do not completely exhaust the musical reality, as the art of sounds is not tantamount to a mathematical equation. Schopenhauer identifies music with the will and essence of the universe. Thus, as a direct objectification and presentation of will, music completely differs from other arts which portray will indirectly by means of ideas. Music as a direct representation of will also directly appeals to the subject, the highest degree of the will's ob-

¹ See Arthur Schopenhauer, *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, vol. 1, ed. Eduard Griesbach (Leipzig: *Grossherzog Wilhelm Ernst Ausgabe*, n.d.), 355: 'so wird wer mir gefolgt und in meine Denkungsort eingegangen ist, es nicht so sehr paradox finden, wenn ich sage, dass gesetzt es gelänge eine vollkommen richtige, vollständige und in das Einzelne gehende Erklärung der Musik, also eine ausführliche Wiederholung dessen was sie ausdrückt in Begriffen zu geben, diese sofort auch eine genügende, Wiederholung und Erklärung der Welt in Begriffen, oder einr solchen ganz gleichlautend, also die wahre Philosophie seyn würde...'

jectification. This fact accounts for the incomparable influence of music on the listener's emotions, passions and feelings. Being the equivalent of the whole world, music even surpasses in its specificity the distinctness of the visual world. Consequently, it has ontological priority over all that exists. Music, as pointed out by Schopenhauer, could exist, to one degree or another, even if the world was non-existent. The same, however, does not hold for other arts.² Hence, it seems that the modification of the sententious title of *The World as Will and Idea* (*Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*) into *The World as Music and Idea* (*Die Welt als Musik und Vorstellung*) is justified and in keeping with Schopenhauer's intention.

Schopenhauer leaves the final verification of his theses to the impact of music. Thus, to be able to fully acknowledge the propounded musical theses one has to, following his suggestion, listen frequently to music and search within it for confirmation of his musical thought.³ The need to start philosophical thinking from the music itself, and then to refer it to these metaphysical theses in order to get to the core of the art of sounds, is common to the majority of trends in the philosophy of music, whose discrete status and subject matter are to a large extent determined by Schopenhauer's metaphysics and the Nietzschean philosophy of life. The area of metaphysics is where the art of sounds meets wisdom-oriented thinking. Music embedded in the metaphysical dimension becomes a philosophical category, representing what is subsumed in non-notional reflection. That which would remain elusive without the participation of music is referred to by Schopenhauer as will, whereas for Friedrich Nietzsche it is the Dionysian element.

2. The Dionysian Wisdom of Music

In the autobiographical *Ecce homo*, Nietzsche confesses his faith, stating that *amor fati* is his true nature.⁴ The adage *amor fati* expresses an attitude implying both necessity and affirmation. The attitude

² Ibid., 398: 'so ist die Musik, da sie die Ideen übergeht, auch von er erscheinenden Welt ganz unabhängig, ignoriert sie schlechthin, könnte gewissermaßen, auch wenn die Welt gar nicht wäre, doch bestehen; was von den anderen Künsten sich nicht sagen lässt.'

³ Ibid., 345–346: 'Überdies halte ich es, um der hier zu gebenden Darstellung der Bedeutung der Musik mit ächter Überzeugung seinen Beifall geben zu können, für notwendig, dass oft mit anhaltender Reflexion auf dieselbe der Musik zuhöre, und hierzu wieder ist erforderlich, dass man mit dem ganzen von mir dargestellten Gedanken schon sehr vertraut sei.'

⁴ See Friedrich Nietzsche, *Ecce homo, Wie man wird, was man is*, in *Sämtliche Werke, Kritische Studienausgabe in 15 Bänden*, ed. Giorgio Colli and Manzzino Montinari (Munich, 1980), vol. 6, 363: '*amor fati* ist meine innerste Natur'.

of affirmation makes the world beautiful. It is part of Nietzschean 'joyful knowledge'.⁵ Nietzsche's Zarathustra opposes causality and goal-orientedness as the determining forces of the universe. Just as man 'has become', so his faculty to understand the world 'is becoming'. To live truly and to be able to sing the song of affirmation, referred to as the 'Yes' song, it is necessary to reject the erroneous path of logic and reason and follow the path of *amor fati*. Nietzsche's Zarathustra rebels against thralldom to the goal in his understanding of the world. Instead, he emphasizes the importance of chance.⁶

