

NIETZSCHE ON TRAGEDY AND SOCRATES

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Abstract

Socrates appears to have been the perpetual target of Nietzsche's manic critique. His accusation of Socrates as ultimately responsible for the untimely death of Greek tragedy acquires both comic aspects and tragic proportions, surrounded as it is by his speculative and mytho-poetic account of the genesis of Greek tragedy and the additional prophesy of its destined rebirth in romantic Germany. Although he acknowledges the Socratic irony and Socrates' sense of humour, Nietzsche feels that he can identify Socrates' dialectic tricks in order to discern and disclose the dangerous essence of Socratism and its corrupting effect on noble Plato. While admiring Nietzsche's vision and power of the will as a classical philologist with philosophical pretensions, he is to be held accountable for his non-philosophical treatment of Socrates.

1. Introduction

The Anglo-American philosophical establishment does not seem to have taken Nietzsche seriously as a philosopher.¹ Nietzsche, however, spoke of the need for a new "Dionysiac philosophy," and for philosophers of "a new type." He dreamed that the "philosophers of the future" will live and think guided by the quest not of "truth," to be hunted down by "Socratic dialectic," that issues happily in "Socratic serenity" and "decadence," but of what he

¹ In spite of Professor Danto's effort, it appears that those philosophers, whose fixed conception of philosophy is that of an analytic discipline of the logic and language of science, have ignored Nietzsche. Danto believed that, by deep and perspective reading of his works, Nietzsche could almost emerge "as a systematic as well as an original and analytical thinker," but he had to confess that "Nietzsche has seldom been treated as a philosopher at all, and never, I think, from the perspective, which he shared to some degree, of contemporary analytical philosophy." *Nietzsche as Philosopher* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), p. 13.

poetically called "tragic wisdom," expressed in Dionysiac dance and "ecstasy."

Nietzsche should be taken seriously, in my view, for two reasons: first because of his claim that he has something new, and philosophically important, to say about the destiny of man and the possibility of a higher culture of more suitable "values" for the tougher world of modern science and technology. Secondly, because in all his writings, from beginning to end, Nietzsche made what he considered as the philosophers of "decadence," Socrates and Plato in particular, the target of a sustained merciless critique. His scorn and ridicule of Socratic rationalism and Platonic idealism is equal to the one he had used on Christianity which, in his estimate, is merely a vulgarized and deformed Platonism of and for the masses. Given his influence on shaping the culture of the 20th century, he must be taken seriously as the "immoral" thinker and judged accordingly.

It would seem that among serious Nietzsche scholars, especially among American specialists, there are those who, like Walter Kaufmann,² want to see Nietzsche as "an admirer of Socrates." Others, like Alexander Nehamas³ and Werner Dannhauser,⁴ prefer to interpret him as holding an "ambiguous" and

² Walter Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*, 3rd edition, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968). Chapter Thirteen is characteristically titled "Nietzsche's Admiration of Socrates" and contrasts nicely, but somehow ridiculously, with the previous chapter titled "Nietzsche's Repudiation of Christ." The fact is that Nietzsche carefully distinguishes Christianity from Christ, and although he repudiates organized Christianity and its founder. For him, this was not Christ but Paul! See, *The Will to Power*, W. Kaufmann and P. J. Hollingdale, trans., (New York: Random House, 1968), Sections 150-176.

³ Alexander Nehamas, *Nietzsche: Lie a s Literature* (Harvard University Press, 1985), p. 30, characterizes Nietzsche's attitude towards Socrates as "irreducibly ambivalent," yet he asserts that "Nietzsche's project is essentially similar to and overlaps the project of Socrates" (p. 25). I suspect that Socrates would be surprised to hear that he had a "project." Nietzsche, too, would be equally surprised to be told that his "project" was similar to the Socratic "project," since for him "Socrates represents a moment of the profoundest perversity in the history of values." (WP, sec. 430) He struggled all his life to project a "value system," which he considered anti-Socratic, anti-Platonic, and anti-Christian. For F. A. Lea, Nietzsche's "ambivalent attitude" is rather towards Plato: "For some things he admired him above all philosophers; for others he detested him." *The Tragic Philosopher* (London: Methuen, 1957), p. 273.

⁴ *Nietzsche's View of Socrates*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974). Dannhauser, like Nehamas, claims that "Nietzsche's image of Socrates, too, is ambiguous" (p. 20). Yet, again like Nehamas, he aspires to articulate "This [Nietzsche's] strange kinship with Socrates, which persists through the most

“complex” attitude towards the Athenian philosopher. In my non-specialist reading of his texts, Nietzsche’s opposition to Socrates and Plato, and what he took them to represent “philosophically,” appears clear, sustained, unambiguous and perfectly justified in light of the “Sophist culture” and the “anti-Socratic values,” which he had chosen to espouse, defend and promote all his life. This fundamental opposition should be considered carefully and judged judiciously, if we want to understand correctly his urgent call for “the revaluation of all values” and his ultimate appeal to the art of poetry, especially the “tragic wisdom” of Classical Greek Tragedy. In this paper, I will attempt to establish and provide ample textual support for the thesis of the ethical opposition of Nietzsche and Socrates as seen by the former.

2. Nietzsche as the New Accuser of Socrates

To the rule of general admiration and honor of the historic Socrates, as expressed in the writings of men of letters, Greeks, Romans, Germans, Frenchmen, Englishmen, Americans, etc., there are two notable exceptions, Aristophanes of Athens and Nietzsche. For these two “skeptics,” Socrates is not an Athenian Achilles, the new hero of the old Hellenic virtue (*arete*); nor is he the true philosopher, as he was for Plato and Xenophon, for Crito and Cicero, and so many other philosophers later. On the contrary, to the satirical mind of the author of *The Clouds*, Socrates seemed to personify the critical and destructive “new spirit” of Greek pedagogy, whose constant questioning in the quest of truth knew of no limit. Aristophanes was writing in the midst of the general misery of the disastrous Peloponnesian war, which had seen the old ethical traditions fading away, under the daily pressures of disease and death. Thus he attempted to show, in his witty plays, the deleterious effects that the new education, the Sophistic teaching, had on the morality of society and the Athenian youth in particular. Unfairly and unfortunately, it would seem to us with the hindsight of millennia, making apparently excessive use of his poetic license, Aristophanes associated Socrates with the Sophistic turn that the pedagogy of his

extreme substantive opposition” (p. 26). But he is right on target regarding Kaufmann’s book: “Moreover, it is disappointing that in a book that is an invitation to read Nietzsche, Kaufmann makes him seem a less shocking, but also less fascinating, thinker than he really is” (p. 41). With this judgment, I fully agree.

