

NIETZSCHE'S BIRTH OF TRAGEDY AFTER A CENTURY

(A lecture given at the Royal University of Malta, Friday 29 October 1971)

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It is a great honour to have been invited to give three lectures on German literature and thought. I am particularly sensible of this privilege since these lectures, so I understand, are the first public lectures ever to be delivered on a theme from German studies in this ancient university which, by a happy coincidence, was founded at the same time as my own *alma mater*, Trinity College, Dublin.

The subjects on which I am going to talk are 'Kant's Political Thought', 'Politics and Drama in Present-Day Germany' and 'Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy*. After a Century.'¹

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Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy* is a classic. But like many classics it is little read. This is not surprising, for it is not a readable book. Although it contains some most impressive passages, it is confusing and at times even confused. A most perceptive contemporary critic recognized these features when, less than fifteen years after its first publication, he called it:

an impossible book ... badly written, awkward, embarrassing, with a frantic and confused imagery, sentimental, in parts sugary

¹It is, of course, the last of these three lectures given on October 25, 27 and 29 respectively, which, at the very kind request of Professor Richard J. Beck, of the Royal University of Malta, I have written up for publication. The text printed here does not entirely correspond to the lecture, but has been revised with a view to publication. I am indebted to Dr. H.B. Nisbet, Mr. M.C. Morgan and Dr. Estelle Morgan for their criticism and scrutiny of my text. A longer version of this lecture was published in German in the *Zeitschrift für Deutsche Philologie*, XIII, 1973. This article also contains more comprehensive notes. I should like on this occasion to acknowledge my appreciation of the splendid, indeed, royal hospitality offered to me by the Royal University of Malta during that last week in October, 1971 for which I am most grateful.

to the point of effeminacy, uneven in its tempo, not revealing any intention to logical neatness, and it is so self-confident that it feels no need of supplying proof for its argument, even worse, it suspects the very notion of proof... an arrogant and enthusiastic book...²

Who was this critic who condemned it so radically? None other than Nietzsche himself, for who else could have written so brilliantly at that point in time. However just some of these strictures may be, the book still repays reading. Not because Nietzsche had solved any problems or developed a new, consistent approach to scholarship or art, but because it is the prelude to a new period of twentieth century German writing, and because it raises central problems for our understanding of the nature of art and of scholarship. As Nietzsche himself put it:

He [Nietzsche] had been the first to tackle the task of seeing scholarship from the point of view of art and art from the point of view of life itself. It seemed to him a new problem, for the first time 'scholarship' was seen to be a problematic, indeed, dubious enterprise, considered against the background of art, for the problem cannot be considered against the background of scholarship itself.³

Such are, however, Nietzsche's later, mature reflections on his first philosophical work. When he wrote it his primary concern, so it strikes the reader, was to trace the rise and decline of Greek tragedy and to proclaim its impending rebirth in Germany. Probably its most memorable part is the myth of the antithesis of the Apolline and Dionysian forces in art, a myth involving a new view of Greek art and culture. In the wake of Nietzsche, Greek art and culture were, in popular German estimation, no longer held to be serene,⁴ as the German classical writers had believed ever since Winckelmann spoke of 'the noble simplicity and calm greatness'⁵ of Greek art. Nietzsche fought against this widely held classical

²Nietzsche, *Werke* (ed. Karl Schlechta) 2nd ed., Munich, 1960, (quoted as *W*), I, p. 11.

³*W*, I, p. 10.

⁴cf. E.M. Butler, *The Tyranny of Greece over Germany*, Cambridge, 1935, p. 307ff.

⁵J.J. Winckelmann, *Sämliche Werke*, Osnabrück, I, 1965 (reprint of the 1825 edition), p. 30.

conception of the Greeks; for he believed that Winckelmann and Goethe had misunderstood the Greeks because they did not take account of the Dionysian, orgiastic element in Greek art and culture.

Nietzsche's views were accepted by many twentieth-century German writers and artists, but not at all by scholars. The work itself alone can tell us whether their rejection was just.

I

What kind of book, then, is the *Birth of Tragedy*? The admixture of scholarship and cultural propaganda is peculiar, but more peculiar still is the metaphysics on which the whole argument is based. On first reading, the purpose of the work seems clear: to vindicate art at the expense of scholarship, to condemn the scientific outlook for its essential hostility to art and, consequently, even to life. On further reflection, however, Nietzsche's attitude towards these problems appears much more ambiguous, and the work is seen to be full of loose ends.

How does Nietzsche seek to make his point? His strategy is determined by his training and profession as a classical scholar. He starts by writing about one of the major themes of Hellenic scholarship, the rise of Greek tragedy. His argument runs as follows: art in general and Greek tragedy in particular depend on the interplay between the Dionysian and Apolline elements. These two terms were for the Greeks no mere concepts, but real experiences. Apollo embodies the element of the dream which finds its purest expression in the art of sculpture. Dionysus, on the other hand, represents the element of ecstasy, of which music is the purest manifestation. Whenever Apollo prevails, man's individuality, the *principium individuationis*, rules. If Dionysus prevails, however, man's individuality is destroyed and the individual is re-united with all other individuals, the primordial condition is restored, in which individuality does not exist and the individual is part of primordial unity. — Nietzsche's debt to Schopenhauer is here obvious; for Schopenhauer assumed that the world of appearance in all its varied manifestations is illusion. The world is not 'many', but 'one'. According to Nietzsche, primordial unity (*das Ureine*) is the real being of the world. It gives birth to the world as a work of art. By way of analogy with this primordial creation, the artist creates works of art. He dreams of experiencing the 'one' (*Ureine*). He knows that the

world, in reality, is a dream, i.e. mere appearance or semblance, and that art created by him from this dream is the semblance of semblance.

