

**BRATISLAVA INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF LIBERAL ARTS**

**NIETZSCHE AND PLATO: DIFFERENT UNDERSTANDING OF MUSIC,  
POETRY AND TRAGEDY IN THEIR WORKS**

**BACHELOR THESIS**

**Simona Andrejová**

**Bratislava 2013**

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## **Declaration of Originality**

I declare that this Thesis is my own work and has not been published in part or in whole elsewhere. All used literature and other sources are attributed and properly cited in references.

Bratislava, 12.8.2013

Simona Andrejová

## Abstrakt

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Cieľom tejto práce je preskúmanie Nietzscheho kritiky Platóna a posúdenie, do či je pravdivá; a ak áno, tak do akej miery. Táto štúdia si vypracovala konkrétnu líniu interpretácie a venuje sa skúmaniu ideí dvoch veľkých mysliteľov, ktorí mali veľký vplyv na ľudskú spoločnosť, ale takisto aj na psychológiu. Zameraním tejto bakalárskej práce je chápanie hudby, konkrétne poézie a tragédie u týchto filozofov. Táto práca však čelí dvom základným problémom, a to – posúdeniu, do akej miery sa Nietzsche a Platón zhodujú, ale aj líšia v chápaní hudby, poézie a tragédie. Na druhej strane je to vysvetlenie vzťahu medzi racionálnymi a iracionálnymi (teda emocionálnymi alebo sentimentálnymi) aspektmi hudby.

Vo filozofii existujú rozdielne prístupy k chápaniu Nietzscheho a Platónovej filozofie. Podľa jedného z týchto pohľadov sú Platón a Nietzsche úplnými protikladmi – pretože Platón podrobuje hudbu racionálnemu skúmaniu zatiaľ čo Nietzsche tento prístup pevne odmieta, zdôrazňujúc, že hudba je vo svojej podstate iracionálna. Podľa druhého prístupu sú Platónove názory podobné Nietzscheho názorom v akceptácii faktu, že život je v podstate nesúvislý a nemajúci žiaden zmysel. Nietzsche však verí, že táto príšerná, „život-ničiaca“ pravda musí byť zakrytá lžami, ktoré ponúka umenie, keďže ľudský život je zobrazovaný ako krásny a vznešený.

Platón však verí, že táto strašná pravda musí byť zakrytá klamstvami, ktoré nám poskytuje rozum, keďže život je zobrazovaný ako zrozumiteľný a usporiadaný. Prístup tejto práce bude podobný tomu prvému, avšak mojím hlavným cieľom nie je ich porovnávanie, (aj keď porovnanie je vedľajším cieľom, ktorý sa nevyhnutne objaví), ale pokus naučiť sa niečo o hudbe od oboch týchto filozofov.

Na jednej strane dúfam, že rozšírim diskusiu a dosiahnem rozvinutejšie ohodnotenie vzťahu medzi Platónom a Nietzsche. Na druhej strane, mám v úmysle zvážiť významné náhľady týchto dvoch veľkých filozofov o povahe hudby. Dôvodom, prečo by sme mali pokračovať v čítaní Nietzscheho a Platónovej filozofie a uvažovať o nich, je najmä to, že hĺbka ich náhľadov o hudbe, poézii a tragédii, stále nie je a snáď ani nikdy nebude vyčerpaná.

Bolo by však trúfale tvrdiť, že práve táto bakalárska práca nejako v základoch zmení chápanie Nietzscheho a Platóna u ľudí. Dúfam však, že moja bakalárska práca prispeje, bez ohľadu na to, akým skromným spôsobom k jasnejšiemu a hlbšiemu chápaniu týchto dvoch veľkých mysliteľov.

## Abstract

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The purpose of this study is to investigate Nietzsche's critique of Plato and assess if it is true and to what extent. This study develops a particular line of interpretation and explores the thoughts of two great thinkers, which have had a significant influence on human society and, in particular, on psychology. This thesis focuses on these philosophers' understandings of music, in particular of poetry and tragedy. This work undertakes two tasks – first, to assess to what extent Nietzsche and Plato genuinely agree and differ – in their respective understandings of music, poetry and tragedy, and, second, to explain the relationship between the rational and irrational (i.e. the emotional or sentimental) aspects of music.

There are different approaches to the understanding Nietzsche's and Plato's philosophy. One of the views is that Plato and Nietzsche are complete opposites, with Plato submitting music to rational scrutiny and Nietzsche adamantly rejecting this approach, emphasizing that music is fundamentally irrational. According to the second approach, Plato's views are similar to Nietzsche's accepting that life is fundamentally incoherent and meaningless, but whereas Nietzsche believes that this terrible "life-destroying" truth must be hidden by lies given by the arts, whereby human life is portrayed as beautiful and sublime, Plato believes it must be hidden by lies given by reason, whereby life is portrayed as intelligible and ordered. The approach adopted by this bachelor thesis will be similar to the first, but the main aim

will not be to compare them (although comparison is a subordinate aim and will inevitably occur), but to try to learn something from both of these philosophers about music.

On the one hand, I hope to engage a broader discussion and attain more developed appreciation of the relationship of Plato and Nietzsche. On the other hand, I intend to consider the profound insights of these two great thinkers on the nature of music. The profundity of their insights is still not exhausted – and may never be exhausted – and that is the reason why we should to continue to read and ponder their philosophies.

It would be presumptuous to say that this bachelor thesis will fundamentally change people's understanding of Plato and Nietzsche. However, I hope that my thesis will make a contribution, no matter how modest, to a clearer insight into and more profound understanding of the two great thinkers.

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## 1. General introduction

*“Without music, life would be a mistake”* (Nietzsche, [1888], 2005, s. 160).

Why are we so attached to music? Is it in fact speaking to our head or our heart? What impact does it have on us? It fascinates us and captures our imagination. The arts, especially music, literature and drama, sometimes help us to escape from reality and make our life more bearable than it is. From many great philosophers, Nietzsche and Plato have some of the greatest, most profound influence on our understanding of music, poetry and tragedy.

Even though much has been written about Plato and Nietzsche, the depth of their insights is not yet exhausted and their works offer us many important topics to analyze. Music, poetry and tragedy have an enormous importance for human psychology and society. The main aim of this study is not comparing these two great philosophers (although comparison is a subordinate aim and will inevitably occur), but trying to learn something from them about the nature of music, poetry and tragedy. For both of them, Plato and Nietzsche, music, poetry and tragedy are closely connected. In Greek “music” does not simply refer to a tune, but to anything inspired by the Muses. This includes any artful speech, thus, poetry written and performed, dramatic or epic, as well as poetry’s most fundamental types, the tragic and the comic. For my part, I will consider that type of music and poetry most extensively examined both by Nietzsche and Plato, that is, the tragic.

According to Friedrich Nietzsche, the world and life are incoherent, full of oppositions and contradictions, and also, full of suffering (Nietzsche, [1886], 1999, s. 8, §5). We usually invent lies to somehow deal with it; these lies can often be transformed into the beautiful world of art. Nietzsche speaks about two different “impulses” on art – Dionysian and Apollonian. He characterizes Apolline (Apollonian) impulse as “naïve” conscious world of beauty (Nietzsche, [1886], 1999, s. 26, §4). The Apolline creates the “beautiful” Olympic gods to make life more bearable. It is naïve in a sense that it is neither aware nor reflects upon this act of creation or upon what

motivates it. As Nietzsche observes, it actually treats life as desirable. The Olympian gods lead us to embrace the very suffering they were invented to hide (Nietzsche, [1886], 1999, s. 23 - 24, §3). On the other side, Dionysiac (Dionysian) impulse is irrational and characteristic by intoxication and states of ecstasy (Nietzsche, [1886], 1999, s. 120, §1). On the other side, these lies perform for Plato a different function. They are useful for dealing with irrational people, who can be educated or compelled through these lies to act in a certain way.