Heraclitus' idea of eternal return is considered by Nietzsche to be the law of becoming and the essence of reality. This law expresses the multitude and short-lived nature of things, as well as the inexhaustibility of man's creative powers. The idea of becoming, tied to the idea of eternal return, of circular motion, arises from the belief in the aimlessness of the world. Becoming does not refer to any final points. It does not have its opposite in existence or in any constant or durable form. It has neither beginning nor end. Human life is entwined in necessity, in the destiny of the whole, in the history of the universe. As such, it can be neither evaluated nor condemned for misdemeanours, for otherwise the universe would also be subject to such judgements. An awareness of this fact leads, according to the author of *The Will to Power (Der Wille zur Macht)*, to liberation through affirmation. The world, which is in a state of flux, is situated 'beyond good and evil'. The interaction of its forces, setting in motion the human will to power and desire to reassess values, gives rise to a joy which is Dionysian in nature. This joy is most fully expressed in music, which, as the speech of will, is understood directly. It also possesses the power to induce a metaphorical expression of the principle of all things, in all its changeability, which asserts itself in the Dionysian element. It is in this element that the triumph of a life created through the will to power is manifest. In *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche explains what the Dionysian character consists in, asserting that its essence would be best illustrated by converting Ludwig van Beethoven's *Ode to Joy* into a painting worshipped by millions.⁷

⁵ See Nietzsche, *Fröhliche Wissenschaft* („*La gaya scienza*“), in *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 3, 521: 'Ich will immer mehr lernen, das Nothwendige an den Dingen als das Schöne sehen: - so werde ich Einer von Denen sein, welche die Dinge schön Machen. *Amor fati*: das sei von nun an meine Liebe!'

⁶ See Nietzsche, *Also sprach Zarathustra. Ein Buch für Alle und Keinen*, in *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 3, 209: 'über alle Dingen steht der Himmel Zufall, der Himmel Unschuld, der Himmel Ohngefähr, der Himmel Übermuth.<Von Ohngefähr> – das ist der älteste Adel der Welt, den gab ich allen Dingen zurück, ich erlöste sich von der Knechtsschaft unter dem Zwecke.'

⁷ See Nietzsche, *Die Geburt der Tragödie*, in *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 1, 29: 'Man verwandele das Beethoven'sche Jubellied der <Freude> in ein Gemälde und bleibe

The second of the two elements that drives the history of art, the Apollonian element, brings with it a world of seemingly beautiful appearances and a state of calm. It covers up the truth about real life. This process makes it easier to survive and to endure the hardships of life, and thus it is an indispensable element of human existence. Nietzsche emphasizes that it is difficult to achieve such an attitude. It is not something obvious, some easily attainable paradise, but is a form of beautiful appearance, an attempt to impart sense to the transitory nature of things. Since Apollo is guided by 'measured limitation', the ethical postulate of moderation in Apollonian art is equally as important as beauty. The world of Apollonian beauty, arising from the world of experience and suffering, is contained in the symbolism of the highest art, where living and being complement each other.

In states of Dionysian intoxication, the *principium individuationis* collapses, and the individual gives way to the general. Dionysus teaches tragic thinking, which reveals the duality of the world's nature, embodying good and evil, joy and suffering. Thanks to Dionysus, man becomes reconciled with nature, with its perfection and richness. Subjectivism yields and is melted into thinking which reflects the workings of the universe. In this state man is seized with a feeling of metaphysical joy.

The Dionysian character is manifest, not so much in the transition from dispassionate and level-headed thinking to intoxication, as in the co-occurrence of the two states. This process is woven into an interdependence of a broader metaphysical nature, namely into the interaction between the two elements. The stronger the drive towards seemingly redeeming appearances, the stronger the manifestation of true existence, of empirical being filled with suffering. Nietzsche suggests that one can grasp the essence of art by looking at it from the perspective of life; likewise, science can be understood from the perspective of an artist. However, it is the truth that is of great importance in both cases. For the author of *The Will to Power*, art that accepts life, and at the same time points to the mechanisms behind the forming of beautiful appearance, is a truly metaphysical activity.

