

“IM SÜDEN”, NIETZSCHE, GOETHE, AND ITALY

1. Introduction

In the first version of the *Versuch einer Selbstkritik* (1886), Nietzsche wrote:

Während die Donner der Schlacht von Wörth über das erstaunte Europa weggingen – schrieb ich in irgend einem Winkel der Alpen die entscheidenden Gedanken dieses Buches [*Die Geburt der Tragödie*, MP] nieder: im Grunde nicht viel für mich, sondern für Richard Wagner, um dessen Gräcisierung und Versüdlichung sich bis dahin Niemand sonderlich Mühe gegeben hatte¹

This article argues that the ‘Gräcisierung’ or ‘Versüdlichung’ that Nietzsche observed in Wagner’s music-drama’s at the time of *Die Geburt der Tragödie* (1872), is not only indeed a characteristic of Wagner’s art, but the essence of Nietzsche’s later, anti-Wagnerian, aesthetic ideal as well. In other words, after his break-up with Richard Wagner, Nietzsche holds to a ‘southern’ aesthetics. However, whereas in his Basle years Nietzsche associates ‘the South’ fully with Greece and Wagner, in the early eighties the South becomes more and more ‘Italian’ and ‘Goethean’ for Nietzsche, as is exemplified by *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* (1882/ 1887) in particular.

I shall begin this article by outlining the geographical and mental circumstances under which Nietzsche wrote *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*. In so doing, I shall focus on Nietzsche’s friendship with Heinrich Köselitz and his enthusiasm for Georges Bizet’s opera *Carmen* in order to distil the musical aesthetics Nietzsche promotes in the early eighties. As it turns out, Nietzsche demands of music that it is ‘southern’, based on the Italian opera style of music. Second, I shall discuss Nietzsche’s aesthetics as articulated in *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*, primarily in Book Four, *Sanctus Januarius*. Here

Nietzsche develops a threefold aesthetics, consisting of an aesthetics of art, an aesthetics of seeing, and an aesthetics of the self. As I shall show, in all three aesthetic modes, the South, as embodied in the 'überdeutsche', 'Italian' Goethe and the city of Genoa, plays a central part. At the end of this article, thirdly, I shall have a closer look at Nietzsche's poem 'Im Süden', published as part of the *Die Lieder des Prinzen Vogelfrei*, and added to the 1887-edition of *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*. This will suggest the conclusion that, according to Nietzsche, philosophers and artists alike should travel to the South in order to become truly 'free spirits', who live out of the pure lust for life.²

2. From Basle to Genoa: Nietzsche's journey to Italy

In a letter of 3 April 1879, Nietzsche writes to his friend Franz Overbeck that he suffers from a 'Basileophobie', due to the miserable quality of the air and water in the town, as well as the 'ganzen gedrückten Wesen dieser unseligen Brütstätte meiner Leiden' (KSB 5. 402). One month later Nietzsche resigns from the University of Basle, where he had been a professor in classical philology for ten years. Frequent attacks of agonising headaches, which have been afflicting Nietzsche for over five years then, combined with a frightful deterioration of his eyesight, prevent him fulfilling his academic duty. The university dismisses Nietzsche honourably and provides him with an annual payment of three thousand Swiss Frank, enough to support Nietzsche.

That winter Nietzsche spends with his mother in Naumburg, but the following two winters he prefers the gentler climate of Genoa. During his sojourn here from October 1881 until the end of March 1882 he writes *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*. Nietzsche enjoys the 'cloudless' sky of Genoa, stating that it makes his thinking cloudless as well. Nietzsche loves Genoa for its vitality, sun, and relaxed, un-modern ambience. Soon

Genoa becomes the symbol of Nietzsche's longing for health, courage, adventure, and solitude, topics *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* abounds in.³

3. Nietzsche's high hopes of southern music

The only friend Nietzsche sees on a regular basis, while living in Genoa, is his former student Johann Heinrich Köselitz, who lives in Venice at that time, where he tries to develop himself as a composer. Köselitz, like Nietzsche, is a former lover of Wagner's music, and, like Nietzsche, in search of new musical authorities. Under their mutual influence, Nietzsche and Köselitz start gaining sympathy for the cheerful Italian opera, especially for Rossini, Bellini, and Bizet.

Their stay together in the Italian countryside of Recoaro in May 1881 was crucial for their friendship.⁴ Here Peter Gast, as Nietzsche called Köselitz, introduced Nietzsche to his opera *Scherz, List und Rache*.⁵ It made Nietzsche, in his own words, prefer 'Venice' to 'Bayreuth', or the innocent, light, and cheerful music of Peter Gast to Wagner's heavy and extravagant compositions. Nietzsche praises Gast as a 'Musiker ersten Ranges' and *Scherz, List und Rache* for its gaiety, technical superiority, and southern innocence. He even calls the composition the 'wohltönendste Fürsprecherin' of his philosophy.⁶ In later years, Nietzsche extols Gast's composition *Der Löwe von Venedig* for its southern atmosphere.⁷ In Nietzsche's view, no other northern composer before Gast succeeded so well in conveying the spirit of the South.

Whereas Nietzsche, in the early seventies, regarded Wagner as a new Aeschylus, who would introduce the Greek, tragic view of life into modern German culture, he now, in the eighties, hopes that Gast's 'buffa' music will drag the warmth of the South up into the northern spirit. Although Wagner's return to Christian morality in *Parsifal*, of which

Nietzsche read the libretto in January 1878, was a great disappointment to him, he never really gave up hope for a transformation of the German soul by means of music.⁸ However, Nietzsche's high hopes of the success of Gast's music proved in vain. Although Nietzsche wrote to all opera-houses that might be interested in organising performances of Gast's opera, no one other than Nietzsche saw in him a great composer. Hence, Nietzsche had to alter the northern, German mind on his own, by the power of his books and without the help of music.