## **2. Catherine Zuckert and Martin Heidegger – Two different views on Nietzsche and Plato**

Many philosophers have had an enormous influence on European philosophical tradition, but it seems that Plato and Nietzsche belong to the most important. The role of Plato was important, because his thinking transformed and influenced European culture for centuries. By contrast, for many people Nietzsche represents quite controversial figure. However, the huge importance of his philosophy is also undeniable both in popular culture and in academic circles, primarily in Continental philosophy, but also in contemporary movements such as postmodernism, existentialism and deconstruction.

In academic literature, among the numerous analyses of works of these two great philosophers, there exist many different perspectives, but for the purposes of this work were chosen two – important, but basic positions, which could help us understand better the relationship between Nietzsche and Plato on the specific questions of music, poetry and tragedy. Of these, Zuckert and Heidegger were chosen, because both of them are influential interpreters and outstanding representatives of the interpretation in this question.

According to the first of them, which is presented by Catherine Zuckert, Plato's own, secret opinions are very similar to Nietzsche's. According to Zuckert, Nietzsche during his rereadings of Plato's work came to suspect that opinions presented by Plato in his own writings are absolutely different from what he in fact believes (Zuckert, 1996, s. 10). To put it more precisely, Zuckert claims Nietzsche came to the conclusion that Plato and Socrates are lying about the ideas, e. g. the idea of the justice, the beautiful and the good. Such things are merely useful to believe, precisely because they do not exist. If Catherine Zuckert is right, what consequences it would have on whole European philosophical thinking? In this case we would have to admit that pillar of ancient Greek philosophy will break down and it was all built on lies.

On the other side, the second view, represented by Martin Heidegger, says that Nietzsche and Plato are complete opposites. Heidegger in his lectures on Nietzsche claims that Nietzsche alone characterized his philosophy as a counterposition to Plato's philosophy (Heidegger, [1937], 1984, s. 205). However, he explains that Nietzsche wanted to oppose Plato by inverting him, but he realized that inversion retains the too much of Plato. In his latest writings Nietzsche understood that what is truly entailed in overcoming Plato (Heidegger, [1936 - 1937], 1984, s. 201).

### Catherine Zuckert – Plato is like Nietzsche

Zuckert opens first chapter of her *Postmodern Platos* with the statement that "philosophy has traditionally been understood to be the search for wisdom" (Zuckert, 1996, s. 10). Nietzsche understands this perpetual and inexhaustible desire for knowledge and wisdom, to which Socrates and Plato submitted nearly everything, as the reason for end of Greek tragedy.

Zuckert adds that Nietzsche during his repeated rereadings of Plato's work "came to suspect that Platonic doctrines like the idea of the Good and the immortal soul constituted public teachings that Plato himself did not believe and that differed markedly from Plato's understanding of his own activity or philosophy properly understood" (ibid.). According to her the entirety of later Platonism was built on a falsification, a "noble lie" or *mythos* intentionally fabricated by Plato mainly for giving his philosophy political influence (ibid.). Firstly, it is true that Nietzsche suspected that Plato and Socrates were knowingly lying, but he was not sure. Secondly, Nietzsche read Plato historically, in the same way as Zuckert read Nietzsche and once people will read Zuckert. Moreover, Nietzsche might agree with "intentional" fabrication, but Zuckert treats it as self-consciously aware of the fact, which is incorrect. Nietzsche alone says in his *The Will to Power* that "one must ask what presuppositions they require for the purpose of education, what dogmas they have to invent to satisfy these presuppositions" (Nietzsche, [1883 - 1888], 1967, s. 89 - 90, §141). They have to invent dogmas, things like metaphysics, which they believe,

in order to justify their “educational lies”, like noble lie. This quotation shows that Nietzsche does not think that Plato is lying. However, in the case that Zuckert is right; the whole Western political thinking would not be based only on a misperception, but on lies gradually built on the other lies. It would mean the ancient Greek philosophy; the pillar of Western culture might collapse anytime.

Zuckert also claims that “Nietzsche did not think that Plato was simply a philosopher or an artist; he thought that Plato was a political activist. To effect political reform, Plato saw he needed to educate a new ruling class. By founding the Academy, he hoped to change the world entirely!” (Zuckert, 1996, s. 11). According to Zuckert’s assumption, Plato’s aim while founding the Academy, was to change the world politically. Nevertheless, it is only Zuckert’s belief, because neither Nietzsche, nor Plato claims something like that. On the one side, Plato or Socrates talks about the ruling philosopher king, who eventually would have political power in his hands, but on the other side, he is downplaying the possibility of such thing to happen (Plato, [around 380BC], 1991, s. 274, 591b - c). Maybe Plato’s main aim was not to change politically, even though education can influence political behaviour of the people.

Moreover, by stating as fact Socrates corrupted “divine Plato” (ibid.) and that Socrates was responsible for creating the new illusion, illusion of order independent of man, she tries to say that only Socrates was the real historical actor or influence (Zuckert, 1996, s. 14). It is undeniable that Socrates was quite influential figure and following this “illusion” Plato created the world of ideas. However, it was Plato, who created it, not Socrates. By blaming Socrates for everything, she is denying any influence, which Plato has had. Moreover, how could she prove anything regarding the influence of Socrates on Plato? In the case that she is only presenting Nietzsche’s ideas, it is true that he thinks Socrates was real historical actor, but Nietzsche does not deny Plato’s influence – on the contrary, he admits it and blames Plato for “invention of the pure spirit, most dangerous of all errors” (Nietzsche, [1886], 1966, s. 4).

Furthermore, another part of Zuckert’s argument is also problematic. She is saying that “Plato thought that a just and rightly ordered society had to be founded on a

“necessary lie” (Zuckert, 1996, s. 18). Even though that Plato is talking about the noble lie, or necessary lie as Nietzsche calls it in *Untimely Meditations* ([1876], 1997, s. 118 - 119, §10), it is important to remind that Plato’s “city in speech”, or just and rightly ordered society was a theoretical model in order to find out what justice and injustice are like (Plato, [around 380BC], 1991, s. 45 - 46, 369a - c; 152 - 153, 472a - 473b).

According to Zuckert “Nietzsche doubted that Plato believed his own doctrines” (Zuckert, 1996, s. 21). However, these declarations to which she tries to refer, are based on §428 of *The Will to Power*, which says only about the Plato did not regard as conditionally true immortality of “souls”, not his own metaphysics. In any case, it is necessary to admit that *The Will to Power* is Nietzsche’s unfinished work, which was badly edited by his sister and based only on his notebooks, and thus neither this argument, which Zuckert probably misunderstood, nor previous Nietzsche’s argument would be certainly true. Moreover, “whether Plato truly believed his own doctrines or not” (Zuckert, 1996, s. 25) cannot be said. This is the main problem of her criticism of Plato, because neither she, nor Nietzsche, nor anybody can say whether if it is true. Regardless of the fact that “noble falsehood” is used in “city in speech”, it does not mean that Plato’s metaphysics is also lie. Nietzsche neither Heidegger, which Zuckert also mentions (Zuckert, 1996, s. 30), thought or implied that we should treat Plato or Socrates as if they were lying about metaphysics.

Zuckert’s overall interpretation of Nietzsche claims that he approached art and philosophy too subjectively (Zuckert, 1996, s. 31). However, for the purposes of this thesis, it is sufficient to focus on a part of that argument in isolation from the rest, namely, where she claims that, for Nietzsche, Plato does not believe in the metaphysics laid forth in his works.

### **Martin Heidegger – Plato and Nietzsche as complete opposites**

In comparison to Catherine Zuckert, Martin Heidegger focuses much more on the details and subtleties of Nietzsche’s text. Heidegger asks the question: What is the

relation of art and truth is for Nietzsche and “to what extent is this relation for him a discordance?” (Heidegger, [1936 - 1937], 1984, s. 153).

Nietzsche alone said about his relation to Platonism in his early sketches of *The Birth of Tragedy*: “My philosophy an *inverted Platonism*: the farther removed from true being, the purer, the finer, the better it is. Living in semblance as goal” (Nietzsche, 1870 – 1871, *The Birth of Tragedy*, IX, 190), (Heidegger, [1936 - 1937], 1984, s. 154). It is important to mention that for understanding Heidegger’s arguments that Nietzsche’s work is different in his early period (*The Birth of Tragedy*, 1870 – 1871) than in his late period (*Twilight of the Idols*, 1889).

