THE TRAGIC TURN IN THE RE-IMAGINATION OF PUBLICS

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Introduction

In several recent presidential addresses of the American Sociological Association, it has been argued that sociologists should regenerate and get involved in what public sociologists call the 'publics', in order to promote critical and reflective discourses (Gans 1989; Adams 1998: 20-21; Piven 2004; Burawoy 2005a). A public, according to C.Wright Mills' definition, is an arena in which the required physical (communication facilities) and intellectual (ability to think and argue) conditions for democratic debates are present (Ossewaarde 2007). These discussions result in well-informed opinions, which in turn find an outlet for effective action, even against the prevailing system of authority, if necessary (Mills 1956: 303-4). Through such conversions and 'reflexive self-examination' (Gouldner 1976: 215), people, like students, media representatives, citizens and so on, can better comprehend social patterns of oppression and delusion, and also act accordingly. Publics are 'webs of critical discourse' which contribute towards the formation of the democratic will of 'lay citizens', who can directly and competently get involved in the political process of determining the paths along which the world is to develop (Emirbayer and Sheller 1998). The hope of public sociology is, in Mills' words (1956: 299), 'that truth and justice will somehow come out of society as a great apparatus of free discussion.'

The Socratic tradition to which public sociology belongs is criticized by Friedrich Nietzsche in *The Birth of Tragedy*. According to Nietzsche, the fundamental weakness of what he calls 'Socratism' is the assumption that reality, including social reality, has a rational (that is, causal, functional, or meaningful) foundation, which is discoverable through reason or science. Hence, contrarily to Socrates and similarly to Heraclites, he maintains that reality, including social life, must instead be understood as a painful and absurd flux of passing phenomena. In Nietzsche's Heraclitean perspective, the world is a fluid entity that cannot be corrected or improved through (sociological) knowledge and intellectual dialectics. Nietzsche's concern is not so much about the good, just or beautiful order, – one in which people can encounter each other in truth – since the perpetual flux makes the very existence of such an order very improbable. Instead, the urgent question, for him, is how to confront the existential pain caused by the endless stream of things that go and come, with the greatest human dignity, as a real hero or, what he calls, the 'good European' (Parkes 1993; Martin 1995; Krell 1997; Szakolczai 2007; Emden 2008; Andler 2009).

For Nietzsche, the 'good European' is the tragic hero who refuses to resign to fate, and opts for greatness and honor, rather than mediocrity and security. This type of hero is represented and honoured in the works of the Attic tragedians, Aeschylus and Sophocles (Griffin 1998: 61). The poetic art of tragedy is, according to him, the only institution that makes living with the truth of a painful and absurd reality possible, without seeking refuge in a world of ideas, which gives meanings, functions and causes to suffering. Only tragic poetry, Nietzsche (2000: 45; 46) says, teaches 'that life at the bottom of things, in spite of the passing of phenomena, remains indestructibly powerful and pleasurable', and 'can reshape that disgust at the thought of the horrific or absurd aspects of life into notions with which it is possible to live.' Hence, for Nietzsche, tragedy is a more significant cultural force than the Church or the state, which typically represent either the classical European values of the Socratic tradition or a tradition tout court.

Although Nietzsche's influence on sociology is widely recognized (Antonio 1995: 3), the implications of *The Birth of Tragedy* for public sociology's enterprise have been left under-explored. Nietzsche's key insights – his perception of reality as tragic and of the Socratic tradition as a plebeian force of cultural regress in Europe (Sweet 1999: 345)[1] – could shed a different light on the (mechanic-causal, organic-functional, cultural-meaningful) worldview that is inherent in different (positivist, functionalist, interpretative) sociologies in general, and on the symbolic form and content of publics in particular. Nietzsche introduces what he (2000: 43) calls 'aesthetic publics', which are meant to replace the intellectual publics. In and through the aesthetic publics, people are confronted with, or made aware of, the Heraclitean flux of existence – the 'seriousness of existence' as the tragedian sees it (Nietzsche 2000: 17) – and are encouraged to actively participate in the performance of the tragedy (c.f., Lea 1977: 37; Sweet 1999: 345). In this way, it is expected that people are able to face the truth and live with it in full dignity, as 'good Europeans'.

In the first part of the paper, the Heraclitean view of reality is compared with the Socratic approach that characterizes public sociology, as the latter has been presented in the works of thinkers like Alexis de Tocqueville, Thorstein Veblen, Robert Lynd, C. Wright Mills and Alvin Gouldner. The Heraclitean view of society as a fluid entity is not a very dominant perspective, but is still present within sociology (particularly in the works of Georg Simmel). The Heraclitean flux reaches its climax in the poetic form of tragedy, according to Nietzsche, when two opposite forces – Dionysus and Apollo, which are assumed to inhere in reality and to govern the world – are united in a climactic moment of truth. The two types of publics that belong to the Heraclitean and Socratic visions, with their two different appreciations of reason, are also presented. Then, it is

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[1] Nietzsche (2000: 5), in a new introduction to *The Birth of Tragedy*, commented that his book is 'badly written, clumsy, embarrassing, furious and frenzied in its imagery.' In *Ecce Homo*, he stressed that it had provided two decisive insights, namely, an 'understanding of the Dionysian phenomenon among the Greeks' and an 'understanding of Socratism…as a typical decadent [rationality]' (Nietzsche quoted in Sweet, 1999: 345).

explained why and how bureaucracy is the common enemy of both types of publics. The final two parts of this article deal with the public sociological revival of the Apollonian publics and with Nietzsche's, as well as other cultural sociologists', plea for an aesthetic public.

The Heraclitean flux and the Socratic Good

The distinctive feature of the Heraclitean dialectical vision is the perception of reality as having no rational (that is, causal, functional, meaningful) foundation or given order, which could be discovered by reason or science. The Heraclitean dialectical view in sociology implies that the social world, with its orders, identities and inequalities, is studied as a 'fearful, evil, enigmatic, destructive, disastrous' flux of passing phenomena, which has neither order, law or form (Nietzsche 2000: 7). The world moves in a dialectic between opposite things that transform reality in their confrontation with each other. Opposites, which sociologists have grasped in ideas like self and other, bourgeois and citoyen, labor and capital, culture and industry, local and cosmopolitan, antiquity and modernity, and myth and enlightenment, are related to each other in a very ambiguous manner. They are namely contraries that struggle against each other, and yet, at the same time, they are driven towards each other, because they ultimately belong to each other (Bloch 1983: 284; Dienstag 2001: 936). This is the tragic story of hero who fights against his fate, knowing that the inevitable will happen, and who, therefore, actually precipitates or realizes his lot. It is the union between opposite forces – the restoration of 'the original Unity', according to Nietzsche (2000: 30) – which ensures the ephemeral periods of cultural flourishing (Seaford 2003: 156-159).