The Dionysian-musical outlook, supplanted from Hellenistic art by Socrates' theoretical thinking, perdured in various metaphors of the spiritual world and continues to attract individuals endowed with the will to creative power, based on tragic knowledge. The tragic myth finds its expression when science, becoming aware of its limitations, gives way

mit seiner Einbildungskraft nicht zurück, wenn die Millionen schauervoll in den Staub sinken: so kann man sich dem Dionysischen nähern.'

to irrational thinking and turns to music and art, which reveal a world inaccessible to theoretical knowledge. 'Socrates, make music!,'⁸ repeated the dream phantom haunting the philosopher in prison

The art of sounds is capable of giving birth to tragic myth, which metaphorically expresses Dionysian knowledge. The tragic myth embodied in music gave birth to the Attic tragedy, the most expressive form of the Dionysian truth of the world, and only from the spirit of music can tragedy be reborn, assuming the form of metaphysical art – the only art of value. Mythical thinking expressing the essence of human existence restores to art its lost wisdom and saves it from mediocrity. The Dionysian power of music, expressed in its ability to interpret myth, accounts for the huge impact of the art of sounds. It adds metaphorical meaning to tragic myth. The joy resulting from surpassing the *individuum* and, consequently, reaching and directly depicting the element of life accepted by tragic wisdom fully manifests itself thanks to the spirit of music. In this form it can be present in poetry and, to a varying degree, other forms of art. The 'Herculean power' of music accounts for the fact that tragic myth did not share the fate of other myths considered as a sum of real facts and rooted in some alleged historical reality.

According to Nietzsche, the essence of the theoretical world of culture is best represented by opera. The composers and theoreticians of the Florentine Camerata were convinced that in the new musical-dramatic genre it was the intelligibility of the words in the text that was of the highest significance. As Nietzsche observed, words accompanied by some kind of harmonic arrangement are allegedly more important than music, just as the soul is nobler than the body.⁹ Thus recitative became the fundamental constituent of opera, with its characteristic monody. Within the *stile rappresentativo*, half-sung speech is accompanied by vocal music, creating a whole that is contradictory to artistic instincts. Opera's departure from the Dionysian spirit of music testifies to the fact that this musical stage form has nothing in common with Greek tragedy, to which the reformers would have it relate. Opera turned music into an art accompanying the words and actions on stage. Thus, the art of sounds has been deprived of its dignity and has gradually become an easy kind of entertainment meeting the tastes of an average audience.

⁸ Ibid., 96: 'Sokrates, treibe Musik!' Arguably, Nietzsche might be referring here to the words uttered by Socrates as presented by Plato in *Phaedo*. On the day of his death Socrates remembers the recurrent dream in which he was encouraged to pursue his interest in music. He wishes he had not given up composing 'common' music or music designed for singing and playing, which is the sonic embodiment of beauty.

⁹ See Nietzsche, *Die Geburt*, 123: 'Denn die Worte seien um so viel edler als das begleitende harmonische System, um wie viel die Seele edle als Körper sei.'

3. Tragic Myth in German Music

Modern times have also brought the reverse phenomenon: the rebirth of the Dionysian spirit. It is present in German music, represented by composers from Johann Sebastian Bach to Beethoven, from Beethoven to Wagner, which Nietzsche compares to the power of the solar system.¹⁰ The first Dionysian accent in German music was Lutheran choral music, expressing the ideas of the Reformation. The Dionysian character of German music, supported by the philosophy of Immanuel Kant and Schopenhauer, implies a departure from confidence in the rational understanding of the world. It also reminds us of our limited capacity to get to the core of things, as well as of the significance of the ethical and artistic issues inseparable from Dionysian wisdom. The 'mystery of the oneness' of German music and philosophy points to the emergence of a new form of spirit. The revitalised Dionysian myth also differs from the explosion of sentimentality, and often tastelessness, which, according to Nietzsche, constitutes the core of German Romanticism. For Nietzsche, the 'resurrection of tragedy' in Wagner's output implies a return to primeval sources, without which future generations would not be able to understand the Dionysian myth.