times had taken, and made him the target of his merciless satire in *The Clouds*.⁵

However, we should not forget that Aristophanes' real target was the "sophistic rhetoric" of Protagoras, Gorgias and the other Sophists, who were active in Athens at that time.⁶ In light of the reliable accounts of Plato's and Xenophon's, there is no doubt that Socrates opposed courageously the declared skepticism and the ethical relativism of the Sophists, that was undermining the foundations of the Athenian custom-based morality. In this regard Aristophanes, the contemporary Athenian playwright, differs radically from Nietzsche, the German writer of the 19th century, as an accuser of Socrates. Nietzsche's merciless attack on "Socrates," about two and a half millennia later, appears as much less excusable than Aristophanes' attack. Yet it is not less tragicomic, as we will see below.

As a German thinker and writer, Nietzsche is clearly exceptional in several ways including his aphoristic and provocative style of writing, his usually contradictory and mostly incoherent way of thinking, and his critical and accusatory tone against many distinguished personalities, Socrates above all. Other icons and "idols" of European culture, such as Wagner, Kant, and Schopenhauer for example, felt the sting of his poisonous pen at some point of time or other. Socrates appears to have been the constant target of Nietzsche's manic critique from the first to his last published work, and even in the notes that he left unpublished. This fact alone should have dissuaded those who were prepared to write apologetically on Nietzsche's supposed "admiration of Socrates." He must have seen some serious philosophical differences between his and Socrates' values. We would do well to try to discover and discuss seriously these differences if we wish to understand

⁵ The question as to why Aristophanes chose to make Socrates "the target" of his critique of the new Sophistic spirit in Athenian education is a matter of speculation and scholarly debate. See on this, William Arrowsmith, ed., *The Clouds*, in *Aristophanes: Three Comedies* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1977), pp. 4-7. In my opinion, the poet either underestimated the power of his art or he overestimated the intelligence and the discriminating capacities of the Athenian citizens. So, Socrates had to pay the price.

⁶ With characteristic Attic tact, Aristophanes refrained from having Socrates himself on stage at the moment when Pheidippides, the son of the Athenian citizen Strepsiades, is persuaded to follow the broad road of Sophistry and not the narrow path of Philosophy. The persuasion is the result of a heated and hilarious debate of the two antagonists presented as two ferocious fighting roosters! *Op. cit.* pp. 66-80.

Nietzsche and his relentless, life-long attack on Socrates and "Socratism."

But before we come to that point, we should emphasize the fact that, in the long history of European literature, Nietzsche is a rather absurd case as a "critic of Socrates." For in the year 1870-1871, when he began formulating his critique of Socrates, Nietzsche was only a 26 year old pretentious and second rate romantic musician, an admirer of Cosima and Richard Wagner, a beginner classical philologist, and a failed student of theology. Above all, he was an aspiring poet with some admittedly rare psychological insights into the depths of the badly twisted and traumatized *psyche* of the Germanic nation, which had tried historically but unsuccessfully to reconcile the irreconcilable, the Teutonic warrior with the Christian saint! Yet, this young man had the temerity to try to outdo the old accusers of heroic Socrates. For he came up with an imaginative and most outrageous charge against the Athenian philosopher. Deep in his guts Nietzsche felt, and dared to write, that Socrates was not innocent at all. He was guilty of a hideous crime, much worse than the ones of which he was officially accused and put to death. Socrates of Athens was a bloody murderer! According to Nietzsche's way of thinking, Socrates was ultimately responsible for the untimely death of Greek Tragedy, that is to say, the best aesthetic product of Athenian dramatic poetry and of Classical Greek art in general!

This outrageous charge was made by the 26-27 year-old Nietzsche in his first published book with the catchy title *The Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music*.⁷ In this sort treatise he does much more than the title of the book suggests. For besides giving an imaginative account of the supposed birth of Greek Tragedy from the Dionysiac spirit of choral music, he proceeds boldly to declare the alleged tragic death of Greek Tragedy in the murderous clutches of Socratic dialectic! As if this were not outrageous enough, the young Romantic writer, like an ancient diviner, attempts to foretell the "pending rebirth" of tragedy in the glorious Germany of his time, that is, the victorious Germany in the Franco-Prussian war of 1871. He dreamed that this revival of classical art and music would be accomplished by the genius of Richard Wagner, inspired by his

⁷ "You, my friends, who believe in Dionysiac music, also know what tragedy means to us. In tragedy the tragic myth is reborn from the matrix of music. It inspires the most extravagant hopes and promises oblivion of the bitterest pain. But for all of us the most bitter pain has been the long humiliation which German genius has had to suffer in the vassalage of evil dwarfs." (BD, p.144).

beautiful wife, Cosima, to whom apparently Nietzsche had been also happily and slavishly attracted, at the time when *The Birth of Tragedy* was conceived in his fertile imagination.⁸ The published book was prudently dedicated to Richard Wagner as a token of admiration.⁹

In this context, Nietzsche's accusation of Socrates acquires both comic aspects and tragic proportions, surrounded as it is by his speculative and mytho-poetic account of the genesis of Greek Tragedy, and the additional prophesy of its destined rebirth in Romantic Germany. It appears that this kind of Nietzschean mythology served somehow his prophesy, which in turn required the sudden death of Greek Tragedy as an art form, necessitating thus the search for a villain to play the executioner's role. In the person of Socrates and the "Socratic spirit," Nietzsche thought that he had found the "real" killer of Greek Tragedy! It will not be necessary for the purposes of this paper to examine all the specifics of this tragicomic birth, death, and rebirth of Greek Tragedy.¹⁰ It will suffice to try only to connect the alleged death of tragedy with the sustained attack on Socrates, which was to be carried out in other more mature works published by Nietzsche.¹¹

⁸ About Nietzsche's rather "slavish" attachment to Cosima and Richard Wagner in the early 1870ies, especially during the time of his conception of *The Birth of Tragedy*, see R. J. Hollingdale, *op. cit.*, pp. 56-85; and, particularly, Joachim Koehler, *Nietzsche and Wagner: A Lesson of Subjugation*, Ronald Taylor, trans., (New Haven: Yale University press, 1998), especially Chapter 4.