Georg Simmel is one of the very few sociologists who, inspired by Nietzsche, assume the Heraclitean dialectic of opposite forces in their reconstruction of social reality. The dialectical sociology of men like Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, C. Wright Mills and Alvin Gouldner, on the other hand, is not Heraclitean but Socratic. Their sociology is based on the understanding of reality as being governed by an ordering principle that can be discovered through reason. The Socratic dialectic, which involves contesting contemplative minds, assumes such a rational order of reality and aims at grasping it through ideas (Gouldner 1965: 259-296; Bloch 1983: 289-90); Prus 2004: 13). Plato's ideas of 'truth', 'justice' and 'beauty', Thomas Aquinas' '*bonum commune*' are examples of such intellectual forms. In sociology, the assumption of a rational order of reality is expressed in, for instance, C. Wright Mills' 'democratic society of publics', Robert Bellah's 'good society', or Philip Selznick's 'moral commonwealth'.[2] These concepts presume that there are criteria to distinguish between good and oppressive orders, and that it is humanly (politically and morally) possible and even necessary to strive after such goods.

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[2] In his presidential address, Herbert Gans (1989: 5) argues that 'we ought also to confront once more an old, recently forgotten question: what is a good society and how can sociology help bring it about?'

From a Heraclitean perspective, these ideas of an order are illusions, since reality is a flux that is not governed by any order, and in which no order can be discerned. Reality is a stream (or perpetual cycle) of destruction (death) – 'the violence of the dialectic', says Walter Benjamin (1977: 166) – and becoming (birth), kept in movement by the continuous strife between opposite forces. The Socratic view, on the other hand, is that the flux is only appearance, and that the enlightened mind can see that there is a hidden, yet discoverable, order of things behind and beyond this physical (phenomenological) veil (Ossewaarde 2010). Reason is the eye that discovers this sublime and eternal meta-physical reality or ordering principle, while the body, with its senses and appetites, can only experience the flux. Reason discovers the good order, which is immune to the forces of the flux or to fate, and which can be imposed on the flux. Chaotic or meaningless realities are, therefore, reshaped in accordance with reason, to achieve, for instance, a more democratic or more just world. Ideas of democracy and justice have always been and will always be, and since reason dwells in this permanence, it can unveil them.

The Socratic intimate relation between reason and the good implies that all evil in the world springs from ignorance, which is not in accordance with reason. Therefore, all evil in the world (falsehood, injustice, oppression, pain) can, at least potentially, be overcome when the world is ordered according to the ideas revealed by reason. The knowledge of the rational order of reality can only be acquired in and through the art of friendly dispute (Ossewaarde 2010). Ignorance is not only the fruit of a suppressed Socratic dialectic, but it also promotes this repression (for instance, by condemning Socrates to death). Hence, ignorance maintains a vicious circle (the flux), and in the end, it is the source of all evil, boredom and woeful agony, while knowledge of the truth about the self and the beautiful ordering principle that governs true reality is the highest that one can achieve in life. The one who knows also sees the unity of all goods (justice, freedom, happiness, health and so forth) in the one Good.

According to the Heraclitean perspective, there may be such a thing as reason, but it is not exempt from the becoming and passing of things, and therefore, sways just as much as passions. Reality, which is always in a state of becoming, does not have a given end, since it does not a beginning (foundation). Neither reality nor the self are to be shaped according to ideas revealed by reason, since these are pure illusions. Reality *is* at a certain time and in a given place, when opposite forces are temporarily united, but this union does not last long, and the process of becoming carries on. The self *is* when the contest between inner forces comes to rest, but the flux ensures that this respite is never permanent. Reason does not have much to say or see in this chaotic process, in which all kinds of (irrational) forces play crucial roles. In other words, the truth about reality is absurd and horrific. The ancient tragedians like Aeschylus and Sophocles express most vividly this Heraclitean vision of the flux, in which the self is carried and tossed back and forth (Steiner 1980: 169). Oedipus' lot is such that he wishes he was never born.

The Heraclitean unity in the art of tragedy

Nietzsche's vision of reality in *The Birth of Tragedy* can be described as Heraclitean. He argues that reality is a process of becoming or a 'flood of suffering and troubles' (Nietzsche 2000: 57), which is animated by a strife or ambiguous relationship between two opposite forces or drives that inhere in a reality that has neither origin nor foundational principle. He names the two opposites after two mythological deities, Dionysus and Apollo. In Greek mythology, Dionysus is the god of wine, fertility, vitality, ecstasy, intoxication and the art of music, who was unjustly dismembered by his enemies in a spell of individuation and later restored by his brother Apollo (Sweet 1999: 354; 357; Nietzsche 2000: 59-60). Apollo is the god of Delphi, of light and dream. He is 'an ethical deity' and the god of individuation and of 'just limits' (Nietzsche 2000: 21-2; 31; 58). Nietzsche (2000: 17) holds that these two opposites are united in the art of tragedy:

> The difficult relation between the Apollonian and the Dionysian in tragedy should really be symbolized through a fraternal bond between both deities: Dionysus speaks the language of Apollo and Apollo finally speaks the language of Dionysus, and so the highest goal of tragedy and of art itself is achieved.

Tragedy, Nietzsche emphasizes, is a Dionysian art. The distinctive feature of Attic tragedy, however, which Nietzsche considers to be the most perfect art of tragedy, is that it has succeeded in coupling the Dionysian and the Apollonian opposites in a fraternal bond, without one force annihilating the other (Nietzsche 2000: 46; Weinberg 1967: 256; 263).

Tragic art does not only presume a fundamentally pessimistic view of the world, but it also offers a way to live with this truth. Nietzsche (2000: 60) notes how there is a '*tragedy's doctrine of the mysteries*'. Nietzsche (2000: 60) points out that the knowledge of the tragedian is the 'the fundamental knowledge of the unity of all that exists', which is the consideration of the spell of Dionysus' individuation as the original cause of evil and 'the presentiment of a restored unity' as the original cause of the good. The narrated life of the hero depicts this suffering of individuation *and* at the same celebrates his heroic longing for an original unity, which is fate. The tragic hero is always a noble character, who is driven by a powerful vitality and potency, and who has a strong will and energy to live life to the fullest. Despite fear and evil, the tragic hero is able to surpass all human limits, to finally succumb to this same transgression or sacrilege (Nietzsche 2000: 58).[3] This fundamental imprudence, unreasonableness or disobedience is what triggers the Apollonian wrath on Dionysus. Yet, it is precisely this heroic, Dionysian impulse that leads to the climax in the tragic story of the hero, since it is his 'attempt to step outside the spell of individuation and to become the *single* essence of the

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[3] Nietzsche (2000: 55) gives the example of the tragic hero's incest as a monstrous transgression of nature. Kurt Weinberg (1967: 265) points out that 'tragedy is invented to ascribe dignity to crime.'

world' (Nietzsche 2000: 57). Tragic art expresses the contradictions hidden in things and the agonies that necessarily flow from them.