Franz Liszt announced that the appearance of *Lohengrin* ended the reign of traditional opera. This work dispenses with the conventional division into separate arias, duets and collective scenes, which, according to Wagner, is devoid of sense from the dramaturgic perspective. Instead, the composer introduces the 'unending melody' (*unendliche Melodie*), which, free-flowing and not restricted by the traditional schemes of periodic construction, is subordinated to the technique of leading motives (*Leitmotive*) connected with particular characters, events and even objects. These leitmotifs, or musical embodiments of ideas, subject to countless transformations, build up the musical and dramaturgic unity of the work. These changes were introduced to create, following the pattern of Greek tragedy, a musical drama uniting all the arts (*Gesamtkunstwerk*), in which music, poetry and movement made up a uniform whole subordinated to the plot of the drama.

As pointed out by Nietzsche, Wagner's music stems from the breakthrough in the art of sounds made by Beethoven. Before the times of the great Viennese musician, music was composed in line with some kind of imposed arrangement springing from a conviction of the musical har-

¹⁰ Ibid., 127: 'die deutsche Musik, wie wir sie vornehmlich in ihrem mächtigen Sonnenlaufe von Bach zu Beethoven, von Beethoven zu Wagner, zu verstehen haben.'

mony of the universe or from what the Greeks refer to as the ethos of music. The art of sounds was organized in unvarying forms, sanctioned by tradition. In Beethoven's music, the focus was on pathos, the expression of human experiences, passions and feelings. This entailed a departure from the laws and conventions which were part and parcel of the prevailing ethos of the art of sounds. Nietzsche argues that it may seem that in his attempt at expressing pathos by means of ethos, Beethoven embarked on a task that was a contradiction in terms.¹¹ The tendency to mould musical matter by means of leading motives in Wagner's compositions replaced the objectivism of pre-Beethovenian music. The ordering of the elements of the musical material, constituted from the passage of emotions and passions, is overseen by the principles of symphonism, the action of which, according to Nietzsche, can be compared to Heraclitus' logos, introducing harmony into opposites.

Wagner employs musical means to bring out from the presented event its very essence. He conveys artistically truth which is inaccessible in any other form. Thus he presents the medieval knights in *Lohengrin* or the Renaissance brotherhood of singers in *The Mastersingers of Nuremberg*, getting to the core of the historical phenomena – an area more accessible to intuition than to reason. The myth, 'the condensed picture of the world', manifests itself in his music. Nietzsche refers to this as a kind of miracle. Natural creative forces make it possible to understand and present the myth without any reference to the causal relationships that are typical of historical sciences and the human psyche. Without myths, any culture is deprived of its actively influencing power. For the Greeks, the twilight of tragedy implied the end of myth. For the Germans, myth was reborn with music. According to Nietzsche, the ideas in German myth focus on creative action and inducing the ability to reassess values, which leads to the transformation of reality. The message of German myth is designed, not for Germans alone, but for all the creative people of the future. The Lutheran Reformation, symbolically identifying power with volition, seems to illustrate ideas beyond the realm of art.

Wagner's mythical thinking rests, not on notions, but on events that are present in the art of sounds. These are moulded into a picture of the world which is ordered by facts, not logical causality. According to Nietzsche, *The Ring of the Nibelung* is a great intellectual system in which thoughts have no notional form. They are just sounds. *Tristan and*

¹¹ See Nietzsche, *Unzeitgemäße Betrachtung IV, Richard Wagner in Bayreuth*, in *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 1, 492: 'Es scheint mitunter so, als ob Beethoven sich die widerspruchsvolle Aufgabe gestellt habe, das Pathos mit den Mitteln des Ethos' sich ausprechen zu lassen.'