⁹ Later in life Nietzsche was to change his tune, hatred now took the place of previous admiration: ".... *Wagner was redeemed*. In all seriousness, this was a redemption. The benefit Schopenhauer conferred of Wagner is immeasurable. Only the *philosopher of decadence* gave to the artist of decadence—*himself*. To the artist of decadence: there we have the crucial words. And here my seriousness begins. I am far from looking on guilelessly while this decadent corrupts out health—and music as well. Is Wagner a human being at all? Isn't he rather a sickness? He makes sick whatever he touches—he has made music sick." *The Case of Wagner*, 4-5, in *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, (New York: Modern Library, 1992).

¹⁰ The most devastating and scholarly critique of Nietzsche's book remains the one by Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, *Zukunftphilologie! Eine Ervidierung auf Friedrich Nietzsches "Geburt der Tragödie"*, (Berlin: Borntraeger, 1973). For a discussion of the reception of the book, see also David Lenson *The Birth of Tragedy: A Commentary*, (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1987), pp. 10-16; and W. Kaufmann's Introduction, in *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, *op. cit.*, pp. ix-xiv.

¹¹ For a sympathetic account of Nietzsche's life and work, I refer to R.J. Hollingdale's book, *Nietzsche: The Man and His Philosophy*, revised edition, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999). For his relations with Jewish people see Siegfried Mandel, *Nietzsche and the Jews*, Amherst, NY:

3. Socrates and the Death of Tragedy

The architectonic of the book is interesting. It seems to be "internally" divided neatly in three parts dealing respectively with the birth of tragedy (Chapters I-X), the death of tragedy (Chapters XI-XV), and the prophetically foreseen rebirth of tragedy (Chapters XVI-XXV). It appears that it was so designed that the villain "Socrates" would occupy its very center. For he was implicated in the death of tragedy, which, nevertheless, had died by "committing suicide" in Nietzsche's logically inconsistent, but "dramatic" phraseology. But how did that happen for tragedy to kill itself, and what did Socrates, that least violent and most peaceful Athenian, had to do with such a dramatic act? In order to answer this question, we will have to follow a little more closely Nietzsche's speculative account first of tragedy's birth, then of its short life and glory in the Athenian stage, and last its "death."¹²

Well, to make Nietzsche's long story short, Greek tragedy was born from "the spirit of music." Mytho-poetically, it was the offspring of a felicitous marriage of what he calls the "Apollonian spirit," expressed in lucid forms, clear images and dreamlike states, and the "Dionysiac spirit," embodied in the powerful passions of men and expressed in the intoxication of inspirational music, sung by a chorus of revelers and accompanied by the flute.¹³ The protagonist on the scene and the dialectic parts exchanged between him and the leader of the chorus are the Apollonian aspect of a Greek tragic drama, but its heart is the chorus and the choral songs praising the victory of the temporally ascending hero, or lamenting the suffering caused by the final fall. In Nietzsche's view, classical examples of

Prometheus Books, 1998), and Weaver Santaniello, *Nietzsche, God, and the Jews* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1994). For extensive selected bibliographies of Nietzsche's works and of works on Nietzsche, see R. J. Hollingdale, *op. cit.*, pp. 263-266, and particularly W. Kaufmann, *op. cit.*, pp. 477-502.

¹²According to Nietzsche's fictionalized account, the tragic death of tragedy would be accomplished at the hands of Euripides equipped by Socratic dialectic and "unwisely" looking for philosophical reasons to comprehend the meaning of Aeschylus and Sophoclean tragedy. Having been corrupted by Socratic logic even Euripides "the tragedian," like Plato the dialectician, could not comprehend or appreciate the higher tragic "wisdom," from the realm of which, Nietzsche insisted, "the logician is excluded." (BT, XIV).

¹³Nietzsche's emphasis on the Dionysiac flute is questionable in light of the fact that at least the young Sophocles used to act in his own plays and to play "the lyre" during his dramatic performances. See *Vita Sophoclis in Sophoclis Fabulae*, A. C. Pearson, ed., (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), pp. xviii-xxi.

Greek tragic heroes are the Aeschylean Prometheus and, to a lesser extent, the Sophoclean Oedipus. (BT, IX)

Euripides, whom Aristotle had characterized as "the most tragic of the tragedian poets," is, in Nietzsche's eyes, the criminal who killed the spirit of Greek tragedy and he had the help of the dialectician Socrates in this murderous act. Behind Euripides' dramatic innovations, he sees the Socratic rationality and morality, which easily and optimistically equated knowledge with virtue and virtue with happiness! But let us better listen to Nietzsche expressing himself on these matters in his inimitable way:

Dionysos had already been driven from the tragic stage by a daemonic power speaking through Euripides. For in a certain sense Euripides was but a mask, while the divinity which spoke through him was neither Dionysos nor Apollo but a brand-new daemon called Socrates. Thenceforward the real antagonism was to be between the Dionysiac spirit and the Socratic, and tragedy was to perish in the conflict. (BT, p. 77) ¹⁴

This is the reason why the figure of Socrates disturbs us so profoundly whenever we approach it, and why we are tempted again and again to plumb the meaning and intentions of the most problematic character among the ancients. Who was this man who dared, single-handed, to challenge the entire world of Hellenism – embodied in Homer, Pindar, and Aeschylus, in Phidias, Pericles, Pythia, and Dionysos – which commands our highest reverence? Who was this daemon daring to pour out the magic philter in the dust? (BT, p.84)

It is evident from the above that in Nietzsche's imagination Socrates' personality has acquired titanic proportions and demonic destructive powers to the detriment of Hellenism and Hellenic culture. These powers seem to surpass even the great powers with which the old accuser, Meletus of Athens, had invested Socrates in

¹⁴Consider also, in this connection, the following comment: "Euripides dared to usher in a new era of poetic activity. If the old tragedy was wrecked, esthetic Socratism is to be blamed, and to the extent that the target of the innovators was the Dionysiac principle of the older art we may call Socrates the god's chief opponent, the new Orpheus who, though destined to be torn to pieces by the maenads of the Athenian judgment, succeeded in putting the overmastering god to flight." (BT, p. 82) "Socrates against Dionysos" was the old drama, the new drama was envisioned to be "Nietzsche [the new Dionysos] against Socrates!"

