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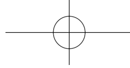
The Who and Philosophy



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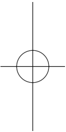
The Philosophy of Popular Culture

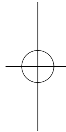
Series editor: Mark T. Conard, Marymount Manhattan College

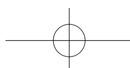
The Philosophy of Popular Culture series comprises volumes that explore the intersection of philosophy and popular culture. The works are devoted to a subject in popular culture, such as a particular genre, filmmaker, or television show. The essays investigate the philosophical underpinnings, or do a philosophical analysis, of the particular topic. The books will contain smart, jargon-free essays that illuminate texts (films and TV shows) in popular culture, and they will introduce non-specialists to traditional philosophical ideas and issues. The governing ideas of the series are that texts in popular culture are worthy of philosophical analysis and that philosophical thinking and traditional philosophical ideas can enlighten us and enrich our everyday lives.

Titles in the Series

The Who and Philosophy, edited by Rocco J. Gennaro and Casey Harison







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The Who and Philosophy

Edited by Rocco J. Gennaro and Casey Harison

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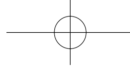

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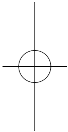

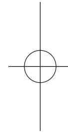

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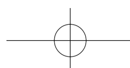

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Chapter Twelve

Behind Zarathustra's Eyes

The Bad, Sad Man Meets Nietzsche's Prophet

M. Blake Wilson

THE POPULAR SONG AS TRAGEDY

"Behind Blue Eyes" is the eighth of nine songs released on *Who's Next* in November 1971. It was also released as a single in Europe and the United States, where it achieved a respectable mid-30s chart position as a Top 40 hit. It was originally intended as a centerpiece of the doomed *Lifehouse* album and film, which was meant to match both the critical and commercial success of its predecessor, *Tommy*. According to David Marsh, "'Behind Blue Eyes' was the theme song of a villainous character[,] and its mixture of self righteousness and self pity [was] so good that it was taken by many to be autobiographical."[1] Songwriter Pete Townshend—whose autobiography Marsh is referring to—says,

> "Behind Blue Eyes" is sung from the point of view of the main villain of *Lifehouse*, Jumbo. The lyrics are a first-person lament from Jumbo, who is always angry and full of angst because of all the pressure and temptation that surrounds him, and the song was intended to be his "theme song" had the project been successful.[2]

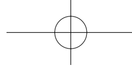
Like its classic rock forebears "Paint it Black" by the Rolling Stones and "The Sound of Silence" by Simon and Garfunkel, "Behind Blue Eyes" is pessimistic, dark, and tragic—all unlikely attributes of hit songs. There are, of course, other hits that deal with tragedy: "Billy Don't be a Hero," "The Night Chicago Died," "Leader of the Pack," "Cat's in the Cradle," and "Seasons in the Sun" were all—for better or for worse—hits. These songs, how-

ever, deal with singular particular events (a young soldier dying, a city burning, an automobile crash) that do not reflect the singer/narrator's *Weltanschauung*, or worldview. For example, when Jagger wants to paint "it" black, he is calling categorically for the world of appearances to be as black as the more "real" world he inhabits: the world *behind* the appearances. Paul Simon's song of silence reflects total desperation and resignation: when he attempts to illuminate the masses, they insist on worshipping over and over the false neon gods. Like those voices, Jumbo, the person behind Peter Townshend's blue eyes, is not just feeling bad and sad today because he woke up to some new revelation about the pointlessness of life; rather, he is reawakening to empty dreams and an even emptier conscience—his *life*, the same thing, every day. He is not lamenting some particular tragic event: he is lamenting the universality of tragedy constituted by the fact that whatever knowledge he has gained of the world has yielded only knowledge of pain, suffering, and evil. He has no solution or resolution—only a self-diagnosis of self-pity.

As an existential pop song, "Behind Blue Eyes" is in good company with other immensely popular classic rock songs which also confront the standard existential themes of loneliness, the inevitable passage of time, and the search for meaning within the reality/appearance dichotomy—key examples are found in the Doors ("The End"), Pink Floyd ("Breathe"), and, most interestingly, the not-so-subtle allusions to Albert Camus's *The Stranger* interspersed within Queen's mega-hit "Bohemian Rhapsody" (after pointlessly killing a man, there is no "escape from reality," "nothing really matters," and the singer sometimes wishes he'd "never been born at all").