Isolde, which Nietzsche regards as the 'opus metaphysicum of all art', is the quintessence of Wagner's style. The musical drama illustrates a particular kind of relationship between music and philosophy, which, underlying the composer's creative intention, is the point from which it is possible to start thinking about his work. In his earlier works, Wagner attempted to make it easier for the listener to understand his music and the ideas contained in it. In *Tristan and Isolde*, he aimed at one thing only, namely 'philosophising with sounds'.¹² With his gift for 'philosophising with sounds', Wagner can be said to be the epitome of the perfect musician, as a composer and performer, and also as a listener. A true musician is able to understand *Tristan and Isolde*, regarded by Nietzsche as the pinnacle of metaphysical achievement in music, as a great symphonic composition without any reference to words and images. In this work, the listener perceives 'the heart-related will of the world', which induces his/her desire for being and experiencing. For Nietzsche, musicians thinking in philosophical terms can be identified with philosophers thinking in terms of music. The former are composers who by means of their music get in touch with the world.¹³ Nietzsche saw the great love duet from Act II of *Tristan and Isolde* as an example of the 'art of transition', i.e. a moulding of musical form which rests on the expression and fluid combination of extreme feelings, as well as on all the degrees of amorous ecstasy. The 'art of transition' encompasses all the musical material, melody, harmony and rhythm. In liberating music from the abstract laws pertaining to pure musical forms, Wagner subordinates them to expression. Thus, in line with his original intention, music gets closer to life. Nietzsche never changed his mind about *Tristan and Isolde*, which remained for him, as a musical drama, the 'opus metaphysicum of all art', even when he became an advocate of Georges Bizet's *Carmen* and considered *The Mastersingers of Nuremberg* a masterpiece of decadence.

4. The Nietzschean Criticism of Wagner

One of the main reasons for Nietzsche breaking off his musical and philosophical friendship with Wagner was the incipient German nationalism, whose centre was the theatre at Bayreuth. In Wagner's 'temple of art', the Dionysian idea of music was replaced with pompousness

¹² Ibid., 479: 'sich mit sich verständigen, über das Wesen der Welt in Vorgängen denken, in Tönen philisophiren; der Rest des A b s i c h t l i c h e n in ihm geht auf die letzten E i n s i c h t e n aus.'

¹³ See Nietzsche, *Die Geburt...*, 135: 'gleichsam ihren Mutterschooss [...] und mit den Dingen fast, nur durch unbewusste Musikrelation in Verbindung stehen.'

and the idolizing of the person of the composer rather than any attempt to get to the core of his music. The atmosphere at Bayreuth gave rise to what the author of *The Will to Power* condemned. Around 1876 Nietzsche understood that Wagner had changed his approach to music.¹⁴ He saw as decadent Wagner's conduct as an ostentatiously art-worshipping aesthete who actually attached more importance to his artistic success. Filled with artificial affectation, Wagner attributes undue importance to trifling matters, and the theoretical outlook he begins to profess is apt to refute and distort the myth. Wagner's art is no longer related to the Nietzschean idea of the superman paving the way for outstanding individuals. Instead, the composer begins to glorify the German nation. In *The Twilight of the Gods*, Nietzsche observes that the Germans are becoming more and more interested in politics. He fears that *Deutschland, Deutschland über alles* means the end of German philosophy and, consequently, music, which is closely related to it.¹⁵

Nietzsche now considers Wagner a composer whose output reinforces all the features of Romanticism – a spiritual system in which the clarity of mind and delight in subtlety typical of free spirituality give way to sentimentality and passion. It is inactive individuals and those bored with life that reveal how to experience passions. In Romanticism, it began to be considered obligatory to be on the side of the oppressed, both in personal and social life. This seemingly altruistic attitude is, according to Nietzsche, the most deceitful form of egoism – a flaunting of one's sentimentality which has nothing in common with the power of the spirit. Great style in art, he added, arises, not from great passions or evoking strong impressions, but from a perfection of artistic form.

Another equally important reason for Nietzsche's severing of contacts with Wagner was the Christianity of *Parsifal*. Wagner signed his last work with his newly received title of church adviser, and, referring to the opera as 'a solemn stage mystery', reserved its performance exclusively for Bayreuth – the site of an increasing worship of his music and person.¹⁶ Nietzsche reproached the composer for offering his art to the

¹⁴ See Nietzsche, *Der Wille zur Macht. Versuch einer Umwertung aller Werte* (Leipzig, 1930), 660: 'Gegen 1876 hatte ich den Schrecken mein ganzes bisheriger Wollen k o m p r o m i t t i e r t zu sehen, als ich begriff, wohin es jetzt mit Wagner hinauswollte...'

¹⁵ See Nietzsche, *Götzen – Dämmerung oder Wie man mit dem Hammer philosophirt*, in *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 6, 104: '...die Deutschen misstrauen jetzt dem Geiste, die Politik verschlingt allen Ernst für wirklich geistige Dinge – <Deutschland, Deutschland über Alles>, ich fürchte, das war das Ende der deutschen Philosophie...'