4. Bizet's *Carmen* as a symbol of health

The years after his retirement from Basle are one long journey in search of a life that would improve Nietzsche's health. Nietzsche feels that he needs more sunshine, lighter food, a new environment, a lighter kind of music, and a freer mode of thinking. He seeks a life suitable to his free spirit, inspired by a southern temper. At the end of November 1881, Nietzsche attends a performance of Georges Bizet's opera *Carmen* in Genoa's Pagini-theatre. He is deeply impressed by it and writes: 'Hat mich nicht Carmen mehr bezaubert als irgend eine Oper, in der mir diese geliebte Welt [Genoa, MP] [...] wiederklingt?'⁹ In *Carmen* he recognises the same innocence, lightness, frivolity, and technical superiority as in Gast, but he finds a charm, delicacy, and naturalism which is totally new to him. *Carmen*'s charm makes him even feel that he is becoming a better musician and a better philosopher (WA 1, 6. 13).

Nietzsche sets up an opposition between *Carmen*'s charm and the captivation of Wagner's music. In comparison with the innocent, musical attraction of *Carmen*, Wagner's music hypnotises like the witch Circe, as Nietzsche says. Whereas Bizet makes music, Wagner harangues, whereas Bizet shows delicacies in emotions, Wagner

exaggerates them, and whereas the former presents love in an honest, natural way, that is as innocent, fatal, and destructive, the latter turns love into a romantic sentiment, equipped with redemptive power. Wagner places the dramatic effect above musicality, whereas Bizet prefers music to the dramatic effect, Nietzsche concludes. Wagner satisfies his public in a typically German way, namely by offering it an idea. Wagner's writings contribute to his attempts to convince his German public of the heavy weight of his music. For Wagner's music is not just music, but a source of splendid ideas, so at least Wagner wants us to believe. Music, however, not in itself as an art form, but as a sign, as a vehicle of ideas, is abhorrent to Nietzsche's new halcyon life-style. Music should predominate, determine the composition, and consolidate the work's unity.¹⁰ Wagner, by contrast, treats his public not to music, but to heavy clouds formed by dramatic effects, in which every note gets an equal share. Such a democratic approach to musical means causes, by lack of a structuring melody, a hubbub of sounds. Nietzsche misses in Wagner '[...] la gaya scienza [...] die Lichtschauder des Südens; das *glatte* Meer - Vollkommenheit...' (WA 10, 6. 37).

In Wagner's music Nietzsche finds a typical German coarseness and chaos, while he is looking for a southern, light subtlety and refinement (JGB 240, 5. 179-180). 'Wagner's Kunst ist krank,' Nietzsche declares (WA 5, 6. 22).¹¹ Bizet's music, on the other hand, is the equivalent of perfect health for Nietzsche. Bizet's southern streak liberates us 'vom *feuchten* Norden, von allem Wasserdampf des Wagnerischen Ideals' (WA 2, 6. 15).

In *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* (1886), Nietzsche explicitly associates the South with 'Genesung'. In aphorism 255 of the book, he calls the South 'eine grosse Schule der Genesung' (5. 200) and confesses that he takes care in listening to German music in order

not to spoil his health. He even calls himself a ‘Südländer [...] dem *Glauben* nach’ (ibid.), who is dreaming of the redemption of northern music by a deeper, sensuous, ‘überdeutschen’ kind of music, a music that ‘von Gut und Böse nichts mehr wüsste’ (ibid., 5. 201), enriched by the voluptuous blue colour of the sea and a clear sky. Music beyond good and evil is music that dances, that plays and glides over morality. It is music directed by and treating the human passions. Against the dominance of Christian morality and northern mythology, pivotal factors in Wagner’s *Parsifal*, Nietzsche demands of music a natural, serene, and stylish representation of inner human passions. Bizet composed honest music and such music, says Nietzsche, is characteristic of ‘gute Europäer’ or ‘Mittelländler’ (JGB 254, 5. 200), people who love the South in the North and the North in the South, people who have integrated the best of both worlds and succeeded in creating a synthesis of it.

Such music was also what Peter Gast had in mind. Peter Gast, so Nietzsche was hoping, would be the first musician from the North to connect the North and the South in a ‘vollkommen’ and ‘überdeutsche’ music. Nietzsche’s aim was, with Peter Gast’s music as the ‘Fürsprecherin’ of his philosophy, to drag the curative power of the natural, truthful, happy, frivolous, and self-conscious South up to the cold, sick North in order to liberate the North from the dominance of morality and religion.

5. The Death of God: overcoming the northern sickness

Nietzsche’s bad health, his long stays in Italy, his change in taste in favour of southern culture as opposed to the northern and, consequently, his musical preference for Georges Bizet and Peter Gast to Wagner, constitute to a great extent the background against which *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* was written. Nietzsche interpreted his health problems as the

result of his life in Germany. Of this sick, modern, German culture, Wagner, according to Nietzsche, was the clearest symptom.¹² Wagner's opera *Parsifal* opened Nietzsche's eyes. Wagner had turned into a pious figure that tried to reconcile art and Christianity. In so doing, he had given up his artistic freedom. From a 'free spirit', who viewed art from life and life aesthetically, he had turned himself into a moral 'Richter und Henker' (*Morgenröthe* 56, 3. 58). For Nietzsche, as *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* shows, the real free spirit is a philosopher-artist who has freed himself from Christian religion and morality, Romantic Aesthetics, and the search for a metaphysical truth behind the veil of empirical reality.¹³ Contrarily, he celebrates the appearance of things as their true being, and, like Bizet in his music, he takes his natural, inner passions as the conductors of his life and wisdom¹⁴.

The prominent 'Gott ist todt' aphorism in the third part of *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* (FW 125, 3. 480-482) is the attempt to prepare human beings for an amoral view of life and for a return to their inner nature, which, according to fragment 343, is being realised bit by bit. Man believes that he is free, but his freedom is an illusion. That is what 'der tolle Mensch' tells his public in fragment 125. What Nietzsche wrote at the end of *Der Wanderer und sein Schatten* goes for this public: despite his growing atheism, man still suffers from 'Ketten-Krankheit' (WS 350, 2. 702). He is still bound to all sorts of theological, moral, and metaphysical illusions. If he wants to set himself free, he has to learn to see things gradually as they are and to accept that that is all there is: there is nothing behind the appearance. Besides, he has to come to terms with himself. Only then will he be able to live out of a pure lust for life, 'um der *Freudigkeit* willen' (WS 350, 2. 702). The motto of the free spirit '*Frieden um mich und ein Wohlgefallen an allen nächsten Dingen*', as advanced in the same fragment, finds its

completion in Nietzsche's 'amor fati' philosophy as introduced in *Sanctus Januarius*, the fourth book of *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*.

