

## Who Is The “Music-Making Socrates”?

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### Abstract

In this article, I wish to show that Kaufmann was right, when he claimed that “nobody has ever found a better characterization of Nietzsche” than his own, when he talked about the “music-making Socrates” in the *Birth of Tragedy*. Firstly, I make some general remarks on the *Birth of Tragedy*. Secondly, I analyse Nietzsche’s understanding of music in the *Birth of Tragedy*. Thirdly, I describe the particular conception of “Socrates” as Nietzsche develops it in *The Birth of Tragedy*. Lastly, I bring these two concepts together, showing that there are various parts of Nietzsche’s mature philosophy which demonstrate a correspondence between the qualities of the “music making Socrates” and the qualities of the later Nietzsche. In this way, I establish that the later Nietzsche is very similar to the “music-making Socrates”, whom he mentioned in his *Birth of Tragedy*.

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In this article,<sup>1</sup> I wish to show that Kaufmann was right, when he claimed that “nobody has ever found a better characterization of Nietzsche” (Kaufmann, 1974, p 395) than his own, when he talked about the “music-making Socrates” in the *Birth of Tragedy*. Kaufmann, however, only put forward this proposition without explaining the meaning of the concept of the “music-making Socrates” or showing in what respect it corresponds to Nietzsche’s endeavours. This is what I do on the following pages. Thereby, it becomes clear that the concept of the “music-making Socrates” corresponds to the mature Nietzsche and the philosophy which he defends from *Thus spoke Zarathustra* onwards. In addition, this comparison enables me to show that Nietzsche’s philosophy within his three periods is less divergent than has been argued. A clear distinction of the three periods has been given by Hollingdale. In the first period (1865-1876), Nietzsche’s “inner life, and a good deal of his outer life, was dominated by Schopenhauer and Wagner” (Hollingdale, 1973, p 44). During his middle period (1876-1883), he mainly put forward “reflections touching on the whole

gamut of European culture whose controlling tendency is a destructive analysis of cultural values” (Hollingdale, 1973, p 45). The latest period (1883-1889) can be described as “continual inventiveness, in respect both of ideas and of literary style” (Hollingdale, 1973, p 45).

Firstly, I make some general remarks on the *Birth of Tragedy*.<sup>2</sup> Secondly, I analyse Nietzsche’s understanding of music in the *Birth of Tragedy*. Thirdly, I describe the particular conception of “Socrates” as Nietzsche develops it in *The Birth of Tragedy*. Lastly, I bring these two concepts together, showing that there are various parts of Nietzsche’s mature philosophy which demonstrate a correspondence between the qualities of the “music making Socrates” and the qualities of the later Nietzsche. In this way, I establish that the later Nietzsche is very similar to the “music-making Socrates”, whom he mentioned in his *Birth of Tragedy*.

## **1. GENERAL REMARKS ON THE BIRTH OF TRAGEDY**

In the *Birth of Tragedy* Nietzsche distinguishes three gods. These gods are Socrates (Nietzsche, 1967-1977, Vol. 1 p 83), Dionysus (Kerenyi, 1976; Otto, 1965), and Apollo (Zeitler 1900, p 26-30). Each of them governs a special sphere of the world,<sup>3</sup> and since they govern the world, they are also present in humanity. When they are effective in human beings, these gods turn up as instincts (Nietzsche, 1967-1977, Vol. 1 p 90/99/112). Instincts determine the actions of man. The fact that Nietzsche identifies gods and types of instincts might initially be astonishing; however, if one takes into consideration that instincts are

responsible for all human action for Nietzsche, it might be less so, because gods usually stand for a certain conception of “the Good”, and thus a basis for ones own actions. Nietzsche’s three different gods are related to three types of culture,<sup>4</sup> for if many people of a society act in a certain kind of way or are governed by the same type of instinct, then that society is formed according to the corresponding principles. Socrates stands for the Socratic-Alexandrian culture, Apollo for the artistic-Hellenistic culture, and Dionysus for the tragic-Buddhist culture (Nietzsche, 1967-1977, Vol. 1 p 116). In Nietzsche’s conception, it can be the case that one god can mainly determine a culture, as it used to be the case with Apollo in the Homeric age, and with Dionysus in the pre-Hellenic age (Silk & Stern, 1981, p 185). It can also be the case that a synthesis of two gods can bring about a culture, as it used to be the case with Apollo and Dionysus, when with Aeschylus tragedy was at its height, or with Apollo and Socrates, when Euripides killed tragedy. However, Nietzsche defends this philosophy of culture only in the *Birth of Tragedy*. He does not use this classification of types of culture in his mature philosophy. In his later writings, Dionysus, for example, could no longer stand for the Buddhist culture, for then Dionysus stands for an anti-nihilistic force, whereas Buddhism represents a nihilistic religion (Sorgner, 1999, p 71-116). After these introductory remarks about the *Birth of Tragedy*, I can now come to the second section.