“For Platonism, the Idea, the supersensuous (*ousia*), is the true, true being. In contrast, the sensuous (genesis) is *mē on*” (Heidegger, [1936 - 1937], 1984, s. 154). However, *mē on* is different from *ouk on*. Whereas *ouk on* means “is not”, *mē on* is only conditional not, which may not be under certain conditions. This Heidegger’s interpretation of Nietzsche’s interpretation of Plato says the supersensuous is valuable, the standard by which we measure the sensuous, or, to put it simply – there is the supersensuous (being, *to on*), the sensuous (a lower order, what does not have anything close to full being, *mē on*) and nothingness (*ouk on*).

As Heidegger explains, the overturning of Platonism means reversing this standard relation – “by way of reversal, the supersensuous must now be placed in service of the sensuous” (ibid.). After the inversion of this standard relation, the sensuous becomes the truth, at least according to “positivism” (ibid.). Positivism or science dismisses the supersensuous as superstition, associating metaphysics as much as theology with it, preferring instead to claim that everything depends upon the senses, the “sensuous”, alone. However, it would be premature to call Nietzsche positivist. In spite of the fact that he shares some features of the scientific position, his view is fundamentally different.

In the decade between 1880 and 1890, which Heidegger characterizes as Nietzsche’s late period, Nietzsche’s work is characteristic by thinking and questioning by means of the standards of the “grand style” (Heidegger, [1936 - 1937], 1984, s. 159). In order to understand first two books of Nietzsche’s *The Will to Power*, we must keep



these things in mind. Heidegger explains that “the basic force of Dasein, the self-assuredness and power of such force to establish a goal” is missing here (ibid.). Dasein, “the being for whom Being is an issue”, or human being (Heidegger, [1927], 1962, s. 67, §42), thus represents creative power. Degeneration of creative life has its roots in Platonic philosophy, concretely in “the definitive preeminence of the supersensuous” and dominating over sensuous (Heidegger, [1936 - 1937], 1984, s. 159). In other words, degeneration of creative life has its roots in Plato, who placed his metaphysics above art.

Nietzsche’s new interpretation of Platonism emerges from the experience of the development of nihilism (ibid.). As Nietzsche says in *Beyond Good and Evil*, “Christianity is Platonism for the ‘people’” ([1886], 1966, s. 4). Similarly as Plato’s privileged being degrades sensuous (*genesis*), Christian God degrades mortality. In order to act meaningfully and be saved, you must suppress your sensuality and dominate your desire. This leads to the life of herd man, who acts without any significant, true meaning in his life and tries to ignore mortality. Living this empty, meaningless life is nihilism. There is also hidden, implicit connection between the sensuous and mortality in Nietzsche’s understanding of Christianity.

“We are no longer Christians: we have grown out of Christianity, not because we dwelled too far from it, but because we dwelled too near it, even more, because we have grown *from* it – it is our more rigorous and fastidious piety itself that *forbids* us today to be Christians” (Nietzsche, XIII, 318), (Heidegger, [1936 - 1937], 1984, s. 160).

In Christianity, the high demands of it are turned against themselves. Christianity downgraded the sensuous, perhaps for, among other things, its proneness to be self-serving and its inability to give meaningful knowledge of things. Then, this demand reveals that Christianity itself is like this, ruled by self-serving manipulators who never seem to even entertain the notion of following the rules they so ruthlessly press down on others and, worse yet, the „knowledge“ of Christianity proves even more wanting than that of the „merely“ sensuous world.

Nietzsche by reflecting on nihilism comes to the “inversion” of Platonism, which is quite different from that offered by positivism. It is not simple substituting sensuous

above supersensuous, but he wants to eliminate whole structure – “overturning Platonism means, first, the shattering the preeminence of the supersensuous as the ideal” (Heidegger, [1936 - 1937], 1984, s. 160). Nietzsche is led to the reversal of Plato the fact that if fail to attain knowledge, it implies you do not have true being, because according to Platonism, “true being, must be secured on the path of knowledge” (ibid.). Anyhow, this is not entirely spelled out by either Nietzsche, or Heidegger – it is only attempt to give a plausible account based on their remarks.

The above-mentioned demand turns out to be too rigorous even for science, or rather, for empiricism and positivism, and thus Nietzsche turns to art. Heidegger adds that “artistic configuration and portrayal are grounded essentially in the realm of sensuous” and art is therefore affirmation of the sensuous (Heidegger, [1936 - 1937], 1984, s. 162). According to this “inversion” of Platonism, the sensuous or art, becomes the truth and new being, which provides foundation for Dasein (Heidegger, [1936 - 1937], 1984, s. 160 - 161).

For Plato is the only true being the supersensuous and the relationship between art and truth, as Heidegger concludes “becomes one of exclusion, opposition, and antithesis; hence, one of discordance” (ibid.). It is quite clear that for Nietzsche the Platonistic relationship between art and truth is a discordance, one which arouses dread, and only by overcoming it we can get univocity and concord (ibid.). But is this really so for Plato? It is undeniable that Plato depreciates art, but does this depreciation at the same time mean discordance, or is it only distancing?

### 3. Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy*

*"'Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music' – from music? Music and tragedy? Greeks and the music of tragedy? Greeks and the pessimistic work of art? The finest, most beautiful most envied race of men ever known, the people who made life seem most seductive, the Greeks – what, they of all people needed tragedy? Or even: art? What purpose was served by Greek art?" (Nietzsche, 1999, s. 3 - 4)*

This passage of An Attempt at Self-Criticism, Nietzsche's latterly added prologue to *The Birth of Tragedy*, his first book, written during similar turbulent events as Plato's *Republic*, opens a lot of unanswered questions. Do these always cheerful Greeks, as he describes them (Nietzsche, [1886], 1999, s. 3), need pessimistic forms of art? How does tragedy come from music and what role does it have in Greek society?

*The Birth of Tragedy* as an analysis of origins of music, poetry and tragedy provoked much concern, excitement and also misunderstanding. However, Nietzsche was aware that this could happen (Nietzsche, [1886], 1999, s. 13). In order to answer all of these questions, he first of all offers us some advice – *"to look at science through the prism of the artist, but also to look at art through the prism of life"* (Nietzsche, [1886], 1999, s. 5, §2). His concerns about this book were not unfounded – it was not typical to look at art, at least in this way as he does – by explaining it through two basic drives – the naïve, beautiful Apolline and all-powerful Dionysiac.

#### *Apolline and Dionysiac*

What is *Apolline* and *Dionysiac* and why are they important for the understanding of music, poetry and tragedy? Nietzsche says that *"the continuous evolution of art is bound up with the duality of the Apolline and Dionysiac"* (Nietzsche, [1886], 1999, s. 14, §1). As he adds, *"these two very different drives (Triebe) exist side by side, mostly in open conflict, stimulating and provoking (reizen) one another to give birth*

to ever-new, more vigorous offspring in whom they perpetuate the conflict inherent in the opposition between them, an opposition only apparently bridged by the common term 'art'" (ibid.). He compares *Apolline* and *Dionysiac*, two basic drives, which are together called as art, to the co-existence of two sexes, which are according to him also living in continuous state of conflict and tension. Similarly, as the two sexes can produce their mutual offspring, the same is possible with these two drives, which connect in the same measure in Attic tragedy (ibid.).

In order to explain the difference between the Apolline and the Dionysiac better, Nietzsche talks of these drives as of art-worlds, namely of worlds of *dream* and *intoxication* (Nietzsche, [1886], 1999, s. 14 - 15, §1). According to him "every human being is fully an artist when creating the worlds of dream, and the lovely semblance of dream is the precondition of all the arts of image-making, including, as we shall see, an important half of poetry" (Nietzsche, [1886], 1999, s. 15, §1). In other words, for Nietzsche is something artistic in creating the worlds of dreams and this semblance of dream is precondition of the all arts, which require image-making, mainly poetry. However, even while this dreamy reality is more alive and real, we still perceive dreams only as a semblance (ibid.).

