

NIETZSCHE: IMAGERY AND THOUGHT

A Collection of Essays

Edited by
MALCOLM PASLEY



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PREFACE

Against image and parable

By means of image and parable one can persuade, but can prove nothing. That is why the world of science and learning is so wary of image and parable; whatever persuades and makes things *credible* is here precisely what is *not* wanted; the aim is rather to provoke the coldest mistrust, initially by the very mode of expression and the bare walls: for mistrust is the touchstone for the gold of certainty.

This passage (section 145 of *The Wanderer and his Shadow*) belongs to the middle period of Nietzsche's career, to the would-be scientific phase of his philosophizing when he was trying to devote himself to critical analysis and the establishing of verifiable fact. This not only involved discarding all metaphysical assumptions, of the kind so readily made by poets, it also involved the curbing of his own poetic mode of expression at the same time. For 'art', as he now asserted, 'covers life with a veil of impure thought' (1, 548). However, just how difficult he found it in practice to abstain from the persuasive tricks of poetry—above all from the cunning art of metaphor—can be gauged from this very passage which warns against 'image and parable'.

He starts off bravely enough with the unadorned discourse appropriate to his thesis, but he simply cannot keep it up. 'Coldest mistrust' might seem a dead enough image, and as such just permissible for Nietzsche in his new role as a 'scientific' thinker, but in the context of the whole book in which the passage appears (*Human, All-Too-Human*) 'coldness' turns out to be a very live image, indeed an image which controls his arguments. And then, having evoked the 'bare walls' within which the pursuit of knowledge is conducted—and these sound at least partly metaphorical—he moves over squarely into metaphor, declaring mistrust the '*touchstone*' by which the '*gold*' of certainty is tested. In arguing against images, he falls back on them: he seems to be either refuting his own argument or changing sides.

The above example may serve to indicate the underlying theme which links the following essays: namely, the tension between the two sides of Nietzsche's activity, between the moral heroism of his truth-seeking and his passionate advocacy of cultural change through the power of poetry and myth. He was torn between the urge to weave a glittering and inspiring web out of reality and the equally strong compulsion to lay bare its most painful truths; the image-maker and the image-breaker worked vigorously at cross-purposes, while a superior third Nietzsche made their antagonism a main object of his reflections. The essays in this book approach from a variety of angles that tension between art and knowledge which his work both explores and embodies.

It is not the aim to insist on his shortcomings as a conceptual thinker, on the impatience and incoherence which often mark his handling of traditional philosophical issues, nor is it the purpose to dwell critically on what he attempted in a purely poetic vein. Attention

is focused rather on the inseparably hybrid nature of his poetico-philosophical enterprise itself, and on that equally hybrid ‘middle mode of discourse’ (as J.P.Stern puts it) in which it is typically conducted. Without trying to paper over or explain away the basic antagonism in Nietzsche’s work, the book offers a framework for its understanding so that we may better recognize where it took a fruitful and where a self-defeating form.

Not least among the questions raised in these pages is how far he allowed his imagery to dictate his argument even when he supposed that his argument was in control of his imagery; how far his theories and doctrines were formed or swayed—more decisively than he knew and to more damaging effect than he could foresee—by the picture-patterns and the mythical models on which he drew.

It is perhaps especially appropriate to Nietzsche that his work should be made the subject of a group of linked, but independent, investigations. Each contributor speaks, of course, for himself alone, and no attempt has been made to mask or edit out conflicts of interpretation. As far as the judgment of Nietzsche’s work is concerned, it is for the reader to say whether some consistency emerges in the balance struck—whether explicitly or no—between approval and rejection.

Quotations from Nietzsche’s texts are given in English translation, words or phrases in the original being added where it seems necessary. References are normally to the handiest and most easily accessible German edition, the three-volume edition by Karl Schlechta (Munich, Carl Hanser, 1956; 2nd edition 1960, with the same pagination); they are given by volume and page number, thus: 1,548. Where the text quoted is not in Schlechta, the reference is to the *Kritische Gesamtausgabe* by Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari (Berlin, de Gruyter, 1967ff), thus: CM vii 44 (vii being here the volume number). Since the Colli-Montinari edition is not yet complete, some quotations from texts not in Schlechta have had to be located by reference to other editions: these are indicated in each case. Nietzsche’s letters are identified by date and recipient only.