¹⁶ After the copyrights of Wagner's *Parsifal* expired, in 1913, the opera appeared on stage in other theatres.

service of the Church and religion. In *The Wanderer and his Shadow*, Nietzsche states that Wagner, though seemingly victorious, is actually a decaying and desperate romantic who has suddenly fallen down powerless and dispirited under the Crucifix.¹⁷ Wagner's acceptance of Christianity and ensuing conception of *Parsifal* contradicts the will to life. This is what Nietzsche could not forgive the composer, to whom he had earlier attributed Dionysian wisdom. Wagner had departed from Nietzsche's opposition 'Dionysus versus the Crucified', which was the point that integrated his whole philosophy. A related issue was also the accusation of decadence that Nietzsche directed at Wagner and his music. According to Nietzsche, decadence consists in the fighting of instincts and the will to life, which determine the will to power. Looking at *Parsifal* from this perspective, the work represents a glorification of powerlessness. However, in the great triad of German music – Bach, Beethoven, Wagner – the name of Wagner has never been replaced with any other.

5. Towards the Musical South

Nietzsche was enraptured with Bizet's opera, with its music and its libretto based on Prosper Mérimée's short story. He regarded Bizet as a composer whose talent was not 'adversely affected' by Wagner. In *The Case of Wagner*, Nietzsche states that he praises Bizet at the expense of Wagner not just out of sheer malice. He asserts that the 'unending melody', the essence of Wagner's music, is a complete threat to formal construction.¹⁸ Bizet's formal precision and his classical treatment of the element of life are in stark contrast to Wagner's lack of form and his entanglement of musical leitmotifs. Comparing Wagner's music with that of Bizet, Nietzsche states that the composer of *Carmen* expresses the tragedy naturally and effortlessly, without the falsehood of grand style.¹⁹ Wagner seems pretentious when presenting passions, whereas Bizet shows eroticism naturally, depicting it in all its cynicism and cruelty. This leads Nietzsche to put forward the fundamental principle of his

¹⁷ Nietzsche, *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches. Ein Buch für freie Geister*, in *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 2, 372: 'Richard Wagner, scheinbar der Siegreichste, in Wahrheit ein morsch gewordener, verzweifelnder Romantiker, sank plötzlich, hilflos und zerbrochen, vor dem christlichen Kreuze nieder..'

¹⁸ See Nietzsche, *Nietzsche contra Wagner, Ein Musikanten Problem*, in *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 6, 422: 'die vollkommne Entartung des rhythmischen Gefühls, das C h a o s an Stelle des Rhythmus'.

¹⁹ See Nietzsche, *Der Fall Wagner, Turiner Brief vom Mai 1888*, in *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 6, 14: 'Ohne Grimasse! Ohne Falschmünzerei! Ohne L ü g e des grossen Stils!'

philosophy of art, whereby that which is good is effortless and light.²⁰ A freedom and effortlessness in observing the laws of art are, to his mind, synonymous with genius. Compared to Bizet, Wagner's music is heavy, and thereby lacking perfection. The criterion of lightness and effortlessness, as pointed out in *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, also refers to those who aim to achieve the greatness of the superman. With great joy and lightness, as if dancing, they should transcend their individual limits and create.

Bizet's music induces the listener to action and is therefore valuable. Nietzsche claims that this music makes him a better man and a more productive individual, and that is what he acknowledges as good.²¹ Carmen's fate is in the hands of inscrutable destiny. For Nietzsche, the acceptance of what fate brings is synonymous with life wisdom, as expressed in the principle of *amor fati*, which reflects the acceptance of, and fascination with, the element of life. In the period of his fascination with *Carmen*, Nietzsche, passing his value judgements on music, employs the opposition of beauty versus ugliness, instead of the old pair of opposites: the Dionysian character versus the Apollonian character. The Nietzschean idea of beauty incorporates creative activity, a kind of rapture, and a manifestation of the will to power. Ugliness is what should be excluded from art for being its substantive opposite; it has nothing to do with the light dexterity of the dancer. Implying decadence, contradiction and an insufficient coordination of inner desires, it is tantamount to the fall of the organizing power – of will.²² Accordingly, Nietzsche considers Wagner's *Parsifal* an example of decadence in music.