The Greek god Apollo, "as the god of all image-making energies, Apollo is also the god of prophecy" and etymologically, he is also the god of light (Nietzsche, [1886], 1999, s. 16, §1). It is necessary to emphasize that his dream-nature of Apollo must also contain some balance with reality. This balance with reality is necessary for dream-nature not to become the pathological lie, which is seducing us to completely believe it and not to be aware of reality (Nietzsche, [1886], 1999, s. 16 - 17, §1).

Influence of Apollo on human beings can be described by using Schopenhauer's version of the Vedantic doctrines about the veil of maya:

"Just as the boatman sits in his small boat, trusting his frail craft in a stormy sea that is boundless in every direction, rising and falling with the howling mountainous waves, so in the midst of a world full of suffering and misery the individual man calmly sits, supported by and trusting in the *principium individuationis*..." (Schopenhauer, *World as Will and Representation*, 1844, I., p. 416), (Nietzsche, [1886], 1999, s. 16 - 17, §1)

To apply to Apollo Schopenhauer's view on the human beings trapped in the veil of maya, we can say that he embodies "the magnificent divine image (*Götterbild*) of the *principium individuationis*, whose gestures and gaze speak to us of all intense pleasure, wisdom and beauty of 'semblance'" (Nietzsche, [1886], 1999, s. 17, §1). Moreover, Nietzsche adds that suffering, misery and enormous horror of life, mentioned by Arthur Schopenhauer, in connection with the blissful ecstasy, which comes from the innermost ground of man, help us to understand the nature of the Dionysiac (Nietzsche, [1886], 1999, s. 17, §1). Dionysiac intoxication "causes subjectivity to vanish to the point of complete self-forgetting" is awoken under the influence of the narcotic drinking or at the approach of the spring, when nature is pervaded by lust for life (ibid.). This intoxication includes singing, dancing, drinking and enchantment, causes that man feels like a god. Man is no longer an artist, as it was in the case of influence of Apolline drive, but he has become a work of art: all nature's artistic power reveals itself here, to the highest, most blissful satisfaction of the primordial unity (Nietzsche, [1886], 1999, s. 18, §1).

Dionysiac dithyramb, a choral song at first evokes horror and terror in people. It is so different from the Apolline, which is characteristic by its wave-like rhythm and hinted-at tones of the cithara. Dionysiac music in fact destroys the veil of maya and man, to completely grasp its rhythm, dynamics and harmony, must reach the height of self-abandonment (Nietzsche, [1886], 1999, s. 21, §2). The Apolline Greeks regarded this man "with an astonishment enlarged by the added horror of realizing that all this was not so foreign to them after all, indeed that their Apolline consciousness only hid this Dionysiac world from them like a veil" (ibid.).

But how did that happen? What was the reason to hide this Dionysiac world by Apolline consciousness? Nietzsche explains that by revealing the roots of Apolline culture and the Olympian gods with help of an ancient legend about King Midas. This legend describes King Midas' hunting for the wise Silenus, companion of Dionysus. When Midas finally found Silenus, he asks him, "What is the best and most excellent thing for human beings?" (Nietzsche, [1886], 1999, s. 22 - 23, §3). After a while the daemon bursts out in laughter and replies: 'Wretched, ephemeral race, children of chance, and tribulation, why do you force me to tell you the very thing which it

would be most profitable for you *not* to hear? The very best thing is utterly beyond your reach not to have been born, not to *be*, to be *nothing*. However, the second best thing for you is: to die soon” (Nietzsche, [1886], 1999, s. 23, §3). As Nietzsche clarifies, the Greeks knew and felt the horrors and terrors of existence and forces of nature and of *moira*, or fate. In order to be able to live, led by the Apolline instinct for beauty, they create the Olympian gods – and these gods justify the meaningless, hopeless and miserable life of men only by living it themselves (Nietzsche, [1886], 1999, s. 23 - 24, §3). One could say that these stories about the Olympian gods are “naïve”, but this naïveté is almost magically powerful, because it helped them to survive and endure the unbearable suffering and terror of life. For Nietzsche is every encounter with the “naïve” in the art the supreme effect of Apolline culture and the complete victory of this delusion is Homeric “naïveté” (Nietzsche, [1886], 1999, s. 24 - 25, §3).

### The Birth of Tragedy

But how could the perfect Attic tragedy emerge from all of this chaos of “naïve” hiding of truth and horror connected with intoxication? Apollo simply could not live without Dionysos and Apolline drive without Dionysiac. They strengthened and intensified each other and “under the rule of the Apolline instinct for beauty emerged the Homeric world from the 'iron' age with its Titanic struggles and its bitter popular philosophy”, later confronted with the Dionysiac (Nietzsche, [1886], 1999, s. 27 - 28, §4). Periods of struggles between them and of their influence changed, until “as the common goal of both drives whose mysterious marriage, after a long preceding struggle, was crowned with such a child, *Attic tragedy*, – who is both Antigone and Cassandra in one” (Nietzsche, [1886], 1999, s. 28, §4). Anyhow, how can Attic tragedy be at the same time Antigone and Cassandra? Antigone, daughter of Oedipus, wise man predestined to unhappiness, and his own mother, tragically died too young by her own hand, but for her death was responsible her uncle, Creon. On the other hand, Cassandra was cursed by Apollo for rejecting him to have

accurate prophecies, which will not be believed by anybody. Is thus for Nietzsche the fate of the Attic tragedy the same – committing suicide and being cursed by Apollo or Apollonian drive? So much truth is hidden in these few words – the Attic tragedy was also cursed by the Apolline and committed suicide, caused by somebody else.

Thus what is the Attic or Greek tragedy? Nietzsche says that according to historical evidence, “*tragedy arose from the tragic chorus* and was originally chorus and nothing but chorus” (Nietzsche, [1886], 1999, s. 36, §7). We should look at the chorus as into the true original drama and do not consider it, as it was usual that chorus is the ideal (*idealistisch*) spectator or the people in contrast to the princely region of the stage (ibid.). For him, these general assertions are not based on the real origins of the Greek tragedy, but mostly on political and modern European view.

According to Nietzsche, the political assumption that the chorus embodies the moral law of the people to be represented there is not based on truth. Original Greek tragedy of Aeschylus or Sophocles precludes not only this opposition to the king, but also any kind of “a constitutional popular assembly” (Nietzsche, [1886], 1999, s. 36 - 37, §7). Moreover, Schlegel’s explanation of the chorus as the ideal spectator is even famous, but it also shows us “the characteristic Germanic prejudice in favour of anything that is called ‘ideal’” (Nietzsche, [1886], 1999, s. 37, §7). For us, a proper spectator has to be aware that everything what he sees is a work of art and not empirical reality – but the Greeks, for example the chorus of the Oceanides believes that it sees the real Titan Prometheus (Nietzsche, [1886], 1999, s. 37, §7). Thus chorus as an ideal spectator is able to identify what he sees and thus imitate it. Socrates in Plato’s *Republic* claims the tragedy uses employs imitation. However, according to him is only imitation of positive things as courage or moderation is good for people. Imitating of chorus or of satyrs and states of drunkenness, lamenting, wailing and succumbing to the Dionysiac intoxication, Socrates criticizes as immoderate.

It is also similar in the case of poetry. The good poet does not see people on the orchestra simply playing their roles, but he “sees the figure continuing to live and act over a period of time” (Nietzsche, [1886], 1999, s. 43, §8). Homer’s advantage before

the other poets was the fact that he imagined and saw the people to live and act during the time. Nietzsche also reminds us that a poet is a person, who “only has the ability to watch a living play (*Spiel*) continuously and to live constantly surrounded by crowds of spirits and a dramatist is a person, who feels the impulse to transform oneself and to speak out of other bodies and souls” (ibid). The good poet and the good dramatist should both live surrounded by these crowds of these spirits, but the difference between them is to identify with them and speak instead of them.

This aforementioned “Germanic prejudice” can be also seen in Schiller, because for him the Greek chorus of satyrs represents “a fictitious *state of nature* on to which they placed fictitious *creatures of nature*” (Nietzsche, [1886], 1999, s. 39, §7). However, as it was already mentioned, for Greeks were satyrs as real as the Olympian gods. Furthermore, Nietzsche emphasizes that “the fact that tragedy begins with the satyr, and that the Dionysiac wisdom of tragedy speaks out of him, is something, which now surprises us just as much as the fact that tragedy originated in chorus” (ibid.).