In those cases where it has fallen on the editor to determine the English form of Nietzsche’s texts, I wish to record my indebtedness to the many translators whose work has been gratefully consulted or used, in particular: Christopher Middleton (*Selected Letters of Friedrich Nietzsche*, Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 1969), R.J.Hollingdale (*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1961; *Twilight of the Idols/The Anti-Christ*, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1968; *Beyond Good and Evil*, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1973) and Walter Kaufmann (especially his *The Gay Science*, New York, Random House, 1974) The Oscar Levy translation of the so-called *Wille zur Macht* has been used as a matter of convenience in the case of Mary Warnock’s essay: this translation is not suspect in itself, but it should be emphasized that the German text available to the translator had been falsely and tendentiously arranged.

Finally, mention should be made of the debt which all Nietzsche scholars owe to the work of Colli and Montinari, who have already largely given us—and will soon give us completely—the authentic Nietzsche texts in authentic order, on which alone our interpretation and judgment of him can be properly founded.

Malcolm Pasley

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Acknowledgment is due to the English Goethe Society for permission to reprint here, in edited form, F.D.Luke's essay 'Nietzsche and the Imagery of Height'. This appeared originally, under the same title, in: *Publications of the English Goethe Society*, New Series, vol. XXVIII (Leeds, 1959), 83–108.

1

NIETZSCHE: ART AND INTELLECTUAL INQUIRY

Peter Pütz

(translated from the German by Roger Hausheer)

In his poem on Nietzsche, Stefan George declares in a tone of reproachful lament: ‘He should have sung,/Not spoken, this new soul!’ [‘sie hätte singen/Nicht reden sollen diese neue Seele!’].¹ These words go to the heart of the fundamental problem in Nietzsche’s life, thought and writing: the antagonism of image and concept, of the creative act which proclaims truth and the analysis which seeks it, of art and intellectual inquiry. But George does not merely define Nietzsche’s basic predicament, he believes that he can show a way out, by proposing in retrospect that the predicament be turned into a straight alternative: rather than singing in the language of rational discourse and discoursing in the language of song, he should have sung *instead* of speaking, that is, been a pure poet like George himself. George’s advice issues from the reservation which he felt about Nietzsche: instead of presenting images and exemplary models, and renouncing the destructive activity of the intellect, ‘you created deities only to destroy them’.

George’s criticism of Nietzsche’s hesitation between art and intellectual inquiry seems to find support from Nietzsche himself, for it is a nearly literal echo of his own words in the late preface (1886) to his *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872). In this ‘essay in self-criticism’ Nietzsche deplores the fact that he had not been bold enough, in his early book, to attempt a new type of discourse, that he had imprisoned himself in Kantian and Schopenhauerian categories instead of presenting his new insights and evaluations in the language of poetry. It is in this context that we find the words which George adopted and slightly modified: ‘He should have *sung*, this “new soul”—and not spoken!’ [‘Sie hätte *singen* sollen, diese “neue Seele”—und nicht reden!’] (1, 12). But this almost literal correspondence between Nietzsche and George holds only for a single aspect of the matter we are considering, namely the admission of the destructive interlocking of creation and analysis. Otherwise agreement between the two breaks down. Nietzsche’s utterance applies to his early book, but not to the writings which aim at enlightenment from *Human, All-Too-Human* to *The Genealogy of Morals*. George, on the other hand, directs his criticism indiscriminately at the whole of Nietzsche. What is still more decisive, though it arises from this difference, is the contrast between the consequences of the two attitudes. George wants to banish the discrepancy between poetry and reflection by simply eliminating the destructive element. He overleaps the abyss and becomes a poet. Nietzsche, by contrast, recognizes this antagonism, and though he sometimes thinks that he might have overcome it in *The Birth of Tragedy*, he remains transfixed on the brink of the abyss. His intellectual honesty will

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not allow him to avert his gaze from it, still less to leap across it. Even after the process of self-criticism, song will not raise him clear of rational discourse, and a world where beauty and truth are identical remains permanently inaccessible.

Here we are not dealing with the much-discussed type of poet-philosopher like Schiller. In a divided state of fruitful tension, such writers produce works of poetry, and surround them with a flotilla of preparatory and explanatory tracts on questions of aesthetic principle. Poetry and thought stand in a clear-cut relationship to one another, each enjoying a carefully defined sphere of competence. With Nietzsche, on the other hand, this relationship is vastly more complex. At one moment poetic creation and reflective analysis interpenetrate to the point where they become indistinguishable, at another they are as incompatible as fire and water. True, in thematic development, choice of phrase, syntax and imagery, the poems do tend to over-intellectualize and stand permanently open to the charge of rhetorical posturing. And on the obverse side of the coin, the theoretical reflective writings are undeniably poised on the border line which divides concept from image, and discursive analysis from the fabrication of myth. Yet while poetry and reflection do converge in this way, they do not achieve a final synthesis. Indeed, their antagonism threatens them with mutual destruction. The reasons for this are as follows. On the one hand, Nietzsche goes in search of truths which can only be conveyed by myth and by that child of myth, the work of art; on the other, the truth which is reserved to myth and art is dragged before the modern tribunal of the intellect and condemned as falsehood. Nietzsche longs for nothing other than the truth of art, yet is compelled to see in it nothing but lies. It is in this sense, then, that he *would like* to 'sing' but is *forced* to 'speak'. Our task will consist in describing and exploring this fundamental antagonism in Nietzsche's work. In so doing, we will discover that the two rivals, art and knowledge, are not self-justifying activities, but draw their legitimation from a principle underlying them both. This principle in turn will prove not to be immune to inner contradiction, and will thus be seen to split into the dichotomy of poetic creation and analytical thought.