Art, thus, springs from the interplay of the Apolline and Dionysian elements. As he crisply formulates the problem:

How does art arise? The pleasure of appearance, the pain of appearance, the Apolline and Dionysian elements which continuously force one another to exist.⁶

Greek tragedy itself arose from the chorus, which was originally composed merely of satyrs who worshipped Dionysus. Tragedy thus grew out of the Dionysian mysteries where dithyrambs were sung exalting the passion of Dionysus, which was the central theme of tragedy. Music is the appropriate means for conveying the experience of the world of Dionysian ecstasy. Music preceded the word, but the original worship of the suffering Dionysus was inchoate. Only Apollo, however, was able to give form to this experience. Tragedy is thus only possible if Apollo transcends the Dionysian mysteries, i.e. if man is saved from the destruction of his individuality by a reconciliation of the two gods, Dionysus and Apollo. Tragedy is the representation or recreation of this reconciliation:

Conscious of the truth once perceived man sees everywhere only the terrible and absurd nature of being – he is disgusted. But in this greatest danger to the will, a sorceress comes, capable of saving him and knowing how to cure him – that sorceress is *art*. It alone is capable of turning these thoughts of disgust with the terrible or absurd nature of being into imaginings with which we are able to live.⁷

Art is, thus, necessary for living. It is necessary both for the individual and for mankind. The Dionysian experience itself is barbarian. Only Apollo has the power to create the balance without which there could never be any culture. The Greeks – and they alone – possessed a true culture; for in Ancient Greece art ruled over life.⁸

⁶ Nietzsche, *Werke, Grossoktavausgabe*, Leipzig, 2nd ed. 1901-26, (quoted as *WGr*), IX, p.190.

⁷ *W*, I, p. 48f.

⁸ *WGr*, X, p. 245.

When Greek tragedy flourished, in the days of Aeschylus, a true culture prevailed. The aim of a true culture is the production of a great work.⁹ The people recognized the quality of these great works, and it was seen to be the purpose and the function of the state to create great art. The study of Greek tragedy thus leads to the very core of Nietzsche's early metaphysical conviction, summed up in the trenchant phrase:

Only as an *aesthetic* phenomenon is existence and life in the world for ever *justified*.¹⁰

Such is Nietzsche's judgment on what he regarded as the greatest achievement of the greatest culture so far created by man, a culture not belonging to the few only, but to a people as a whole.

This great era did not however last. How and why did it perish? Nietzsche's answer is unexpected and provocative. 'It committed suicide'.¹¹ How could this come about? Euripides was to blame. He brought about its agony.

As a poet Euripides felt superior to the mass of his spectators, but not to two of them.¹²

Who were these two spectators whose judgment Euripides was alone prepared to respect?

Again, Nietzsche's answer is startling:

the first is none other than Euripides himself, but Euripides the *thinker*, not Euripides the *poet*. Endowed with 'a critical mind' he sat 'pondering' in the theatre and thought that 'he did not understand his great predecessors'.¹³ Consequently, he was dissatisfied with his dramatic work, since it could not be justified at the bar of his intellect which, in his view, was 'the only root of all enjoyment and creation'.¹⁴ Understandably he looked round for a companion to share his despondency and found the only other spectator who did not understand tragedy and so did not respect it.

Who was this second spectator? Once again Nietzsche's answer is unexpected. None other than Socrates! In company with him

⁹ *WGr*, X, p. 124.

¹⁰ *W*, I, p. 40.

¹¹ *W*, I, p. 64.

¹² *W*, I, p. 69.

¹³ *W*, I, p. 69.

¹⁴ *W*, I, p. 69.

Euripides dared to be 'the herald of a new art.'¹⁵

Socratic Aestheticism is, thus, the murderous principle on which Greek tragedy foundered. How did Socrates succeed in triumphing over Dionysus and in driving the all-powerful god to retreat? He was able to do so because he stood for theoretical man, for the scientific approach, and because he was the representative of optimism and reason. This intellectual attitude is hostile to art. Unwittingly it destroys the soil that true art needs. As a theoretical man Socrates was not moved by Dionysus nor did he understand his world.

Socrates' teaching prevailed, however. The ideal of Greek youth is no longer the dying Dionysus, but the dying Socrates. A shallow, 'enlightened' optimism replaced the profound pessimism of the pre-socratic era. The triumph of scholarship and the glorification of knowledge inevitably spell the death of tragedy. For a work that has become estranged from the primordial basis of being cannot be a great work of art. Theoretical man, i.e. the scientist or the scholar, still pays homage to an illusion, viz. to the belief that he is able to understand the world and its meaning. But this assumption is mistaken; for the intellect and its products, science, scholarship and logic, do not suffice to apprehend the world. The triumph of logic is a Pyrrhic victory. For in contradistinction to the pre-socratic artist, theoretical man does not know that his activity is an illusion, that he can never attain his aim of understanding the world. His self-deception makes it however impossible for him to create tragedies. They can be created only if the poet is aware that the world is semblance, that art is the semblance of semblance.

So far Nietzsche has proceeded as a historian, though, in tune with his basic approach, it is history steeped in philosophy, though admittedly a philosophy of a peculiar metaphysical brand. But, as he argued passionately in the *Use and Abuse of History*, history for history's sake, however philosophical its character, is not enough. It is valuable only if it can be put to use for the present and for the future. History must lead to artistic action. Great periods of history – and they are defined as those periods which have a great culture – have to serve as an example for the contemporary world. Even more, the historical study of a great period should tell us how a renaissance of a great culture could be

¹⁵W, I, p. 75.

achieved in Nietzsche's own time:

We have to learn from history that what was once great was possible and could be possible again.¹⁶

But where and when would that come about? Again, Nietzsche's answer is provocative. It is to be in the Germany of his own day, and it will be an even greater culture than that of Ancient Greece:

The new stage of art was not to be attained by the Greeks: it is the German mission.¹⁷

To prove the truth of this claim he appeals to, and propounds, his enthusiasm for Wagner's opera. Wagner, influenced by Schopenhauer like Nietzsche himself, had been able to create the dream-like, illusory world of art, steeped in a pessimistic awareness of suffering. He was thus the harbinger of a new age; for if the view of the world and art were generally accepted, a new genuine culture would arise, hitherto unknown in Germany. (Even Goethe had been only a promise of future possibilities, no more.). Relying on his knowledge and insight as a classical scholar and historian, on his appreciation of Wagner and on his conviction as a cultural prophet, Nietzsche proclaims the rebirth of tragedy in Germany and, as a result, prophesies a cultural renaissance in Europe.

These ideas are striking, but are they true or at least reasonable? Several questions have to be asked. Firstly, is Nietzsche's historical interpretation of Greek culture securely grounded in scholarship? Secondly, is his work philosophically fruitful and does his theory of art carry conviction? Thirdly, did his cultural prophecy come true?

II

To answer this question we have first to consider Nietzsche's aim and the reception his work had with classical scholars.

Although classical scholarship and cultural propaganda make unusual and uneasy bed-fellows, one of Nietzsche's aims was undoubtedly to write a scholarly work; but his overriding intention was to strike out new paths in the field of Greek studies, and in his masterpiece to transcend the conventional limits of scholarship, and this

¹⁶ W, I, p. 221.