First effect of Dionysiac tragedy is that it brings about with itself a feeling of overwhelming unity, which leads men back to the heart of nature (Nietzsche, [1886], 1999, s. 39, §7). Moreover, this state of intoxication, connected with overwhelming unity, contains also a *lethargic* element as Nietzsche calls it, which separates the world of everyday life and the Dionysiac experience. But as soon as the everyday reality collides with the consciousness of the man, he feels revulsion (Nietzsche, [1886], 1999, s. 40, §7).

The people perceived the satyr as “the original image (*Urbild*) of mankind, the expression of man’s highest and strongest stirrings, an enthusiastic celebrant, ecstatic at the closeness of his god, a sympathetic companion in whom the sufferings of the god are repeated, a proclaimer of wisdom from the deepest heart of nature, an emblem of the sexual omnipotence of nature which the Greek habitually regards with reverent astonishment” (Nietzsche, [1886], 1999, s. 41, §8). For the Greeks of those times the satyr represents something, which is close to them as the original image of the mankind, because they see themselves in him. He is at the same time



close to the god Dionysos, because they could see in him his sufferings, and wisdom of the nature.

Even though Nietzsche says it was necessary to separate the spectators of the tragedy from the Dionysiac chorus, there was no real opposition or discordance between them, it is rather the self-mirror of Dionysiac men, because “the chorus of satyrs is first and foremost a vision of the Dionysiac mass, just as the world of the stage is in turn a vision of this chorus of satyrs” (Nietzsche, [1886], 1999, s. 42, §8).

But this to be the real perfect Attic tragedy there is still one thing missing. “In the enchanted state the Dionysiac enthusiast sees himself as a satyr, and *as a satyr he in turn sees the god*, i. e. in his transformed state he sees a new vision outside himself which is the Apolline perfection of his state” (Nietzsche, [1886], 1999, s. 44, §8). Or, to put it more simply, drama is the Apollonian embodiment of Dionysiac insights and effects (ibid.).

Nietzsche considers Sophocles’ *Oedipus* and Aeschylus’ *Prometheus* to be a good example of the Attic tragedy. Oedipus, “the same man who solves the riddle of the nature – that of the double-natured sphinx – must also destroy the most sacred orders of nature by murdering his father and becoming his mother’s husband.....’The sharp point of the wisdom turns against the wise man; wisdom is an offence against nature’” (Nietzsche, [1886], 1999, s. 48, §9).

Prometheus’ fate is also similar – for his temerity to bring the fire back to people, he must be punished, because “*moira*, as eternal justice, throned above gods and men” (Nietzsche, [1886], 1999, s. 49, §9). Both tragic heroes have something Dionysiac and Apolline in themselves at the same time. Their revolt against the nature, rules and suffering is of Dionysiac character and the after coming just punishment represents Apolline. As Nietzsche adds, “all that exists is just and unjust and is equally justified in both respects. That is your world. That you call a world.” (Goethe, *Faust*, 1808, I., p. 409), (Nietzsche, [1886], 1999, s. 51, §9)

## Nietzsche's critique of Socrates

However, after the glorious times of the Greek tragedy, its tragic end has come. It died by suicide similarly as Antigone. According to Nietzsche, Euripides is responsible for this suicide – “he died at your violent hands...And because you deserted Dionysos, Apollo, too, has deserted you” (Nietzsche, [1886], 1999, s. 54, §10). A Euripides' tendency in his New Attic Comedy, as Nietzsche blames him, “was to expel the original and all-powerful Dionysiac element from tragedy and to re-build tragedy in a new and pure form on the foundations of a non-Dionysiac art, morality, and view of the world” (Nietzsche, [1886], 1999, s. 59, §12).

Nevertheless, for destroying Greek tragedy Nietzsche blames, not only Euripides, but also Socrates. Socrates encouraged Euripides and helped him compose his poetry (Nietzsche, [1886], 1999, s. 64, §13). Even though Euripides was not successful in re-building drama on purely Apolline foundations, the most glorious and the most beautiful of temples, the Attic Greek tragedy, lies forever in ruins (Nietzsche, [1886], 1999, s. 60 - 62, §12).

The supreme law of *aesthetic Socratism* runs roughly like this: “In order to be beautiful, everything must be reasonable” (Nietzsche, [1886], 1999, s. 62, §12). As Nietzsche admits, this inclination to reasonability destroyed Greek tragedy, because it completely expelled all-powerful, but ecstatic Dionysiac element of the tragedy and submitted everything to reason and rational scrutiny.

Nietzsche says that Socrates did not understand the older tragedy and therefore did not respect it. Socrates, wandering the Athenian streets leads critical and logical dialogues with different people. He condemns existing art (Nietzsche, [1886], 1999, s. 64 - 66, §12 - 13), because by trying to find rationality and logic everywhere, he came to the conclusion that it is missing in Dionysiac element of the Attic tragedy.

Moreover, “the art of tragedy did not seem to Socrates even to 'tell the truth', quite apart from the fact that it addresses itself to those who 'have but little brain', in other words not to the philosopher... Like Plato, he thought it belonged to the flattering arts, which represent only what is pleasant and not what is useful”

(Nietzsche, [1886], 1999, s. 68, §14). Thus, according to Socrates and Plato the old tragedy is lying art, which is not suitable for the wise philosophers, but only as flattering, useless art for people with little brain.

For Plato, a successful student of Socrates, the older type of art and drama also was not acceptable. His main objection was that “it was the imitation of an illusory image and thus belonged to an even lower sphere than the empirical world, could not be allowed to be levelled against the new work of art” (ibid). As it can be seen, for Plato the old tragedy lost its important role even more. Empirical world is according to Plato only the image of the world of ideas, stands at the higher point than the old tragedy, which represents only the imitation of illusions. Art thus becomes overgrown with *philosophical thoughts* as Nietzsche remarks and the *Apolline* tendency has disguised itself as a logical schematism (Nietzsche, [1886], 1999, s. 69, §14) and everything connected with the intoxicating Dionysiac element vanishes. Desire and hunting for knowledge connected with science starts taking place in society. “Metaphysical illusion is an instinct which belongs inseparably to science, and leads it to its limits after time, at which point it must transform itself into art; which is actually, given this mechanism, what it has been aiming at all along” (Nietzsche, [1886], 1999, s. 73, §15). Socratic optimistic desire for knowledge and science, which takes its roots from there, became the worst threat of the old Aeschylean tragedy.

As Nietzsche observes, “it is certain that tragedy perishes with the disappearance of the spirit of music, and it is just as certain that this spirit alone can give birth to tragedy” (Nietzsche, [1886], 1999, s. 76, 16). Euripides’ tendency to expel everything Dionysiac, mostly typical Dionysiac music and dithyramb from drama, inspired by Socrates, allowed the Greek tragedy to die. But bringing back this spirit of music to art can certainly according to Nietzsche give birth to tragedy. Or, to be more precise, “the art of Dionysos customarily exerts two kinds of influence on the Apolline capacity for art: music stimulates us to *contemplate symbolically* Dionysiac universality, and it causes the symbolic image to emerge with the *highest degree of significance*” (Nietzsche, [1886], 1999, s. 79, §16). However, the new dithyramb of un-Dionysiac spirit presented by Euripides alienated music from itself – music lost its

mythical character and enriching aspect, which before broaden the individual phenomenon and make it into an image of the world (Nietzsche, [1886], 1999, s. 83, §17). True Dionysiac music was firstly a mirror of the world, revealing the terrible truth behind the Apolline order and beauty.

Nietzsche's conclusion is that music and tragic myth, which represent the Dionysiac element of the art, are both inseparable from one another (Nietzsche, [1886], 1999, s. 115, §25). The Dionysiac in comparison to the Apolline beauty is "the eternal and original power of art which summons the entire world of appearances into existence" (ibid.). Even though the Apolline could not exist without the Dionysiac according to Nietzsche is the Dionysiac aspect of art more powerful, because it is enabled the world of appearances to exist in art. However, as Nietzsche notices in the end of the book, these people had to suffer much, in order that all that might become beautiful (Nietzsche, [1886], 1999, s. 116, §25).