Tensions show up in countless contradictory assertions of the value and worthlessness of knowledge, and, closely bound up with this, of the worthlessness and value of art. Here we will cite only a few of the more representative ones: we hear 'that there is no honey sweeter than that of knowledge' (1, 624); frequently Nietzsche praises the 'urge for knowledge', the 'passion for knowledge', which shrink from no sacrifice and can bear to gaze into the darkest abyss (cf. 1, 1223). Thought even acquires a religious aura in phrases where it is consecrated as 'order of truth-seekers' (1, 1148), or the 'holy eucharist of knowledge' (1, 1198). As God demands his all from the believer, so too does absolute knowledge from the thinker: 'we all prefer the decline of humanity to the dwindling of knowledge!' (1, 1223f). Opposed to knowledge is art, a disreputable deceiver and cheat: 'in religion, art and morality we do not touch upon "the essence of the world in itself"' (1, 452). *Pari passu* with the cooling of Nietzsche's attitude to Wagner from *Human, All-Too-Human* onwards, artists are seen increasingly as 'play-actors', as 'glorifiers of the religious and philosophical errors of humanity' (1, 577). As charlatans and liars they are at all times 'henchmen of some morality, philosophy, or religion' (11, 843). They resemble the thoughtless disciples who look only to their own needs and fall asleep instead of participating in the martyrdom of knowledge: '*On Gethsemane*.—The most painful thing the thinker can say to the artist is: What, could ye not watch with me one hour?' (1, 754).

The clear primacy of knowledge over art is rebutted in equally numerous assertions to the contrary. Not only do these give poets priority over thinkers but they see in art the only panacea against knowledge. In *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche is already engaged in a bitter struggle against 'theoretical man' who, since Socrates, has pursued his disastrous triumphal march, subjecting all things to scientific laws. Nietzsche's sole hope of salvation from the tyranny of concept and number lies in the 'spirit of music'. As early as 1872 he writes: 'Art is more powerful than knowledge, for *art* desires life, and knowledge achieves as its ultimate goal only—destruction' (111, 271). And as late as the 1880s we have the following from the 'Nachlass': 'We have *art* in order that we *may not perish from truth*' (in, 832).

Such contradictory views are voiced not only in the sphere of aesthetics, and in questions as to the respective value of art and knowledge, but in questions of morality, religion and psychology. They also occur in discussions of the most important artists and philosophers. Authorities are repudiated and reinstated only to be rejected again, and so on. So it is with Socrates, Epicurus, Schopenhauer, Wagner—to mention but a few. All these win and lose Nietzsche's esteem several times over, either in one and the same breath or in the course of time. Scarcely any of these great figures can pass muster before this fickle and contradictory judge. Among the very few unshakable authorities are Goethe and, apart from his teaching and historical influence, the person of Christ, with whose passion Nietzsche, as a martyr for the sake of knowledge, still identified in his period of mental collapse, when he signed his letters to Peter Gast and Georg Brandes as 'The Crucified' (111, 1350). The contradictions and ambiguities of Nietzsche's judgments in matters of philosophy, art and science are a source of constant irritation to his interpreters. Connecting threads slip from the critic's hands before he can tie them together. All attempts at systematization and at placing the entire *opus* on sound philosophical foundations have hitherto failed. No single unifying principle has been found. The more competent interpreters have thus recognized the internal contradictions in Nietzsche's work and have not tried to harmonize them. Among these are Ernst Bertram, Karl Löwith, Karl Jaspers, Max Horkheimer, Theodor W. Adorno and Martin Heidegger.² Yet others have sought to eliminate these contradictions by one-sided emphasis on isolated aspects of the work. Examples of this are afforded by Alfred Baeumler,³ who made of the 'will to power' a dominant principle, and by Georg Lukács,⁴ who denied the element of enlightenment in Nietzsche and branded him as a proto-fascist murderer of reason. As such he is still taboo in our own day in the Eastern European countries which are under the sway of dialectical materialism.