order to make him appear more dangerous in the eyes of the Athens. He had argued during the trial that Socrates' corrupting influence on the Athenian youth was so great that it could not be counter-balanced by the force of the entire city of Athens pulling in the opposing direction and trying to morally improve the character of the young men of Athens.¹⁵ To return to Nietzsche, it seems that the powerful weapon in Socrates' hands was dialectic, rationalism and optimism. For:

Optimistic dialectics took up the whip of its syllogisms and drove music out of tragedy. It entirely destroyed the meaning of tragedy – which can be interpreted only as concrete manifestation of Dionysiac conditions, music made visible, an ecstatic dream world. (BT, p.89) If we examine Socrates in the light of this idea [that thought, guided by the thread of causation, might plumb the farthest abyss of being and even conquer it], he strikes us as the first who was able not only to live under the guidance of that instinctive scientific certainty but to die by it, which is much more difficult. For this reason the image of the dying Socrates – mortal man freed by knowledge and argument from the fear of death – is the emblem which, hanging above the portal of every science, reminds the adept that his mission is to make existence appear intelligible and thereby justified." (BT, p. 93)

Thus the triumph of what Nietzsche calls the "Socratic spirit," identifying it with "the spirit of science" and its faith in reason at the expense of the "Dionysiac spirit," which he identifies with the spirit of art and tragedy in particular, can be seen as a regrettable development and turn of affairs. For him it appears as a degradation of the superior experience and artistic expression of the Greek aristocracy of the 6th and early 5th centuries.¹⁶ However, Nietzsche is

¹⁵ For the memorable exchange between Socrates and Meletus, see Plato's *Apology* 24b-28b.

¹⁶ At other contexts, where Nietzsche wants to stress the fundamental differences between what he calls "master morality" and "slave morality," Homeric Greeks would seem to fit better the role of the natural Greek aristocracy. This could, then, be favorably compared with the Greek "decadence" of Socrates and his age, and more so later on during the Roman "masterful" domination of Greece. See on this, *Beyond Good and Evil*, especially Part Nine entitled "What is Noble." Yet, captive Greece captivated Rome "art-fully!"

aware that there were then, and at the present, other and much worse alternatives to science and rational research. He goes on to state clearly:

Once we have fully realized how, after Socrates, the mystagogue of science, one school of philosophy after another came upon the scene and departed; how generation after generation of inquirers, spurned by an insatiable thirst for knowledge, explored every aspect of the universe; and how by that ecumenical concern a common net of knowledge was spread over the whole globe, affording glimpses into the workings of an entire solar system – once we have realized all this, and monumental pyramid of present-day knowledge, we cannot help viewing Socrates as the vortex and turning point of Western civilization. For if we imagine that immense store of energy used, not for the purposes of knowledge, but for the practical egotistical ends of individuals and nations, we may readily see the consequence: universal wars of extermination and constant migrations of peoples would have weakened man's instinctive zest for life to such an extent that, suicide having become a matter of course, duty might have commanded the son to kill the parents, the friend his friend, as among the Fiji islanders. We know that such wholesale slaughter prevails whenever art in some form or other – especially as religion and science – has not served as antidote to barbarism. (BT, pp.93-94)

It is important to note that, in Nietzsche's broad understanding of art, even "religion and science" become forms of art, human endeavors that save human beings from the utter barbarism of war and wholesale destruction for which they are capable. But even more important is the fact that Nietzsche was also aware that science and the "Socratic spirit" have had their day. He thought that the time had come for reason to recognize its limitations and for mankind to return once again to art for consolation. The time was ripe for the resurrection of Dionysos, the god of ecstatic dance, music, and tragic wisdom not in Greece this time but in Germany. As he put it:

But science, spurred on by its energetic notions, approaches irresistibly those outer limits where the optimism implicit in logic must collapse. For the periphery of science has an infinite number of points. Every noble and gifted man has, before reaching the

mid-point of his career, come up against some point of the periphery that defied his understanding, quite apart from the fact that we have no way of knowing how the area of the circle is ever to be fully charted. When the inquirer, having pushed to the circumference, realizes how logic in that place curls about itself and bites its own tail, he is struck with a new kind of perception: a tragic perception, which requires, to make it tolerable, the remedy of art.

If we look about us today, with eyes refreshed and fortified by the spectacle of the Greeks, we shall see how the insatiable zest for knowledge, prefigured by Socrates, has been translated into tragic resignation and the need for art; while, to be sure, on a lower level that same zest appears as hostile to all art and especially to the truly tragic, Dionysiac art, as I have tried to show paradigmatically in the subversion of Aeschylean art by Socratism. (BT, p.95)

There must be something terribly wrong, since it does not seem to be ironic at all, with Nietzsche's characterization of Socrates as the prototype of the modern scientists in their effort to conquer the physical world by scientific inquiry, and thus an enemy of art. This seems to me worse than even Aristophanes' playful error of identifying Socrates as a "natural philosopher" and stargazer. Certainly there were many people at Socrates' time and even before his time, who were engaged in such inquiries, but Socrates was not one of them.¹⁷ The knowledge which Socrates was not of the natural world but of the human soul. The Delphic precept "Know thy-self" had become the emblem of his search for wisdom.¹⁸ And far from

¹⁷ On this important point not only Plato and Xenophon, but also the distant and objective Aristotle agree. Compare, for example, *Apology* 19b-d, *Phaedo* 96a-99c, *Memorabilia* I, I 10-17, and *Metaphysics* 987b.