However, this Nietzsche's critical attitude toward Socrates and Plato is obvious from many of his works, not only from *The Birth of Tragedy*. To mention only some of them, even in the Preface of *Beyond Good & Evil* Nietzsche blames Plato for the "invention of the pure spirit and the good as such", which for Nietzsche represents "the worst, most durable, and the most dangerous of all errors so far" (Nietzsche, [1886], 1966, s. 2).

#### 4. Plato's *Republic*

Plato also admits that music, poetry and tragedy have an undeniably important function in a society. The poets played a key role in ancient Greece in those times, because their task was not only to entertain, but was also to educate people. The poets like Homer, Hesiod or Orpheus had enormous influence on what people thought about justice. Moreover, through Homer and the other poets people learn the stories about gods. And this is the key problem for Socrates and Plato – because of the fact that the poets were the only source of these stories, they could very easily make them up or change them as they wanted. However, it is not the only problem, connected with the poets in ancient Greece. Critical attitude to these poets, but also to music, poetry and tragedy could be clearly seen in Plato's *Republic*.

#### Poetry and tragedy for Plato in general

Plato's opinion on music, poetry and tragedy is different than Nietzsche's. He and Socrates do not consider the Attic tragedy to be the peak of the Greek art or at least of art at his times in general. Instead of it, for him poetry and tragedy represents only the hymns, tales and stories, from which we know about the nature and the deeds of the gods and heroes (Plato, [around 380BC], 1991, s. 55, 377d - e). However, as it will be shown, he thinks that these stories presented mostly by poets like Homer and Hesiod are false and deceitful (ibid.).

On the other hand, he claims that "tragedy in general has the reputation of being wise and, within it, Euripides of being particularly so" (Plato, [around 380BC], 1991, s. 247, 568a) seem to be contradictory to what he said before. Nevertheless, he praises Euripides, the same Euripides, which Nietzsche blames for his first attempts to destroy the Attic tragedy (Nietzsche, [1886], 1999, s. 54 - 55, §10 - 11).

### Plato's critique of the poets

Adeimantus in Book II of *The Republic* develops position, which is also presented by his and Plato's brother, Glaucon. They claim that "no one, is in society willingly just but only when compelled to be so" (Plato, [around 380BC], 1991, s. 38, 360c). Even "the gods, after all, allot misfortune and a bad life to many good men too, and an opposite fate to opposite men" (Plato, [around 380BC], 1991, s. 41, 364a). In fact, Adeimantus is the only one of the interlocutors – who brings up the question of the stories, that are usually told only by the poets. These stories usually result in hesitation and rejection of young people to behave justly – why would they even respect justice, if they know these stories? Moreover, the poets also accompany as witnesses beggar priests and diviners, who try to persuade people that unjust deeds can easily be healed with pleasures and feasts and gods moved by prayers (Plato, [around 380BC], 1991, s. 41, 364b - e). This seems to be a sufficient reason not to behave justly, if anger and punishment of the gods can be so easily averted.

However, Socrates' account of critique of the poets has also significant relevance – it is important to explain it in order to understand the core part of Nietzsche's criticism of Plato and Socrates.

Socrates accuses the poets of "composing false tales for human beings" (Plato, [around 380BC], 1991, s. 55, 377d). For Socrates many of these false tales, especially the myth of a creation of the world presented by Hesiod, do not represent the truth and must not be spoken in his city (Plato, [around 380BC], 1991, s. 55, 377e - 380b). Anyway, Nietzsche's attitude to these false stories would be different, because according to him we usually invent lies to deal with the "world and life, which is incoherent, full of oppositions and contradictions, and also, full of suffering" (Nietzsche, [1886], 1999, s. 8, §5). It's reasonable to suppose the lies of which Nietzsche speaks in *Beyond Good and Evil* are akin to the lies of which he speaks in *The Birth of Tragedy*.

Moreover, according to the poets the gods are good and beautiful (Plato, [around 380BC], 1991, s. 57, 379b - c ). It is also said that they are always changing their

shape. But Socrates' answer is clear – these two things contradict each other and therefore, if the gods are good, they do not change their shape; do not harm anybody and do not deceive (Plato, [around 380BC], 1991, s. 58 - 59, 380d - 381 b). Adeimantus answer is reluctant, but he agrees with Socrates and says that “it seems so” (Plato, [around 380BC], 1991, s. 59, 381 b). But it is important to look closer to it – do these things really contradict each other? When Socrates talks about changing of shape, he also mentions the word *idea*. However, an idea can be understood firstly as how something looks like, and secondly what it is, but Socrates places special stress on connecting the *idea* to the second understanding, or to what something is – *to on* (Liddell & Scott, 1883). If the poets say that the gods are the most beautiful, why did Zeus himself take the form of a swan (Ovid, [8AD], 1958, s. 150)? In fact, the swan is uglier than god, so why did he do this? The answer is simple – to sleep with a mortal woman through trickery. The changing of Zeus' *idea* suggests that not even his look has changed, but also his being or character. It implies that Zeus is not as good as it seems – he is in reality bad, because he is a liar and a deceiver. This could be a potential problem for Nietzsche's thought, because Zeus, the father of gods and men, which is supposed to be superior to the other gods and men, proves to be not “as distinct from the *lying* common man” (Nietzsche, [1887, 1888], 1989, s. 29, §5). But, on the other side, Nietzsche does not discuss it specifically. He probably intends to distinguish these beautiful deceptions of the gods and beautiful lies of the poets from the base lying of the common man. The poets' lies gives meaning for life, but the lies of the common man are only excuses for weakness and acting without courage.

But aside from this, what is not said in *The Republic* in the discussion between Adeimantus and Socrates? There are a few things, which are quite important to mention. Firstly, why Adeimantus as reply to Socrates instead of unwilling consent does not say something like this – gods do change, therefore they are bad sometimes? Is it because of the fact that he knows that gods are sometimes bad and harmful and they might punish him? Nevertheless, Nietzsche's possible answer to the issue of good and bad would probably be this – to be good does not have to mean, and in fact, it does not mean that to be good is the same as to benefit or to be

useful to another (god or person), but the contrary – being good is according to the master morality simply doing what you want (Nietzsche, 1989, s. 27, §3; 45, §13). However, we cannot say the gods (for Nietzsche) possess master morality because the gods, strictly speaking, do not exist. Rather, the gods are *expressions* of the worldview tied to master morality.

Secondly, why do the poets have to be consistent and not contradict themselves? Consistency of poets is important because of the principle of noncontradiction. Following this principle is linked to being reasonable. Socrates applies it to discovering whether the soul has parts. He says that “it’s plain that the same thing won’t be willing at the same time to do or suffer opposites with respect to the same part and in relation to the same thing” (Plato, [around 380BC], 1991, s. 114, 436a). If there would be real self-contradictions within the soul, it would be irrational. Thus these self-contradictions must be contradictions between different parts of the soul. It can be clearly seen that Socrates too applies this rule to the poets and wants them to be consistent and not to contradict themselves. However, Nietzsche criticizes Plato exactly for this thing and calls it *aesthetic Socratism*. According to Nietzsche, the “supreme law of *aesthetic Socratism* is: In order to be beautiful, everything must be reasonable” (Nietzsche, [1886], 1999, s. 62, §12). Thus, submitting poetry to reason is for Nietzsche unacceptable, because his main criticism of Plato is the fact that he ruined tragedy by rationalizing it<sup>1</sup>.

And there is also a third thing, which is necessary to mention. As Adeimantus said, our only sources of information about gods are the poets (Plato, [around 380BC], 1991, s. 42, 365e). It implies that we know about the gods only because we trust these poets. However, as it was mentioned above, the poets contradict themselves, so why do we trust them at all? And why do we even believe in the gods? If we stop trusting the poets, it will also mean that we stop believing in the gods. Anyway, this point, which is implied by Socrates, would be for Nietzsche again problematic. How

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<sup>1</sup>at the same time, Socrates’ analysis is similar to Nietzsche’s own in *Beyond Good and Evil*, where he also finds conflict within the soul and comes to the conclusion that “our body is a social structure composed of many souls” or drives (Nietzsche, [1886], 1966, s. 26, §19)



can Plato destroy the myths and the stories, which help making our life more livable? (Nietzsche, 1966, s. 12, §4).