## **2. MUSIC**

In the *Birth of Tragedy* several types of music are mentioned.<sup>5</sup> In general music is linked to Dionysus, which means that music is the most Dionysian of all the arts. However, there are types of music which are properly Dionysian, and others which are also strongly Apollonian

(Schmidt, 1991, p 13-17). Yet, music only has a strongly Apollonian aspect only, if the melody and structure of the musical work was determined by the words to which it was set, as it was with the folk songs of Archilochus (Nietzsche, 1967-1977, Vol. 1 p 48-52). This type of music is only an imitation of proper music. Proper music for Nietzsche is always solely related to Dionysus (Nietzsche, 1967-1977, Vol. 1 p 25-30), who is the god of the original unity of the world. By referring to this original unity, which is full of contradictions, permanently changing, and unapparent (Nietzsche, 1967-1977, Vol. 1 p 38-42), Nietzsche alludes to Schopenhauer's metaphysics. However, it would be wrong to claim that in the *Birth of Tragedy* Nietzsche is simply rephrasing Schopenhauer's philosophy (Kaufmann, 1968, p 296-299; Young, 1992, p 1-57). There are three significant differences between Nietzsche's and Schopenhauer's position. (1) According to Schopenhauer instrumental music is the highest type of art, but this is not the case for Nietzsche.<sup>6</sup> Yet, both Nietzsche and Schopenhauer attribute great importance to music. (2) Nietzsche's conception of the good life is not Schopenhauerian. Schopenhauer proposes the denial of, or escape from, the will as an ideal, whereas Nietzsche embraces the will and all the pains and pleasures related to it, clearly pointing out that "only as an aesthetic phenomenon are life and the world justified eternally" (Nietzsche, 1967-1977, Vol. 1 p 47). (3) Schopenhauer distinguishes the realm of causality and freedom. In Nietzsche there is only one realm in which one finds both chaotic and orderly forces (Böning, 1988, S. 2-3).

According to Nietzsche, Dionysus stands not only for the self-contradictory, permanently changing original unity, but also for all the drives of this original unity. These drives are not only effective in the whole of the original nature, but they also determine the actions of

human beings, and in addition, they are responsible for one particular type of art created by human beings, namely, music. Music is related to this original unity, because it too is flowing, and permanently changing. Surely, one could object that while one is playing music the score does not change. This is one of the reason there cannot be a purely Dionysian art. A more important reason is that all art is created by man and therefore it necessarily belongs to the realm of appearance, since human beings partly exist in this realm. For analogous reasons there cannot be a purely Apollonian art, because men and all of their creations also have to be a part of the Dionysian unity. Even in the most Dionysian of the arts there has to be something which remains stable, which in the case of music is, e.g., the score, in the same way as in a work of a typically Apollonian type of art, like sculpture, there has to be change. One might wonder where the aspect of change is to be found in a sculpture. If a sculpture was not subject to change, and therefore purely Apollonian, it would have to remain the same forever – like a Platonic form. However, due to the change in the world, i.e. due to Dionysus, even every sculpture has to fade away eventually. Yet, is music indeed the most flowing of the arts? Poetry could also be considered as permanently flowing and changing because it too needs to be read or performed, just as music needs to be played. Nietzsche acknowledges the similarity between the poet and the musician (Nietzsche, 1967-1977, Vol. 1 p 43). Actually, these two types of artist were often identical in Ancient Greece. However, what makes music slightly more Dionysian is that music uses tones, whereas poetry is made out of words, as words have a higher degree of order, and of abstraction than tones. The higher the degree of abstraction, the closer something is to the *principio individuationis* which is opposed to the Dionysian unity. Therefore, music is a more Dionysian type of art than poetry, and as there is no other type of art which is more Dionysian, this is the first reason why music is the most Dionysian

type of art. Yet, it is not only the aspect of change which makes music Dionysian. There are other aspects as well.