¹⁷ W, I, p. 88.

in turn was to inaugurate a new era in German Culture.

How could a young scholar, only in his late twenties, be so bold? The answer lies in his attitude to the studies he had been pursuing during the previous decade. Nietzsche was a classical scholar, but with a difference. His ability was great, indeed, outstanding, but he was profoundly dissatisfied with classical studies. They were for him the prototype of the humanities, indeed, of all scholarship and science, but he doubted their value. His early success only seemed to reinforce his doubts. His first scholarly publications had attracted attention, and through the support of his eminent teacher at Bonn and Leipzig, Friedrich Wilhelm Ritschl, then at the height of his fame, Nietzsche had been elected to the chair of Greek at the University of Basel at the age of twenty-four before he had even taken his doctorate. This might have been thought an achievement to gratify any scholar, but as Nietzsche began to teach, earlier doubts about his subjects came to the fore again and he became convinced that previous classical scholars had misunderstood antiquity and thus not only ruined their own lives, but those of their students, and what was worse, their misunderstanding had warped the whole appreciation of antiquity and thereby the cultural and spiritual life of the whole nation.

But why should dissatisfaction with scholarship as it had been practised in Germany have led Nietzsche to the conviction that it was his task not only to reform, indeed, to revolutionize scholarship itself, but also to promote a new European culture? Nietzsche entertained these high hopes because he held that scholarship ought to emulate art and inform the whole body of cultural life. In this belief Nietzsche was, however, only continuing a well-established German tradition. Classical studies had become a kind of secularised theology and claimed the same intellectual primacy theology had enjoyed in the Middle Ages. This claim was, moreover, not a mere will-of-the-wisp of unworldly professors, but was widely accepted by the educated public. Nietzsche's own teacher, Ritschl, may serve as a telling example. When he wanted to leave his chair at Bonn to go to Leipzig because he had quarrelled with his colleagues and with the minister of education, the King of Prussia, William I, was unwilling to accept his resignation. It was necessary for his principal minister, none other than Bismarck himself, to intervene, to try and dissuade Ritschl from resigning

and when this failed, to advise the King to give his consent.¹⁸ Ritschl was in many ways the prototype of the eminent classicist of that period. Nietzsche's attitude to classical scholarship was influenced by his admiration for as well as by his rebellion against his teacher. Although Ritschl had literary and artistic taste he was entirely devoted to scholarship. For him scholarship meant primarily to adopt the historical approach. He insisted on a rigorous standard of historical scholarship, but, unconsciously rather than consciously, he believed in scholarship for scholarship's sake, in history for history's sake. To ask the question – which for Nietzsche mattered above all – why the ancients should be studied and what they could mean for contemporary art and culture would have been an unscholarly and hence illegitimate question. The greatness of Ancient Greece was accepted without any further ado. It was for Ritschl:

the eternal bourn of world culture to which we have to return again and again with living sensitivity.¹⁹

This attitude smacks of an over-weening confidence in one's own calling. Nietzsche was aware of this defect in his teacher whom he greatly revered. His gratitude and personal liking for Ritschl did not however obscure his awareness of possible failings. He wrote in his *Autobiographical Notes* 1856-69:

he [Ritschl] held his subject undoubtedly in too high an esteem. Thus he was opposed to classical scholars taking an interest in philosophy.²⁰

In the *Birth of Tragedy* Nietzsche attacked this attitude of mind, and in so doing attacked his own early scholarly writings in which he had followed Ritschl's example. He now demanded scholarship with a philosophical slant, and in writing about classical scholarship he thought he was tackling the problems of scholarly and scientific disciplines. In Nietzsche's view, a fundamentally different approach was needed. The new *Wissenschaft* was to pro-

¹⁸ Cf. Otto Ribbeck, *Friedrich Wilhelm Ritschl*, II, Leipzig, 1881, p. 541 and p. 371.

¹⁹ To Nietzsche, 15 February 1872; *Gesammelte Briefe*, 2nd ed. (quoted as *Ges.Br.*), Leipzig, 1903 ff., III, p. 143.

²⁰ *W*, III, p. 139.

vide an insight into the nature of being; armed with this philosophical brand of scholarship literature and history would be interpreted anew. They would no longer be treated as dead matter, but would be seen as a part of life and with a view to living. In this respect, they would be analogous to art. Indeed, a philosophical artist's (or – artist-philosopher's) touch, such as Nietzsche believed himself to possess, was needed to bring the whole undertaking to life. Thus, Nietzsche's aim was:

to infuse my scholarship with this new blood, to inspire my lecture with the Schopenhauerian seriousness which is imprinted on the brow of this sublime man – this is my desire, my boldest hope. I want to be more than the teacher of competent classical scholars.²¹

Nietzsche's words sound as if he, the heir of a long tradition of Protestant pastors, wanted not merely to preach to the faithful, but also to convert the very infidels whom he was chastising. For he wanted to win over classical scholars, like Ritschl, to his cause, although at the same time he argued with passion that their limited outlook prevented their understanding his higher philosophical approach. He was therefore pained by the silence of his colleagues, from whom he had impatiently been awaiting approval of his revolutionary ideas. A few friends – Richard Wagner, Franz Overbeck, an ecclesiastical historian, and Erwin Rohde, the only classical scholar of standing among them – applauded him. And Rohde, a close friend of Nietzsche's from his Leipzig days, was far from impartial, for though in later years when he had become an eminent scholar himself he took a different view, at the time he believed that Nietzsche and himself were making common cause. Only one outsider, Hermann Hagen, Professor of Classics at Berne, wrote a letter of congratulation.²²

Nietzsche felt that the leading scholars greeted his work with a conspiracy of silence. Not a word even from his master, Ritschl. Undoubtedly Nietzsche was most impatient and could not wait. Within a month of publication he wrote a letter to Ritschl revealing

²¹ To Carl von Gersdorff, 11 April 1869; *Historisch-Kritische Gesamtausgabe der Werke und Briefe, Abt. Briefe*, Munich 1933 ff. (quoted as *Briefe*), II, p. 310.