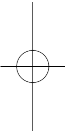
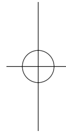
In terms of song craft, "Behind Blue Eyes" is typical of a style that Townshend perfected on several songs on *Who's Next*, including "Bargain," "Getting in Tune," and "This Song is Over": an alternating current between clear and gentle acoustic music in the introduction, which always reprises at least once, and rocking electric (and electronic, with the addition of the new ARP synthesizer) music which is typically triumphant, angry, and distorted. These songs cover quite a bit of musical and emotional territory, but the extraordinary "masterpieces" of the LP—and perennial concert favorites—are "Baba O'Riley," "Won't Get Fooled Again," and "Behind Blue Eyes."[3]

The yin/yang relationship of sound and lyric in "Behind Blue Eyes" was also explored by German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche in his first book, *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872). In this study of the dramatic art of the ancient Greeks and the then-contemporary opera of Richard Wagner, Nietzsche described the competing Apollonian and Dionysian artistic drives which inspire great artists: the Apollonian drives artists towards form, reason, and harmony, while the Dionysian pushes them into chaos, irrationality, and the discord of intoxication. Neither impulse takes priority over the other, and great art in the form of tragedy arises from the synthesis of these expressions of the



artistic sublime. Townshend's composition of these songs, coupled with the band's subtle and then explosive renditions of his words and music, discloses this understanding of the synthesis of the Apollonian and Dionysian in the art of the classic pop/rock song.

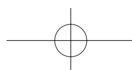
"Behind Blue Eyes" has an even deeper connection to the German philosopher. Ten years after publishing *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche began publishing the four books that would together result in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, a rambling and shambolic philosophical and literary work describing the activities and sermons of the wandering titular sage Zarathustra. The sage encounters townsfolk, jesters, talking animals, and other religious figures, offering sermons and stories on everything from a proper diet to the role of women in society to the afterlife. He famously introduces Nietzsche's ideas about the Death of God, the Eternal Return, and the Overman. It is a profoundly strange book, which Nietzsche, in the megalomania of his impending insanity, described as the "greatest present" ever given to mankind.[4]

As a wandering sage, Zarathustra is in search of disciples. Let us therefore imagine Jumbo, the first person narrator of "Behind Blue Eyes," a self-described bad, sad man, singing his song and then encountering Zarathustra on one of his many walks through the forest. Zarathustra counsels Jumbo to affirm life in the face of meaninglessness through his song: this requires Jumbo to "sing a new song" and find an existential joy—the joy of existence—in tragic art exemplified by tragic song. But first we meet Nietzsche, his understanding of tragedy, and the idea that "Behind Blue Eyes" has tragic potential.

NIETZSCHE: OUT OF THE SPIRIT OF GERMANY

Friedrich Nietzsche was born to a Lutheran minister father in Röcken, Germany, in 1844. He became a full professor at the age of twenty-four. His first book, *The Birth of Tragedy*, was published in 1872 to near-universal disdain. He was profoundly influenced by the mid-nineteenth century German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer (d. 1860), and he had an intensely close personal relationship with composer Richard Wagner (d. 1883). After retiring his teaching position after ten years due to increasing illness marked by violent headaches, near blindness, stomach ailments, and insomnia, Nietzsche began to wander about Europe, living in *pensiones* throughout Southern France, Switzerland, and Italy in the constant quest to find the perfect climate to combat his illnesses. His several published books—including *The Gay Science* (1882), *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1883–1885), and *On The Genealogy of Morals* (1887)—garnered little attention. On January 3, 1889, Nietzsche suffered a mental breakdown in Turin, Italy, while watching a carriage driver whip a horse in the street. He had experienced a total paralysis of the mind,



which has historically been attributed to an untreated syphilitic infection. Nietzsche was immediately institutionalized for eighteen months. He lived thereafter, first with his mother and then, after her death, his sister, as a physical and spiritual invalid. He wrote no more, and died insane and bedridden on August 25, 1900.

During the period of his insanity, Nietzsche became a sensation in Europe largely due to his sister Elisabeth's persistent and opportunistic promotion of his books as well as his biography, which was rapidly approaching legendary status. Elisabeth Nietzsche was the widow of one of the era's most notorious anti-Semitic German nationalists, and used her role as executor of her brother's estate to conform the Nietzsche literary estate to her brand of politics. Over the course of the next several decades, Nietzsche became known primarily in the English-speaking world as the crazed Teutonic philosopher of Nazism. Taken out of context, his writings about race, war, cruelty, "Supermen" and "blond beasts" became his unfortunate epitaph, and in many circles Nietzsche was blamed for providing the philosophical justifications for German military aggression throughout the twentieth century. Nietzsche was rehabilitated during the latter half of the century, and subsequently associated with any number of movements, schools, interpretations, and re-evaluations. Even a casual investigation of his most approachable work—an effort never broached by his sister, apparently—ought to convince the reader that Nietzsche was no Nazi.