The fact that the contradiction and pain which is present in the original Dionysian unity is represented very well by proper music is the second reason why Nietzsche links music with Dionysus. Dissonances that are painful to our ears represent contradictions with respect to the tonal system, in the same way as consonances correspond to the tonal system. When Nietzsche proposed this view of music, he had a very high estimation for Wagner and his works, regarding them as the perfect expression of music (Fischer-Dieskau, 1974, p 40-57). The dissonances Nietzsche had in mind were the ones from the prelude to Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde* that was first performed in Munich in 1865. This prelude is one of the most important pieces for the development of 20th century music. At this point in the history of composition, the process of the dissolution of tonality is at a crucial stage, and it leads directly to the compositional order of Schönberg. Since with this piece Wagner distances himself from the principle of the tonal order, and embraces the dissonances, and Nietzsche regards Wagner's music as the highest kind of music, Nietzsche has good reasons for linking proper music to Dionysus.

Besides the flowing and contradictory aspects of music, there is the aspect of intoxication and self-forgetfulness (Nietzsche, 1967-1977, Vol. 1 p 28-29). In contrast to arts such as drawing and sculpture, which appeal mainly to the visual capacities of men, music has an effect on the whole body. Of course, we mainly perceive music by means of our ears, but we experience music always holistically, and when we listen to live performances of music, we become

especially aware of this. We hear music with our whole body, and we are within the music when we enjoy a great performance. In these moments, it is impossible for us to distinguish between our selves and the external world. Music enables us to dissolve the boundaries of our individuated existence. This is another reason why for Nietzsche music is the most Dionysian of all the arts, for Dionysus also represents a unity, namely, the metaphysical original unity of the world (Nietzsche, 1967-1977, Vol. 1 p 38-39). Within that unity the individuation principle is absent, and one cannot find any separate entities there. The whole original world is unified. The closest we can get to this state through art is through music, because when we listen to music we also get embedded in the unity of sound, and we are no longer caught within our limited self. Due to the flowing character, the contradictoriness of its essence, and the unifying aspect of its effect on men, Nietzsche regarded music - in its proper form - to be the most Dionysian of all the arts.

The last quality that I wish to point out concerning the realm of Dionysus, and therefore indirectly also of music, is that men cannot survive, if they are only governed by Dionysian instincts (Nietzsche, 1967-1977, Vol. 1 p 57-71). This is an insight which is significant to Nietzsche's later philosophy. For Nietzsche, the realm of Dionysus is the truth, or the original unity of everything. Since we cannot survive with Dionysus alone, he concludes that the truth is destructive for men (Sorgner, 1999, p 71 – 96). In this way, he questions the value of truth for our lives. Nietzsche expresses this thought most clearly, when he talks about the myth of Oedipus (Nietzsche, 1967-1977, Vol. 1 p 64-71). Oedipus solves the riddle of the sphinx, and thereby solves the riddle of nature, and grasps what our world is like. However, the myth makes clear that the very person who solves this riddle, also has to be the one who murders

his father and marries his mother, which in the end leads to his own destruction. The one who solves the riddle of nature is doomed to experience the dissolution of all individuation in the unity of nature. This interpretation of the famous Oedipus myth expresses Nietzsche's doubt that a culture which is predominantly Dionysian promotes the good life for the people of the respective society. It is also the reason why Nietzsche praises the culture that is brought about by the synthesis of the Dionysian and the Apollonian forces, for the Apollonian aspects enabled men to justify their lives immanently, and the Dionysian aspect provided them with a suitable balance, as Dionysian unity for Nietzsche represents the truth that in the end affirms itself in all orderly creations. This was the scheme of the immanent Greek theodicy (Nietzsche, 1967-1977, Vol. 1 p 34-38).

In short, proper "music" implicitly represents the original unity of the world which is contradictory, without individuality, permanently changing in all respects, and unbearable for men (Sorgner, 1999, p 71 – 96). To understand the concept "music-making Socrates", however, we also have to grasp Nietzsche's understanding of Socrates in the *Birth of Tragedy*. I discuss Nietzsche's concept of Socrates within the *Birth of Tragedy* in the following section.