Apart from the above-mentioned interpretations, yet other possibilities of eliminating, or at least explaining, the contradictions in Nietzsche's works may be considered. Biographical investigations (P.J. Möbius,⁵ Erich F. Podach,⁶ among others) point to pathological traits in Nietzsche's make-up which become more blatant in the late works and herald his mental collapse, or even anticipate it in the form of logical confusion, so that even before 1889 there was no possibility of any coherent philosophical picture's emerging. But quite apart from the fact that such an approach tells us little about the work and still less about its influence, it misconstrues contradiction from the very outset as a flaw in philosophical thought. It reacts to any departure from the well-trodden paths of rational discourse with suggestions for a medical cure. It frustrates Nietzsche's attempt to shatter rigid normality as the yardstick by which to determine what is true (healthy) and untrue (sick)—although

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it is precisely from Nietzsche that we could have learnt how sickness can sharpen our cognitive faculties.

Apart from pathological explanations, there is an historical and philological approach to the problem of Nietzsche's contradictoriness. This approach sets out to subsume his divergent opinions under various phases, thus ordering them in a steady line of development. And many contradictions are indeed explicable if one divides up the work into successive stages. In each of these stages we find convergent judgments relating to specific clusters of problems. Very roughly, three phases may be distinguished. The first comprised *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872) and the *Untimely Meditations* (1873–6), and it shows their author as a successor to Schopenhauer and Wagner. His cultural criticism is directed above all against 'theoretical man', against the scientific positivism of the nineteenth century, and against the spirit of the *Gründerzeit*, the period of Germany's economic and industrial expansion, in which he finds genius and organizing power lacking, despite, or perhaps because of, the uplifting national unity which Germany had just achieved. Socrates, the father of both 'theoretical man' and Christianity, undertook with the aid of logic and dialectics to dissolve the life-giving contradictions of ancient myth, and to use morality to mark off good from evil. The culmination, in the nineteenth century, of the resulting optimistic belief that everything can be rationally calculated and amicably ordered is for Nietzsche a pious piece of self-deception on the part of weak natures. They no longer dare to look into the abyss and become cheerful from sheer terror. It is therefore precisely in optimism, democracy and logic that he sees signs of declining vitality and physical exhaustion. A pessimistic vision of life, on the other hand, coupled with affirmation of horror and madness, is an unmistakable sign of strength. Rooted in the spirit of pessimism, Greek tragedy is both an instrument and a product of proud natures who are even prepared to let *nothingness be*. All such tragedy sends us on our way with the metaphysical consolation 'that life, despite all its constantly changing appearances, is in its very depths indestructably powerful and joyous' (1, 47). Here it is already clear how logical inconsistency for the young Nietzsche is not a sign of individual sickness. On the contrary, he elevates it to a principle of existence and defends it against the demands of science for unity and system. At this stage in his development, he appeals to art for assistance in his battle against the myth-destroying rationalism of Socrates. For art, above all other things, with its non-scientific images and constructions, is most likely to revive the myths we have lost. Art (above all the music tragedies of Wagner) triumphs over science.

The second phase in Nietzsche's development can be dated from *Human, All-Too-Human* up to the end of *The Joyful Science* (1882). With *Human, All-Too-Human*, a new conception of science takes shape and with it a new estimate of the relations between art and knowledge. At the beginning of the first section we already hear the following: 'All that we need and that can be had at the present level of scientific development, is a *chemistry* of moral, religious, aesthetic representations and sensations...' (1, 447). Chemistry in place of myth, a breaking down into elements in place of the construction of an organic whole, analysis in place of synthesis—all these bear witness to new stirrings of a scientific bent. The 'esteeming of unpretentious truths' (1, 448) takes us out of the realm of the timeless essences preserved by myth, and leads to a decisive insight into the historicity of men, their tools of knowledge and their systems of truth: 'but everything has become what it is; there are *no eternal facts*: just as there are no absolute truths' (*Ibid.*). In place of art and myth

(*The Birth of Tragedy*) we are given chemistry and history. Ecstatic celebration of the great interconnected whole is replaced by sober preoccupation with detail, distinctions and exact nuance. In this phase, Nietzsche is the radical sceptic, psychologist and analyst. The sole yardstick of knowledge at any price is that frequently invoked 'intellectual honesty' which is deaf to all wishful thinking. The scientist ranks before the artist, and the dubious activity of the latter is revealed most clearly to the seeker after truth in the case of Wagner. Art has the sole function of helping in 'the transition to a truly liberating philosophical science' (1, 468). The significance of Wagner's music is no longer seen in its capacity to breathe new life into myth, but in its value as material for Nietzsche's analytical forays into the psychology of art.