Book III of *The Republic* also contains the infamous “first critique” of poetry. Socrates there suggests supervising poets, because he thinks that these stories are discouraging people, dishonoring gods and the life in Hades (Plato, [around 380BC], 1991, s. 63, 386a - c). Even such courageous man as Achilles, son of a goddess, would rather be a slave than the king in Hades (Plato, [around 380BC], 1991, s. 63, 386c). These dreadful stories about the life in Hades make people fear more death than slavery and because of that they should be deleted and the “the opposite model must be used in speaking and writing” (Plato, [around 380BC], 1991, s. 64 - 65, 387c). The problem with them is not that they are not poetic enough, but the opposite and thus too powerfully compelling. Moreover, for the same reasons lamentations and pitiful speeches of famous men in case of lost somebody close to them must not be accepted (Plato, [around 380BC], 1991, s. 65 - 66, 387c - 388e).

Socrates also proposes that “it’s appropriate for the rulers, if for anyone at all, to lie for the benefit of the city in case involving enemies or citizens, while all the rest must not put their hands to anything of the sort” (Plato, [around 380BC], 1991, s. 67, 389b), what indicates his advocating of the noble falsehood later in Book III.

According to Socrates, stories, which depict Ares’ seducing of Aphrodite or Zeus’ loss of control with Hera, are bad for maintaining of self-control and moderation of the young. Such and similar things are impossible to be done by heroes or relatives of the gods and because of that he insists upon compelling “the poets to deny either that such deeds are theirs, because it will educate the children to act the same way, or that they are children of gods, but not say both, nor to attempt to persuade our youngsters that the gods produce evil and that heroes are no better than human beings. For, as we were saying before, these things are neither holy nor true. For surely, we showed that it’s impossible for evil to be produced by gods” (Plato, [around 380BC], 1991, s. 68 - 69, 390c - 391e).

Furthermore, Socrates takes a firm stand when it comes to tragedy. He probably wants this, what Nietzsche calls the Attic tragedy, to be forbidden in his ideal city. It

is because tragedy as such employs imitation, which Socrates considers to be good only in one case. Imitation is good only when imitating good habits as courage and moderation and also pious and free deeds in contrast to slavishness, wailing, drunkenness and using shameful language (Plato, [around 380BC], 1991, s. 72 - 77, 394b - 398c). As Socrates adds, imitating of many things, mainly inappropriate things, causes distortion and because of that he would forbid poetry and also tragedy, which does fulfil these conditions (Plato, [around 380BC], 1991, s. 76, 398a - b). He also wants to supervise the speech, the harmonic mode and the rhythm of music. Here is clearly obvious Socrates' and Plato's preference for the Apollonian drive, because "it's nothing new we're doing, my friend, in choosing Apollo and Apollo's instruments ahead of Marsyas and his instruments" (Plato, [around 380BC], 1991, s. 77 - 78, 398d - 399e). Plato here probably refers to a myth about the satyrs Marsyas, who playing the flute lost his contest with Apollo and was skinned alive. Marsyas as satyr<sup>2</sup> here clearly represents the Dionysiac drive of the music characteristic by states of self-forgetting and intoxication, whereas Apollo with cithara and pipe represents the Apolline drive characteristic by consciousness and beauty.

Socrates also clearly states that the naturally right kind of love is moderate, orderly and fine (or Apolline), and the love that is mad or akin to licentiousness (or Dionysiac) must not approach the right kind of love (Plato, [around 380BC], 1991, s. 82, 403a - b).

When it comes to choosing of the guardians of the city, Socrates clearly advocates the noble lie. He says that the founding myths were presented by the poets in Phoenicia and many other places (Plato, [around 380BC], 1991, s. 93, 414b - c), to establish that a people are autochthonous to a region and justify a hierarchy within the community. According to Socrates, it is important "to persuade the first rulers and soldiers of the city that their previous education and rearing were like dreams and in fact they were being reared themselves under the earth. When their arms and the job had been completely finished, then the earth, which is their mother, sent them up" (Plato, [around 380BC], 1991, s. 94, 414d - e ). Whereas all the people in

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<sup>2</sup> Marsyas is a satyr – satyrs are closely connected to Dionysus and Dionysian festivals. See more in 3<sup>rd</sup> chapter – Nietzsche's – *The Birth of Tragedy*

the city are brothers, they should protect their land in which they were born together. The rest of the tale says the god mixed three types of metal in at their birth – gold, silver, iron and bronze. Guardians have in their soul gold, auxiliaries silver and craftsmen iron and bronze. Children will be raised and then lead up to find their place in the city in accordance with the metal in their soul. Due to the fact that all of them are brothers, it is possible by chance even gold parents will have a silver child or bronze parents a gold child. However, according to an oracle, “the city will be destroyed when an iron or bronze man is its guardian” (Plato, [around 380BC], 1991, s. 94, 415a - c). The noble lie or noble falsehood can be also understood as an example of the orderly, beautiful tale, or for Nietzsche, another victory of the Apolline drive over the Dionysiac, since Euripides inspired by Socrates destroyed tragedy and the Dionysiac.

### How to bring poetry and tragedy back to the city

Socrates in Book X goes back to the question of whether imitative poetry will be allowed at all in the city. As it was already mentioned, tragedy and other types of imitation can be dangerous to people who do not have the knowledge about the real nature of the things, which this kind of poetry describes (Plato, [around 380BC], 1991, s. 277, 595a - b). It seems that Homer, the first teacher and leader of all tragedians, is responsible for deceiving the people. In spite of the fact that Socrates feels certain kind of friendship for Homer, for him no one and nothing is to be valued more than truth (Plato, [around 380BC], 1991, s. 277, 595b - c).

Because of that Socrates elaborates more on what he understands under imitation. If we take into consideration for example couch, there exist three kinds of couches – the first, which is produced by a god, *is* in nature and it is the *idea* of the couch (Plato, [around 380BC], 1991, s. 280, 597b - d). This idea of couch is unchanging, true and knowable, and knowledge is thus dependent on what *is* (Plato, [around 380BC], 1991, s. 157 - 158, 477a - 478a).

The second is the couch produced by a couchmaker. This couch is not the same as the *idea* of the couch, but it takes part in the being of this *idea*. Opinion is related to this second type of couch and it “looks darker than knowledge and brighter than ignorance” (Plato, [around 380BC], 1991, s. 159, 478c). It is something *what is between what is and what is not* and participates in both of these realms.

Third and the last kind of couch is the picture of the couch. Socrates describes it not as imitation of the *idea* of the couch or being, but as imitation of what looks like it. “Therefore, imitation<sup>3</sup> is surely far from the truth, and, as it seems, it is due to this that it produces everything – because it lays hold on a certain small part of each thing, and that part is itself only a phantom” (Plato, [around 380BC], 1991, s. 281, 598a - c). This phantom of couch can be also characterized as something *what is not*, and therefore ignorance (Plato, [around 380BC], 1991, s. 159, 478b - c).

Socrates points out that if a painter is “a good painter, by painting a carpenter and displaying him from far off, he would deceive children and foolish human beings into thinking that he is truly a carpenter” (Plato, [around 380BC], 1991, s. 281, 598c). It implies that poetry and tragedy, which are only imitation, can be in fact quite deceiving and dangerous for the people unaware of the truth like children and foolish human beings.

As a result it is necessary to reconsider tragedy and Homer, because it is said that “these men know all arts and all things human that have to do with virtue and vice, and the divine things too” (Plato, [around 380BC], 1991, s. 281, 598d - e). However, Socrates says that the good poet, who makes fair poems, is in possession of knowledge of the things about which he talks (ibid). Socrates also assumes that if Homer and other tragedians were really able to educate people and make them better because of the knowledge of the things they talked about in their poems and not only as imitators, they would be famous for their advices for ruling the cities, winning the wars or as being favourite educators (Plato, [around 380BC], 1991, s. 282 - 283, 599c - 600e). According to Socrates, Glaucon and Adeimantus these things

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<sup>3</sup> See previous discussion on imitation in part Plato’s critique of the poets

proved not to be true and they come to the conclusion that tragic poetry is imitation in the highest possible degree (Plato, [around 380BC], 1991, s. 285, 602b).

