

## *Nietzsche's Aesthetics*

### **Primary Sources:**

Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, Sections 10-15, 18, 24-25, in Kaufmann, *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, pp. 73 – 98, 109-114, 139-144

### **Background:**

This reading continues Nietzsche's analysis of tragedy. In Sections 10 – 14, Nietzsche discusses the death of tragedy at the hands of Euripides and Socrates. In Section 15, he then levels a critique of Socratism (or Scientism, if you prefer). In the remaining sections, he posits a “rebirth of tragedy” by the opera of Wagner. In the three sections we are reading (18, 24-25), he recapitulates the problems with Socratism for culture, and he tries again to explain why “only as an aesthetic phenomenon is existence and the world eternally justified”.

### **Questions:**

- What is the "problem of Socrates" in Sections 11 – 15?
- What is "aesthetic Socratism" (Section 12)?
- How did Euripides and Socrates murder Greek tragedy (Sections 11 - 14)?
- Why is Socrates the turning point in world history (Section 15)?
- Why is it that the modern (Socratic) culture should turn into an artistic one (Section 18)?
- What is aesthetic pleasure (Section 24)?
- Is Schopenhauer's will the "primal artist" (back in Section 5), and is the world a work of art produced by this will out of a "primal pleasure" (Section 24)?