6. Amor fati: finding health

The famous text on the 'amor fati' (FW 276, 3. 521) has been given the form of a New Year's greeting in which Nietzsche declares that he has decided to do things differently in the year 1882. He wants to mend his ways forever. The lesson he has to learn is to consider the necessity of life as beauty, to say with perfect conviction 'yes' to life, however ugly or repulsive life sometimes might be. This 'yes' would be the last step of Nietzsche's return to himself and to health.

In the epilogue of *Nietzsche contra Wagner* (1889), Nietzsche writes: 'Amor fati: das ist meine innerste Natur' (6. 436). Nietzsche has become aware that every moment, happy or sad, is necessary for the fulfilment of one's personal destiny.¹⁵ That is why one should not only bear one's pain, but also appreciate and even love it. The person in possession of this deep, loving nature, derives his happiness from the surface. He considers the 'skin' of things as the best that things offer (FW 256, 3. 517). Nietzsche recognises this form of happiness in Epicurus, of whom he says:

ich sehe sein [Epicurus', MP] Auge auf ein weites weissliches Meer blicken, über Uferfelsen hin, auf denen die Sonne liegt, während grosses und kleines Gethier in ihrem Lichte spielt, sicher und ruhig wie diess Licht und jenes Auge selber. Solch ein Glück hat nur ein fortwährend Leidender erfinden können, das Glück eines Auges, vor dem das Meer des Daseins stille geworden ist, und das nun an seiner Oberfläche und an dieser bunten, zarten, schauernden Meeres-Haut sich nicht mehr satt sehen kann; es gab nie zuvor eine solche

Bescheidenheit der Wollust (FW 45, 3. 411).

Nietzsche calls Epicurus' 'Garten-Glück'¹⁶ with a fundament of pain Greek 'Heiterkeit'. He models the free spirit on this Epicurus. It is the spirit who 'aus Tiefe' chooses to remain at the surface, near the skin of things (FW Vorrede 4, 3. 352). He does not feel the need to search for anything behind the veil.

To be able to love one's fate and become free, Nietzsche suggests, one has to adopt an 'Epicurean' lifestyle. In *Sanctus Januarius* Nietzsche puts up a strong opposition between the Epicurean lifestyle and Stoic ethics. Whereas the Stoic develops a 'harte Haut', and inculcates 'Unempfindlichkeit' (FW 306, 3. 544) towards chance, the Epicurist has a 'feine Reizbarkeit' (ibid.). Whereas the Stoics, thus, try to get rid of any vulnerability, the Epicurists attempt to retain it. Therefore, Epicurists abstain from everything unsuitable for their edgy and intellectual nature. To the Stoic, however, even the slightest sense of a sensation spells danger to his peace of mind. But arming himself so firmly, he cuts himself off 'von den schönsten Zufälligkeiten der Seele' and 'von aller weiteren *Belehrung*' (FW 305, 3. 543). It is the more open, Epicurean approach to life, the more sensitive, "porous" skin that Nietzsche uses as an example of his alternative, self-ish¹⁷, southern morality, as opposed to the 'Stoic' fear of the unknown as a northern hallmark. However, besides an 'Epicurean' lifestyle, one should adopt a Goethean view of the world: As a 'Ketten-Kranke' living in the North, Nietzsche looked upon things '[...] mit einer entsetzlichen Kälte' (M 114, 2. 105). Living in Genoa and developing his warm, loving eye for the world under supervision of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Nietzsche defrosts.¹⁸

7. Learning to love the world: Nietzsche's aesthetics of seeing

In his *Italienische Reise* (1829), which Nietzsche re-read in Genoa¹⁹, Goethe writes: 'Mir ist es jetzt nur um die sinnlichen Eindrücke zu thun, die kein Buch, kein Bild gibt. Die Sache ist, daß ich wieder Interesse an die Welt nehme'.²⁰ In Italy, where he stayed between 1786 and 1788, Goethe wanted to train his 'Beobachtungsgeist', ascertain that his 'Auge licht, rein und hell ist' and that he was able to express his visual impressions creatively.²¹ In Italy, Goethe looks at art and nature with the eye of the Italian painter. In his reports, Goethe holds the view that one's natural environment shapes the brightness of one's perception of life. During his stay in Venice he writes:

Es ist offenbar, daß sich das Auge nach den Gegenständen bildet, die es von Jugend auf erblickt, und so muß der venezianische Maler alles klarer und heiterer sehn als andere Menschen. Wir, die wir auf einem bald schmutzkotigen, bald staubigen, farblosen, die Widerscheine verdüsternden Boden und vielleicht gar in engen Gemächern leben, können einen solchen Frohblick aus uns selbst nicht entwickeln.²²

The opposition North-South, or Germany-Italy, forms the main frame of Goethe's experience of Italy. In this, the North stands out in darkness to the bright South. In Italy, Goethe experienced a 'Wiedergeburt'.²³ This rebirth consisted in a return to the world and gaining sensuous knowledge.²⁴ The artist Goethe does not want to work from theory any longer, but from pure observation, in which he tries to catch the vitality of things and reach the highest plastic grasp of art and nature.²⁵ He wants to master the Italian 'Frohblick'. At the same time, Goethe perceives the vitality in a work of art as the expression of the artist's conscious and happy life.