As his first book, *The Birth of Tragedy* fulfills two roles in the Nietzschean canon: it is simultaneously a youthful and romantic work, filled with embarrassments, hyperbole, and, as Nietzsche said later, the "offensive" odor of Hegelianism, as well as the keystone linking together a theme that permeates his work from this early effort to his very last writings prior to his breakdown: this theme centers on an attempted theodicy of life itself through the medium of the tragic world view. This theodicy—the attempt to explain the value of the world in the face of overwhelming evidence of its meaninglessness and the predominance of evil—acquiesces to the type of pessimism advocated by Nietzsche's mentors Wagner and Schopenhauer, but sees in this pessimism the chance to justify life and its meaningfulness only as a yes-saying affirmation of life, and the world, as an aesthetic phenomenon—a creative and destructive production of life itself as a *work of art*. This view of life (what Nietzsche termed a *perspective*) is tragic: it finds meaning in a meaningless world through the artistic struggle between the perspective of opposing yet complementary forms of life exemplified by the Greek gods Apollo and Dionysus and their respective drives. According to Nietzsche, these drives were reconciled in the musical drama of Richard Wagner, and Nietzsche's complex relationship with the composer resulted in a mutual demand for a renewed German tragic greatness, a culture informed by Wagner's vision of the artistic sublime which overcomes tragedy by making life

tolerable. Tragic life becomes tolerable by accepting meaninglessness as an object of knowledge—think of it as the *fact* of meaninglessness, known through one's own experience of dissatisfaction, pain, and loneliness—and then constructing one's life within the demands of the Apolline and Dionysiac drives tempered by the Socratic search for truth and self knowledge. The result is a Socrates who makes music: a creative/destructive artist who is also knowledgeable, scientific, and optimistic. This is Nietzsche's artistic ideal.

As the first component part of the tragic perspective, the Apolline is characterized by the drive towards individualization in the face of the crowd; here, the lines and boundaries that separate human beings are as carefully constructed as Doric columns, and *Schein*—semblance, or likeness/appearance—predominates in art and life due to our collective insistence that the world consists of two warring sub-worlds: the real and the apparent. As a creative force, the Apolline instinct is most clearly expressed in the lyric poetry of Homer, the architecture of Greek temples, and sculpture. Generated by the images of the dream, it is primarily a visual art characterized by the outward appearances illuminated by the rays of Apollo's sun. When dreaming, "[every] human is fully an artist[,] and the lovely semblance (*Schein*) of dream is the precondition of all the arts of image-making."[5] Here, as dreamer/artist, we experience the illusion of the *principium individuationis*, or individuating principle, which, when compared with our experiences in waking life, produces not only the unreal feeling of our individuality and the reality of separate and distinct objects in the world, but also "intense pleasure, wisdom, and [the] beauty of 'semblance.'" [6] Apollo, whose maxims are "know thyself" and "not too much," is the deification of the *principium individuationis* and is typically represented by the main character in the Attic tragic plays.[7]

This dream world is in dialectic tension with the Dionysiac impulse towards intoxication, excess, and the destruction of the boundary-creating illusion of the individuating principle. In Attic tragedy, this drive is represented by the singing and dancing of the non-individuated chorus as well as the instrumental music of the satyr's flute. These very different drives are brought together in the "open conflict" of the tragic play, "stimulating and provoking one another to give birth to ever new, more vigorous offspring."[8] Creativity emerges as the result of this tension between the gods, and the tension is ubiquitous: it is found in institutions, art, ourselves, everything.

There are a variety of ways of experiencing "Behind Blue Eyes" as a tragic work of art—albeit, an incomplete one. Early in *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche discusses the ancient legend of Silenus, a wise figure and companion of Dionysus who answers the question "what is best for human beings?" with a shrill laugh: "The very best thing is utterly beyond your reach not to have been born, not to *be*, to be *nothing*. However, the second best thing for you is: to die soon."[9] Jumbo, it would appear, is a disciple of this kind of

terror and horror: he is keenly aware of his immorality, his greed, and his loneliness, and even if he gets what he demands (a finger down his throat, a blanket or a coat, or bad news) he remains unhappy. This "tragic wisdom" is the basis upon which Nietzsche sets his attempted theodicy: the justification of life in the face of evil or meaninglessness—the cruel knowledge imparted to us by the wisdom of Silenus—is possible only when life is lived as an aesthetic phenomenon.[10] Jumbo has merely diagnosed his pessimism, but this recognition of the unlikelihood of happiness due to the meaninglessness of life is merely the first stage in the rebirth of tragedy envisioned by Nietzsche: the second stage is that upon which Zarathustra sings his song of life, urging Jumbo to embrace his negation of the world through art.