The agony of Dionysus is the one of a humanity that is torn to pieces in a disorderly world (Steiner 1980: 167). The 'dismemberment, the properly Dionysian suffering,' Nietzsche says in a Heraclitean style (2000: 59), 'is similar to a transformation into earth, wind, fire and water.' The material world can only be a whole if these four elements are united as One. In other words, the suffering of Dionysus reflects broken bonds, between man and man, and between nature and man (Nietzsche 2000: 22). In his poem *The Persians*, Aeschylus, the first of the Attic tragedians, presents Xerxes, the greatest enemy of the Greeks, as the tragic hero. In his disastrous defeat at Salamis, the Persian king falls into the Dionysian abyss by crossing the Straits of Helle, driven by his strong Dionysian impulses and energy (his desire to conquer Europe). By imprudently transgressing the Apollonian border that separates Europe and Asia, Xerxes encounters Apollo's wrath. Xerxes' fatal misjudgment, which he is destined to make given his blessing and curse, leads to the ruin of the Persians, the climactic unity of opposites. And thereby, the hero transforms the unformulated field of tragic fate, the Dionysian abyss, into a sublime piece of art, of which he forms part.

A tragedy like *The Persians* tells a profound truth about the Heraclitean flux and the place of human beings in it, presenting the hero's encounters with the isolation, death and suffering, which are part of the human condition, as the hero experiences it (Curtis 2007: 860; 870). In tragedies, heroes like Xerxes have a Dionysian flaw or impulse that is inescapable, given the forces of necessity.[4] They refuse to accept the limits drawn by Apollo, transgress these limits, fight against misfortune, succumb to their cruel fate, and mystically abandon their selves (Nietzsche 2000: 24; Alford 1992: 157; Antonio 1995: 7; 16; 19). The hero's self-abandonment, after being ruined, is typically an act of rage (Steiner 1980: 128). Such anti-climax or Dionysian defeat is most evident in Sophocles' Oedipus myth. After having seen his sacrileges, Oedipus becomes so disgusted with his self that he pokes out his own eyes, so as not to see himself again. His heroic self-abandonment is definite: he will never be king again and will be a blind beggar for the rest of his life (Farley 1996: 127). Gone are the heroic impulses that drove him to overcome the contradictions inherent in human life.

Apollonian and Dionysian publics

The tragic art and the Socratic art of friendly dispute take place and result in different publics. The Socratic dialogues presume and promote Apollonian publics, which are based on the assumption that knowledge can be acquired through intellectual interactions.

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[4] Hans-Uwe Haus (2008: 321-322) points out that 'what strikes and fascinates us in reading ancient Greek tragedy, however, is precisely the belief that we cannot assert our will unconditionally and that we occupy a small place in an immense universe in which all things, even the immortal gods, are subject to one force, the force of necessity. For it is the recognition of necessity, in one form or another, that finally resolves the conflict in Greek tragedy.'

Such publics ensure, at the same time, that the contest of minds is not stifled by all sorts of social forces and sophistries (Voegelin 2000: 66; 123; 125). From an Apollonian viewpoint, the essence of the European culture is the rule of reason and the protection of the rational order, through prudence and moderation, that is, by recognizing Apollo's just limits. Reason and the Apollonian publics can, therefore, only flourish if the European life is lived through friendly disputes, whereby the ordinary citizen is brought on stage and gets a chance to speak. The example of such a wise, reasonable and serene way of life is set by Socrates, the Apollonian intellectual hero who sacrifices his own life for the sake of the eternal Reason and ideas. Socrates even succeeds in turning his own death into a theme for his dialogue, which in turn makes his heroic death become the 'art of dying' (Bradatan 2007: 589; 602). The Apollonian hero – the exemplary figure for scientists standing in Europe's Socratic tradition – outwits even death (Nietzsche 2000: 76; 82). Neither the horror of death, which is itself just appearance, nor the Dionysian abyss is experienced. The material reality veils what cannot be killed.

The Heraclitean perspective, on the other hand, does not perceive reason as such a praiseworthy human characteristic. Reason is, just as everything that is human, subjected to the flux. Hence, for Nietzsche, the 'art of living' is not so much philosophizing and learning how to die as to live life with all its horrors and absurdities and purposelessness to the fullest (Nietzsche 2000: 128; Dienstag 2001: 924-925). This powerful will to live is expressed in and reinforced through the Dionysian festival. It is the powerful or heroic will that characterizes Nietzsche's 'good European', who is cultivated in an 'aesthetic public'. Tragedies used to be performed during the Dionysian festival, in an Athenian sanctuary of Dionysus, in honor of the god of wine (Lea 1977: 36-7; Herington 1986: 19; Scullion 2002: 107).[5] Tragedies are performed against a background of enchanting myths, in particular those of Dionysus' dismemberment and of his madness inflicted by Hera. Dionysian or aesthetic publics enable the audience, to borrow Leszek Kolakowski's words (1989: 45), 'to participate in myth,' so that it can fully experience the tragedy and become part of it. In aesthetic publics, the demigod and his chorus of satyrs, rather than debating ordinary citizens, are at the centre of the stage, offering a spectacle that, in Nietzsche's view, is a 'more truthful, more real, more complete image of existence' than the Apollonian thinker 'who commonly considers himself the sole reality' (Nietzsche 2000: 47).

During the Dionysian festival, the audience becomes intoxicated with the Dionysian ecstasy and will to live (Nietzsche 2000: 52; Dienstag 2001: 932), which Nietzsche (2000: 113) calls 'an orgiastic feeling of freedom.' Freedom is here associated with the free play of the virile passions and energies, which refuse to be defeated by suffering and death. This feeling of freedom is an aesthetic experience that is at once ecstatic, musical and intoxicating (Sweet 1999: 354). The audience becomes part of the performance, is carried into life of the legendary hero, tastes the Dionysian euphoria, jubilates in the hero's triumphs and mourns his downfall and mysterious self-abandonment (Nietzsche 2000: 48; Weinberg 1967: 252-3; 266; Dienstag 2001: 927).

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[5] The Dionysian festival and the contest of the tragedies had originally been institutionalized in ancient Athens, in around 534 BCE, during the reign of Pisistratus.