²² To Nietzsche, 1 February 1872; *Briefe*, III, p. 462.

as much self-confidence as desire for approval:

it should be by this book; for it brings hope to our classical studies, it brings hope to the German character even if a number of individuals were consequently to perish. As you will readily believe, I have not written this work for the sake of personal ambition or consideration, as I do not wish to further my own career. I hope to do something for others. I wish to get hold of the younger generation of classical scholars and I should deem it a shameful sign if I were to fail in this task. But I am somewhat disturbed by your silence.²³

It is not at all surprising that Ritschl, on receiving this letter, noted in his diary (on 2 February 1872):

'Phantastic letter from Nietzsche. Megalomania'.²⁴

When he had read the book he wrote even more drastically: 'a brilliant fraud'. But he reserved these thoughts for his diary and wrote him a temperate, friendly letter, although he was unmistakably critical of his ideas. He came to the heart of the matter when he wrote:

I am too old to look for entirely new ways of life and of the mind. And what matters most. By nature I am so entirely wedded to the historical approach, and to the historical consideration of human affairs that I have not been able to discover the salvation of the world in any philosophical system, that I have never been able to describe the natural fading away of an epoch or of a phenomenon as suicide, that I do not consider the individualisation of life to be a retrograde step nor have I been able to believe that the intellectual achievement of a gifted, through historical development especially privileged nation could ever be the measuring yard for all nations and periods. It can be that just as little as one religion suffices, has sufficed and will ever suffice for the different national individualities. You can never expect from the 'Alexandrine' scholar that he condemns knowledge and take art to be the force which shapes, saves and liberates the world. The world is something different for every one.²⁵

Ritschl was clearly also worried about the impact the book might

²³ To Ritschl, 11 April 1869; *Briefe*, III, p. 201 f.

²⁴ Quoted in *Briefe* III, p. 461.

²⁵ To Nietzsche 15 February 1872; *Ges. Briefe*, III, p. 141.

have on susceptible minds. His words sound prophetic when he wonders:

whether the great mass of contemporary youth might not, by following Nietzsche's example, be led to an immature contempt of scholarship without exchanging it for a heightened appreciation of art – whether instead of fostering poetry we did not run the danger of opening the door for a general dilettantism.²⁶

Nietzsche's old teacher was disappointed and unwilling to follow his pupil on his metaphysical mountaineering. For him, scholarship was a much more modest, limited, rational undertaking and he benevolently hoped that Nietzsche would eventually find his way back to traditional scholarship.

Almost all other classical scholars reacted much more extremely to Nietzsche's provocation, uninhibited as they were by any benevolent, paternal friendship for Nietzsche such as Ritschl felt for him. They were plainly horrified, but, for the time, kept silent. When Rohde asked Zarncke, the editor of the *Literarische Zentralblatt*, a man of scholarly repute, to publish an enthusiastic review of Nietzsche's book,²⁷ his request was turned down. To offer to review a friend's book in a learned journal without being first approached was unusual, but Rohde's next step even more blatantly offended against traditional scholarly etiquette; he published a eulogising review in the Sunday supplement of the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*.²⁸ He should have known better and realised that by writing for a newspaper, even for its literary supplement, he was harming his friend rather than helping him. The offence seemed to be the more grievous since by defending his friend he appeared also to propagate his own cause. His action was bound to provoke a rebuttal. Rohde's review appeared on 26 May 1872. Not long afterwards the attack came and it was devastating. A young man, younger than Nietzsche himself, Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Möllendorff, at that time only twenty-three and an unknown Ph.D. of a very recent vintage, but later one of the greatest classical scholars of all time, savaged Nietzsche in a pamphlet with the sardonic title *Zukunfts-*

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 142.

²⁷ Reprinted in Karlfried Gründer (ed.) *Der Streit um Nietzsches Geburt der Tragödie*, Hildesheim, 1969, (quoted as Gründer) pp. 9-14 Berlin 1872.

²⁸ Gründer, pp. 15-26.

philologie (*The Scholarship of the Future*),²⁹ an allusion to Wagner's conception of 'music of the future' (*Zukunftsmusik*). Wilamowitz who belonged to the Berlin school of classical scholars hostile to Ritschl's Leipzig school had been angered by Nietzsche's attack on Ritschl's former Bonn colleague, Otto Jahn (with whom Ritschl had the notorious quarrel when still in Bonn); he was sensitive, too, because the criticism of his beloved scholarship came from someone with whom he had been at school in Pforta. Wilamowitz's wrath was sincere, even if its expression was not entirely felicitous: in later years he regretted publishing the hurriedly written pamphlet.³⁰ But he was right in thinking that scholarship itself was threatened: Nietzsche had done violence to historical facts and scholarly methods. Wilamowitz attacked Nietzsche with the utmost fury because the *Birth of Tragedy*, although it appeared in a scholar's cloak, was not a work of scholarship. He could not forgive Nietzsche this transgression, and he believed he could prove to the world Nietzsche's 'ignorance and lack of regard for truth'.³¹ The *Birth of Tragedy* might be a 'dionysian-appolline work of art',³² but it was not a work of scholarship, and in a purple passage, he adjured Nietzsche to give up his chair and stop corrupting German youth.³³ Nietzsche's approach, so Wilamowitz thought, was determined by his belief in the metaphysics of Wagner and Schopenhauer; he thus found in Greek art and culture what he was looking for, viz. an all-pervading Schopenhauerian pessimism, regardless of the historical facts. In the wake of his theories he also committed a large number of scholarly errors. Homer was, for Nietzsche, a great solitary figure — and not a poet inheriting a great tradition of song. He asserted that music preceded the word, but he ignored that the elegy was not sung: according to him, Euripides spoke with the voice of Socrates, but Socrates was only fourteen years old when Euripides' first play was performed! But these errors of detail are unimportant in comparison with Wilamowitz' main charge, repeated in his second pamphlet, that Nietzsche, in contradistinc-

²⁹ Gründer, pp. 27-55.

³⁰ Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Möllendorff, *Erinnerungen* 1848-1914, Leipzig, n.d. (1928), p. 129.

³¹ Gründer, p. 29.

³² Gründer, p. 55.

³³ Gründer, p. 55.

tion to Winckelmann, had failed to view Greek culture historically and had not sought to understand the beauty and development of Greek art. In short, he sought to superimpose a philosophical conception on Greek reality.

When he heard of the attack Nietzsche was worried, but when he read it he felt that it did not really bear on what he had said. He tried to take it lightly. His letters are full of jokes at Wilamowitz's expense. Still he must have been hurt, perhaps even touched on the raw; for he and Rohde plotted to annihilate Wilamowitz as a scholar. But it was left to Wagner to reply publicly on Nietzsche's behalf, once again in the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* (23 June 1872).³⁴ Not surprisingly, classical scholars did not take any notice of Wagner's open letter in defence of Nietzsche, particularly since he maintained that poets and artists in any case ignored classical scholars and their findings, an argument not likely to cut much ice with Wilamowitz and his fellow classical scholars or to endear Nietzsche to them.