¹⁸ For example, in *Phaedrus* 230a, regarding the skeptic critique of current myths, Socrates confessed:

"I myself have certainly no time for the business, and I will tell you why, my friend. I can't as yet 'know myself,' as the inscription at Delphi enjoins, and so long as that ignorance remains it seems to me ridiculous to inquire into extraneous matters. Consequently I don't bother about such things, but accept the current beliefs about them, and direct my inquiries, as I have just said, rather to myself, to discover whether I really am more complex creature and more puffed up with pride than Typhon, or a simpler, gentler being whom heaven has blessed with a quiet, un-Typhonic nature." Nietzsche as well as his contemporary Sophists would seem to fit perfectly the Typhonic, prideful nature

been anti-artistic Socrates confessed at the end of his life that he had conceived of philosophy as the highest form of music, the inner harmony of soul.¹⁹

The declared goal of the Platonic Socrates, as he philosophized dialectically, was to discover and to see clearly the divine essence of the *psyche* temporarily encased inside the mortal being. He wanted to try to put in the best possible order its various and conflicting elements, so that they would ultimately harmonize with each other. Such achieved harmony would make the Socratic philosopher feel at home in this life and possibly in the life to come, if it turned out that all does not end in the grave.²⁰

In this respect, then, Nietzsche would seem to have followed Aristophanes without having the Aristophanic poetic licence. He is making up a caricature of Socrates in order to have an easier target for his critique. As we will see, the situation would not get any better as the critic of Socrates advanced in maturity of age but not necessarily in Socratic wisdom. But what is astonishing and, as we will see, significant for Nietzsche's life-long project, is that in his extensive critique of his "fictional Socrates" he completely ignored

described here by Socrates. Regarding natural philosophy, the "scientific" knowledge of his time, he stated in *Apology* 19: "I mean no disrespect for such knowledge, if anyone really is versed in it—I do not want any more lawsuits brought against me by Meletus—but the fact is, gentlemen, that I take no interest in it." And *Memorabilia* I. i. 10-17.

¹⁹ In this respect, Nietzsche would seem to have misunderstood or misinterpreted the musical and artistic Socrates, as his comments on the possibility of the "Socratic artist" in BT, XIV, indicate. Here he speaks of the supposed "Socratic strategy" for the "destruction of the Dionysiac drama" and wonders whether "art and Socratism" are really as "diametrically opposed" as his analysis of the death of tragedy had made them. Imaginatively he presents Socrates talking to him-self with self-doubt and dreaming the Nietzschean dream of a union in holy matrimony of logic and art, science and poetry, "Socratic spirit" and "Dionysiac spirit!"

"Have I been too ready to view what was unintelligible to me as being devoid of meaning? Perhaps there is a realm of wisdom, after all, from which the logician is excluded? Perhaps art must be seen as the necessary complement of rational discourse?" That there is a "form of wisdom" which goes beyond *logos* (logic) to the higher sphere of *nous* (noetic apprehension, intuitive intellection) was a view shared by Socratic and Platonic philosophers, including Aristotle, the most "logical" of them all. I have shown this in *The Hellenic Philosophy*, *op. cit.*, Chapter II. In "artistic Socrates" others have seen "the archetype of what Nietzsche himself aspires to be." M. S. Silk and J. P. Stern, *Nietzsche on Tragedy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 193. This and similar views are mistaken, in light of Nietzsche's sustained anti-Socratism.

²⁰ See *Phaedo* 82e-84b, and compare to *Republic* 443c-444e.

and bypassed the real Socrates, the historical Socrates as he emerges from the writing of his beloved students, Plato and Xenophon in particular. This Socrates is the uncompromising opponent of the Sophists of his time, of Protagoras and Gorgias, of Thrasymachus and Callicless, and of all the other "well born" Greeks, who were admired by Nietzsche, as paragons and advocates of traditional "aristocratic" Greek values.

As a Classical philologist, Nietzsche was unforgivable for his pyrotechnic attack on "Socrates," as the alleged forerunner of medieval Christian morality and modern scientific mentality, while overlooking his real role in life, to fight by all lawful means in his disposal sophistry and the degradation of life to which it inevitably leads by its epistemological skepticism and ethical relativism. Of course, Nietzsche was free to prefer the "Sophistic values" as opposed to the "Socratic values," but as a classical philologist, if not a philosopher, he ought to have the decency to place Socrates where he historically and traditionally belonged, that is to say, in unyielding opposition to sophistry and the Sophists. He ought to be judged for that reason and in that light. The fact, however, remains that with Nietzsche's helping hand and powerful pen the twin offspring of Protagorean sophistry, skepticism and ethical relativism, were destined to triumph in less than a century from his death. We should keep this historical fact in mind as we celebrate Socrates and Nietzsche's memories.

4. The Problem of Socrates

The Twilight of the Idols, which was published the year before his collapse, is one of Nietzsche's last works, in which we find the most direct and brutal attack on Socrates and what he stood for philosophically.²¹ As seen by Nietzsche, "the problem of Socrates" has nothing to do with the so-called "Socratic problem," which has greatly exercised modern and contemporary scholars. These scholars have questioned and argued about the possibility of ever knowing the historical Socrates and his philosophy, in light of the fact that he wrote nothing. Besides, those who wrote about him, men

²¹ Between *The Birth of Tragedy* (1871), with its artistic or "esthetic" critique of Socrates, and the more severe and frontal attack on Socrates, with which Nietzsche opened one of his last books, *The Twilight of the Idols* (1888), there are critical and mostly negative comments about Socrates (and Plato, the worst of all Socratics) to be found in all the other books published before his collapse in 1889. But they are sporadic attack compared to the sustained critiques in which he engaged in these two works, especially the latter.

like Plato and Xenophon, or Aristophanes and Aristotle, seem to have given us markedly different pictures of the Athenian philosopher. Even those scholars, who accept the Platonic portrait of Socrates as the most accurate or attractive, face the problem created by the absence of a clear line showing where the philosophy of Socrates ends and the philosophy of Plato begins in a Platonic dialogue or the whole series of them.²²

However, Nietzsche, the life-long critic of Socrates and the classical philologist, does not seem to have been bothered by such critical and philological questions at all. He speaks rather dogmatically about "Socrates," as if he knew exactly who he was, where he stood historically, and judges his thoughts, his deeds, and his alleged many "misdeeds." Although he acknowledges the Socratic irony and Socrates' sense of humor, Nietzsche feels that he can see through Socrates and his dialectic tricks in order to penetrate and reveal the dangerous essence of "Socratism" and its corrupting effect on "noble Plato." Socrates is one of the idols targeted to be touched by the hammer of Nietzsche's critique and found to be wholly hollow. In Socrates' personality and philosophy, the critic sees accumulated all the vices of democratic and decadent Greece. For him, Socrates represents the antithesis to the aristocratic Greece with its expressed "will to power" and its "healthy animal instincts" intact and functioning. Looked at from the perspective of Nietzschean "values," Socrates appeared to him as a man who valued death over life, dialectic over poetry, syllogism over music, reason over instinct, knowledge over action, dialogue over command, and irony over heroic straight talk or aesthetic Sophist oratory. Socrates was also "ugly" and "plebeian."²³ Therefore, far from been "the physician" for the sickly and decadent souls of the degenerate Athenian aristocrats of his time, he was the laughable "buffoon," who did not deserve to be taken seriously as "a philosopher!"