Following in Goethe's footsteps, Nietzsche wants to find the way back to the things themselves, to the reflection and colours which things catapult into the world. For

that reason, he seeks the same clear, bright, and warm eye as Goethe. Modern scientists assume that they see better by looking at the world with a so-called objective eye, but their attitude is ‘gefroren und trocken wie ein heller Morgen im Winter’, as Nietzsche expresses (*Morgenröthe* 539, 3. 308). Instead, Nietzsche pleads that intellectual honesty and justice to the world require a warm, engaged attitude towards the unknown.²⁶ In fragment 334 of *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*, Nietzsche describes this process as ‘lieben lernen’, to learn to love ‘das Fremde’. It is a process in which one first discriminates one’s immediate surroundings, then learns to tolerate this strange environment with patience, good will, exertion, and sympathy, and in the end, appreciates its beauty and becomes a ‘lover’ of ‘das Fremde’. This lover of life experiences ‘ein Wohlgefallen an allen nächsten Dingen’.

8. Learn to love oneself: Nietzsche’s aesthetics of the self

In order to become a truly free spirit and gay scientist, however, one needs not only to learn to love the world, but also to learn to love oneself. According to fragment 107 of *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*, life can be justified only aesthetically.²⁷ Art, Nietzsche supposes, enables us to make a work of art out of our character. Fragment 290 of *Sanctus Januarius* reveals how a free spirit might turn his personality into a paragon of ‘Kunst und Vernunft’ in order to reach complete satisfaction with oneself. According to the last sentence of fragment 107, we have to start this process of loving ourselves with shedding our shame. Shamelessness is ‘das Siegel der erreichten Freiheit’, declares fragment 275. To feel no longer ashamed of oneself, means that one no longer views one’s passions as stains of nature²⁸, as northern man had learned to do from the Stoics and Christians.

Noble individuals like Epicurus and Goethe are not ashamed of what they feel.

They rather live on their passions and trust these as ‘das Gute an sich’ (FW 99, 3. 433). Nietzsche calls this attitude ‘die Unschuld der höchsten Selbstsucht’ (ibid.) and he finds this absence of shame, which forms the foundation of the natural, noble, and free person, in Italy. He even calls it, in fragment 77 of *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* ‘[...] die Eigenheit der südländischen Humanität’.

Shamelessness is the first step to an anti-Christian, selfish morality, and a free, creative, heroic philosophy, which opposes personal wisdom to general opinion. A heroic philosophy implies the absence of fear of pain and solitude. It even seeks solitude deliberately in order to avoid to becoming a ‘letzter Mensch’ (Z Vorrede 5, 4. 19).²⁹ Pain must prevent the philosopher’s levelling down and should ground his particularity. Being unique increases the feeling of happiness, in other words, without pain, one can not experience happiness.

Western society understands ‘happiness’ as the absence of pain (FW 326, 3. 553-554). However, a true, heroic philosopher celebrates his misery, because he accepts it as a natural effect of his decision to embrace life and knows misery gives wisdom (FW 318, 3. 550). His experiences form the source of his wisdom. He seeks harmony between life and philosophy. Life, to him, is a praxis in accordance with his view of life, which, on the other hand, is the consequence of his life-experiments: ‘Wir selber wollen unsere Experimente und Versuchs-Thiere sein’ (FW 319, 3. 551). Nietzsche’s heroic philosopher is a practical thinker, for whom every thought is expressed in an action and for whom every action functions as a touchstone for his ideas. His daily life is an experiment, and conducting them his delight.³⁰

Nietzsche calls the idea that he could regard life as a means to knowledge ‘der grosse Befreier’ (FW 324, 3. 552), which gave him great joy. With ‘joy’ Nietzsche does

not mean 'relaxation' in the spare-time after work with health as its object, but true joy, emanating from life as 'otium' and 'vita contemplativa', where the status of work is lover than the status of the 'vita contemplativa'.³¹ Like the Greeks, Nietzsche tries to insert 'otium' and 'bellum' in his life and thinking. He wants to join those Greek philosophers who said '[...] wir Denker sind als Denker die Glücklichen' (FW 328, 3. 555). Like Socrates and Diogenes of Sinope, Nietzsche dares to be alone and set himself apart from the mass. Socrates cum suis went against the current. They found true happiness in being selfish. *Sanctus Januarius* instils new life into this Greek morality of selfishness.

9. Goethe as ideal

Instead of being ashamed of ourselves, 'wir [...] *wollen Die werden, die wir sind*' (FW 335, 3. 563), that is 'die Neuen, die Einmaligen, die Unvergleichbaren, die Sich-selber-Gesetzgebenden, die Sich-selber-Schaffenden' (ibid.). The perfect harmony of art and reason implies that all sides of one character are bound by one law, the law of a single taste, through which a character becomes strong, self-controlled, and self-sufficient. Typical for modern times is that people lack the self-controlling taste with which they discipline themselves into self-sufficient personalities, as Nietzsche analyses.

Genoa is the place where Nietzsche found this self-sufficiency, self-love, and accompanying autocracy, because the people of Genoa know how to conquer and build a unique place for themselves to live:

[...]. Diese ganze Gegend [Genoa, MP] ist mit dieser prachtvollen unersättlichen Selbstsucht [...] überwachsen [...]. Im Norden imponirt das Gesetz und die allgemeine Lust an Gesetzlichkeit [...]. Hier [in Genoa, MP] aber findest du, um jede Ecke biegender, einen Menschen für sich [...], welcher

dem Gesetze und dem Nachbar wie einer Art von Langerweile abhold ist [...]'
(FW 291, 3. 531-532)³²

In Genoa, Nietzsche finds the courage and self-glorification he wants to see in human beings. He opposes them to the northern craving to be just like one's neighbour and obey the laws valid for every citizen. In Genoa, there are gaps between people. Freedom, to Nietzsche, means the courage to maintain these gaps, to keep distance, to take the responsibility not to become like anyone but oneself.³³

The only German man in whom Nietzsche recognises his ideal of perfection is Goethe. In his art Goethe manifests himself as 'Willens-Bändiger (VM 172, 2. 452). The modern poet, on the other hand, is an 'Entfesseler des Willens' (ibid.). Modern poetry is barbarian, says Nietzsche, because it is created by uncontrolled, chaotic souls, whereas classical poetry demonstrates an abundance of wisdom and harmony (VM 173, 2. 453). The classical poet has a 'vollkommen' character, writes poetry, moreover, lives his life perfectly, since he himself is a 'good poem' (VM 172, 2. 452). He knows that art has to be spread out over life itself. By applying artistic skills in his daily life, he ennoble his life (VM 174, 2. 453-454). Fragment 290 of *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* shows that Nietzsche projected the idea of applying artistic skills to the moulding of the individual character. In fragment 299, he transfers this idea, as in VM 174, to our daily life. Aphorism FW 299 declares that we should create ourselves as 'Dichter unseres Lebens'. As poets of our personal lives, we voice every single thing he experiences, small or big.