Nietzsche was also keenly aware of the role of song in tragedy: Apollo's song is defined by its ghostly harp and lyric poetry, Dionysus's by the satyr's flute and the dissonant noise of the chorus. The lyric poet and musician are combined—recall that tragedy is the union of these brotherly drives—in the folk or popular song structure shared by all cultures, which stands as a "musical mirror of the world" typified by melody as the "primary and general element" of the song.[11] "Behind Blue Eyes" certainly features these tragic elements in the subdued dynamics of the acoustic guitar (Apollo's harp), the dissonance of atonal drums, cymbals and distorted guitars (Dionysus' quasi-orgiastic excesses), and, of course, the simple yet strong melody supporting a narrative about loss, dissatisfaction, and meaninglessness, all of which culminate in the stunning anarchic bridge—initiated by Jumbo's incredible demand that we "crack open" his clenching, angry fist—which constitutes the song's climax. Not coincidentally, one of Nietzsche's most powerful metaphors was that of the bridge—a connection between two phases or stages of existence. "What is great about human beings," he writes, "is that they are a bridge and not a purpose; what is lovable about human beings is that they are a *crossing over* and a *going under*."[12] Human beings lack a *telos*, or ultimate end, and Jumbo's greatest challenge will be learning this stark lesson while also affirming life.

THE BRIDGE

The acoustic intro and exit verses—marked by Apollo's ghostly harp-like arpeggiated chords from Townshend's acoustic guitar—bookend the electric bridge; until this "rope," or connection between points, commences, the song is "soft, folkish in its plain melodicism and simple statements of suffering and anxiety."[13] Marsh continues: "This part of 'Behind Blue Eyes' brilliantly unites Townshend's spiritual vision with a topic that had obsessed him since his mod days: the crumbling of identity in the face of a loss of cool or control, the importance of maintaining a façade and the terror of not being

able to." Marsh further claims that the bridge has a religious subtext as "the most furious prayer ever sent to heaven"[14] as well as the "staple rock & roll emotions [of] sanctimonious self-pity and marginally political rage."[15] Here, the minor and unresolved suspended 4th chords of the acoustic guitar vanish along with the angelic backing vocals as Moon's crashing cymbals and Townshend's electric guitar slash through introspection and regret with determined, focused vitriol. Jumbo's self-reflection and self-pity are shattered in a heartbeat as the Dionysiac ideal of purely instrumental music overwhelms, forsaking the previous verse's appeal to the trite emotions of sadness or loneliness in the face of the expression of a psychological type: here, the Will appears. Nietzsche heard this type emerge from the solo flute of the satyr—the fusion of goat and god—and in this brief interlude Dionysus speaks as a technologically modern electric satyr. Although the band is in tune, the collective result is a dissonance that is both tragic and Dionysian.

It is here that "Behind Blue Eyes" fully approximates the tragic myth by inducing what Nietzsche calls "aesthetic delight." He asks: "How can things which are ugly and disharmonious, the content of tragic myth, induce aesthetic delight?"[16] These ugly things induce this delight through a metaphysics of art, where "only as an aesthetic phenomenon do existence and the world appear justified; which means that a tragic myth in particular must convince us that even the ugly and disharmonious is an artistic game which the Will, in the eternal fullness of its delight, plays with itself."[17] Within this musical dissonance "the pleasure engendered by the tragic myth comes from the same homeland as our pleasurable sensation of dissonance in music," a place where "the Dionysiac, with the primal pleasure it perceives even in pain, is the common womb from which both music and the tragic myth are born."[18] Tearing off and dissolving the "mask" of Daltrey's voice, Dionysus-as-Jumbo emerges briefly from the safety of the *appearance* of order and harmony (remember that Apollo is a deceiver), which conspired to create the boundaries of individuation. Like a veil of illusions, Apolline consciousness temporarily hides the frightening Dionysiac world from us.