Let this be enough as a foretaste of the delicacies to be found in Nietzsche's last book and his most brutal attack on Socrates. To

²² For more on "the Socratic Problem" and bibliography, see my "Socratic Intellectualism and Aristotelian Criticism," in *The Philosophy of Socrates*, K. Boudouris, ed., (Athens: Kardamitsa Press, 1990).

²³ Nietzsche's identification of Socrates with the Athenian "proletariat" is a-historical and too simplistic. On this see Ellen and Neal Wood, *Class Ideology and Ancient Political Theory: Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle in Social Context* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1978), pp. 97ff; also Keith Ansell-Pearson, *An Introduction to Nietzsche as Political Thinker* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 63-83.

be more specific, we may note that the treatise opens with the general statement that, in the judgment of “the philosophers” and the wisest men of every age, life is “worthless.” A classic example of this melancholy, weary, and pessimistic group of people is Socrates who had said as he was dying: “To live – that means to be a long time sick: I owe a cock to the savior Asclepius. Even Socrates had had enough of it.”²⁴ This *consensus* of the wise man points to some truth. But “the truth,” as Nietzsche sees it, is not that life is sickness, but rather that those who have thought so, must have been “declining types,” sick, old, and tottering “decadents.” Then he boasts: “I recognized Socrates and Plato as symptoms of decay, as agents of the dissolution of Greece, as pseudo-Greek, as anti-Greek.... For a philosopher to see a problem in the *value* of life thus even constitutes an objection to him, a question-mark as to his wisdom, a piece of un-wisdom.” (TI 2, p. 30) So it turns out that the philosophers, “the wisest men of every age,” are both decadent and “unwise,” in Nietzsche’s opinion!

Socrates, in particular, besides been decadent and unwise, was also handicapped by his low, plebeian origins, and his physical unattractiveness and ugliness. This makes Nietzsche question whether Socrates was a Greek at all. Then he pontificates as follows:

Ugliness is frequently enough the sign of a thwarted development, a development *retarded* by interbreeding. Otherwise it appears as a development in *decline*. Anthropologists among criminologists tell us the typical

²⁴ Nietzsche does not refrain from scorning even the innocent words, which Socrates addressed to Crito at the last moment of his life. He sarcastically comments: “I would that he had also been silent in the last moment of his life, --perhaps he might then have belonged to a still higher order of intellects. Whether it was death, or the poison, or piety, or wickedness—something or other loosened his tongue at that moment, and he said: “O Crito, I owe a cock to Asclepius.” For him who has ears, this ludicrous and terrible “last word” implies: “O Crito, *life is a long sickness!*” Is it possible! A man like him, who had lived cheerfully and to all appearance as a soldier,--was a pessimist! He had merely put on good demeanor towards life, and had all along concealed his ultimate judgment, his profoundest sentiment! Socrates, Socrates *had suffered from life!* And he also took his revenge for it—with that veiled, fearful, pious, and blasphemous phrase! Had even a Socrates to revenge himself? Was there a grain too little of magnanimity in his superabundant virtue? Ah, my friends! We must surpass even the Greeks.” Lately a lot of literature has been developing around the final Socratic request with Michel Foucault as its source and epicenter. For the details of this new development see A. Nehamas, *The Art of Living: Socratic reflections from Plato to Foucault* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), pp. 157-180.

criminal is ugly: *monstrum in fronte, monstrum in animo*.
But the criminal is a decadent. Was Socrates a typical
criminal? (TI 3, p.30)

In this role of the diagnostician of Socrates soul and physiognomy, Nietzsche finds that "the admitted dissolution and anarchy of his instincts," his "dialectical manner," as well as "the superfetation of the logical and that *barbed malice*, which distinguishes him," all point in the direction of Socrates' decadence and his lack of good Greek taste.²⁵

Everything about him is exaggerated, *buffo*, caricature, everything is at the same time hidden, reserved, subterranean....²⁶ Whenever a authority is still part of accepted usage and one does not 'give reasons' but commands, the dialectician is a kind of *buffoon*: he is laughed at, he is not taken seriously. – Socrates was

²⁵ Furthermore, according to Nietzsche, Socrates and Plato were wrong to insist on the connection between "right reason" and "right action," and to equate virtue with happiness. These views were opposed to "the values" of Greek aristocrats, who dreamed of tyranny, and were admired by Callicles and by Nietzsche: "For this is the ignoble secret of every good Greek aristocrat: out of the profoundest jealousy he considers each of his peers to stand on an equal footing with him, but is prepared at any moment to leap like a tiger upon his prey, which is rule over them all: what are lies, murder, treachery, selling his native city, to him then! This species of man found justice extraordinary difficult and regarded it as something nearly incredible; 'the just man' sounded to the Greeks like 'the saint' does among the Christians. But when Socrates went so far as to say: 'the virtuous man is the happiest man' they did not believe their ears and fancied they had heard something insane. For when he pictures the happiest man, every man of noble origin included in the picture the perfect ruthlessness and devilry of the tyrant who sacrifices everyone and everything to his arrogance and pleasure." *Daybreak: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality*, M. Clark and B. Leiter, ed., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), sec. 199, p.119.