### **3. SOCRATES**

Socrates, as portrayed by Nietzsche, is a figure who is very different to Dionysus. During most of his life Socrates was the personification of a theoretical man (Nietzsche, 1967-1977, Vol. 1 p 98). He practiced neither music, nor poetry, nor did he have a high opinion of either. Only when he was in his death cell did he start to discover his musical side. Nietzsche

attributes great importance to this observation (Nietzsche, 1967-1977, Vol. 1 p 92-96). From this brief description alone we can see that Nietzsche's Socrates is very much influenced by Plato's, for it was in Plato's *Phaedo* that this story of Socrates was told Plato (*Phaedo* 60c-61d). However, it will soon be clear that Nietzsche's Socrates is far from identical with Plato's. Still it is much closer to Plato's than it is to Xenophon's or Aristophane's Socrates who are the other major literary versions of Socrates.<sup>7</sup>

Nietzsche himself in the *Birth of Tragedy* claims that his Socrates is not supposed to be identical with the historical, that his Socrates is a god (Nietzsche, 1967-1977, Vol. 1 p 81-88; Hildebrandt, 1922, p 31) – *die Gottheit[...] war[...] ein[...] Dämon, genannt S o k r a t e s* (Nietzsche, 1967-1977, Vol. 1 p 83). Besides Apollo, and Dionysus, he is the third major deity who can determine the actions of human beings. I now analyse for which types of actions Socrates is responsible.

Socrates is introduced in the *Birth of Tragedy* as the daemon who influences Euripides in his way of constructing tragedies (Nietzsche, 1967-1977, Vol. 1 p 81-88). As Socrates was the personification of the theoretical man (Nietzsche, 1967-1977, Vol. 1 p 98), he influenced Euripides in such a way that, according to Nietzsche, Euripides no longer just created the tragedies unconsciously as Aeschylus did, but dedicated himself to the analytic study of tragedies before he wrote them. He had to understand what the older tragedians were doing, he had to be conscious of the order of the tragedies, and he had to make a plan, and stick to it. This is what was Socratic about Euripidean tragedies. According to Socrates, one has to have knowledge to be virtuous, and according to Nietzsche, Euripides applied an analogous

principle to his tragedies: Something has to be understandable to be beautiful (Nietzsche, 1967-1977, Vol. 1 p 81-88). Nietzsche refers to this attitude as “aesthetic Socratism” because Euripides wished to establish Apollonian beauty by means of Socratic reason. Before Euripides, tragedy was always linked to an insight into the Dionysian original unity. Euripides brought about the death of tragedy because proper tragedy needs a Dionysian grounding which means that it needs to be based on the insight that the world is self-contradictory, that it is permanently changing, and that in the end we do not receive any further reward for all the pain we have to bear during our lives, which are all aspects absent from Euripidean tragedies. Euripides was the reason for the death of the great synthesis of Apollo and Dionysus, but he brought about the beginning of the collaboration between Apollo and Socrates whereby the Socratic element was the more effective [“aesthetic Socratism” (Nietzsche, 1967-1977, Vol. 1 p 85)]. The reign of the Socratic-Alexandrian culture, according to Nietzsche then, was present until the nineteenth century, revealing itself in the importance of the typical traditional operas before Wagner (Nietzsche (1967-1977), Vol. 1 p 120-129). Nietzsche thought that the end of that type of culture was near, he believed that Wagner could bring about a rebirth of tragedy, which would be a very significant step for the development of a predominantly tragic culture out of the German spirit, and he regarded Luther (Nietzsche, 1967-1977, Vol. 1 p 147), Bach (Nietzsche 1967-1977, Vol. 1 p 127), Beethoven (Nietzsche, 1967-1977, Vol. 1 p 127), Kant (Nietzsche, 1967-1977, Vol. 1 p 128), and Schopenhauer (Nietzsche, 1967-1977, Vol. 1 p 128) to have been strong forces in favour of the re-establishment of a tragic culture. Kant, for example, attacked the Socratic culture because he showed that it is impossible to grasp the essence of the world, the thing-in-itself. Schopenhauer, on the other hand, is an opponent to Socratism because he showed that our reason and understanding were brought

about by the will to life which itself is completely irrational and chaotic. In this way, these two thinkers undermined the unconditional faith in the possibilities of reason (Bowie, 1990, p 206), and understanding which are linked to Socrates (Nietzsche, 1967-1977, Vol. 1 p 92-96). However, as the cultural progression always includes continuities, “the advent of something post-Socratic which would include Socratic elements was necessary” (Dannhauser, 1974, p 87). Later, I come back to what Nietzsche thought about the possible future development of our culture. Now, I dedicate myself further to the study of the concept “Socrates”.