Rohde followed this up by publishing a pamphlet which, on the suggestion of Nietzsche's friend Overbeck, he called *Afterphilologie (Bastard Scholarship)*.³⁵ Apparently believing the old adage that attack is the best form of defence he launched a powerful onslaught on Wilamowitz, but, unlike Wagner, he took issue with Wilamowitz's scholarship and recommended him to follow Heraclitus' advice: 'it is better to conceal one's own ignorance than to expose it by bragging.'³⁶ He did not however, apart from some general words of praise for Schopenhauer, defend Nietzsche's philosophical position, the presuppositions and consequences of which he ignored, but attacked Wilamowitz for alleged scholarly errors of detail. He succeeded in scoring some points, as Wilamowitz acknowledged in his reply to Rohde's pamphlet, but he also counterattacked by pointing to flaws in Rohde's argument. For Wilamowitz, the cardinal question is not one of being right or wrong in points of detail, but whether Greek studies should be scholarly or not – and Nietzsche's overall metaphysical view of art and culture in general is, in his opinion, decidedly unscholarly, to say the least.

³⁴ Gründer, pp. 57-64.

³⁵ Gründer, pp. 65-111.

³⁶ Gründer, p. 108.

Wilamowitz' reply (in a second instalment appropriately called *Zukunftsphilologie. Zweites Stück* <*The Scholarship of the Future. II.*>)³⁷ does not add anything of importance to his earlier pamphlet, but it is a vigorous, and, on the whole, not unsuccessful defence against Rohde's strictures on his scholarship. He also correctly emphasised that a wide gulf separated Nietzsche from Rohde.

Thus ended the famous quarrel about the *Birth of Tragedy*, famous less because of the vehemence and scope of the polemic than because of the stature of the combatants. What was at stake was the status and methods of scholarship, but that issue was never squarely faced, or even clearly brought into the open.

As far as the classical scholars were concerned, however, the outcome was crystal-clear. They did not accept Nietzsche's main contention and followed Wilamowitz and not Nietzsche.³⁸ Their attitude is summed up in the words of Hermann Usener, Professor of Classics at Bonn, a man whom Nietzsche greatly esteemed:

it is the greatest nonsense, of no use to any one. Whoever writes that kind of stuff is dead as a scholar.³⁹

Nietzsche was for his professorial colleagues, as he put it himself, 'the most objectionable scholar of the day'.⁴⁰ They believed he had committed a crime and 'condemned him to death',⁴¹ so to speak. Only a few friends stood by him; even the students stayed away from his lectures: in the winter term of 1872/73, only two turned up, neither of them studying classics.

But Nietzsche did not despair. He speculated whether classical scholars had the strength to annihilate anyone and consoled himself with the thought of the wide gulf separating his work from pure scholarship, a thought he would not, however, admit to Ritschl. Nevertheless, the book remained for scholars, at its best, a *succès de scandale*. It only won readers when Nietzsche's work as a

³⁷ Gründer, pp. 114-135.

³⁸ For a good account of Nietzsche's classical scholarship cf. Ernst Howald, *Nietzsche und die klassische Philologie*, Gotha, 1920; cf. also the account in the most thorough work on Nietzsche by Charles Andler (*Nietzsche. Sa vie et sa pensée*), 6 vols., Paris, 1920-31.

³⁹ cf. Nietzsche's letter to Rohde, 25 October 1872 (*Briefe*, III, p. 302) in which the sentence is quoted.

⁴⁰ To Malwida von Meysenbug, 7 November 1872; *Briefe*, III, p. 313.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

whole had been discovered and made famous by Georg Brandes, the eminent Danish critic.

Was this hostility on the part of scholars justified? Or was Wilamowitz' attack and the outlawing of Nietzsche by classical scholars only another of the many instances where scholars, arrogant and self-righteous as pharisees, failed to recognize a genius when he appeared? Was their attack yet another of the kind that Reuchlin, one of the greatest German scholars of all times, had had to suffer more than three centuries earlier from contemporary obscurantists and dimwits? Undoubtedly, the classical scholars failed to recognize Nietzsche's genius. But they can hardly be blamed for that. His earlier works of scholarship had been good, indeed, very good, but mainly remarkable on account of his youth; they were not revolutionary. Nor did the *Birth of Tragedy* reveal his gifts as an original thinker which were largely concealed by his style and his subject-matter. His fellow scholars might have penetrated the mist of his style, but the subject was a solid obstacle. On the one hand, it undeniably belonged to the field of classical scholarship, and was therefore, in principle, capable of being investigated by scholarly methods. On the other hand, Nietzsche's main contention cannot be tested and his method is, accordingly, unscholarly. Indeed, Nietzsche was not even interested in testing his hypothesis. He did not want to produce evidence to support it which could be challenged and sifted. He was only concerned with intuitively apprehending the problem as a whole. But the origins, climax and decline of a literary genre cannot be intuited this way. Something quite different has to be done: to disentangle the interplay of many strands of thoughts and many literary and social factors. This Nietzsche was not prepared to do. Nor was he willing to admit the possibility that chance – for who can safely predict or satisfactorily explain the rise of a great poet or of a period? – may have played its part.

Understandably, scholars did not continue Nietzsche's line of argument, but followed quite different paths.⁴² Nietzsche did not in-

⁴²In a most interesting as yet unpublished lecture on 'Nietzsche and the Ancient World', Hugh Lloyd Jones, Regius Professor of Greek in the University of Oxford, argues that Nietzsche's emphasis on the irrational basis of Greek culture has been decisive and that the *Birth of Tragedy*, on

itiate a new kind of scholarship, nor did he produce a new theory of scholarship that carries conviction. Of course, the questions as to the end of scholarly and scientific activity and of academic and educational institutions which implicitly form the background of the work and on which he explicitly discoursed in other works are still being discussed. But how could that be otherwise? These issues do not allow of a final, let alone of an easy, answer. The debate has, therefore, to rage on.

Nietzsche himself completely turned his back on classical scholarship. He saw it as the source of 'the most shallow enlightenment, always dishonest. Finally, it had become ineffectual.'⁴³ Scholars, so he thought, lacked the feeling for what is really vital in thought. 'When they talk of scholarship they never go to the root [of the matter]. They never pose the question of scholarship as a problem.'⁴⁴

On reflection, the quarrel about the *Birth of Tragedy* is probably nothing but a curious episode in the history of scholarship, but this does not tell us anything about the philosophical value of Nietzsche's book. It is thus for philosophy to take up the enquiry.