Nietzsche acknowledged Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart as Bizet's predecessor and viewed him as a more than merely European phenomenon, the expression of 'great centuries-old European taste'. Through Mozart's rococo, the clarity of form, transparent structure and lightness, there appeal to us his sincere kindness, fondness for loveliness, tenderness, dancing, blissful tearfulness, and his faith in the South.²³ From this perspective, Beethoven is a musician of the North. The essence of Beetho-

²⁰ Ibid., 13: 'Das Gute ist leicht, alles Göttliche, läuft auf zarten Füßen.'

²¹ Ibid., 14: 'Ich werde ein besserer Mensch, wenn mir dieser Bizet zuredet. Auch ein besserer Musikant, ein besserer Z u h ö r e r. [...] Bizet macht mir fruchtbar. Alles Gute macht mich fruchtbar. Ich habe keine andre Dankbarkeit, ich habe keinen andern B e w e i s dafür, was ist gut.'

²² See Nietzsche, *Der Wille zur Macht*, 535: 'bedeutet d é c a d e n c e eines T y p u s, Widerspruch und mangelnde Koordination der inneren Begehungen, – bedeutet einen Niedergang an o r g a n i s i e r e n d e r Kraft, an <Willen>...'

²³ See Nietzsche, *Jenseits von Gut und Böse, Vorspiel einer Philosophie der Zukunft*, in *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 5, 157: 'seine Höflichkeit des Herzens, sein Verlangen nach Zierlichem, Verliebtem, Fanzendem, Thränenseligem, sein Glaube an den Süden...'

ven's music is the interdependence of subjective factors and formal objective conditions, combined with the necessity of imposing form on the spiritual and material activity of the subject. Being, on the one hand, the leading representative of Viennese Classicism and, on the other, a representative of the storm and *Sturm und Drang* movement, Beethoven, going beyond the strictly ordered forms of classical music, creates music of the dark age, deprived of lightness, which dances 'around the revolutionary tree of freedom' and, in the end, almost seems to worship Napoleon.²⁴ German Romantic music after Beethoven – whose music Nietzsche considered more European than German and, consequently, among the foremost achievements of the art of sounds – is a second-rate, provincial phenomenon. Felix Mendelssohn's pure and light compositions were soon forgotten, whereas Schumann, considered by Nietzsche to be the embodiment of bad taste, was praised to the skies. The idea of a musical South, representing richness and affirmation, was adopted, after Mozart, by Bizet. As viewed by Nietzsche, the South is a great school of healing, an untamed richness of sun and fair weather spread out over a being that believes in itself.²⁵ The music of the South is situated 'beyond good and evil'. Its essence, the beauty of sounds, evokes an overwhelming desire to exist. It is designed, not only for the people in the South, but also for those in the North who love the South. Thus, it comes close to the ancient Greek 'Yes', accepting existence. This music implies in the most unequivocal manner that Europe desires unification.²⁶

6. Concluding Remarks

For the author of *The Will to Power*, the difference between Bizet's and Wagner's music partly coincides with a distinction between 'classical' and 'romantic', which in this case signify, not successive periods in the history of art, but opposing creative attitudes, involving the differentiation between activity (a sense of power, clarity and fortitude in accepting all that the process of becoming brings) and inactivity (a lack of power, and the state typical of decadence). Thus, Wagner's romantic attitude, glorifying spiritual experiences, impulses and passions, does not

²⁴ Ibid., 187: 'um dem Freiheitsbaum der Revolution getanzt und endlich vor Napoleon beinahe angebetet hatte.'

²⁵ Ibid., 200: 'eine grosse Schule der Genesung, im Geistigsten und Sinnlichsten, als eine anhängige Sonnenfülle und Sonnen – Verklärung, welche sich über ein selbsherrliches, an sich glaubendes Dasein breitet..'