The beginning of the third phase is announced at the end of *The Joyful Science* (1882). If *Human, All-Too-Human* commenced with an expression of faith in chemistry, in this work the joyful scientist scorns number and calculation, seeing and grasping, as 'coarseness' and 'idiocy' (11, 249). He sums up as follows: 'Consequently a scientific interpretation of the world, as you conceive it, could still be one of the *most stupid*, that is to say, the most empty of meaning, of all possible interpretations of the world' (*Ibid.*). Then from *Zarathustra* on, not only are all demands for a scientific or historical interpretation of the world superseded, but even the heroism of truth at any price is drowned out by the laughter of buffoons, by the mocking wisdom of those who have seen through the little tricks of science, by the rhythmic stamping of the dancer. Now, instead of 'unpretentious truths', the great philosophical and visionary themes hold the field: 'the will to power', 'eternal recurrence', the 'great man', 'breeding', and so forth. After the 'yes' of *Zarathustra*, the transvaluation of values begins, Nietzsche's great essay in metaphysics. Art is rehabilitated and given a positive function as the opponent of devitalizing knowledge: 'Art and nothing but art! Art is the great enabler of life, the great temptress to life, the great stimulant of life' (11, 692).

The three phases of Nietzsche's development appear again in *Zarathustra* in allegorical disguise: Three metamorphoses of the spirit I name to you: how the spirit becomes a camel, and the camel a lion, and the lion at last a child' (11, 293). The camel as beast of burden is the carrier and conservator of the precious cultural tradition (Antiquity, Schopenhauer, Wagner). This fits the first phase of Nietzsche's development during the Basle period when he was a professor of classical philology. But then the 'burden-bearing spirit' takes upon himself the 'heaviest weight' of all (*Ibid.*), namely the cultural heritage, and bears it away into the desert. There he becomes a ravening lion, destroying every 'thou shalt' and every value, including even the burden he patiently carried: To create new values—not even the lion can do that yet: but to create freedom for new creation—that the might of the lion can do' (11, 294). The middle period (from *Human, All-Too-Human* to *The Joyful Science*) throws up no new images or exemplary types, the lion is neither a bearer nor a creator of truths but a hunter-down of lies. Analysis and destruction are the sole weapons of the second phase, but through their radical power of negation they prepare the ground for new possibilities. These are taken up by the child in the third metamorphosis. The child heralds a new kind of simplicity, since it is neither to bear the burden of the past nor to destroy it but to remain free to create the things of the future: 'The child is innocence and forgetfulness, a fresh beginning, a game, a self-bowling hoop, a first movement, a holy affirmation' (*Ibid.*). With this we have arrived at the third phase of Nietzsche's work, where intellectual honesty is replaced by love of lies and devitalizing knowledge by art as the 'stimulant of life'.

Any historical and literary interpretation of Nietzsche's works must take account of this three-phase division. It will look for and find reasons for the changes that occurred: the break in personal relations with Wagner, new acquaintances and influences (e.g. Paul Rée, English moral psychology, etc.), the course taken by his illness and the connected shift in his evaluation of intellect and ecstasy. Perhaps it will even discover the root of indecision and fickleness in the fundamentally problematic relationship between art and knowledge. Yet despite all these things, the schematic division fails by a long way to do full justice to Nietzsche's widely divergent judgments. For scepticism towards the artist is still evident in *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886), a work which, according to the above schema, should belong to the third phase. In like manner, in *The Genealogy of Morals* (1887) we encounter, contrary to all expectations, that passionate commitment to truth which we have not been accustomed to since *The Joyful Science*. Nietzsche enjoins us 'to sacrifice all human wishes to the truth, to every untruth, even the truth which is plain, harsh, hideous, repellent, un-christian, immoral...' (11, 772).

Apart from the intrinsic difficulties which stand in the way of such a neat division, there are still further objections to resolving the contradictions by the three-phase model. If the texts themselves reveal the simultaneous presence of divergent judgments, so their historical reception only serves to intensify this impression. Thomas Mann, Robert Musil and Gottfried Benn, for example, did not only absorb Nietzsche's writings through the filter of this triadic scheme. Rather they found a fundamental cleavage which in their view ran through the entire work. The extraordinarily high value Nietzsche puts on art on the one hand, and his radical scepticism about art—and above all artists—on the other, is something of which they were equally aware without assigning each of these attitudes to different phases of development. Contradictory stances are not seen as historically remote from one another, but as direct rivals. One insight is not more or less true than another merely for coming earlier or later. Only if we take the contradictions together can we do justice to Nietzsche's own awareness of the problem. We fail if we seek to iron them out by consigning them to different phases of development.