III

The Birth of Tragedy fails to satisfy the standards of historical scholarship. Nor does it fare better as a philosophical treatise. It was Nietzsche's tacit intention to vindicate Wagner's music drama philosophically, but he does not make a genuine attempt to do so. Wagner's achievement is praised because his work reveals an affinity with the spirit of Schopenhauer and affords an analogy with Greek tragedy, but the argument is couched in very general terms. Other philosophical issues are, however, raised, but his manner of resolving them is open to severe criticism. However passionate Nietzsche's concern with philosophical truth was, his approach is inconsistent and self-contradictory. On the one hand, art is for him semblance, indeed, the semblance of semblance. Thus, it cannot

this account, constitutes a turning point in Greek scholarship and that, despite all its defects, it has proved to be a seminal work. This view, if correct, would of course make it necessary to modify my argument on one important point.

⁴³ *WGr*, X, p. 276.

⁴⁴ *WGr*, XIV, p. 369.

claim to convey or represent truth. On the other hand, scholarship (or science) which seeks to establish truth is the victim of an illusion; for the intellect is inherently incapable of grasping the world as a whole, and so it is bound to come up against the limits of intellectual enquiry and there suffers shipwreck. On what grounds do we prefer one illusion to another? If fullness of life, or usefulness for living, are the criteria why should art enable a man to fulfil or endure life more effectively than scholarship? To assert this is to stake a metaphysical claim incapable of proof. To say that art is a better guide to life than scholarship because, in contradistinction to scholarship, it springs from an awareness of suffering is clearly not enough, even if the major premise of the argument be true. But is there any reason to believe that it is true? Merely to assert it as true is not enough. Furthermore, is the antithesis between art and scholarship sensible? Are they really enemies, as Nietzsche will have it. Or is he not caught in the trap of his own approach?

Nietzsche's questions may appear bizarre, if not misleading. Nonetheless, it is worth while to look at the reasons that prompted him to ask these questions for he was trying to solve an interesting problem. He asked the question: which is the best way to attain truth, by way of art or of scholarship? Since antiquity claims have been advanced by both artists and scholars. Poets, for instance, have been thought to be the spokesmen of the gods of the makers of myths – and, thus, to be fabricators of lies. On the other hand, scholars (and scientists) have always sought to discover truth and have also been condemned for perpetually and necessarily failing to reach their goal. Or, to put it differently, Nietzsche asks the question which is the best way properly to understand life, its meaning and its various manifestations? Is this best done by way of creative intuition or intellectual cognition? And how does culture arise? Is the artist or the scholar more likely to promote it?

In the years before the actual composition of the *Birth of Tragedy* Nietzsche thought that both ways, that of art and that of scholarship, led to truth. In his Bâle inaugural lecture *Homer and Classical Scholarship* he still thinks so:

Life is worth living, art maintains, the most beautiful seductress – life is worth knowing, so scholarship states.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ W, III, p. 159.

By the time he came to write the *Birth of Tragedy* he had changed his position. Knowledge is less important than life. Art is of greater value than scholarship.⁴⁶ He writes:

The will to semblance, to illusion, to deception, to becoming, is deeper, more metaphysical than the ways to truth, to reality, to beauty.⁴⁷

But Nietzsche deceived himself. For did he not write, or rather attempt to write, a scholarly work? There is thus a discrepancy between his statements and his aims. His conviction of the paradigmatic character of both art and the artist does not correspond to his own practice. He is not yet willing to turn what he wanted to say into poetry. He still wishes to speak as a scholar, to appeal to the world of scholarship and give it a new impetus and a new direction.

Nietzsche was fascinated by the paradox of reason looking for truth, but never finding it, since its powers – unrecognised by reason itself – are of their very nature unequal to the task. The world is irrational and reason (and its offspring, scholarship and science) can never see the whole, but only parts of the whole. Sooner or later, and here Nietzsche is indebted to Kant and Schopenhauer, they must become aware of their own limits. Unlike them, art knows no boundaries of the kind. Art does not seek to convey truth through reason. It creates illusions which are analogous to the illusions of life. From the intuition of art it is not truth that suffers but scholarship, especially classical scholarship, which had, Nietzsche was convinced, proved quite inadequate to handle poetry or to tackle the question of aesthetic values. For how can intellectual cognition do justice to art, i.e. to illusion and thus to a lie?

But what is truth? Nietzsche discusses this epistemological question in an early essay *On Truth and Art in a non-moral Sense*. Truth is beyond both art and scholarship. It is a mode of lying. It is indeed the goal of life itself which can possibly be reached only by the genuine philosopher, a man who, like Nietzsche, seeks to combine art and scholarship. But even this hope may yet be a deception: for we may have become so accustomed to a lie that it as-

⁴⁶ Cf. Karl Jaspers, *Nietzsche. Einführung in das Verständnis seines Philosophierens*, 3rd ed., Berlin, 1950, for a discussion of this aspect.

⁴⁷ WGr, XIV, p. 369.

sumes for us the appearance of truth:

For what we call truth is an illusion of which we have forgotten that it is one.⁴⁸

When Nietzsche wrote the *Birth of Tragedy* he was not aware of the whole extent of the problem. His attempt to give scholarship a philosophical basis (i.e. for him, to give it the poetic flavour of art) surely implied his belief that the problem of truth could be solved, or at least be depicted by art and scholarship.

The question as to the function of art and whether it can claim to convey truth is only one of the many problems to which the *Birth of Tragedy* gives rise, however important this problem was for Nietzsche himself. But the work raises many other questions: one of them is: how does Nietzsche arrive at the aesthetic criteria by which he judges art? Greek tragedy, so we are told, is exemplary, but why is this so? Does Nietzsche base his judgement on intuitive insight? And if so, of what kind? Nietzsche does not give any answer to any of these questions. It does not suffice to say that Greek Tragedy is great because it united the Apollinine and Dionysian elements. This would be far too vague and also amounts to a circular argument. It is also not clear whether Nietzsche considers the Apollinine and Dionysian to be historical forces, psychological impulses or aesthetic criteria. In the work itself he alludes to all these possibilities.⁴⁹ In the last resort, he postulates their existence, but he does not argue the case sufficiently. Merely to state categorically as he does that great art must be or is like the art of the Greeks and that similar conditions have to prevail if it is to flourish is not enough.⁵⁰

Great art is necessary. Only then can a period be great. Only then has life significance and only then can we speak of culture. So much we may learn from the central sentence of the *Birth of Tragedy*: 'Only as an *aesthetic* phenomenon can existence and the world be for ever *justified*'.⁵¹ But does this cardinal statement

⁴⁸ W, III, p. 321.