When this mask of semblance is doffed, Apollo's fraternal twin emerges as Dionysian dissonance assumes Jumbo's human form. This primal Dionysiac enthusiast is the satyr, the synthesis of goat and god,[19] and causes the *principium individuationis* to be both cancelled and uplifted to a higher stage of temporary existence. Jumbo/Apollo is now Jumbo/Dionysus, as the newly birthed goat-god, irrationally and chaotically demands from his fellow chorus members that they restrain his violence ("When my fist clenches, crack it open / Before I use it and lose my cool"), deflate his happiness ("When I smile, tell me some bad news"), prevent him from embarrassing himself ("Before I laugh and act like a fool"), force an emetic upon him for "swallowing" evil or false beliefs ("If I swallow anything evil / Put your finger down my throat"), and finally to provide him with shelter because he lost or

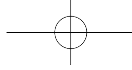
gave away his own due to his intoxication, generosity, or disregard for material possessions ("If I shiver, please give me a blanket / Keep me warm, let me wear your coat."). Jumbo/Dionysus is no longer sad or bad "behind" the mask of blue eyes (and here "blue" might refer not to color but sadness, as in having the blues): he no longer claims that his dreams and his conscience are empty. The Dionysiac tragic drive, which privileges the dominance of music, has triumphed over the Apolline at this point: the psalm-singing artist with their harp, artificially damming up world of semblance and measure, confronts and is destroyed by the daemonic popular song with "its seductive magical melodies finding expression in pleasure, suffering, knowledge, in a voice which [rises] in intensity to a penetrating shout."[20] During the bridge's brevity, Townshend and The Who privilege the Dionysiac over the Apolline much like Nietzsche believed that Attic tragedy privileged the song of the satyr god over Apollo's ghostly harp and poetry.

This brief appearance of the chaotic and irrational spirit of Dionysus concludes with several bars of classic power-chording by the band punctuated by Moon's savage percussion. Then—as abruptly as it began—the bridge terminates and the first lines and arrangement are briefly reprised. Apollo's mask is donned again as the verse poem is recited. Apollo re-establishes the balance, knocked off kilter by an excess of Dionysiac revelry, and Jumbo's attempt to discard the *principium individuationis* has failed. Unbeknownst to Jumbo, Zarathustra has heard his tragic lyric and song.

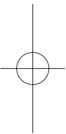
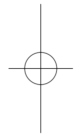
ZARATHUSTRA'S TRAGIC TEACHINGS

Suffering under a cloud of self-pitying pessimism, Jumbo has nothing to live for, no justification of his life. His song is a proper tragic art form—as much Apolline as Dionysiac—but his lyric poem is world-weary and pessimistic. Despite his attempted overcoming during the bridge, he returns to each of his afflictions: he is sad and bad once again. It is up to Zarathustra's teachings to make him a true disciple of Dionysus and adopt the tragic *Weltanschauung* by realizing that his life is justified only as an aesthetic phenomenon. This permits him to grasp the knowledge that although life has no meaning, it can be tolerated therapeutically. Although his teaching finds its genesis in Schopenhauer's claim that "life is suffering," Zarathustra's tragic arts—singing, dancing, sermonizing—attempt to give meaning to a life of suffering through the creative and destructive processes of art itself. Zarathustra may have been a dismal failure as a lecturer or preacher, but he nevertheless found himself with an unusual assortment of followers including, as we shall see, our Jumbo.

Thus Spoke Zarathustra, the source of these teachings, is Nietzsche's most well known book, and probably his most infamous due to its philosoph-



ically unorthodox narrative style and lack of any determinate plot or structure throughout its four books and hundreds of pages. It is essentially a series of sermons and adventures undertaken by Zarathustra, a wandering prophet and former recluse who comes down to mankind after ten years of voluntary solitary confinement in the mountains in order to speak of the death of God, eternal recurrence, and the Overman. Encountering numerous human and animal characters, Zarathustra tells stories and riddles, plays with words and phrases, sings songs and poetic verse, argues with his hearers, and makes numerous proclamations about morality, psychology, religion, and death. Nietzsche describes tightrope walkers, fools, corpses hidden into trees, talking animals (including a laughing lion), sailors, tarantulas, snakebites, pale criminals, drunken songs, a leech, and a magician throughout the eighty sections in the book. Like the sermons of Jesus, many of Zarathustra's teachings begin with the word "verily," and most of those sections end with a conclusive "Thus spoke Zarathustra." For the many sections where Zarathustra either danced or sang his sermon, the ending is appropriately "Thus sang Zarathustra."