Socrates is the god of reason and understanding, according to whom one has to have knowledge to be virtuous, and virtue again is essential for happiness (Nietzsche, 1967-1977, Vol. 1 p 92-96). Knowledge refers to knowledge of the truth as corresponding to the world. Here we can see the greatest difference to Dionysus. From the aforementioned it follows that, according to Socrates, knowledge of the truth leads to happiness, and that therefore the truth is good for us. Yet, the happiness Socrates is talking about can only be reached in a transcendent world. This is not stated explicitly in the *Birth of Tragedy*, but it is necessary to read him in this way. The reasons are as follows. Firstly, Nietzsche himself says in some unpublished notes that from Socrates on Greek philosophy is the preparation for Christianity (Nietzsche, 1967-1977, Vol. 12, p 202). As one of the main elements of Christianity is the promise of an eternal, fulfilled afterlife, the above statement provides us with a good reason to think that Nietzsche attributes such an afterlife theory to Socrates also. Secondly, Nietzsche regularly refers to another excerpt from Plato’s *Phaedo* where Socrates, just before his death, asked Crito to sacrifice a cock to Asclepius (Plato’s *Phaedo* 118a; Nietzsche, 1967-1977, Vol. 6, p 67 & Vol. 3, p 569-579). In these passages Nietzsche always sees this utterance as an

indicator for Socrates regarding life in this world as a disease, which is not worth living, and from which he is saved via his death. This is a plausible interpretation, as Asclepius is the god of Health and people normally sacrificed a cock when they were cured from a disease (Taylor, 1998, p 23). Given that Socrates believed that life in this world is a disease, he cannot have expected to reach happiness in this world. Yet, he did hold that virtue leads to happiness. Therefore, we can conclude that Socrates believed in another world in which the promise of happiness is fulfilled. The third reason in favour of the above interpretation concerning the world in which Socrates expects to reach happiness is that this interpretation would provide him with a genuine reason to reject Socrates, as he does in the *Birth of Tragedy*, when he accuses him of the death of tragedy. The fact that Socrates is the personification of the theoretical man cannot be the reason Nietzsche rejects him, as theory, reason, and understanding enable man to survive, in the same way the Apollonian forces enable man to survive, and Nietzsche is full of praise for Apollo, as he knows that only as an aesthetic phenomenon our lives can be justified (Nietzsche, 1967-1977, Vol. 1 p 47).<sup>8</sup> Therefore, Nietzsche needs to have had another reason for partly rejecting Socrates,<sup>9</sup> and given the above reflections I am forced to conclude that Nietzsche rejected Socrates because he regarded him to have believed in the afterlife in a transcendent realm. Nietzsche objected to this belief, as for him Dionysus represents the truth, and this implies that a Socratic afterlife in the other world can never be reached, and that in this way all tragic elements which are necessary for a this-worldly life affirmation get excluded. He does not attack Socrates because his position is a delusion, but because his position is life-denying, as it excludes the tragic elements. For Nietzsche the tragic elements are important, as they imply that the worldview presented is only this-worldly, which for him is a personal necessity. Socrates' belief in a

happy afterlife is also the reason Socrates is not afraid of death.

However, there is one aspect of the character of Socrates which seems to contradict all the knowledge Socrates himself puts forward, for he defends the proposition that he is special because he knows that he does not know anything (Nietzsche, 1967-1977, Vol. 1 p 89). This claim firstly seems to go against everything which was said before, like his claim that knowledge leads to happiness, and secondly it seems to be self-contradictory, as this claim also seems to apply to the utterance itself. However, it has to be read differently. Socrates wanted to express that all propositions can possibly be doubted, and that there are no propositions of which one can be certain of in respect to a correspondence to reality. Although he was aware of this, Socrates had to see the world in the way it is portrayed in his positive views. What distinguishes him from the other human beings, who also see the world in their own way, is that he was well aware that all propositions can be doubted. This is his reason for thinking that he knows more than others do. Socrates became aware of the contingency of all knowledge by examining all world views by means of his reason. For himself, he kept the above mentioned world view and principles, as they were the one which reason enabled him to hold. So there is an aspect of Dionysus to be found within Socrates, but it is of secondary importance with respect to his positive views, e.g., afterlife, virtue leads to happiness.