The Attic tragedians remind their audience that the dramatic ruin of the hero can also be their own fate and constantly charge their tragedies with deeper tragic significance, against the superstitions of the crowd (Lea 1977: 37-38; Steiner 1980: 315; Alford 1992: 159; Antonio 1995: 30; Dienstag 2001: 931).[6]

Nietzsche (2000: 111) argues that the art of tragedy is 'a necessary healing craft'. He holds that only the performed tragedy, that is, the aesthetic experience of the Dionysian festival, can reshape the disgust of life into the will to live, and hence, saves from collapsing into a condition of despair or apathy (Nietzsche 2000: 46). The audience needs the literary art, 'as a protection and remedy' (Nietzsche 2000: 84), to be able to tolerate (rather than ignore or escape from) reality. The redemptive power of the tragedy lies in its fusion of greatness with suffering – of the tragic hero in this case – against a background of singing and dancing chorus and audience (Nietzsche 2000: 19; 23; Farley 1996: 125). The participants literally imbibe the powerful passions that characterize a heroic life and end. If they are, in turn, able to live such a life, they become Nietzsche's 'good Europeans'.

The music of the chorus, in the performance, forms a crucial part of the aesthetic experience of tragic heroism. Nietzsche argues that 'real music' or 'serious music' is 'the imageless Dionysian art' (Nietzsche 2000: 19) performed by the chorus in honor of Dionysus. Such a music expresses the 'essence of the world', that is misfortune, which the public of 'aesthetic listeners' (Nietzsche 2000: 120) can hear ('drink'). The Heraclitean flux can, indeed, only be expressed in imageless sounds, while the 'voice' of reality is blocked by rationalizations (Friedlander 2006: 640). Music expresses that which words can hardly tell namely the experiences of perpetual destruction and re-creation, death and re-birth, and the climactic moment when the hero meets his fate (Friedlander 2006: 634-5). Tragic music is therefore an 'original echo of pain' (Nietzsche 2000: 35), the pain of Dionysus and of everyone who longs for greatness, the infinite. The musical performance requires, or presupposes, an audience that is sensitive enough to be able to hear the shattering of fluid realities or 'the undistorted voice' of the flux (Nietzsche 2000: 90) – the pain of becoming – in the performance of the tragedian. In the Apollonian art, by contrast, suffering is vanquished or erased by the beauty of beautiful images that depict a reality free from contradictions.

Nietzsche points out the antagonistic relationship between the Socratic dialogue and the Dionysian festival. Apollonian publics promote a life of intellectual contempt for

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[6] Jean Bodin stresses that this so-called deeper tragic significance must be understood within the context of the Athenian city-state. Bodin (2008: 280) argues that the legend of the tragic hero 'functions as a warning addressed to the demos.' The tragedian understands the city-state, as Anitra Laycock (2009: 29) emphasizes, as the extension of the rule of Olympian gods into the human realm. Paul Epstein (1996: 30), therefore, calls the city-state an 'Olympian institution' (Epstein 1996: 30). Nietzsche (2000: 28), however, claims that these gods were 'born of dream, as a screen' and created by the Greeks themselves, who invented them to be able to live with 'the terrors and horrors of existence'.

the primitive, unrestrained instinct, feverish impulses and wildness of the Dionysian impulses, which are aroused during the performance of the tragedy. For Nietzsche, Socrates is 'a newly born daemon' and a 'despotic logician' who 'single-handedly dares negate the Greek character', which is so closely related to the Greek mysteries, and instead, creates an Apollonian or Socratic culture in which there is no place for the Dionysian will to live (Nietzsche 2000: 68; 79; 74). In this culture, the reckless hero who provokes fate and transgresses all reasonable limits is a bad example for citizens.[7] Apollo or the wise philosopher, on the other hand, teaches how to live serenely, in the belief of eternal forms. In his dialogues, Socrates shows an open distaste for the formlessness, fickleness and futility of music, myth and dance, and he reduces the intoxicating tension of the tragic with comical remarks and laughter (Detienne 2001: 150-1). Nietzsche insists that the death of tragedy begins with the Socratic dialogue, which is a cowardly escape of the mind into a dream-world of ideas (Nietzsche 2000: 83). 'Not reflection, no! - but true knowledge, insight into the horrific truth' is what fundamental knowledge is about (Nietzsche 2000: 46). The really wise man is Oedipus, not Socrates (Nietzsche 2000: 55); and yet, in the tragedians' plays, the Dionysian hero is, despite his sharp reason, ignorant. The wise Oedipus did not know who is father was.

Nietzsche, however, notes how even the life of Socrates eventually expresses the union between the Apollonian and Dionysian forces; or more exactly, how the Apollonian drive in Socrates can no longer resist the Dionysian impulse. This climax, according to Nietzsche, is reached when the hero (Socrates) finally becomes musical, just when he is about to die (Nietzsche 2000: 80). Then he comes to realize, against his earlier beliefs, that philosophizing may not be the highest (or most beautiful) art after all, and that there may be wisdom in music, which had thus far been inaccessible to him as theoretical man. For Nietzsche, the last days of Socrates reveal that Apollo needs Dionysus, especially in times of existential crises like an imminent death and wars, and that Dionysus can make himself be heard and felt even in the life of the most reasonable (Apollonian) men. If Dionysus could make such a come-back in the life of Socrates (the personification of European rationality), then, tragedy can also be revived in the Apollonian culture of European modernity. When the Enlightenment movement was destroying the old rational order of Christian Europe, Richard Wagner arose as the new Aeschylus, to reaffirm the Greek character of the German nation. At least that was Nietzsche's hope when he wrote *The Birth of Tragedy*.

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[7] Nietzsche (2000: 73) presents Socrates and Euripides as hand in glove, holding that 'Socrates used to help Euripides with his writing.' In his *The Bacchae,* Euripides narrates the story of a Dionysian festival in which things go terribly out of hand. When King Pentheus of Thebes declares a ban on the worship of Dionysus, Pentheus' cousin, the mask of Dionysus, invites the King to attend the Dionysian public that had driven the Theben women into ecstatic frenzy. During the orgiastic worship of Dionysus, the deity calls out to his worshippers and accuses Pentheus. This drives the women wild, including the king's mother, who, in her frenzy, cuts off the head of her son, and only realizes what she has done when she awakens from her Dionysian spell. In *The Bacchae*, Dionysus is not always noble, and the chorus, including its singing, dancing, music and acting, plays a minor role.