²⁶ The only time that Nietzsche offers what sounds like a praise of Socrates is when he compares the philosopher to the founder of Christianity: "If all goes well, the time will come when one will take up the memorabilia of Socrates rather than the Bible as a guide to morals and reason.... The pathways of the most various philosophical modes of life lead back to him; at bottom they are the modes of life of the various temperaments confirmed and established by reason and habit and all of them directed towards joy in living and in one's own self; from which one might conclude that Socrates' most personal characteristic was a participation in every temperament. Socrates excels the founder of Christianity in being able to be serious cheerfully and in possessing that *wisdom full of roguishness* that constitutes the finest state of the human soul. And he also possessed the finer intellect." *Human, All too Human*, R. J. Hollingdale, trans., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), WS, 86, p. 332.

the buffoon who *got himself taken seriously*: what was really happening when that happened? (TI, 4-5, p.31)

For Nietzsche, the Socratic doctrine that equates reason with virtue, and virtue with happiness, is "the bizarrest of equation and one which has in particular all the instincts of the older Hellenes against it." Socratic dialectic is "a last-ditch weapon in the hands of those who have no other weapon left." The use of dialectic makes Socrates look more like a traditional Jew rather than an Ancient Hellene! This is distasteful to Nietzsche, and so is Socrates' uses of irony, which he interprets as an expression of "the *ressentiment* of the rabble." If Socrates attracted young Athenians in spite of his ugliness and his low class, this was to be explained simply thus:

He fascinated because he touched on the agonal instinct of the Hellenes – he introduced a variation into the wrestling-matches among the youths and young men. Socrates was also a great erotic. But Socrates divined even more. He saw *behind* aristocratic Athenians; he grasped that case, the idiosyncrasy of his case, was no longer exceptional. The same kind of degeneration was everywhere silently preparing itself: the old Athens was coming to an end. – And Socrates understood that all the world had need of him – his expedience, his cure, his personal art of self-preservation... How did Socrates become master of *himself*? – His case was after all only the extreme case, only the most obvious instance of what had at that time begun to be the universal exigency; that no one was any longer master of himself, that the instincts were becoming mutually *antagonistic*.... I have intimated the way in which Socrates exercised fascination: he seemed to be a physician, a savior.... Socrates was a misunderstanding: *the entire morality of improvement, the Christian included, was a misunderstanding*.... To have to combat one's instincts – that is the formula for decadence: as long as life is ascending, happiness and instinct are one. (TI, 9-11, pp.32-34)

In the last paragraph of this merciless attack on Socrates and on Athens of his time, that is, the golden time of Ancient Greece, Nietzsche went even further than this. He intimated that Socrates in his shrewdness understood very well that he and his faith in "reason" to achieve happiness through self-mastery were ineffective means and that death is the only savior for those who have reached

such low point of degenerating decadence. His last and presumably considerate and mature judgements of Socrates were:

Did he [Socrates] grasp that, this shrewdest of all self-deceivers? Did he at last say that to himself in the wisdom of his courage for death? Socrates wanted to die – it was not Athens, it was *he* who handed himself the poison cup, who compelled Athens to hand him the poison cup.... 'Socrates is no physician,' he said softly to himself: 'death alone is a physician here.... Socrates himself has only been a long time sick....' (TI 12, p.34)²⁷

In Nietzsche's new interpretation, it would seem that the "wisdom" of decadent Socrates was the shrewd realization that there was no salvation for "decadents" besides death, which might put an end to their miserable existence of powerlessness! Even in the notes that Nietzsche left unpublished the picture of Socrates and "Socratic philosophers" is very negative and compares poorly with his praise and admiration for the Sophists, especially for great Protagoras,²⁸ heir of pre-Socratic artful thought. Consider, e.g.:

The appearance of Greek philosophers from Socrates onwards is a symptom of decadence; the anti-Hellenic instincts come to the top. The "Sophist" is still completely Hellenic – including Anaxagoras, Democritus, and the great Ionians – but as a transitional form. The *polis* loses its faith in the uniqueness of its culture, in its right to rule over every other *polis*.... The "philosopher," on the other hand, is the *reaction*: he desires the old virtue.... He desires the ideal *polis* after the concept 'polis' has had its last day (approximately as the Jews held firm as a 'people' after they had fallen into slavery).... The Greek culture of the Sophists had developed out of all the Greek instincts; it belongs to the culture of Periclean age as necessarily as Plato does *not*: it has its predecessors in Heraclitus, in Democritus, in the scientific types of

²⁷ Nietzsche saw Socrates' wish for death everywhere, and explained his actual death as a case of "suicide": "The two greatest judicial murders [Socrates and Christ?] in world history are, not to mince words, disguised and well disguised suicides. In both cases the victim *wanted to die*; in both cases he employed the hand of human injustice to drive the sword into his breast." (H, II, 94, p. 233). Probably in both cases, but definitely in Socrates' case, Nietzsche is wrong as usual. Although not afraid of death, Socrates loved life.

²⁸ Kaufmann, *op. cit.*, in his eagerness to show Nietzsche's "admiration of Socrates," has conveniently overlooked his admiration for the "realist" Sophists. Protagoras is absent from the 524 page long book.

In a footnote (p. 2816) the Sophists are mentioned and praised for their comparatively advanced doctrines!

the old philosophy; it finds expression in, e.g., the high culture of Thucydides. And – it has ultimately shown itself to be right: every advance in epistemological and moral knowledge has reinstated the Sophists. Our contemporary way of thinking is to a great extent Heraclitean, Democritean, and Protagorean: it suffices to say it is Protagorean, because Protagoras represented a synthesis of Heraclitus and Democritus. (WP, 427-428)²⁹

Compared with such paragons of Hellenic virtues and “healthy instincts,” poor Socrates is characterized again as “*roturier*” (kind of anti-aristocrat) and as “a *buffo* with the instincts of Voltaire,” while Plato is “passionate in everything *anti-Hellenic*!” His final verdict on Socrates is given in the following passage, with which the case shall rest:

In summa: the mischief has already reached its climax in Plato³⁰ – And then one had need to invent the abstractly perfect man as well: – good, just, wise, a dialectician – in short, the scarecrow of the ancient philosopher: a plant removed from all soil; a humanity without any particular regulating instincts; a virtue that ‘proves’ itself with reasons. The perfectly absurd ‘individuum’ in itself! Unnaturalness of the first water. – In short, the consequence of the denaturalization of moral values was the creation of a degenerate type of man – ‘the good man,’ ‘the happy man,’ ‘the wise man.’ – Socrates represents a moment of the profoundest perversity in the history of values. (WP 431, p. 235)

With this last judgment on Socrates, Nietzsche has shown the ethical abyss that separated him from the philosopher. He may live on as a poet or a sophist, but not as a philosopher.

²⁹ Friedrich Nietzsche: *The Will to Power*, W. Kaufmann, ed., translated by the same and R. J. Hollingdale, (New York: Vintage books, 1968).