In this process, form and content play an equally important role. The problem with Wagner is, Nietzsche says, that he does not create out of totality, but places the content in the forefront. Wagner lacks everything Nietzsche finds in Goethe. Goethe is a gentle, gay scientist, who enjoys life. He possesses the innocence of passion, the

lightness, brightness, and harmony that Nietzsche sees in the Italian people, but misses in the German people. Goethe is the example of a German who became a ‘*mehr* [...] als ein Deutscher’ (VM 302, 2. 502), and hence, ‘der Ausnahme-Deutsche’ (FW 103, 3. 460). His character is the perfect harmony of art and reason, expressing autocracy in a unity of style. This Italianised, harmonious, self-confident, and loving Goethe, is the free spirit ‘par excellence’ for Nietzsche. Goethe stands for ‘health’ and ‘*gaya scienza*’, as opposed to Wagner, who represents ‘sickness’ and ‘Romanticism’.

10. Convalescence: changing the North for the South

In order to recuperate from Wagnerian music and German idealistic and pessimistic philosophy, Nietzsche believed he had to leave the North and, following Goethe’s lead, head for the South. The return to health implies ‘den *Süden* in sich wieder entdecken [...] die südliche Gesundheit und verborgene Mächtigkeit der Seele sich wieder erobern’.³⁴ Travelling to the South, the German returns to health, as Winckelmann, Goethe and Mozart had demonstrated.³⁵ They went to Italy, where they shaped themselves into ‘mehr als Deutsche’. As an ‘mehr als Deutsche’, Goethe becomes Nietzsche’s anti-Wagnerian exemplar, in the early eighties. The name ‘Goethe’ stands for the South, paganism, naturalism, and sensualism. ‘Wagner’, then, stands for the North, for religious tendency, morality, and Romanticism. Goethe is the noble character against Wagner’s coarseness. He stands for playfulness and gentleness against Wagner’s far-fetched seriousness, for ‘Vollkommenheit’ against ‘Unvollkommenheit’, for self-constraint against the loss of control, for honesty against Wagner’s playing the gallery, for pride as opposed to vanity, natural passion to forced emotion, innocence to shame, harmony to chaos. Goethe versus Wagner, shortly, means health against sickness, the classical poet against the archetype of

modernism, the gay scientist against the Romantic artist.³⁶

Goethe versus Wagner also means Nietzsche's scientific ideal against Wagner's abhorrence of science.³⁷ We recall Nietzsche's ideal of the scientist who mixes artistic powers and practical wisdom.³⁸ Goethe definitely was such a scientist:

Goethe löste sich nicht vom Leben ab, er stellte sich hinein; er war nicht verzagt und nahm so viel als möglich auf sich, über sich, in sich. Was er wollte, das war *Totalität*; er bekämpfte das Auseinander von Vernunft, Sinnlichkeit, Gefühl, Wille [...], er disciplinierte sich zur Ganzheit, er *schuf* sich (GD Streifzüge 49, 6. 151).

As ideal scientist-poet, Goethe is the best example of Nietzsche's ideal of the philosopher-artist with a truly liberated, healthy, and affirmative mind:

Ein solcher *freigewordner* Geist steht mit einem freudigen und vertrauenden Fatalismus mitten im All, im *Glauben*, dass nur das Einzelne verwerflich ist, dass im Ganzen sich Alles erlöst und bejaht – *er verneint nicht mehr* (ibid.).

It is this man, this exceptional mind, that Nietzsche strives to be, when he, at the beginning of *Sanctus Januarius*, expresses the wish of 'amor fati', the wish to become a lover of life, to affirm his destiny and to deny no longer.

11. Goethe as Nietzsche's bridge between the North and the South

A note Nietzsche wrote down in 1881, says:

Jener Kaiser hält sich beständig die Vergänglichkeit der Dinge vor, um sie nicht zu wichtig zu nehmen und ruhig zu bleiben. Auf mich wirkt die Vergänglichkeit ganz anders – mir scheint alles viel mehr werth zu sein als daß es so flüchtig sein dürfte – mir ist als ob die kostbarsten Weine und Salben ins Meer gegossen

würden³⁹

Whereas this emperor puts his life in the perspective of temporality, the idea of temporality encourages Nietzsche to extend life with the help of art. Life is so precious, that Nietzsche wishes to preserve it by 'eternalising' it, as fragment 370 expresses it. Art, as 'Abweichung der Natur' (FW 80) has the power to elevate life above mortality. Nietzsche calls the art he is thinking of 'Apotheosenkunst' (FW 370). This art is produced out of the artist's longing for the eternity of life, as he loves life and feels thankful for it. This art is 'dithyrambisch [...], selig-spöttisch [...], hell und gütig' and spreads a 'homerischen Licht- und Glorienschein über alle Dinge'. Examples are found in the painter Rubens, the poet Hafis, and Goethe. The difference between the 'Apotheosenkunst' and Romantic art is also made clear in FW 89:

Ehemals waren alle Kunstwerke an der grossen Feststrasse der Menschheit aufgestellt, als Erinnerungszeichen und Denkmäler hoher und seliger Momente. Jetzt will man mit den Kunstwerken die armen Erschöpften und Kranken von der grossen Leidensstrasse der Menschheit bei Seite locken, für ein lüsteres Augenblickchen; man bietet ihnen einen kleinen Rausch und Wahnsinn an.

Nietzsche wants to extend this 'grossen Feststrasse der Menschheit'. Art has the capability to supply a short moment with eternal durability. In this way, Nietzsche offers an alternative to the Romantic man who suffers from life, and to the emperor who is constantly aware of life's mortality.