⁴⁹ Cf. W, I, p. 33; WGr, XIV, p. 364; W, II, p. 1109.

⁵⁰ Cf. Walter Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*, Princeton, N.J. 1950, p. 108 who points out that Nietzsche in the *Birth of Tragedy* did not fully develop a theory of aesthetics.

⁵¹ W, I, p. 40.

really say that? If the sentence is examined it appears as anything but clear.⁵² Does a single aesthetic phenomenon suffice for all times? Or must every individual be confronted with an aesthetic phenomenon and then have an aesthetic experience? And if so, how often must he have it? Moreover, is it one or several (or many?) individuals who have to undergo this experience? Furthermore, if it be so how often has this to happen? Does it perhaps mean that a work of art has perennial or even 'eternal' value? Does Nietzsche speak of 'eternal' works of art, or can life, existence, the world itself, become an aesthetic phenomenon? Indeed, how can we know what constitutes an aesthetic phenomenon? Or again, how can the semblance – art – justify life and culture? Or is life, existence or the world itself to be seen as a work of art and hence as an aesthetic phenomenon? Is this judgement to be made from the perspective of the primordial one? But how can we pass judgement on the world of appearance from that point of view since the primordial one cannot be known? Nietzsche's utterance remains enigmatic. Several interpretations are possible, but none carries conviction or has more plausibility than the others. The statement is thus poetic rather than philosophic.

This problem was for him a personal experience; he was oscillating between both modes of experience. He wished to be both an artist and a scholar, but he was an artist with the bad conscience of a scholar,⁵³ and a scholar with the bad conscience of an artist. And later on he blamed himself for not having written a work of imaginative literature; for a work of that kind would have had a much greater impact:

It should have sung this new soul, and not spoken. What a pity that I did not dare to say what I had to say as a poet. I might have been able to do so.⁵⁴

But was Nietzsche really an artist, or was he merely receptive to

⁵² H.A. Reyburn (in collaboration with H.E. Hinderks and S.G. Taylor), *Nietzsche. The Story of a Human Philosopher*, London, 1948, p.132 calls this statement 'more startling than intelligible'. Reyburn then proceeds to interpret it, but even his quite plausible account leaves several questions unanswered, to say the least.

⁵³ Maria Bindschedler, *Nietzsche und die poetische Lüge*, 2nd ed. Bâle, 1962, p.34.

⁵⁴ W, I, p.2.

art? Admittedly, later on he wrote some fine poetry, and *Thus spake Zarathustra* is much more a work of poetry than of philosophy. At the time when he wrote the *Birth of Tragedy*, however, he also wished to be a composer. In the summer of 1872 he sent one of his compositions to Hans von Bülow, the famous conductor and champion of Wagner's operas. But Bülow's response was not what Nietzsche had hoped: he condemned the piece outright without the slightest attempt to spare Nietzsche's *amour propre*. He wrote:

Your Manfred-meditations are the most extreme instance of fantastic extravagance, the least pleasant and anti-musical composition which I have come across. I had to ask myself on several occasions: is the whole piece a joke? Did you wish perhaps to produce a parody of the so-called music of the future? – Are you intentionally poking fun at the rules of sound connection, from higher syntax to orthodox spelling? Apart from the psychological interest – for in your musical fever-product there is an unusual mind at work, still distinguished despite all errors – it has only the value of a crime in the moral world. I have not been able to discover a trace of the apollinine element: as far as the dionysian is concerned I had, quite frankly, to think more of the *lendemain* of a bacchanal than of a bacchanal itself.⁵⁵

For Nietzsche this reply appears to have been a devastating blow. He apologized to Bülow for sending him the piece⁵⁶ and told his friends that he had been cured of a tiresome misapprehension. But it must be doubted whether he really gave up his dream of being acknowledged as a composer of standing. A few months later he was, understandably, delighted when he heard that Liszt had praised his 'Manfred-meditations'.⁵⁷ A later comment by Peter Gast, the editor of Nietzsche's correspondence with Bülow, may also be indicative of his mood: Gast condemned Bülow's attitude and called the work 'an excellent symphonic achievement in every respect'⁵⁸ which Bülow groundlessly attacked. There is some reason to assume, although it cannot be proved, that Gast, who as

⁵⁵ To Nietzsche, 24 July 1872; *Ges. Br.*, III, p. 349 ff.

⁵⁶ Cf. to Hans von Bülow, 29 October 1872; *Briefe*, III, p. 349.

⁵⁷ To Elisabeth Nietzsche, 26 October 1872; *Briefe*, III, p. 305; also of letter to Rohde 27 October 1872; *Briefe*, III, p. 307.

⁵⁸ *Ges. Br.*, III, p. 347.

Nietzsche's disciple and friend was familiar with many of his views, spoke with his master's voice. This presumption is borne out by Nietzsche sending Bülow some fifteen years later another piece of music which he had composed. In the accompanying letter he made it quite clear that this time he was convinced of the high quality of the work.⁵⁹ Bülow did not reply himself, but left it to his wife to thank him courteously and excuse her husband's failure to reply on the grounds of his many commitments,⁶⁰ an unmistakable rejoinder. Indeed, Bülow's silence was most expressive.

Undoubtedly Nietzsche was not without musical talent, but as a composer his work is not significant. He cannot be mentioned in the same breath as the friend of his early days, Wagner – far from it. Nor does his music reveal the Dionysian qualities which he wished it to have in the anti-Wagnerian period.⁶¹ He was, to quote Gustav Mahler, 'a composer manqué'.⁶² But as a poet, albeit a minor one, he had to be taken seriously.

It is, of course, also possible that Nietzsche, as a young man, cherished the hope of rivalling Wagner himself. If he had hoped for success of that kind, he is unlikely to have entertained it consistently. *The Birth of Tragedy* does not say explicitly whether Wagner's operas constitute the rebirth of tragedy, or whether a future musical drama had still to be created in order to realize these aims. It is, thus, not impossible that Nietzsche sometimes expected to achieve future artistic triumphs which would allow him to attain the goal set out in the *Birth of Tragedy*. These hopes are, indeed, voiced in *Ecce Homo*, his intellectual autobiography which, though it contains much exaggeration, also expresses many truths about himself and his conscious and unconscious hopes and beliefs. In this work he not only sees *Zarathustra* and its poet as the artist of the future, but he states explicitly in the chapter dealing with the *Birth of Tragedy* that whatever he said about Wagner in his essay *Richard Wagner in Bayreuth* should really be applied to himself:

⁵⁹ To Hans von Bülow, 22 October 1887; *Ges. Br.*, p. 367.