Bureaucracy and publics

For Nietzsche, the Heraclitean vision sees the truth about reality while tragedy subsequently transforms this unbearable absurdity of life into an aesthetic public, without masking the horror itself. The Socratic dialectic and its Apollonian publics intellectually involve people who are incited to search for the good in the realm of ideas, in spite of the phenomenological flux and absurdity of things. Dionysian publics do not try to check the becoming of reality, but instead, incite the participants to live it as art, by making them become part of the story itself. In Socratic dialogues, disputing friends critically question all established orders in their search for the rational or good order. Both the Dionysian and the Apollonian publics can disturb an established order and institutions. The urge to control drives bureaucracies, which, in order to effectively fix one type of reality, have to destroy all forms of publics that have the potential to upset order. In modern societies, bureaucracies impose an enlightenment model of rational order devoid of mythical content and uncertain self-knowledge, upon a reality that is thereby made fully intelligible, controllable and correctible.

Nietzsche considers the European enlightenment as the modern successor to the Socratic myth-annihilation, which characterizes the Apollonian publics.[8] The enlightenment movement's confidence in the capacity of reason and its belief in the rational order of reality are Socratic in origin. However, Nietzsche suggests that the enlightenment goes steps further than Socrates in its annihilation of myth. Although Socrates ridicules and destroys the legendary tales of the tragedians, his dialogues are premised upon the myth of the Delphic oracle (which revealed that there was no one wiser than Socrates). And, although Socrates maintains that reason rather than myth is the foundation of European culture, reason, the *nous*, is itself a mythical entity (Nietzsche 2000: 72): the 'voice of reason' is the 'divine voice' of Socrates' *daimonion*, which makes itself be heard in the dialogues (Nietzsche 2000: 75). In the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, inspired by Nietzsche (c.f., Wellmer 1991: 3), maintain that the enlightenment movement postulates a vision of reason that is devoid of mythical content. Enlightenment reason, in its origin, seeks to make people think for themselves and to liberate them from their fears and superstitions, but, in the modernization process, it becomes an instrument that serves bureaucratic objectives, such as enforcing laws effectively, fixing a machine, or making a business run more efficiently.[9] Horkheimer and Adorno (2007: 57) emphasize that Nietzsche, like

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[8] Antonio (1995: 8) points out that 'according to Nietzsche, the Protestant 'north' is the heartland of Socratic culture,' the enlightenment movement being represented most explicitly in Kant's works and, as Benjamin (1977) affirms, in German drama or Baroque opera.

[9] Horkheimer and Adorno (2007: 103-4) point out that the enlightenment movement is primarily directed against the myth of the teleological order of natural law (discoverable by the *nous*) and the charisma of the authorities that safeguard the pre-given order.

Hegel before him, had grasped this pathology of enlightenment reason that turns into a bureaucratic instrument.

The reduction of the Socratic *nous* to an instrumental reason has far-reached political and cultural implications. Enlightenment reason provides the static concepts, mummified categories, classifications and catalogues that are required to construct bureaucratic limits and boundaries, which in turn rationally order reality (Honneth 2007: 70). Dialogical or democratic practices have no place in such a technical organization of reality. Bureaucracies, whose function is to implement the enlightenment or any other theoretical model of reality, have no need for the Socratic publics and consider dialogues and the need for intellectual justification rather troublesome and disorderly (Gouldner 1973: 76; Gardiner 2004: 35). The (potential) participants of Socratic dialogues are turned into bureaucratic subjects, like workers, consumers and clients, that is, into 'spectators without influence', whose lives are governed by the enlightened power elites and civil servants (Honneth 2007: 33). The identity of bureaucratic subjects is determined by typically large and powerful organizations, such as government agencies and enterprises (Mills 1956: 355).

The Enlightenment movement is, in Nietzsche's words (2000: 85), 'the most illustrious opponent of the tragic world-view.' Horkheimer and Adorno stress that the enlightenment movement, or perhaps more exactly, some kind of process deriving from it, eventually comes to substitute the plebeian entertainment of mass culture industries for the tragic art of the aesthetic publics. According to Nietzsche, bureaucratic subjects who live in a disenchanted world in which myths are annihilated by Apollonian reason cannot bear the horrific and absurd truth about their own existence.[10] The subjects of the culture industries no longer have the opportunity to participate in enchanting tragic myths that cultivate powerful passions and the Dionysian will to live, which characterize Nietzsche's 'good European'. The entertainment provided by manufactured images and commodity forms, like music productions, films, television programmes and glossy magazines, ensures that the absurdity of life and the Dionysian abyss are forgotten (Horkheimer and Adorno 2007: 159).[11] Being thoroughly rationalized, such subjects cannot develop the mythical imagination or a certain sensitivity that would have allowed them to 'live the tragedy' in and through the aesthetic publics. In a bureaucratic culture, subjects cannot experience, feel or live the tragic fate of the Dionysian hero, because, as Nietzsche (2000:

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[10] Nietzsche (2000: 104-5) identifies the opera and the 'theatre public' (Nietzsche 2000: 43) as optimistic entities that do not 'bear the slightest trace of the elegiac pain of an eternal loss, but rather the serenity of eternal rediscovery, of comfortable pleasure in an idyllic reality.' Benjamin (1977) contrasts the seventeenth century German opera (the *Trauerspiel* or mourning play) with Attic tragedy. Like Nietzsche, Benjamin stresses that the latter is mythic in its conception, while the former is organized within a rational order (Friedlander 2006: 633).

[11] Neil Curtis (2007: 861; 877) points out that, in the culture industry, the mass media plays the role of the chorus and yet, it cannot function as the chorus because it separates the spectator or the listener from the play.

45) insists, shielded by bureaucracies, they are not 'equipped for the most delicate and intense suffering.'

Bureaucracies expect and demand passive obedience from their subjects, which makes cultural movement nearly impossible. Such passive spectators or so-called 'consumers of art' (Shrum 1991: 349; 371), are, Horkheimer and Adorno (2007: 155; 166) point out, deluded en masse, governed to take refuge in comfortable, boring and mindless bureaucratic forms of entertainment. Culture industries provide ready-made experiences to a passive public that is willing to buy them to fill the emptiness of a disenchanted world and appease the cowardly fear of living in the flux, which they explicitly experience in temporary relationships and the continuous flow of new products and changed consumption patterns. The experience of the flux can also be more implicit or unconscious, resulting in a sort of malaise, feeling of insecurity or restlessness. However, the escape from life into a manufactured dream-world of cultural productions does not really quench the thirst, as the Socratic dialogue and the Dionysian festival do, which, therefore, allows the culture industry to carry on with its provision of manufactured dream-worlds, to fill an emptiness that never decreases.