Whereas German people are hollow and tired, and do not know any high moment in their life, except for the intoxicated moments provided by Wagnerian music, Nietzsche recognises the lust for life and the longing for the extension of life in the Italians. Italians do not need a moment of intoxication in which he can forget his apathy and lethargy

through the excitement aroused by sensational music-drama. They do not desire 'Erlösung'. What they seek is 'Erleichterung' of their inner passions by giving them a style: 'Die Deutschen wollen durch den Künstler in eine Art erträumter Passion kommen; die Italiäner wollen durch ihn von ihren wirklichen Passionen ausruhen' (*Morgenröthe* 217). Nietzsche is looking for the same alleviation, as shows FW 368: 'Was *will* eigentlich mein ganzer Leib von der Musik überhaupt? Ich glaube seine *Erleichterung*'.

Aphorism 370 was written as part of Nietzsche's reflections on nineteenth-century art and philosophy.⁴⁰ Formerly, he expected that this century would rise highly above the eighteenth century, but here he admits, that only Goethe succeeded in overcoming the eighteenth century. Not only does Goethe express the right zest for life. Not only is Goethe an 'übernationale' person. He also is Nietzsche's bridge between the North and the South. Apart from being 'Dionysian' and 'übernational', Goethe is 'unzeitgemäss'.⁴¹ Goethe accumulates a whole century. He is 'total' and 'vielseitig', because he knows how to assemble and pack together many things in his character, he gives himself a style and lives human history personally. Goethe interprets and accumulates the great moments in human history, and combines his knowledge with his inner passions. Producing a high and original art in this way, he determined human destiny, because he changed European culture by enriching it with new forms and new ideas.

13. 'Im Süden'

Nietzsche celebrates the Italian, southern lifestyle he advocates in *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*, in several poems. After receiving the long-expected typewriter from his sister, in February 1882, Nietzsche started to write a series of verses and poems. Eight of these were published as *Idyllen aus Messina* the same year. However, six of these eight

poems he decided to rewrite as *Lieder des Prinzen Vogelfrei* and add to the re-issue of *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* (1887). One of the rewritten poems is 'Im Süden'. Initially, it bore the title 'Prinz Vogelfrei'. 'Prinz Vogelfrei' tells the story of prince Vogelfrei, who was taught how to fly and sing by birds. The flying enabled the prince's liberation of thinking, while it supplied him with the power to interchange his former rigidity with the enjoyment of the momentum, for a certain lightness of being, represented in the poem by singing:

Vernunft? – das ist ein böses Geschäft:/ Vernunft und Zunge stolpern viel!/ Das
Fliegen gab mir neue Kräfte/ Und lehrt' mich schönere Geschäfte,/ Gesang und
Scherz und Liederspiel. (IM, 3. 333)

Prince Vogelfrei needs to learn to sing, but in order to be able to sing, he must first learn to fly. Prince Vogelfrei, as it appears, has not always been 'Vogelfrei'. It is not easy to become free as a bird: therefore one should look out for the company of other birds, who teach you how to be a truly free bird. That is the message that emerges from this poem.

In its remake 'Im Süden' this message is repeated. However, Nietzsche has added a crucial element: the North-South viewpoint. Not only does the 'I' in this poem (prince Vogelfrei is not named here) fly high above his former rigid state of mind and will to truth, as the last lines show, but it is made explicit that that state of mind and the will to truth are typically 'northern', and that one is to overcome this by travelling to the South:

Nur Schritt für Schritt – das ist kein Leben,/ Stets Bein vor Bein macht deutsch
und schwer./ Ich hiess den Wind mich aufwärts heben,/ Ich lernte mit den
Vögeln schweben,-/ Nach Süden flog ich über's Meer.

Apparently, the 'South' is idyllic, colourful, and innocent for Nietzsche:

Das weisse Meer liegt eingeschlafen,/ Und purpurn steht ein Segel drauf./ Fels,

Feigenbäume, Thurm und Hafen,/ Idylle rings, Geblök von Schafen,-/ Unschuld
des Südens, nimm mich auf!⁴²

Nietzsche craves for cure and expects to find new health in the South, a health that implies innocence; Not just flying around, however, cured him, but flying to the South:

Ich hiess den Wind mich aufwärts heben,/ Ich lernte mit den Vögeln schweben,-/
Nach Süden flog ich über's Meer.

Here we face the chief alteration. In the newer version of the poem it is not so much the flying itself that executes the transition from thinking to singing, from rigidity to freedom, but the deliberate flight to the South. In the South, courage, blood, and energy for a new form of life and play are found, as tells the fourth stanza. For freedom and health, the 'I' had to go to the South, this poems tells us.

With his poems 'Prinz Vogelfrei' and 'Im Süden' Nietzsche presents himself as a troubadour, who sings about his own life-experiences and passions, as a poet of his own life, 'Mittelländler' and good European.⁴³ The poems give voice to the shift in views of life that took place when Nietzsche imbibed a strange world, started to love the South and to celebrate the health he regained there.

'In the South' articulates in a very explicit way that his journey from the North to the South liberated Nietzsche. His journey from Germany to Italy enabled him to make the transition from the northern morality of 'unselfishness' and equality to the southern morality of innocent self-ishness, and to the faith in great passion as the good in itself (FW 99), as the foundation of life and art. The journey from North to South comes down to the move from 'chain-illness' to health. A long visit to the South, Nietzsche's free spirit philosophy declares, is needed for every philosopher-artist, to free his mind and spread

his wings.

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1 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Sämtliche Werke*. Kritische Studienausgabe (KSA) in 15 Vols. (ed. Giorgi Colli and Mazzino Montinari), Munich/ Berlin, 1988 (2e. rev. ed.), Vol. 14, p. 45. From now on referred to as 'KSA' with volumenumber followed by pagenumber (hence: 14.45).