What Socrates reached by claiming that he is the only one who knows that he does not know anything is a new and higher estimation of knowledge (Nietzsche, 1967-1977, Vol. 1 p 89). In this way, he turned knowledge into something extremely rare, precious and difficult to reach, which again makes it very tempting, desirable, and sought-after. With Socrates, truth becomes

something valuable. This is what makes Socrates the perfect personification of the theoretical and scientific man for Nietzsche, as these fields aim for the truth. In addition, science and theory are always linked to reason and understanding. Nietzsche's understanding of what is scientific and theoretical is extremely wide, and one must not think only of the natural sciences when he talks about science. Everything which is predominantly governed by reason and understanding is scientific for Nietzsche and one of the major characteristics of science is consistency. With these remarks I wish to conclude section 3 and focus on the last section of this article.

#### **4. NIETZSCHE AND THE MUSIC-MAKING SOCRATES**

After having analysed the concepts "music" and "Socrates" in Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy*, we can now bring these two concepts together to get a grasp of what exactly the expression "music-making Socrates" exactly means. However, I wish to add something about the role of Socrates first.

Since Socrates never appreciated tragedy, i.e. music and poetry, during most of his life, and as he only went to the theatre when the plays of the logical poet Euripides were performed, it was strange that in his death cell Socrates suddenly devoted himself to music and poetry. According to Nietzsche, then an important part of Socrates character, which he normally oppressed, was set free (Nietzsche, 1967-1977, Vol. 1 p 92-96). As a result of this observation Nietzsche questions whether a music-making Socrates could ever found a culture, and even whether such a figure could be the founder of the forthcoming culture in Europe (Nietzsche,

1967-1977, Vol. 1 p 102-108). While he was writing the *Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche believed and hoped that a new tragic culture will appear in Europe and that it will be formed by the great German spirits like Wagner and himself. However, in his late period, from *Zarathustra* on, he no longer had such a hope in the German spirit, and he also had a significantly different view with respect to the philosophy of culture. Yet, I will show that the concept of the “music-making Socrates” actually corresponds to the mature Nietzsche himself.

If we bring together the essence of the concept “music” and “Socrates” from Nietzsche’s *Birth of Tragedy*, what do we end up with? As we saw in the first section, ‘music’ is related to Dionysus who stands for the tragic world view, which means that there is only this world, which in its essence is full of change, is self-contradictory, unified, and unbearable for men. What is tragic about it, is that everything eventually has to fade away again, and that everything is permanently changing in some respect, which implies that all things always have to be suffering at least a little bit because if something changes, it has to overcome something else, so that it can change, and overcoming is always painful. The essence of the concept “Socrates”, however, is that he is the founder of a culture in which it is believed that it is best for men to reach a basis for their lives by means of the faculties of reason and understanding, and that therefore only theoretical and scientific men can reach a good life. If we bring these two concepts together, then we have to say that the concept of the “music-making Socrates” corresponds to a founder of a tragic and Socratic culture. A tragic and Socratic culture is one in which men believe only in this one world which is full of change and pain, but which is explained and justified by means of scientific thinking, i.e. the application of the faculties of reason and understanding. As a result one would end up with an

immanent, tragic, but scientific world view, and I show next that this is exactly what Nietzsche was putting forward during his mature period.

When discussing Nietzsche's mature philosophy, I refer to my own interpretation of it which is published under the title *Metaphysics without Truth: On the Importance of Consistency within Nietzsche's Philosophy* (Sorgner, 1999). Here, I only give a short summary of the relevant points in question. I begin with the musical or Dionysian aspects.

Firstly, Nietzsche's mature world view is a tragic one which means that it is a this-worldly world view. There is nothing beyond the appearance of a thing, for "a thing is the sum of its effects" (Sorgner, 1999, p 55). These effects are permanently interacting with one another, for each thing is a power-quantum consisting of will and power. These aspects can only be thought separately, but they can never actually exist independently of one another. So all effects are power-quanta, and we ourselves are also just a set of power-quanta. Nietzsche's metaphysics is exclusively this-worldly.