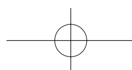



Taking place at the very beginning of Book One, the story of the tightrope walker is one of Zarathustra's best-known allegories. Zarathustra begins by telling his audience in the marketplace that he is going to teach them the Overman. As he is speaking, we learn that the crowd has not gathered to hear him preach—again, he is a failure at preaching—but rather to see a tightrope walker perform his act high above the crowd. As the walker begins his dangerous performance, Zarathustra seizes on the situation and exclaims,

> Mankind is a rope fastened between animal and Overman—a rope over an abyss. A dangerous crossing, a dangerous on-the-way, a dangerous looking-back, a dangerous shuddering and standing still. What is great about human beings is that they are a bridge and not a purpose; what is lovable is that they are a *crossing over* and a *going under*.[21]

Zarathustra then declares his love for persons—including, perhaps, Jumbo—who overcome themselves, but no one is listening to him; they are transfixed by the tightrope walker above them, who has reached the exact center of his course. Suddenly, a jester appears at one end of the rope, chides the tightrope walker, and dangerously jumps over him. This causes the tightrope walker to fall, and "the people rushed apart and over one another, especially at the place where the body must hit the ground."[22] The man dies and Zarathustra is the only person to properly dispose of the corpse.

Like all of us, Jumbo and the tightrope walker must overcome significant obstacles. For the tightrope walker, his challenge forces him to tread the rope that ties mankind's bestial nature to the Nietzschean Overman. It is a dangerous crossing, made even more treacherous by the jester creating a further



obstacle. The jester, of course, could represent any barrier to enlightenment or knowledge: in fact, "a jester can become man's fatality."[23] Jumbo is perhaps fated to overcome his obstacle, while the tightrope walker obviously was not. Despite this failure Zarathustra is adamant that humankind must overcome itself.

Another early speech, "On the Three Metamorphoses" depicts "how the spirit becomes a camel; and the camel, a lion; and the lion, finally, a child."[24] It is necessary that one's spirit undergo these transformations in order to be a follower of Zarathustra—at this point, Jumbo is considering the opportunity—and the speech is his exhortation for finding followers out of the multitude who hear his preaching. The camel symbolizes a spirit that must bear a heavy load on its journey; without that load, the journey will never even begin. The lion symbolizes destruction and rage, which is lost when the spirit is transformed into a child, whose spirit plays freely and creatively.

Zarathustra's freely-playing child speaks directly to the kind of world-weary pessimism he witnesses in Jumbo in "On the Preachers of Death," where Zarathustra addresses those who "preach renunciation of life . . . who would like to be dead . . . . They encounter a sick man or an old man or a corpse, and immediately they say 'Life is refuted.' But only they are refuted . . . . Everywhere the voice of those who preach death [or eternal life] is heard."[25] For Jumbo, life is refuted because of his pessimism, sadness, and loneliness: he is the target of the preachers of death who negate life by pointing to life's failure to satisfy.

Zarathustra's many teachings begin to resonate with Jumbo. After hearing Jumbo's self-pitying lament in the Apolline portion of "Behind Blue Eyes," Zarathustra responds that a bad man, a criminal, "does not want to be ashamed of his madness" and should rather "overcome his ego" which is, for the criminal, "the great contempt for mankind." These words are spoken "from his eyes."[26] In "The Child With the Mirror" Zarathustra finds that the loneliness of life on his solitary mountain allows him to grow in wisdom. Based on this teaching, Jumbo recognizes that being lonely can have many advantages, and learns that his discipleship under Zarathustra requires him to be faithful to the old seer. In particular, this requires Jumbo to discard his self-centeredness, his self-pity, and his pessimism. Zarathustra is particularly keen to disabuse Jumbo of his hatred of his own anger. Anger can be revitalizing, and Zarathustra tells his friends, the snake and eagle, that anger will reinvigorate his teachings and bring a "wild wisdom" to Jumbo and the other disciples.[27] Jumbo is ashamed of his loneliness and anger, but Zarathustra praises them because experiences of solitude, anger, and foolishness are necessary for understanding his "wild wisdom."[28] He urges Jumbo to overcome his guilt because guilt is for the herd who are oppressed by the unfulfilled desire to be moral, and the overcoming of guilt is the only way to become the Overman.

Zarathustra elaborates on the role of anger and hate in "On the Passions of Pleasure and Pain," where he shows how Jumbo's turmoil lies not in his "evil," but in the evil that grows from his moralizing struggle between his virtues and his vices. In fact, "evil . . . envy, mistrust and slander" are necessary vices among virtues because they become virtues just as "devils become angels" and wild dogs are transformed into "birds and lovely singers."[29] Again, Zarathustra reminds us that "human being is something that must be overcome"; this is done by ensuring that one's virtues do not cause one to perish.