Citations from Nietzsche's works are according to the KSA-edition. They are indicated with the standard abbreviation and number of the fragment. FW = *Fröhliche Wissenschaft*; GD Streifzüge = *Götzen-Dämmerung, Streifzüge eines Unzeitgemässen*; GT = *Die Geburt der Tragödie*; IM = *Idyllen aus Messina*; JGB = *Jenseits von Gut und Böse*; LPV = *Lieder des Prinzen Vogelfrei*; M = *Morgenröthe*; MA = *Menschliches Allzumenschliches*; SE = *Schopenhauer als Erzieher*; VM = *Vermischte Meinungen und Sprüche*; WA = *Der Fall Wagner*; WS = *Der Wanderer und sein Schatten*; Z = *Also sprach Zarathustra*. References to Nietzsche's posthumous papers refer to note-number, KSA- volume and pagenumber. References to Nietzsche's letters are cited according to Friedrich Nietzsche, *Sämtliche Briefe* (KSB) in 8 Vols. (ed. Giorgi Colli and Mazzino Montinari), Munich/ Berlin/ New York, 2003 (second ed.), and referred to as 'KSB' followed by volume- and pagenumber.

I thank Roger Stephenson for his helpful comments and corrections on an earlier draft of this text.

2 For an extensive account of the subject of this article, I want to refer to my book on

Nietzsche's *Fröhliche Wissenschaft: Lof der Méditerrannée*. Nietzsches vrolijke wetenschap tussen noord en zuid. Kampen, 2005.

3 See Letters of Nietzsche to Franz Overbeck of 14 October 1881 (KSB 6. 134), 21 October 1881 (KSB 6. 135), and 28 October 1881 (KSB 6. 137), to Heinrich Köselitz (27 October 1881, KSB 6. 136; 6 November 1881, KSB 6. 138), and to Paul Rée (6 November 1881, KSB 6. 139).

4 Werner Ross calls Köselitz 'als einziger unter Nietzsches Freunden unbedeutend' (*Der ängstliche Adler*. Friedrich Nietzsches Leben. Munich, 1999, p. 569). Frederick Love is more correct when calling the friendship 'on the edge of despair' ("Prelude to a Desperate Friendship: Nietzsche and Peter Gast in Basel" in: *Nietzsche-Studien 1* (1972). Berlin/ New York, pp. 261-285, p. 262).

5 Gast composed this work after Goethe's libretto. Nietzsche published a collection of verses by the same name in *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*, deliberately alluding to Goethe and Gast. See for a comparison of Nietzsche's and Goethe's *Scherz, List und Rache*: Kathleen M. Higgins, *Comic Relief, Nietzsche's Gay Science* (New York/ Oxford 2000), Chapter Two.

6 See Nietzsche to his mother and sister 18 May 1881 (KSB 6. 88) and to Franz Overbeck on the same day (KSB 6. 89).

7 Originally being a recomposition of Paësiello's and Cimarosa's *Il matrimonio segreto*, Gast re-baptises this work after Nietzsche's suggestion *Der Löwe von Venedig*. Cf. Nietzsche to Heinrich Köselitz, 4 October 1881, KSB 6. 133, and Nietzsche to Franz Overbeck, 14 November 1881, KSB 6. 141.

⁸ Cf. Frederick Love, "Nietzsche's Quest for a New Aesthetic of Music: 'Die allergrösste

Symphonie’; Grosser Stil’; ‘M \ddot{u} sik des S \ddot{u} dens’” in: *Nietzsche-Studien* 6 (1977). Berlin/ New York, pp. 154-194, pp. 155-156.

9 See 15 [67], KSA 9. 657.

10 Nietzsche writes to K \ddot{o} selitz: ‘Dies ist Ein Punkt: den Text *nach* der Musik zu dichten’ (10-01-1883, KSB 6, pp. 317). Cf. Curt Paul Janz, “The Form-Content Problem in Nietzsche’s Conception of Music” in: *Nietzsche’s New Seas. Explorations in Philosophy, Aesthetics, and Politics* (ed. Michael Allen Gillespie and Tracy B. Strong). Chicago/ London, 1988, pp. 97-116.

11 It has a healthy colour, though, because Wagner is a master of illusion (*Morgenr \ddot{o} the* 255).

12 ‘Durch Wagner redet die Modernit \ddot{a} t ihre *intimste* Sprache,’ Nietzsche writes (WA Vorwort, 6. 12).

13 Cf. the important line in FW Vorrede 4: ‘Wir glauben nicht mehr daran, dass Wahrheit noch Wahrheit bleibt, wenn man ihr die Schleier abzieht [...]’ (3. 352). See for a very instructive account on Nietzsche and the problem of appearance/ semblance (‘Schein’): Paul Bishop and R. H. Stephenson, “Nietzsche and Weimar Aesthetics” in: *German Life and Letters*. New Series Vol. LII No. 4, October 1999, pp. 412-429, esp. pp. 413-422.

14 See FW 317, 3. 549. Vgl. Mazzino Montinari, *Nietzsche Lesen*. Berlin/ New York, 1982, p. 64.

15 Cf. FW 338, 3. 565-568, where Nietzsche speaks of the ‘pers \ddot{o} nliche Nothwendigkeit des Ungl \ddot{u} cks’.

16 See 30[31], 8. 527. In his article ‘Nietzsche and the Figure of Columbus’ (*Nietzsche-Studien* 24, Berlin/ New York 1995, pp.162-183, p.168), Duncan Large calls this

Epicurus ‘distinctly Genoese’ and I fully agree with this epithet.

17 ‘Selfish’ as translation of ‘selbstsüchtig’, not meaning ‘egoistic’, but rather ‘egocentric’. I thank Roger Stephenson for the beautiful suggestion of ‘porous’.

18 *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* is the result of the ‘Sieg über den Winter’ (FW Vorrede 1, 3. 345), and its language is the ‘Sprache des Thauwinds’ (ibid.).