Secondly, as all power-quanta are permanently interacting with one another, there is no end to striving for any organism, which is another expression for power-quantum. Whenever an organism strives, it has to overcome others, which permanently causes some pain to each organism. So each thing is permanently suffering, although this pain does not necessarily always have to be so big that one has to be aware of it (Sorgner, 1999, p 56).

Thirdly, each of the finitely many power-quanta, which can only appear in certain sizes, has a

certain perspective on the world. Someone would know the truth about the world, if he took in all perspectives at all times. So all perspectives taken together would constitute the truth. However, no one is able to do so, according to Nietzsche. Yet, what is important for our purpose is that, if all perspectives taken together constituted the truth, then again the truth would be self-contradictory (Sorgner, 1999, p 81-87). So far it should have become clear that both the philosophy of the mature Nietzsche as well as the concept of the “music-making Socrates” includes that the truth is self-contradictory, everything is permanently in modified change, this world is the only world, there is no afterlife, and we permanently have to suffer at least a little bit of pain.

Let me come to the Socratic aspects of Nietzsche’s later philosophy. Firstly, Nietzsche was using reason and understanding to develop his philosophy (Nietzsche, 1967-1977, Vol. 5 p 18/55). He was doing so not because these faculties provide men with the truth but because human power quanta developed them in order to survive (Sorgner, 1999, p 80/93), so by using them he knew he could bring about a world view which enables men to at least survive — and by combining this method with his further insights (e.g. world as will to power), he wished to make his world view even life-enhancing (Nietzsche, 1967-1977, Vol. 6 p 175-176; Vol. 13 p 266). The metaphysics of the eternal recurrence of everything show the great importance of reason within Nietzsche’s philosophy (Sorgner, 2001, p 165-170). All the various premises necessary for this concept do in fact appeal to the intellect. The world has to consist out of a finite amount of energy, because we cannot think an infinite amount of energy. As we cannot think infinitely many states of energy, power quanta can only take in a finite amount of energy states. What is interesting in this respect is that this insight corresponds to the insight

of modern physicists. According to which, energy can only appear in a quantity which is the integral multiple of the Planck constant which also implies that energy can only take in a finite amount of states if the total amount of energy is finite. These are only two of the premises necessary for the argument which leads to the eternal recurrence of everything, yet they clearly reveal the rational basis of that metaphysics.

Secondly, Nietzsche developed a metaphysics of the will to power (Sorgner, 1999, p 34-58) which, due to its resemblance to Darwinian anthropology and also because it is very biological, appeals to scientifically minded people. It is biological because the world consists of many organisms for Nietzsche. These organisms are will to power, and therefore act and develop according to what they themselves think is best for them. So the phylogenetic development of human beings according to Nietzsche is also based on a striving for power. In principle it functions very similar to Darwin's theory of evolution, with the difference that according to Darwin the basic drive is the will to survive whereas in Nietzsche it is the will to power.

Lastly, Nietzsche hoped to be the founder of a culture so that "whole millennia will swear their most solemn oaths" in his name (Sorgner, 1999, p 124). All of these aspects again do correspond to the qualities of the concept "Socrates" of the *Birth of Tragedy*, for it was essential for both Socrates and Nietzsche to use their faculty of reason and understanding to establish their world view, that the theories with which they ended up can be regarded as scientific, and thirdly that both figures are supposed to be founders of a culture.