Nevertheless, Socrates again brings out the discussion about the soul and its parts from Book IV. As it was said before, “it is impossible for the same thing to opine contraries at the same time about the same things” (Plato, [around 380BC], 1991, s. 286, 602e). Accordingly, soul has three different parts – calculative, spirited and appetitive, and “the part which trusts measure and calculation would be the best part of the soul” (Plato, [around 380BC], 1991, s. 286, 603a). From it results that the rational or calculative part of the soul is the best, because it can make the best decisions for life. In case that this best part was not adequately educated by argument and habit, it relaxes its guard over the mournful spirited part if sees suffering of the others and is not shameful for it (Plato, [around 380BC], 1991, s. 289, 606a). Such and similar reactions are produced in the soul mainly by the tragic poetry. However, if the soul is rightly educated, it will not succumb to these effects of the tragic poetry. Furthermore, “if poetry directed to pleasure and imitation have any argument to give showing that they should be in a city with good laws, we should be delighted to receive them back from the exile, since we are aware that we ourselves are charmed by them” (Plato, [around 380BC], 1991, s. 291, 607c).

Possible interpretation is also that poetry is essential to the city because only it can properly educate the lower parts of the soul into obeying calculation, what is the whole point of purifying poetry of imitation. However, even imitative poet like Homer need not be changed, only defended anew.

To understand this, it is necessary to go back the original charges stated by Adeimantus in Book II. These charges are “added to” the charges concerning the sophists mentioned by Glaucon, who also uses poetry and myth. *If* this is all Homer’s fault, then it is because Homer is *the* educator of Greece. However, passage 606e of *The Republic* indicates that “praisers of Homer say this poet educated Greece”. Socrates does not actually claim Homer is the educator of Greece therefore does not necessarily claim Homer corrupted Greece. Who has, in fact, done so? Not Homer,

but the sophists and, in particular, the “greatest sophist” namely, the political community itself.

To put these together, the implication is that the problem with Homer is not what Homer himself says, but rather with how the community interprets what Homer says, because it is in fact the community that is corrupt.

To conclude, it is clear that Socrates and Plato prefer poetry, which can be according to Nietzsche described as the Apolline. However, as it was shown, they do not reject tragedy and imitative poetry at all. They are willing to take it back from exile, because they know that people “are charmed by it, especially when contemplating it through the medium of Homer” (ibid.), but only if people would be aware what kind of impact it has on them. Thus, in spite of clear preference of the Apolline, they give more credit to the Dionysiac than is Nietzsche willing to admit.

## 5. Conclusion

The main aim of this thesis was the investigation of Nietzsche's critique of Plato regarding music, poetry and tragedy, and to assess, whether it is justified and to what extent. In the beginning were mentioned two important approaches according to which it is possible to analyze the relationship between Nietzsche and Plato on the questions of music, poetry and tragedy. This thesis adopted the second view, presented by Martin Heidegger, but not completely. It is similar to Heidegger in a sense that it also claims and tries to prove that Nietzsche's and Plato's opinions are fundamentally different. Nevertheless, it differs from Heidegger, because it does not investigate Nietzsche's overcoming of Platonism.

According to the Greeks, who felt suffering and all horrors of existence, led by the Apolline drive, created the beautiful Olympian gods in order to be able to live and to give their lives meaningfulness. This naïve Apolline consciousness connected with the ecstatic Dionysiac intoxication gave birth to Attic tragedy, which is the Apolline, beautiful embodiment of Dionysiac insights. Nietzsche by claiming that Plato with Socrates destroyed the Attic tragedy by rationalization gives all his credit to the Dionysiac aspect of art. According to Nietzsche, Socratic desire for knowledge expelled the all-powerful Dionysiac element not only from tragedy, but also from art. This Platonistic placing metaphysics above poetry and art degraded all creating force of life, which leads to nihilism.

On the other side, it is undeniable that Plato in *Republic* criticizes poetry for being false and deceitful. It is because it discourages young people, who know the stories about the gods, who are not always good, harm people and deceive, to act justly and courageously. Moreover, poets are dishonoring the gods and describing the life in Hades as a dreadful and terrifying place. According to him mainly tragic poetry, which is characteristic by imitation of mainly bad things like slavishness and wailing is dangerous for people. As Socrates later adds, this imitation produces only phantoms, which do not take part in the being of the ideas of the things, but are only reflections of visible things. However, in the end Plato and Socrates allow taking poetry and

tragedy back to the city, because they can educate lower parts of the souls to obey calculation.

Even Homer's imitative poetry, which was also discredited by Socrates' critique of poetry, can be again allowed in the city. The problem with Homer is not that his poetry would be inherently destructive and corruptive – he was only misinterpreted by the sophists and political community.

It is clear that for Plato poetry does not play as important role as his metaphysical teaching, but he gives more credit for educating people than Nietzsche admits. however, the final reflections on Homer raise the question of whether Plato was seeking to subordinate the sensuous to reason and the *ideas* or whether we was simply using reason to undo the destructive interpretations of the sophists, granting (admittedly without Nietzsche's intensity or overall outlook) that music, poetry and tragedy, even of the imitative variety, can be among the noblest of pleasures.



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## Resumé

Táto bakalárska práca sa zaoberá vzťahom medzi Nietzsche a Platónom, konkrétne Nietzscheho kritikou Platóna v otázkach hudby, poézie a tragédie. Prvá kapitola, všeobecný úvod, zoznamuje čitateľa so s tematikou tejto práce.

Druhá kapitola uvádza dva dôležité, ale základné prístupy, na základe ktorých sa vzťah Nietzscheho a Platóna, čo sa týka špecifických otázok hudby, poézie a tragédie dá chápať. Ide o postoj Catherine Zuckert a Martina Heideggera. Podľa Zuckert sú si Platón a Nietzsche podobní v tom, že Platónove tajné názory boli podobné Nietzschemu. Zuckert tvrdí, že Nietzsche štúdií Platónových diel prišiel k podozreniu, že Platónova filozofia odlišná od jeho súkromných názorov. Podľa Zuckert Platón sám neveril svojej metafyzike o ideách, ale prezentoval ju preto, aby svojej filozofii zabezpečil politický vplyv. Heidegger si na druhej strane kladie otázku, aký je pre Nietzscheho vzťah medzi umením a pravdou a do akej miery je tento vzťah nesúhlasný a disharmonický.

Tretia kapitola tejto bakalárskej práce sa zaoberá Nietzscheho Zrodením tragédie. Vysvetľuje pôvod dvoch základných elementov, Dionýzskeho a Apolónskeho, ktorých spojením vznikla klasická Atická tragédia. Dionýzsky impulz predstavuje základnú silu, ktorá by sa dala charakterizovať ako stav opojenia a extázy. Apolónsky impulz však predstavuje naivný svet krásy. Vytvoril aj Olympských bohov, aby tak život spravil napriek utrpeniu znesiteľnejším. Navyše, táto kapitola obsahuje aj Nietzscheho kritiku Platóna a Sokrata, ktorí podľa neho zničili Grécku tragédiu prílišným racionalizmom a snahe mu všetko podriadit.

Štvrtá kapitola poskytuje Platónove chápanie hudby, poézie a tragédie a takisto uvádza aj Platónovu kritiku básnikov. Platón vo svojom Štáte pomocou postavy Sokrata kritizuje poéziu ako falošnú a klamnú. Je to preto, že odrádza mladých ľudí, ktorí poznajú príbehy o bohoch prezentované básnikmi od spravodlivého a statočného života. Je pravdou, že Platón poézii, hudbe ani tragédii neprikladá taký

zásadný význam ako svojmu metafyzickému učeniu, no jeho vplyv na Grécko uznáva viac, ako je Nietzsche ochotný priznať.