19 Vivetta Vivarelli, “‘Vorschule des Sehens’ und “stilisierte Natur” in der *Morgenröthe* und der *Fröhlichen Wissenschaft*” in: *Nietzsche-Studien* 20 (1991), Berlin/ New York, pp. 134-151, p. 134. Although Nietzsche’s indebtedness to Goethe is acknowledged by different commentators (see for example: Erich Heller, “Nietzsche and Goethe” in: *The Importance of Nietzsche. Ten Essays.* Chicago/ London, 1988, pp. 18-38; Mazzino Montinari, “Aufklärung und Revolution: Nietzsche und der späte Goethe” in: *Nietzsche Lesen.* Berlin/ New York, 1982, pp. 56-63.; Theo Meyer, “Nietzsche und Goethe. Goethes Wirkung auf Nietzsches Lebens-, Kunst- und Kulturbegriff” in: *Perspektiven der Philosophie 2001* (Volume 27). Ed. Wiebke Schrader, Georges Goedert, Martina Scheibel, Amsterdam/ New York, 2001, pp. 223-268), only few (Paul Bishop and Roger Stephenson, *Nietzsche and Weimar Aesthetics*; Aldo Venturelli, “das Klassische als Vollendung des Sentimentalischen. Der Junge Nietzsche als Leser des Briefwechsels zwischen Schiller und Goethe” in: *Nietzsche-Studien* 18 (1989). Berlin/ New York, pp. 182-202; and Vivetta Vivarelli, op. cit., and her article “Nietzsche, Goethe und der historische Sinn” in: *Centauren-Geburten. Wissenschaft, Kunst und Philosophie beim jungen Nietzsche* (ed. Tilman Borsche, Federico Gerratana, Aldo Venturelli. Berlin/ New York, 1994, 276-291)) seem to recognise the depth of Goethe’s influence on Nietzsche.

20 Noted on 11 September 1786 in: *Goethes Werke.* Hamburger Ausgabe in 14 Bänden,

Volume XI, 1964 (6th ed.), p. 25. Further referred to as 'HA'.

21 Ibidem.

22 HA XI, pp. 86-87 (Venice, 08-10-1786).

23 HA XI, p. 150 (Rome, 20-12-1786).

24 Cf. Rome, 27-6-1787: 'Ich will auch nicht mehr ruhen, bis mir nichts mehr Wort und Tradition, sondern lebendiger Begriff ist' (HA XI, p. 352).

25 Cf. Rome, 28-8-1787: 'In der Kunst muß ich es so weit bringen, daß alles anschauende Kenntniss werde, nichts Tradition und Name bleibe' (HA XI, pp. 388-389).

26 See 6[67], KSA 9. 211.

27 Cf. GT 'Versuch einer Selbstkritik' 5 (KSA 1. 17), GT 5 (1. 47), and GT 24 (1.152).

28 See 6[382], KSA 9. 296.

29 Nietzsche uses the 'heroic' idea of 'Schmerz zufügen' against the bogey of 'the last man', that is the man who wants to be just like his neighbour, and is afraid of everything big.

30 Cf. FW 51: '[...] I no longer wish to hear anything of all those things and questions that do not permit any experiment. That is the limit of my "truthfulness"'.

31 See FW 329 (3. 556-557). Cf. FW 283 (3. 526-527).

32 Cf. : 'Ich gehe durch die neuen Strassen unserer [deutschen] Städte und denke wie von allen diesen greulichen Häusern, welche das Geschlecht der öffentlich Meinenden erbaut hat, in einem Jahrhundert nichts mehr steht und wie dann auch wohl die Meinungen dieser Häuserbauer umgefallen sein werden' (SE 1, 1. 339).

33 Cf. GD, Streifzüge 38. Nietzsche calls the distance one keeps to one's neighbour also 'Pathos der Distanz' (GD, Streifzüge 37). He declares this as 'der Wille, selbst zu sein,

sich abzuheben' (ibid.). The 'Pathos der Distanz' is a precondition for the creation of a higher human being and a higher culture.

34 41[7], KSA 11: 682. In this fragment, Nietzsche speaks of the German desire to return to Greek culture. Italy, with its Renaissance, vitality, innocence, courage, and selfishness, provides the entrance to this southern and Greek spirit. Italy, like Goethe, is the 'bridge' to the rebirth of the Dionysian spirit in modern culture (ibid.).

35 See 25[162], KSA 11: 56.

36 Nietzsche adopts Goethe's own distinction between classic/health and romantic/sick as expressed to Eckermann: 'Das Klassische nenne ich das Gesunde und das Romantische das Kranke. Und da sind die *Nibelungen* klassisch wie der *Homer*, denn beide sind gesund und tüchtig. Das meiste Neuere ist nicht romantisch, weil es neu, sondern weil es schwach, kränklich und krank ist, und das Alte ist nicht klassisch weil es alt, sondern weil es stark, frisch, froh und gesund ist' (2-4-1829. Johann Peter Eckermann, *Gespräche mit Goethe in den letzten Jahren seines Lebens*, Bd. 19 of Goethe's *Sämtliche Werke* (München: Hanser Verlag, 1986), p. 300).

37 Cf. 4[213], KSA 9: 153.

38 FW 113, 3. 474.

39 12[145], KSA 9: 601. Cf. 11[94], KSA 13: 43.

It is not clear which emperor Nietzsche means. A possibility could be Marcus Aurelius (I thank Roger Stephenson for this suggestion).

40 Though being part of the 1887-edition of *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* only, it confirms rather than deviates from Nietzsche's 'free spirit' aesthetics.

41 It is surely remarkable that Nietzsche considers Goethe now 'Dionysian', as he

condemns Goethe (and Weimar Classicism) in *Die Geburt der Tragödie* explicitly for being not Dionysian. In my view, this not so much confirms Nietzsche's changing view of Goethe, but rather his changing conception of the 'Dionysian'. This is not the place to discuss these changes, but shortly we could say that in the eighties Nietzsche underlines the life-affirmative aspect of Dionysus, whereas in *Die Geburt der Tragödie* he stresses the tragic aspect of Dionysus, its rupture into individuality.

42 'Das weisse Meer liegt eingeschlafen' reminds of a citation made earlier in the text, where Nietzsche speaks of 'ein weites weissliches Meer' (FW 45), upon which Epicurus' eyes gaze. These eyes are happy eyes according to Nietzsche, that have witnessed the sea become calm. Here something similar is meant, it seems to me.

43 Nietzsche considered to call *Die Lieder des Prinzen Vogelfrei*: 'Prinz Vogelfrei. Oder: der gute Europäer' (KSA 14. 712).