This comparison between the concept of the “music-making Socrates” and the philosophy of the mature Nietzsche has clearly revealed that Kaufmann was correct, when he said that he regards the concept of the “music-making Socrates” to be the best characterization of the mature Nietzsche, although Kaufmann did not specify this expression any further himself.<sup>10</sup> In all their essential points the concept of the “music-making Socrates” and the philosophy of the mature Nietzsche do correspond with one another, as we have just been able to realise.<sup>11</sup> In addition to this, this essay should have made it obvious that Nietzsche both in his first, as well as in his last period had a very high estimation of science, which traditionally has not been recognised sufficiently among Nietzsche scholars. In the *Birth of Tragedy* he did attack Socrates, and blame him for the death of tragedy, but this does not mean that he disrespected the faculty of reason and understanding, or the scientific type of man in general, but only that he objected to the claim that by using reason one becomes virtuous and that virtues enable man to reach a good life within the transcendent world. It was the otherworldliness which he attacked, for it posits a world which according to his own Dionysian truth does not exist, and which causes men to refrain from leading a good life within this world. However, Nietzsche did acknowledge the power and value of reason by wondering whether the “music-making Socrates” will be the founder of the next European culture. In his mature philosophy, it becomes even more obvious that Nietzsche was embracing science, and applying it for his purposes. This cannot only be seen in his biological, and rational metaphysics. According to Lou Salomè, Nietzsche even thought about studying physics in Paris in order to prove the eternal recurrence of everything scientifically (Sorgner, 1999, p 135). This should make it clear that both the early and the mature Nietzsche had a higher respect for science than has

traditionally been thought among Nietzsche scholars.

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> This article includes material from my article "Nietzsche" which was published in the essay collection *Musik in der deutschen Philosophie: Eine Einführung* edited by S. Sorgner and O. Fürbeth [Stuttgart: Metzler Verlag, 2003].

<sup>2</sup> The best commentaries to the *Birth of Tragedy* are: von Reibnitz (1992); Nietzsche (1994); Silk/Stern (1981). All relevant articles on the *Birth of Tragedy* from the time of its publication can be found in the following collection: Gruender (1969).

<sup>3</sup> Compare Barker, 1992, p 9-10. Barker correctly stresses that in the *Birth of Tragedy* Apollo is not subsumed into Dionysus, but he has forgotten to point out that Socrates exists as a separate force.

<sup>4</sup> Jaehnig regards Socrates to be the absolutised version of Apollo (Jaehnig, 1975, p 163). This position has to be false as Nietzsche clearly distinguishes Apollo, Socrates, and Dionysus (Nietzsche, 1967-1977, Vol. 1 p 116).

<sup>5</sup> A good introduction to the topic "Nietzsche & Music" can be found in: Ottmann, 2000, p 479-480, and Pöltner/Vetter 1997. The following three articles excellently summarise which composers were influenced or inspired by Nietzsche: Musical Settings of Nietzsche Texts: An Annotated Bibliography (I) (Thatcher, 1975). Musical Settings of Nietzsche Texts: An Annotated Bibliography (II) (Thatcher, 1976). Musical Settings of Nietzsche Texts: An Annotated Bibliography (III) (Thatcher, 1986). Babette Babich compiled a useful bibliography on the topic "Nietzsche and Music" (Babich, 1996). Also see Dahms (1921) and Haeussling (1999).

<sup>6</sup> If Meyer was right who holds that Dionysian art alone is life affirming (Meyer, 1993, p 83), then the position of the early Nietzsche would be identical to that of Schopenhauer, as Dionysus represents music. However, Nietzsche regards a duality with the Dionysian elements as a necessary constituent as the highest type of art, as can be seen in Nietzsche's praise of the works of art based on the synthesis of Dionysus and Apollo.

<sup>7</sup> A good introduction to the various literary treatments about Socrates and their problems can be found in the essay "Introduction: The Paradox of Socrates" by G. Vlastos [Vlastos, 1971, p 1 – 22]. A brilliant overview over various perspectives on Socrates in German gives Wolfgang H. Pleger (Pleger, 1998). Some other studies of Socrates which can be recommended are the following: Guthrie (1971); Figal (1995); Taylor (1999).

<sup>8</sup> It is important to stress that Apollo and Socrates stand for different forces. Apollo represents the harmonious order within single things, whereas Socrates stands for the harmonious, and consistent order of the world as a whole.

<sup>9</sup> Nietzsche's attitude towards Socrates has always been ambivalent (Nehamas, 1998, p 155).

<sup>10</sup> Sallis also remarked that "Nietzsche cannot have merely have written of the turn but also must have written from *out of the turn*. His writing must itself already have entered into the turn toward the music-practicing Socrates" (Sallis, 1991, p 133). However, he did not give a clear analysis of why this is the case either.

<sup>11</sup> According to Hildebrandt "the music-making Socrates" was merely an allegory of Nietzsche's hope (Hildebrandt, 1922, p 37). This is true for the time at which Nietzsche wrote the *Birth of Tragedy*, but he fulfilled the hope himself in his later work.

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