We are still saddled with the problem of Nietzsche's divergent judgments, and have made no progress. True, we have become acquainted with a number of false turnings and dead-ends. Neither a pathological study nor a neat division into phases can resolve our problem. Yet there is a third possibility of reconciling Nietzsche's fundamentally different views, and that is to see thinking in antinomies as being itself Nietzsche's methodological principle. This holds not only for the relationship between art and knowledge but also for many other problem-areas. For this reason we propose here to extend the investigation somewhat and examine the antagonism between art and knowledge in the light of contradiction as a fundamental principle. A whole list of antithetical concepts and images in Nietzsche's language seem to indicate a deep-seated antinomianism of thought and imagination. In *The Birth of Tragedy*, the bright Apollonian element in art and nature is already opposed by dark Dionysian forces. Where the Apollonian principle limits and simplifies, the Dionysian principle overflows boundaries and strives after all-encompassing unity. These two principles are matched by a plethora of dualities and antagonisms: to Apollo, the God of light, corresponds appearance but also illusion; Dionysus on the other hand stands for a loss of grip on appearances, a kind of shuddering horror; the Apollonian principle of individuation and plurality is opposed by the dissolution of individuals

and a mystical experience of unity. Similar polarities modelled on the mythical schema of Apollonian/Dionysian are dream and ecstasy, 'appearance' and 'will' in Schopenhauer's sense of these terms, optimism and pessimism, serenity and joyful horror. In the field of aesthetics there is at once conflict and correspondence between plastic art (Apollo) and music (Dionysus), rhythm and melody, cithar and flute, Homer and Archilochus, epic and lyric, dramatic dialogue and chorus—examples could be multiplied almost indefinitely. For the images of the Apollonian and Dionysian are not confined to the artistic sphere alone, but stretch out beyond it as elemental 'artistic states of nature' ['Kunstzustände der Natur' (1, 25)].

Karl Löwith, who sees in Nietzsche's philosophy rather a 'tentative experimentation than a completed body of knowledge',⁷ deals with another fundamental antagonism. For him, the antinomy of decision and necessity stands in the foreground. Even as a schoolboy, Nietzsche had chosen and treated with intellectual passion the essaytopic of 'Free Will and Fate'. Later, the same problem arises in connection with the enthusiastically embraced notion of 'eternal recurrence' which forms the core of his philosophy. In it a basic contradiction is apparent. On the one hand, man has an urge to self-overcoming and self-aggrandizement ('will to power'), yet on the other, nature, with its law of the conservation of energy, admits only of the aimless repetition of the eternally identical. But how can the will to power rise above itself if the cycle of eternal recurrence obtains? How are we to conceive of Nietzsche's hoped-for 'new man' whose advent he announces, if 'eternal recurrence' only allows of a perpetuation of man as he is and has been?

The antagonism of Apollonian and Dionysian, of will to power and eternal recurrence, and of art and knowledge, seems indeed to confirm those who see in contradiction Nietzsche's ultimate, irreducible first principle. Yet for all that, there are plenty of assertions in Nietzsche which reject contradiction as an instrument for establishing truth. To quote a few of the especially significant ones: 'Antithesis is the strait gate through which error most likes to slip on its way to truth' (1, 563), or, 'There are no antitheses: only from those of logic do we derive the concept of antithesis—and thence mistakenly apply it to things' (111, 541). In the light of such objections, it is no longer permissible to take antithetical structures of thought as forming the basic principle of Nietzsche's philosophy. For here even the principle of *contradiction* is *contradicted*. Antithesis has thus forfeited its validity as the necessary or even sole instrument of knowledge. Nietzsche has seen through it as a mere mechanism pertaining to consciousness. It has no ontological status but is a mere instrument of logic.

Divergences and contradictions accumulate and seem to outdo one another to the point where all meaning dissolves. Even our initial question concerning the relationship between art and knowledge is threatened. But if we refuse to resign ourselves to chaos, yet cannot discover any antithetical principle capable of imposing system on it, we must look beyond contradiction itself. We must look for any approach which, while not perhaps reconciling the contradictions themselves, may nevertheless perhaps be able to oppose the principle of contradiction. An outward sign and first clue is afforded by what Schlechta calls the 'remarkable monotony of the total statement' (111, 1435). For all its contradictoriness, Nietzsche's work is permeated by a kind of unity of intellectual style. This results in part from the relatedness of the basic themes which are presented in ever-new variations. The same or similar phenomena constantly recur in the same or slightly modified form, but no progress is made in the discovery of systematic and logically verifiable knowledge.