²⁶ Ibid., 201: 'die unzweideutigsten Anzeichen [...] in denen sich ausspricht, dass Europa Eins werden will.'

aim to conquer them, and is therefore akin to nihilism. The classical attitude, in contrast, is a form of thanksgiving for existence, expressed symbolically in each work of art. Such is Bizet's music, which, having nothing in common with decadence, embodies the ideas of the musical South. Being full of vitality, it also observes the principles pertaining to the coherence of form. The power of vitality inherent in Bizet's music reflects the Nietzschean conviction that art is the crowning glory of being, the generating of perfection and plenitude; it is, in fact, the confirmation, blessing and worship of existence.²⁷

The 'worship of existence' refers also, perhaps primarily, to love. The two musical pictures of love portrayed by Wagner and by Bizet, in *Carmen*, represent different dimensions of the experience of love, which in a simplified, not musically notated, assignation, can be described as mystic and vital. Following Nietzsche's methodological suggestions, it is necessary to verify his philosophical judgements pertaining to music by listening to it. For it is only in the direct perception of these two kinds of music that the difference in love experience as presented by the two composers becomes clear. Accordingly, the love duet in Act II of *Tristan and Isolde* appears to be in sharp contrast to the habanera sung by Carmen, who does not accept any binding oaths of love. However, the perception of Wagner's and Bizet's music does not testify to the fact that erotic experiences as expressed in music are more intense in the case of the composer belonging to the musical South. After all, Nietzsche never changed his opinion of *Tristan and Isolde*: the '*opus metaphysicum* of all art'.

It follows that the musical South is a category that enables us, first and foremost, to pass a value judgement on the art of sounds in terms of its artistic perfection (a value of formal significance), and also represents the Dionysian character recognizable in musical-mythical thinking.

In *The Secret of Zarathustra*, a psychoanalytic biography of Friedrich Nietzsche, Joachim Köhler attempts to demonstrate that Nietzsche saw the 'musical South' as a place of the discovery of, and fascination with, bodily beauty, as the kingdom of Dionysus, the god of liberated sexuality.²⁸ At the age of thirty-seven, Nietzsche, having retired from his professorship at the University of Basle, begins to travel, or, it can also be said, to look for a place where he could find peace and satisfaction. He travels all over Italy for eight years. In 1881, in Genoa, he sees *Carmen*

²⁷ See Nietzsche, *Der Wille zur Macht...*, 553: 'Daseins - V o l l e n d u n g, ihre Hevorbriugen der Vollkommenheit und Fülle; Kunst ist wesentlich B e j a h u n g, S e g n u n g, V e r g ö t t l i c h u n g d e s D a s e i n s...'

²⁸ See Joachim Köhler, *Zarathustras Geheimnis. Friedrich Nietzsche und seine verschlüsselte Botschaft. Eine Biographie* (Reinbek bei Hamburg, 1992).

for the first time. Every now and then he comes back to Taormina, in Sicily, at the time a meeting place of aesthetes who, following the example set by the ancient Greeks, favoured homosexual love. Employing the Freudian method of psychoanalysis, Köhler analyses the structure of Nietzsche's personality. Focusing on the id and on analysis of the philosopher's dreams, Köhler comes to the conclusion that the philosophy of life created by Nietzsche goes far beyond the framework of classical philosophical thinking, which in its attempt to capture phenomena in the area of ontology and axiology, is aware of its limits when trying to understand the world. To support his theses, Köhler refers to Nietzsche's criticism of Schopenhauer's metaphysics of sexual love propounded in *The Wanderer and his Shadow*. According to Schopenhauer, the ultimate goal of all amorous endeavours boils down to the instinctive procreation of subsequent generations.²⁹ It is at this point that Nietzsche questions his predecessor's theses. In *Beyond Good and Evil*, he attempts to demonstrate that human sexuality is related to individual spiritual development. Yet this conviction does not prove the pertinence of Köhler's analyses.

For Nietzsche, the crowning glory of all music, and also the constant frame of reference, is the output of Fryderyk Chopin, which contains all the components of the work of a genius offering the listener a 'moment of blessing', filled with the love for metaphysical beauty. Chopin captured such a moment of blessing in the sounds of his Barcarolle.³⁰

Should love for metaphysical beauty be added to these considerations?

Translated by Elzbieta Lesiak-Bielawska

²⁹ See Schopenhauer, *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, vol. 2, chap. 44.

³⁰ See Nietzsche, *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches*, 619: '... diesen seligen Moment hat Chopin, in der Barcarole, so zum Ertönen gbracht, dass selbst Götter dabei gelüsten könnte, lange Sommerabende in einem Kahne zu liegen.'