One of Jumbo's more cryptic utterances is "My love is vengeance / That's never free." Vengeance could mean simple revenge, or it can also refer to something done in an extreme or intense manner as in "winter has returned with a vengeance." The second meaning does not make much sense here, so what could Jumbo mean by love as revenge? Revenge, after all, is a negative emotion that displaces justice in terms of punishment, and Jumbo is correct to experience self-hatred because of his revengeful love. Or is he? What if revenge is a proper reaction to harm, one that requires expiation or dissipation, a deeply important emotion that cannot be delegated to, for example, an institution that attempts to negate the urge for revenge by masking it with the veil of "justice"? Zarathustra lectures extensively on the subject of revenge—mostly in terms of retribution as a justification for punishment—and appears to reject retribution itself as a mere justification for revenge. For example, in "The Adder's Bite," Zarathustra claims "I do not like your *cold* justice, and from the eyes of your judges gazes always the executioner and his cold steel,"[30] and he chastises the "virtuous" who believe they are "too pure for the filth of the words revenge, punishment, reward, retribution." As a result, when the virtuous say "I am just," they really mean, "I am just avenged."[31] These pronouncements appear to be a blanket condemnation of revenge, but they only apply to the self-styled "virtuous" who *deny* their thirst for revenge as they seek justice: others—the Nietzschean sovereign individuals—are not seeking justice when they avenge. Their *own* revenge is a "small revenge" (compared with the grand revenge of the herd) that is "more humane than no revenge at all."[32] When Zarathustra advises that Jumbo "[g]row weary of the words 'reward,' 'retribution,' 'punishment,' 'revenge in justice,'" all of which are "old words that have been learned from fools and liars,"[33] he is urging Jumbo to unlearn his determination to moralize these concepts and to cease attempting to find justice in revenge or to conversely find revenge in justice. Revenge exists, but justice is an illusion.

Therefore, Nietzsche's criticism of revenge is not merely directed at the vain attempt to annihilate the past, but upon the motivation of the revenge-seekers themselves. Revenge indeed "sits in the soul" of the tarantula (and Jumbo), and its poison makes Zarathustra's soul "whirl with revenge," but these tarantulas are "preachers of *equality*,"[34] and here equality is equated

with revenge-seeking. Not all seekers of revenge are condemned as tarantulas, but preachers of equality and justice are condemned because they are seeking to annihilate past deeds *in vain* but also out of *ressentiment*. Revenge, after all, "springs from behind the word 'justice.'"[35] When Zarathustra wants to see mankind redeemed from revenge he is rejecting equality as a *ruse* for revenge disguised as justice. Zarathustra therefore condemns only certain types of revenge, including the revenge of the tarantulas who heap insult on those whom are not their equals. Between equals, however, revenge-seeking is a legitimate resolution of conflict, particularly in terms of honor violations: revenge re-establishes equality among equals. Poisonous revenge that is predicated on the "aggrieved conceit, repressed envy, [. . .] and the envy and conceit of your fathers," must be swiftly discharged.[36] However, revenge that is not predicated on these unhealthy impulses is, as Homer said, "sweeter than honey"[37] and beyond moral evaluation. If Jumbo's love is this type of revenge, then Zarathustra cannot find fault with it. If it is revenge that attempts to compensate for Jumbo's many faults—as we rightfully suspect of his revenge—then his "love" must be jettisoned as further pessimistic poison.

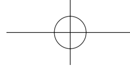
With Zarathustra as the model for a new type of yes-saying to life and even to evil, Jumbo has no reason to regurgitate whatever evil he swallowed. Where he previously said no, Jumbo—Zarathustra's new disciple of Dionysus—now cries "yes!" to poison, evil, sadness, badness, loneliness, and even vengeance. Jumbo's new song is presumptively silenced, however, by the looming figure of Socrates.