Despite all the shifts and breaks, the drive for strict continuity may be seen in the late work in Nietzsche's ever-more-frequent and copious quotations from his earlier writings. *Ecce Homo* and the preface to *The Genealogy of Morals* reveal his concern that his works should be interpreted as a unity. He repeatedly speaks of the 'common root', the 'basic will for knowledge', of 'becoming One'. He hopes that all his endeavours as philosopher, poet, and also as scholar, may 'come together as one'. The contradictoriness of individual judgments finds its adversary in that 'monotony' which is an expression of the search for unity. Antithetic reasoning, therefore, can no longer be conceived as the sole basic principle of his work: 'If anything indicates our *humanization*, true and real *progress*, it is to be found in our no longer needing excessive contrasts, indeed, in our dispensing with them altogether...' (111, 810). Nietzsche associates the elimination of antitheses with an historical process which either ought to have achieved its goal or will do so in the future. In either case, his expectations are shored up by a utopian idea, for as a simple matter of fact his thought constantly deals in contradictions. Thus the urge to eliminate them contrasts with their continued sway. True, the notion of a totality which would embrace these contradictions is no more than a *desideratum*, but as such it does oppose the massive onslaught of contradictions. *Actual* fragmentation and *longed-for* unity are separate but complementary strands in Nietzsche's thought.

After the problems arising out of conflict and antagonism, we must turn in what follows to those relating to totality and unity. We already find in the cultural criticism of Nietzsche's early writings, particularly *The Birth of Tragedy* and the *Untimely Meditations*, a protest against fragmentation into individual concepts and scientific disciplines, against division of labour and the lack of spiritual unity in Germany, a lack which contrasts sharply with the recent foundation of a new national German Empire. The interconnected totality of all phenomena, including contradictory and destructive ones, which Nietzsche misses in the present, he thinks he finds realized in Greek myth, before Socrates began to destroy it with reason and morality. Only in his earlier works does the *concept* of myth constitute an explicit theme; later he no longer talks *about* it, but sketches out, to the best of his ability, a body of myth which will justify both art and knowledge. The later Nietzsche transfers his basic mythological and aesthetic categories, the Apollonian and the Dionysian, from the realms of tragedy and music to his total vision of human life. Or to put it the other way round, in *The Birth of Tragedy* he already projects his later vision into the Greek myths, which as an archaic symbol of unity and totality prefigure Nietzsche's thought in all his writings thereafter.

The specific linguistic and epistemological concerns of the modern era, which can only express itself in isolated frozen particulars and contrasts, not only forbid any definition of myth but call into question the attempt to talk about it at all, since by its very nature myth resists abstraction and division into opposites. Moreover, unless forms of speech are used which are in turn mythical, myth can only be expressed in permanently provisional and partial statements. Two such individual statements of Nietzsche's that may be taken as representative are as follows: 'In their mythology the Greeks transmuted the whole of nature into Greeks',⁸ and 'Myth sought to understand all changes by analogy with human action and human volition'.⁹ If we disregard the different *content* of these two sentences and concentrate on the *form* they take as judgments, we will see in both cases, as in many others, the ubiquitous use of words like 'whole', 'entire', 'all', 'every', 'always', etc. All

these terms reveal a tendency to seek totality. Since myth breaks down definitions and overcomes the barriers set between rationality and irrationality, between good and evil, beauty and ugliness, it can itself only be defined in terms of the constant elimination of definitions. On the one hand this occurs through the use of the above-mentioned epithets of totality, on the other, through a progressive negation of individualizing particulars. Hence Nietzsche is permanently in a position where he can only say what myth is *not*. If he wants to tell us what it is, he must take the leap into seemingly empty generality which allows of no analytical division and hence no definition. With sarcastic undertones he quotes the words of Anaxagoras: 'in the beginning everything was of a piece [*'beisammen'*]: then came human reason and created order' (1, 74). So long as 'everything is of a piece', scarce a word is necessary for the whole edifice to fall apart. Thus the provisional and sole concept adequate to myth and its unruly and contradictory nature is—totality. But this term is used not in a Hegelian sense to express *reconciliation* of opposites but rather their *toleration*. Nietzsche conceives of myth as a form of totality to be striven after by progressive negation of distinctions, a totality which must be left open. This conception, we may note in passing, is rooted not in the thought of antiquity but in early romanticism, and hence stands at the beginning of the modern age. Nietzsche is fully aware that myth is irreconcilable with modern awareness, but his certainty of this is intimately bound up with his conviction of the necessity for a mythical renewal; 'Without myth every culture loses its healthy and creative natural powers: only a horizon ringed about with myths can confer unity on an entire cultural movement' (1, 125). The more remote and strange myth is to the modern age, the more urgent is its need of myth and yet the more hopeless is the attempt to reconcile the two. Here lies the basic, tormenting contradiction at once of Nietzsche's thought and of the modern age itself. Like no one else, Nietzsche suffered from this wound. But he not only suffered from it, with biting sharpness of perception he made the wound deeper and more painful, so that his contemporaries and followers would be forced to cry out, or at least be shaken out of their mental torpor and their complacent acceptance of scientific habits of thought.