⁶⁰ Marie von Bülow to Nietzsche, 26 October 1887; *Ges. Br.*, III, p. 368.

⁶¹ Cf. Martin Vogel. *Apollinisch und Dionysisch. Die Geschichte eines genialen Irrtums*, (Studien zur Musikgeschichte des 19. Jahrhunderts, 6). Regensburg, 1966, pp. 219-245 for an analysis of Nietzsche's music.

⁶² Quoted *ibid.*, p. 219.

In all psychologically decisive passages there is talk only of myself. Wherever the name 'Wagner' appears in the text my own name or the word 'Zarathustra' may be substituted without compunction. The whole of image of the dithyrambic artist is the image of the pre-existent poet of Zarathustra, depicted with abysmal depth, not for a single moment touching Wagnerian reality. Wagner himself grasped this fact; he did not recognize himself in this essay.⁶³

And what Nietzsche said about Wagner in *Richard Wagner in Bayreuth* closely corresponds to the views about him and his work expressed in the *Birth of Tragedy*. There are therefore some grounds for assuming that the *Birth of Tragedy* is, in some ways, also an attempt to justify his own position and aspirations as an artist. Indeed, in this respect at least, it anticipated his achievement as the poet of *Thus spake Zarathustra* and his lyrics, even if it did not vindicate the musical composition which he was writing, or about to write, at that time.

This poetic approach to history and life corresponds to Nietzsche's later conviction that the *Birth of Tragedy* was a watershed in European intellectual history; for here the path to irrationalism began. The work, so he thought, contained two decisive innovations. Firstly, it presented an understanding of 'the dionysian phenomenon in the life of the Greeks',⁶⁴ a phenomenon of which it gave the first psychological account and in which the roots of Greek art were found. Secondly, it made it possible to understand Socrates and his philosophy as the tools of Greek enlightenment and recognized them for the first time as typical of its decadence. And he spoke of 'rationality against instinct, rationality at any cost as a dangerous force that undermines life.'⁶⁵

Nietzsche's attack on Socrates and Plato as symptoms of decadence, as pseudo-Greek, as anti-Greek, is as extravagant as his praise of Dionysus. His formulation is original, even if it recalls Romantic attacks directed against the enlightenment. But it is no less dangerous. Thomas Mann criticised him not without justice for preferring instinct to the intellect, brute life to reason; for, as

⁶³ W, II, p. 1112.

⁶⁴ W, II, 1109 (*Ecce Homo*).

⁶⁵ *ibid.*

he remarked, there seemed to us to be not the least danger that the intellect might dominate human affairs.⁶⁶ Indeed, however brilliant and seductive Nietzsche's formulations may sound, they offer no reason why a scholar should, as Ritschl had immediately recognized, accept so irrationalist an approach. And whoever, in the wake of Nietzsche, wishes to condemn scholarship or science should at least know which idol he is worshipping.

IV

After the failure of the *Birth of Tragedy* Nietzsche abandoned all hope of doing philosophical work in conjunction with his classical studies. He realized that there could be no marriage between historical scholarship and his own philosophical outlook. He realized, too, that to combine these two perspectives could mar his writing.

So much for the work itself. Nietzsche changed his own views later on in life; for a time after his quarrel with Wagner, he rated his intellect higher and art lower, but was soon struck by the ambiguity of all experience. The well-known line from *Thus spake Zarathustra* 'Poets lie too much – But Zarathustra, too, is a poet',⁶⁷ expresses his own ambivalence and his own dilemma which he was never able to resolve, whatever way he looked at it.⁶⁸ But his approach to the problem was always conditioned by the strands of thought that came first in the *Birth of Tragedy*.

The work itself had a curious history. Although it is unsatisfactory as a work of scholarship or philosophy, and although its cultural prophecies failed, it gave rise to new myths – to the myths of Apollo and Dionysos, in particular to the Dionysian basis of all art – and thus inaugurated a new age of German writers,⁶⁹

⁶⁶ Cf. Thomas Mann, 'Nietzsche's Philosophie im Lichte unserer Erfahrung', *Schriften und Reden zur Literatur, Kunst und Philosophie* (ed. Hans Bürgin), III, Frankfurt/Main, 1968, p. 37.

⁶⁷ *W*, II, p. 383.

⁶⁸ For an analysis of Nietzsche's later view of art cf. Helge Hultberg, *Die Kunstanschauung Nietzsches* Bergen und Oslo, 1964; cf. also Hans Peter Pütz, *Friedrich Nietzsche*, Stuttgart, 1967 and *Kunst und Künstlertum bei Nietzsche und Thomas Mann*, 1965, pp. 1-45.

⁶⁹ Cf. Vogel, *Apollinisch und Dionysisch*, pp. 197-218 and 247-280; cf. also Paul Böckmann, 'Die Bedeutung Nietzsche für die Situation der

for myths are frequently more important to artists than the conclusions of reason.

The question whether art is able to convey truth since it is a lie and artists are liars has exercised many German writers in the first half of the twentieth century. And the belief in the Dionysian character of Greek drama and culture has had an equal impact on German education. This story cannot be told here, for it would be tantamount to describing a great part of German writing in the years after Nietzsche's rise to fame in the early 1890's, after his discovery by Georg Brandes. But, in conclusion, *one* point must be stressed: The *Birth of Tragedy* had an impact quite different from what Nietzsche had hoped. Its ideas were not taken up by the naive writers who might be in tune with the world of Dionysus, but rather by those reflective, intellectual writers who resembled Euripides and who had eaten from the tree of knowledge. But such is the irony of life: intention and impact frequently do not go together.

modernen Literatur', *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte*, XXVII, 1953, pp.77-101; Anni Carlsson, 'Der Mythos als Maske Friedrich Nietzsches', *Germanisch-Romanische Monatsschrift*, XXXIV, (N.F. VIII), 1968; and Max L. Baeumer, 'Das Dionysische-Entwicklung eines literarischen Klischees', *Colloquia Germanica*, 1967, pp.253-262 for a discussion of this question.