The rebirth of Apollonian publics in sociology

Public sociology is born out of an uneasy relationship to the enlightenment movement in general, and to the bureaucratic fixation of social reality in particular (Ossewaarde 2007; Ossewaarde 2010). Public sociologists, like Robert Lynd and C. Wright Mills, understood their sociologies as sciences that were inspired by the Socratic tradition of dialogues, self-reflection and self-criticism, which also meant that sociologists had the moral duty to bear the consequences of their words and deeds. Public sociologists have, therefore, endeavored to revive the Apollonian publics of friendly disputes (Ossewaarde 2010. In such a view, sociology is only able to flourish when opposite sociological perspectives are allowed to provide liberating perspectives of each other; and when the tension of an intellectual dispute is upheld (Gouldner 1973: 361).[12] According to Alvin Gouldner, for instance, sociology, during the 1960s and 1970s, throve on the dispute between functionalist and Marxist sociologists. Similarly, Robert Merton (1976: 110) emphasizes that sociology can grow when sociologists disagree with each other, while it stagnates under the force of one dominant perspective that ends the dispute.[13] Michael Burawoy, on the other hand, holds that sociology – as a science with different dimensions

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[12] Patricia Mooney Nickel (2009: 195) argues that Burawoy's understanding of sociology is not dialectical but bureaucratic, namely, he offers a 'division of labor as the stabilization of the 'rationalization' of the discipline of sociology.'

[13] Robert Merton (1976: 116) stresses that 'the chronic crisis of sociology, with its diversity, competition, and clash of doctrine, seems preferable to the therapy sometimes proposed for handling the acute crisis, namely, the prescription of a single theoretical perspective that promises to provide full and exclusive access to the sociological truth;' and points out 'the stagnation of sociological inquiry as a result of premature agreement on a single paradigm that is claimed to be an exhaustive guide to investigating the wide range of sociological questions.'

and facets – can only survive if there is reconciliation, or at least cooperation, between the bureaucratic reason of professional and policy sociologists, on the one side, and the Socratic reason of critical and public sociologists, on the other side.

Public sociologists like Mills and Gouldner maintain that European culture or what they call 'Western civilization' finds its highest expression in the flourishing of Socratic reason. In their view, public sociology represents a particular quality of reason, namely the sociological imaginative conception of 'the interplay of man and society, of biography and history, of self and world' (Mills 2000: 4). Similarly to reason, the sociological imagination can, however, only flourish in dialogical publics, which can be considered as 'Apollonian entities'. While sociologists may have different definitions of 'publics', they all seem to stress the latter's dialogical or discursive character. Habermas' 'public sphere' is one in which a critical and reflective (political) discourse can take place, so that only the force of the better argument, and not the power of fixed institutions and habits, is acknowledged (c.f., Gardiner 2004: 38; 42). Mustafa Emirbayer and Mimi Sheller (1999: 155) observe that 'publics signify rational-critical argumentation and collective will formation regarding the paths along which the state, economy, and civil society itself are to develop.' In sum, public sociology is an Apollonian enterprise and the public sociologist is a Socratic figure who is a suspect in the eyes of all those who offer a positive doctrine (Gouldner 1976: xvi).

Public sociologists define European culture as an Apollonian culture of critical discourse. They discern the presence of Apollonian publics, in different forms, throughout European history. Tocqueville (2000: 33) argues that publics are the core of what he calls democratic society, which, in his view, is the most rational and just order. He discovers such publics in the Puritan New England township, in which the Socratic dialectic continues and democratic citizens cultivate the type of reasoning needed to make democracy work. Michael Burawoy (2005b: 318; 324) sees the publics in the protest movements of civil society and defines the sociological enterprise today in terms of 'fostering public sociologies to bolster the organs of civil society' (Burawoy, 2005b: 319). Civil society movements like Marxism, the labor movement, civil rights movement, anti-war movement or anti-globalization movement are, in this perspective, dialogical entities that contest the fixated, bureaucratized actualities of what he calls a 'reactionary world'. Burawoy's publics exist to promote and shape a better alternative world or, as Luc Boltanski and Laurent Thévenot (1999: 373) note, a 'plurality of worlds', whereby one world does not dominate the other.

Public sociologists contest the bureaucratic suppression of the Socratic dialectic, which results in the eclipse or reduction of reason to a bureaucratic tool. They seek to explain, in Axel Honneth's words (2007: 29) 'the pathological deformation of reason sociologically.' Since Tocqueville, public sociologists have repeatedly pointed out the danger of the bureaucratic destruction of publics, which is the big threat to democracy.[14]

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[14] Francis Fox Piven (2004: 34) has recently re-emphasized the dedication of public sociology to democracy, stating that 'we should try as sociologists to have a public voice.

Tocqueville (2000: 45), for instance, observes that the destruction of New England townships leads to a social condition in which 'there is no freedom of mind in America.' Similarly, Mills (1956: 360-1) emphasizes the relationship between the bureaucratic suppression of the Socratic dialectic and the progress of 'the second rate mind.' For public sociologists, 'the mindlessness and mediocrity of men of affairs' (Mills 1956: 354), which flow from the destruction of publics and the spread of bureaucracies, is the real social problem of our times.[15] Gouldner (1973: 167-8) insists that 'in the end, it is the quality of *mind*, not politics, that confronts us with the deepest abyss.' Without the Socratic quality of mind and the sociological imagination, which is stifled in bureaucratic life, there can be no possibility to search for alternative orders, and therefore, people are condemned to live in falsehood or delusion. This is the most urgent concern of public sociologists.

Sociology and Dionysian publics

Robert Antonio (1995) has called Nietzsche the 'antisociologist' because of the latter's claim that reality is better understood by the (tragic) artist than by science that relies on reason. Nietzsche's radical skepticism undermines the very foundation on which sociology reposes and makes the sociological endeavor appear vain. This gap between Nietzsche and sociologists may compel one to conclude that *The Birth of Tragedy* cannot be of any value to the public sociological enterprise in particular, especially since public sociology cannot incorporate a Heraclitean vision of reality. Furthermore, the aims and commitments of public sociologists seem to differ from those of Nietzsche. The former sociologists are committed to a more just, meaningful and less painful, absurd, oppressive and mindless world. They believe that this can be achieved with the help of human reason, which explains their attempt to make the *nous* flourish, through the art of friendly dispute without having a particular culture (order) in mind. Nietzsche was also appalled by the mediocrity of man, but had a different vision of greatness. He admired and was committed to the European culture of the Greek tragedians, which he tried to revive through 'the artistic re-awakening of tragedy and of the tragic worldview' (Nietzsche 2000: 92), and the corresponding rebirth of aesthetic publics of 'good Europeans' (Nietzsche 2000: 92; 120).