³⁰ “There is something in the morality of Plato that does not really belong to Plato but is merely encountered in his philosophy –one might say, in spite of Plato: namely, the Socratism for which he was really too noble.... Plato did everything he could in order to read refined and noble into the proposition of his teacher –above all, himself. He was the most audacious of all interpreters and took the whole Socrates only the way one picks a popular tune and folk song from the streets in order to vary it into the infinite and impossible –namely into all of his own masks and multiplicities.” *Beyond Good and Evil*, in *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, W. Kaufmann, ed., and trans., (New York: Modern Library, 1992, sec. 190, p. 293).

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, it should be evident from the discussion of Nietzsche's extensive comments and his sustained negative critique of Socrates and the Socratic spirit, that he had no "admiration" for the Athenian philosopher and no appreciation for what he considered as the "decadent values" of Socratism. To these values he included Socratic logic and dialectic, and Socratic virtue ethics with the emphasis on equalizing individual differences and universalizing morality by ignoring the all important for Nietzsche master/slave dichotomy. In particular, the Socratic equations of "knowledge with goodness" and "goodness with happiness," appeared to Nietzsche as repulsive and contrary to the "healthy instincts" of aristocratic Hellenes, who lived risky lives in the pursuit of personal pleasure and political power. Having to choose between the "opposing cultures," respectively represented by the "unrealistic" values of Socratic and Platonic philosophers and by the "realistic" and naturalistic Sophists, Nietzsche opted for the later with great enthusiasm for their supposedly "life enhancing" possibilities!

It was also noticed, albeit in passing, that this ethical controversy over "values," the Sophistic versus the Socratic values, rested on the metaphysical background of the more fundamental opposition between Protagorean "Becoming" and Platonic "Being." As Nietzsche saw it, modern science had undoubtedly vindicated Protagoras, the Sophist and faithful follower of the great pre-Socratic philosophers, Heraclitus and Democritus. Their respective doctrines that there is only one world, this visible and changeable world of matter and life, of darkness and light, of sheer chance and natural necessity were, even for the critical Nietzsche article of faith and beyond questioning. Thus, the Socratic and Platonic alternative proposal, which tentatively postulated and searched for a "real" world of Being and stability, of design and intelligibility, of purpose and ultimate *goals*, was seen as unscientific, unrealistic, and unworthy of the attention of modern men, who were "enlightened" by the light of contemporary science that vindicated pre-Socratic thought.

Above all, Nietzsche's objection to "Socratism," and his battle with him was based on aesthetic considerations. It was perceived by him and stated boldly that the philosopher's influence on Greek arts, especially on the Athenian tragedy, had been devastating. It was apparent to Nietzsche that Greek tragedy had died as a result of the pernicious influence, which Socrates and his dialectic, with its demand for meaning and intelligibility in poetry, had on the last of

three great Athenian tragedians, Euripides. Nietzsche ignored the possible negative influence of the pre-Socratic cosmological speculations and the Sophist anthropological observations on Greek traditional moral values and religious beliefs, on which the *catharsis* function of Greek tragedy rested. Instead he narrowly focused on Socrates and irrationally made him responsible for the alleged sudden death of Greek tragedy.³¹ In so doing, he seems to have surpassed in audacity even the ancient accusers of Socrates. He certainly left Aristophanes far behind.

So as we celebrate beyond Nietzsche's century, we may admire his vision and the power of the will that sustained it and tried to embody it in a series of books that he left behind. We may honor the author of these works created with great pathos and wit. However, as a Classical philologist with philosophical pretensions, Nietzsche is to be held accountable for his non-philosophical treatment of Socrates. Also he cannot be easily exonerated for having drawn the dividing line of European culture in such a clumsy way as to put one half of Hellenic Philosophy (and arguably the better part in terms of "values") on the side of its and, apparently, his own arch-enemy, Christianity. Such a division is historically unjustifiable and philosophically problematic and questionable for those who are not taken in by the traditional historiography of European philosophy.³²

Ironically, this oddly drawn division makes Nietzsche's task of "radical revaluation" of European values even more difficult than it would have been with such natural allies, as Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, on the side of needed reform. As a Classical philologist, critic of culture, and evaluator of "values," he should have known better and he should have treated such serious matters of "cultures" and "values" with more tact. He chose to side with the Sophists and their thirst for power and/or pleasure against Socrates and his love for philosophic wisdom and virtue. His star was to rise and fall with the rise and fall of Nazi political power. They thought that they found

³¹ He also failed to take into account the possible influence that the prolonged and horrific Peloponnesian War might have had on the fate of Athenian dramatic art, which had grown with the rise of Athens to hegemonic power after the glorious Persian Wars. He seems to have been interested not in facts but impressions.

³² On this point see my stated views in *The Hellenic Philosophy: Between Europe, Asia, and Africa*, (Binghamton, NY: Global Publications), pp. 157-186.

plenty of reasons in his writings permitting them to make him their "star" philosopher.³³

In the long run, though, the physically robust and reasonable Socrates will surely overcome the passionate and "sickly" Nietzsche, just as he outran the smart and forceful Protagoras. When future philosophers and reasonable people come to see, as Socratic philosophers from Plato to Boethius clearly saw, that *philosophia*, the love of wisdom, as the Ancient Hellenes understood and practice it in their lives, is above all "a way of life" to be measured by *phronesis* (practical wisdom) and *ethike arete* (ethical excellence and moral virtue), they will have no difficulty in choosing between Socrates and Nietzsche. For philosophy has nothing to do with rhetorical pronouncements of the Protagorian and Sophist type, nor with aphoristic pyrotechnics of the Nietzschean and Neo-sophist type.

From these philosophical contests, Socrates will emerge victorious once again in the end, because of the quality of the higher ethical and humane values so vividly expressed in his life as philosopher and teacher of virtue. There is no better criterion of evaluating values.

³³ For different reasons, he has also been idolized temporarily by the pleasure seeking post-modernists of our times, but if history is any guidance to the future, such glory cannot last for very long. But we will see.

For a comprehensive and well written account of his influence, especially in Germany between the two World Wars, see Steven E. Aschheim's work, *The Nietzsche Legacy in Germany 1890-1990* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994). Aschheim's historical account of Nietzsche's relationship to the Third Reich seems more balanced and judicious than Kaufmann's account that has dominated the scene.