In his early writings Nietzsche glorifies ancient myth as the lost guarantor of the universal interconnection of all things, though he does not cast off the myth-destroying spell of modern awareness. In his later writings, similarly, he does not abandon the search for an all-embracing whole amid all the antagonisms. But what exactly lies hidden behind this all-encompassing totality which is supposed to embrace and settle all questions of truth and falsehood, art and knowledge, a something which can no longer be expressed in the language of myth alone? The answer seems simple, at least as far as terminology goes, for there is one constantly invoked word in Nietzsche's writings which forces itself on our attention, and that is 'life'. 'Life' is the foundation and interconnection of things, and embraces and determines all there is. The secondary literature on Nietzsche is very ill at ease with the vagueness of this concept, if indeed it should be called a concept at all; terms like 'metaphor' or 'figure' seem preferable. And even the oft-repeated assertion, especially in the 'Nachlass' of the 1880s, that the formula for 'life' is the 'will to power', has no abiding validity since it is contradicted, as we have seen, by the idea of 'eternal recurrence' (cf. Löwith). For how can the 'will to power' raise man above the limits set down for him in a universe ruled by iron fate? From our inability to answer this question it is plain that every specific interpretation of the sought-for whole, of 'life', restricts the totality of this

principle and opens the way to contradiction. Restriction of the whole entails the loss of its universality.

What we said earlier about myth holds also for 'life'. Nietzsche can conceive of 'life' only as a totality to be striven after and kept open by progressive negation of particular distinctions. This totality is the only concept adequate to life and its unruly contradictoriness, not in Hegel's sense of *reconciliation* but of *toleration* of contrasts. The totality of 'life', which in *The Birth of Tragedy* Nietzsche still projects on to the Greek myths, comprises a radical openness and affirmation of self-destructive antagonisms, including the notion of nothingness as a complement of totality. It is not the recognition and acceptance of *nothingness* that Nietzsche stigmatizes as *nihilism*, but its covering up and disguising by Christianity and morality.

But this notion of totality as a conceptual basis for Nietzsche's ideas about ancient myth and for his later scheme of a myth of 'life' does not culminate in quasi-religious worship and the invocation of chthonic mythical powers. On the contrary, it is bound up with modern aspirations to exact knowledge, and still more with an awareness of the problems of epistemology. This is revealed in the very inadequacy of language: 'every word is a prejudice' (1, 903), or, 'Words are only symbols for the relations of things to each other and to ourselves, and at no point do they touch upon the absolute truth' (111, 390). Words are not merely inadequate, they are false because they are the instruments of distortion. On the one hand we are dependent upon them, on the other they not only fail to serve us but actually get in the way. When we talk of something in conceptual language we do not grasp it in its totality but only in isolated aspects, and are led to rest content in this partial view. In this way we suppress the multi-faceted ambiguity of the object of knowledge and with it the sought-after wholeness: 'So far as the word "knowledge" has any sense at all, the world is knowable; but it can be variously *interpreted*, there is not one single meaning hidden behind it, it has countless meanings.—"Perspectivism"' (in, 903). Here Nietzsche states the notion which most tellingly characterizes his method of thought. The constantly renewed attempts to grasp the totality of 'life' come to grief and are repelled by relative partial judgments which are at loggerheads with one another. Through the constant shifts of position by which his entire work is marked, Nietzsche seeks the desired totality in ever-renewed nuances which are mutually contradictory and point to new perspectives. Such a perspectivist way of seeing things both relativizes individual judgments and yet at the same time preserves them from onesidedness. It keeps our eyes open to that totality which is the realm of open possibilities. The permanent isolation of one perspective as a universally valid way of seeing things would establish an ideal and hence a principle inimical to 'life'.

In the light of such changing perspectives, contradictions and opposites acquire a new function. Since the manifold facets of the whole can never be stated exhaustively, let alone simultaneously, the perspectivist approach first stakes out the extremes; and in this way there arises that appearance of plain contradiction. In reality, however, the opposites have the function of poles which mark off those extreme points of the whole between which a multiplicity of other perspectives are possible. And antithesis, encompassing as it does the greatest conceivable sweep, is the best suited to embrace these multifarious possibilities. Such poles do not therefore constitute absolute opposites but rather correlated extremes which stand in relation to a totality, even if it is one that cannot ultimately be encompassed.