For Nietzsche, the European cultural movement was at its peek when tragedy – of which the Dionysian festivals are the expressions – was an integral part of it. The 'good Europeans', in his view, are the ones who are able to look at the horrific and absurd realities and endure them without ending up in a state of despair, nihilism, ascetic resignation, apathy or hostility to life (Antonio 1995: 19). The 'good European' is not the 'rational' Socrates but Agamemnon, Xerxes or Oedipus, who unreasonably dare to fight against their cruel fates and surpass their (predetermined) limits. A renaissance of tragedy

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And we should do this in order to contribute to a democratic discourse about public problems that tempers concentrated power.'
[15] Hence, for Mills (1956: 350), the clearest indication of cultural regress is that 'George Washington in 1783 relaxed with Voltaire's 'letters' and Locke's 'On Human Understanding',' whereas 'Eisenhower read cowboy tales and detective stories.'

would create such powerful, heroic men. A revitalized Europe is literally one that radiates and creates tragic heroes who are able to rise high above mediocrity that characterizes the bureaucratic realm (Nietzsche 2000: 94). However, centuries of bureaucratic culture have shaped subjects who are much less sensitive to symbols and tragic myths; while at the same time, people can only experience the full aesthetic dimension of tragedies if they possess a mythical imagination, which allows them to 'live the tragedy' in aesthetic publics.

Although Antonio presents Nietzsche as the 'antisociologist', he does make it clear that Nietzsche has had a major influence on the sociological works of Ferdinand Tönnies, Max Weber, George Simmel and Karl Mannheim. It is especially in the realm of cultural sociology that Nietzsche's ideas have left their marks. Weber, for instance, recognizes that his interpretive sociology bears, to a large extent, the imprint of Marx and Nietzsche, while Mannheim identifies Nietzsche, together with Marx, as a founding father of the sociology of knowledge (Antonio 1995: 3). It is particularly Simmel who has tried to re-awaken a tragic worldview in sociology, manifesting a Heraclitean or Nietzschean view of 'society', which is defined as an aesthetic phenomenon that is becoming. The tragic worldview, in Nietzsche's own words (2000: 3), is characterized by 'an intellectual preference for the hard, horrific, evil, problematic aspects of existence which stems from well-being, from overflowing health, from an *abundance* of existence.' Simmel shares Nietzsche's aesthetic commitments in a tragic sociological manner.

Simmel, as Yoel Regev (2005) explains, understands 'society' as a cultural complex that moves through a confrontation of opposites, between what he calls the creative force of life and fixed cultural forms. The creative force of life resembles Nietzsche's Dionysian force, while the fixed cultural form resembles Nietzsche's Apollonian opposite. According to Simmel, the Heraclitean flux is characterized by the confrontation of the two opposites. As he explains:

> Life is ineluctably condemned to become reality only in the guise of its opposite, the form…. Thus life here aspires to the unattainable: to determine and manifest itself beyond all forms, in its naked immediacy. But knowledge, volition and creation, though wholly governed by life, can only replace one form for another: they can never replace the form itself for the life that lies beyond it (Simmel quoted in Regev, 2005: 587).[16]

The creative force of life needs to express itself in its Apollonian opposite of fixed cultural forms like music, sculpture, literature, painting, science and technology. Simmel's tragic worldview becomes clearer in his vision of the cruel fate of the Dionysian force that is no longer welcomed in the Apollonian forms, since the latter are no longer receptive to the creative force of life. European culture then becomes purely Apollonian, whereby the dialectical confrontation is confined to an interaction between

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[16] Yoel Regev (2005: 587) stresses that, like Nietzsche, 'Simmel's sympathies seem to clearly lie on the side of "life".'

old and new forms. This is the 'tragedy of culture' in Simmel's cultural sociological analysis.[17]

The tragic worldview in Simmel's cultural sociology, however, does not at all imply that his aim is to revive aesthetic publics. While public sociology cannot exist without Socratic dialogues, and, indeed, actually develops from such publics, tragic sociology can exist without the Dionysian festival. Public sociology is developed in a dialogical setting, but tragic sociology, although it is inspired by the Attic tragedians, is not performed in the classical Greek theatre. In other words, aesthetic publics are not indispensable for integrating the tragic worldview. Cultural sociologists may, like Nietzsche, acknowledge that aesthetic publics are needed to resist Apollonian dominion and unleash Dionysian habits of imagination in order to regenerate European culture, but they are not the ones who resurrect the aesthetic publics or participate in them *qua* sociologists. It is not the sociological discourses of academics like Simmel, but the oeuvres of artists, which can revitalize the aesthetic publics and re-enchant European culture. Without the myths of the artist, European culture forfeits its creative force of the imagination (Nietzsche 2000: 122).

In European modernity, such efforts have been highly exceptional given the predominance of the enlightenment movement, but they have been undertaken. Racine, for instance, not only wrote tragedies in the seventeenth century, but he also actively tried to shape the court theatre as a Greek, Dionysian (royal) public (Steiner, 1980: 76). Cultural revitalization, for Racine, required the resurrection of something that resembled the Dionysian festival, but then adapted to a modern age, in which the Greek legends have long lost their ancient, deeper significance. In other words, the challenge of the modern tragedian is to involve people and to get them to participate in a myth while knowing that modern people do not possess the same receptivity as ancient Europeans. The most well-known attempt to revitalize the aesthetic public is doubtlessly Richard Wagner's festival at Bayreuth.[18] Wagner not only tried to compose tragic music drama in which the Heraclitean dialectic is expressed in tremendous orchestral tensions (Adorno 2008: 121-123), but he also tried to arouse a public response of Dionysian feelings. During late nineteenth century modernity, he attempted to create an audience of aesthetic

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[17] Tragic sociologies are typically written in fragments, are full of nuances and diverse voices, and hence, devoid of an overarching unity. In tragic sociological fragments, no thesis is justified and no argument is advanced (Honneth 2007: 71). Tragic sociologists insist upon the fragmentary and unfinished character of social life. Walter Benjamin (1977: 235) suggests that the fragment resembles a tragic ruin.