A NEW SONG

In the figure of Socrates, the scientist/knower, Nietzsche saw the downfall of Attic tragedy as well as the downfall of Attic culture. In language that adumbrates Zarathustra's, the Nietzsche of *The Birth of Tragedy* writes:

> Yes, my friends, believe as I do in the Dionysiac life and in the rebirth of tragedy. The time of Socratic man is past. Put on wreaths of ivy, take up the *thyrsus* and do not be surprised if tigers and panthers lie down, purring and curling at your legs. Now you must only dare to be tragic human beings, for you will be released and redeemed. You will accompany the festive procession of Dionysus from India to Greece! Put on your armour for a hard fight, but believe in the miracles of your god![38]

Socrates is the threat to Dionysus and the teachings of Zarathustra because tragedy loses out to a morality predicated on reason: this "aesthetic Socratism," formed in parallel with the dictum that "only he who knows is virtuous," claims that "in order to be beautiful, everything must be reasonable."[39]

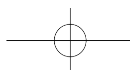


Nietzsche claims that in the reconciliation of the chorus and tragic hero, Euripides—whose plays were said to be "coached" by Socrates himself—expelled the Dionysian in favor of morality; this is exemplified by the Euripidean prologue, where a single person explains who they are, what precedes the action, and what will happen in the course of the play. Here, Euripides replaces Apolline visions with "cool, paradoxical thoughts," and substitutes fiery effects such as the *deus ex machina* for Dionysiac ecstasies. In doing so, Socrates murders Dionysus.[40] The virtuous hero must now be a dialectician: there must a visible, discursive connection between virtue and knowledge.[41] But this type of "science" results in the Socratic or "optimistic" opposition to the tragic view. What then is to be done? Nietzsche's solution is the *music-making Socrates*. This artist is informed by science but at the same time a product of the equally important internecine battles between Apollo and Dionysus. Nietzsche believed that a gradual reawakening of this Attic spirit was occurring in the artistic lineage flowing from Bach to Beethoven to Wagner,[42] and, quite possibly, to *himself* as the consummate tragic artist of his age. Kant and Schopenhauer, the leading philosophers of the previous century, were also making inroads with their thinking that makes a new Dionysiac wisdom possible, resulting in the "mysterious unity of German music and German philosophy."[43] This unity, coupled with the recognition of life's meaninglessness in the fulfillment of the Silenus prophecy, is taught by Zarathustra to Jumbo with joy through the use of music combined with lyric poetry in the form of the popular song. Silenus is correct: it is best to have never been born, but here you are, and it is here that a tragic song such as "Behind Blue Eyes" also affirms life.

In the final days of his sanity, Nietzsche writes to his amanuensis, Peter Gast, as his own personal tragedy begins: "Sing me a new song: the world is transfigured and all the heavens rejoice!"[44] Sing us a new song, Jumbo. Make music! Make life!

NOTES

1. Dave Marsh, *Before I Get Old: The Story of the Who* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983), 385.
2. Steve Grantley and Alan Parker, *The Who by Numbers: The Story of the Who Through Their Music* (London: Helter Skelter, 2010).
3. Marsh, *Before I Get Old*, 385.
4. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, in *Basic Writings of Nietzsche,* ed. Walter Kaufman (New York: The Modern Library, 1968), 675.
5. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 15.
6. Ibid., 17.
7. Ibid., 26.
8. Ibid., 14.
9. Ibid., 23.
10. Ibid., 33.



11. Ibid.
12. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), Part 1:Prologue 4.
13. Marsh, *Before I Get Old*, 387.
14. Ibid., 385.
15. Ibid., 386.
16. Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 113.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid., 114.
19. Ibid., 7.
20. Ibid., 27.
21. Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Z1:4.
22. Ibid., Z1: 5–6.
23. Ibid., Z1:7.
24. Ibid., Z1: "On the Three Metaphorphoses."
25. Ibid., Z1: "On the Preachers of Death."
26. Ibid., Z1: "On the Pale Criminal."
27. Ibid., Z2: "The Child with the Mirror."
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid., Z1: "On the Passions of Pleasure and Pain."
30. Ibid., Z1: "The Adder's Bite."
31. Ibid., Z1: "On the Virtuous."
32. Ibid., Z1: "The Adder's Bite."
33. Z1: "On the Virtuous."
34. Z1: "On the Tarantulas."
35. Ibid.
36. Ibid.
37. Homer, *The Iliad* XVIII, 107ff., n.d.
38. Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 98.
39. Ibid., 62.
40. Ibid., 64.
41. Ibid., 70.
42. Ibid., 94.
43. Ibid., 94–95.
44. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Selected Letters of Friedrich Nietzsche*, ed. Christopher Middleton (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1996), 345.

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but continues to write and is using his new found free time to pursue his interest of studying popular music performance. Peter has attended over 2,000 concerts, from the late 1960s to the present day, and writes a daily blog on his personal concert experiences, which can be found at http://vintagerock.wordpress.com/.

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