[18] In this article, only the two most illustrious examples in modern European history are mentioned. Jean Bodin (2008: 280) points at some alternative efforts made by several German theatre directors to revitalize the Dionysian festival during the Weimar Republic. Bodin (2008: 278) also identifies the cadres of party discipline as the Bolshevik alternative to confronting the world's absurdities.

listeners who would be actually able to experience the flux and their woeful agony in his art (Steiner 1980: 286).[19]

Nietzsche himself had dedicated *The Birth of Tragedy* to his friend Wagner in 1872. He had hoped that Wagner's tragic music dramas and the inauguration of the Bayreuth festival in 1876 would mean the rebirth of tragedy in the newly founded German state. In the foreword of *The Birth of Tragedy*'s second edition in 1886, Nietzsche expressed his disenchantment. He now held that German music, including Wagner's so-called tragic dramas, was 'Romantic through and through and the most un-Greek of all forms of art' (Nietzsche 2000: 11). According to Nietzsche, the works of German composers bore the influence of Christian aesthetics, and reflected the doctrine of beauty (or good) that triumphs over suffering (evil). A true recovery of tragedy is only possible if the Apollonian ideas lose their grip on the minds and hearts of modern Europeans. Zygmunt Bauman's concept of 'liquid modernity' may denote such a loss of ground. In liquid modernity, globalization processes undermine the fixed boundaries of bureaucratic categories, and social forms become increasingly transient and uncertain (Bauman 2000). John Urry (2002: 133) defines this 'post-modern' condition as global fluidity or 'cosmopolitan global fluids'. Urry argues that society as a fluid must be understood as the 'mobility' of social reality or an ongoing social process of self-constitution. The 'post-bureaucratic' culture, which Bauman and Urry seem to perceive, may offer dialectical possibilities, not only for a regeneration of the Apollonian publics, but also for a revival of the Dionysian publics.

Nietzsche's vision of 'aesthetic publics' enriches the imagination. It enables sociologists to rethink the very notion of 'publics'. And yet there can be no place for aesthetic publics in public sociology. Public sociologists do not associate publics with aesthetics, and hence, it has not been their endeavor to create publics via the aesthetical experiences of performed tragedies. A sociological dedication to publics is a commitment to the rational order of a good, typically democratic, society, which is discoverable by the *nous*. The existence of such an order is denied, in the art of tragedy, and in the tragic world-view. The tragic worldview, which perceives the world as a fluid and absurd phenomenon, can be foundational for cultural sociology, but such a sociology is, in the end, itself Socratic since any thinking depends on the *nous*, and can only survive in a free dialogical setting. Public sociology develops through Socratic dialogues and is destroyed when the Socratic dialectic is suppressed by bureaucracies. The Socratic, dialogical life of public sociologists and of citizens cannot be led in the fixed orders of bureaucracies. This longing for freedom resembles, to a certain extent, the Dionysian will to live and in any case, is not necessarily its antagonist.

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[19] In the *Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche is still enthused about Wagner's efforts, but he eventually comes to mock Wagner's public as a hothouse of romantic dreaming as well as demagogic anti-Semitism (Steiner 1980: 288; Andler 2009: 302). Romanticism is a non-tragic movement and essentially 'un-Greek' (Nietzsche 2000: 11). Luis Dumur (2009: 276-7) emphasizes the difference between Nietzsche's understanding of culture and the romantic concept of *Bildung*. The latter refers to the romantic ideal of aesthetic self-realization.

Public sociologists seek to revive the political and moral experience of being dialogical citizens in a European culture of critical discourse, in which Apollonian values like democracy, rule of law and human rights are constitutive. In such an Apollonian culture, intellectual mediocrity is the major public sociological concern since the 'second-rate mind' is incapable of discovering the rational order of the good society; or even worse, imposes a bureaucratic order on reality in the name of reason or the good. Since ignorance, according to the Socratic tradition, is the source of all evil and suffering, the progressive deterioration of the mind can only mean a general weakening of Apollonian values, immorality, irresponsibility, injustice and manipulation. These are the signs of the irrational order of modern society today. Such a social order of mindlessness, governed by techniques and devoid of sociological imagination, develops when publics are destroyed by bureaucracies, which denies citizens the freedom to govern themselves. Burawoy (2005b: 317-8) argues that the world, in the era of global capitalism, has become so irrational and unjust place, that the urgent matter is not so much a transformation (purification) of sociology as ensuring that the world does not become an inhabitable place for many.[20]

Nietzsche, however, argues that the Socratic tradition is itself a plebeian force of cultural regress. Public sociologists assume that reason must be protected from repressive and manipulative forces, because reason, as personified in the dialogical life and death of Socrates, is what makes it possible to give each person, independently of who (s)he is, his or her due in the rational order. Nietzsche does not share this intellectual understanding of order. The European culture that Nietzsche has in mind is an aesthetic complex, in which the Dionysian impulses, – the will to live – which define the tragic hero, are given free rein. From Nietzsche's viewpoint, the greatness of the good European accrues to the hero who has the courage to transgress Apollo's boundaries, thereby contesting the fundamentally unjust and obscure conditions of human existence, and yet, without hating them (Nietzsche, 2000: 56; Steiner 1980: 167; Curtis 2007: 866).[21]

While the Socratic tradition – and all sociological traditions that understand the human being as a rational being – seeks to revive and cultivate the Europeanness that is seen to lie in reason, Nietzsche thirsts for the good European can hardly be grasped by human understanding and be expressed in words. In tragedies, the hero even fights against the gods, in battles that cannot be won. The tragedian knows that the transgression of certain limits is bound to incur the wrath of Apollo, leading to the fatal abyss. The tragic perspective is painfully aware of Apollo's just limits and of the fluidity of selves and societies, and hence of the futility of the many attempts to shape and re-shape the European identity according to certain ideas of Europe. Yet, the heroic greatness that Nietzsche envisions lies precisely in the confrontation with human fate. These human limits, including death itself, are nearly ridiculed by Socrates, who even philosophizes about death, thereby overcoming or more precisely, masking the true

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[20] Burawoy (2005b: 325) himself identifies Apollonian culture with 'democratic socialism'.

[21] As Wendy Farley (1996: 125) puts it, 'by showing the destruction of good persons by power, the tragedies call for a justice that their characters do not receive.'

despair and suffering by having recourse to irony and argument, the voices of reason. Only in the dying Socrates, says Nietzsche, is the (his) Greek character re-affirmed; only then, is the Dionysian force of music allowed to escort him till the gates of Hades.

In Europe's Socratic tradition, including the Enlightenment, these human limits are generally considered as temporary barriers that can be overcome through human prowess. While public sociologists have been alert watchdogs who were highly aware of the oppressive social or bureaucratic forces that transformed the European mind into a second-rate shallow mind, they have generally not questioned their Socratic tradition, or more precisely, its foundations. Most of them have perceived the absurdity and fragility of social life, but have refused to accept it as the only possible reality. In other words, sociologists do not generally believe in a fatal social determinism but seek to order the flux according to ideas of the good or just society. Hence, Nietzsche can say that they are cowards who flee the harsh reality of the flux. He was, however, not concerned with public issues of democratic life, but longed for a Dionysian greatness. Sociology – and the sociological imagination – cannot be harmed by a continued discussion between these two forms of dialectics, but it is hardly an option to substitute art for sociology, or the sheer will to live life heroically for reason.

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