Truth as Value:
Nietzsche's Escape from Nihilism

By

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Abstract

Nietzsche's conception of truth provides the foundation for his entire philosophy. To clarify his view of what it means for a proposition to be "true," this thesis considers Nietzsche's attacks (in his writings from 1885 on) on three previous conceptions of truth. Nietzsche's own view then appears as an attempt to satisfy the needs out of which the belief in the truth of the various propositions arose. "Will to power" is viewed as men's need to fulfill their basic human needs and Nietzsche's conception of truth as value is seen as making human life the basis of valuations. Thereby avoiding what Nietzsche considers "Nihilism."

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The general structure of the thesis as well as numerous technical improvements are due to the conscientious assistance of my thesis advisor. Credit is also due my typist, Doris Whiteman, for providing moral support throughout and her diligent labors in the last stages.

With topic, structure and typing supplied by others, the pleasure (and frustration) of reading and contemplating Nietzsche's philosophy remained mine.

Note on references

With the exception of Nietzsche's own works, references are cited throughout the thesis by their author's name. Works quoted and those useful in the preparation of the thesis are listed in the Bibliography with their publishing information.

The following abbreviations are used in referring to Nietzsche's writings:

BG&E   *Beyond Good and Evil*

               (*Jenseits von Gut und Bose*, 1886)

GM   *Genealogy of Morals*

               (*Zur Genealogie der Moral*, 1887)

HAH   *Human, All-Too Human*

               (*Menschliches, Allzu Menschliches*, 1882)

JW   *Joyful Wisdom*

               (*Die Frohliche Wissenschaft*, 1882)

Twil.   *Twilight of the Idols*

               (*Die Gotzen-Dammerung*, 1889)

WP   *The Will to Power*

               (*Der Wille zur Macht*, posthumous)

Zar.   *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*

               (*Also Sprach Zarathustra*, 1885)

PN   *The Portable Nietzsche*, W. Kaufmann (ed.)

               (includes Twil. And Zar.)

Content

Introduction

Friedrich Nietzsche has been one of the most influential writers of recent times. He has also been one of the most misunderstood. This is partly due to the distortions by his sister on behalf of the Nazis. But it is due to other things as well. One problem is merely formal. Nietzsche seemed to hide his thoughts behind images and obscure references, which can only be understood after his ideas have been understood. He was aware of this problem in other writers and may have consciously adopted it for his own purposes. In his discussion of the "Free Spirit," Nietzsche says, "Every profound spirit needs a mask, around every profound spirit a mask is growing" (BG&E 40). Luckily, Nietzsche's personal notes, which are often quite clear, have been published in *The Will to Power*, although they have been very poorly translated. By seeing Nietzsche's arguments for his views in his notes, we can then go back to his works and understand their meaning. The other problem with understanding Nietzsche is that he held a conception of truth that is in many ways different from the traditional view of truth and that is the foundation, or at least a corollary of nearly all of his philosophy. It is my purpose in this thesis to explore that conception of truth, which forms the basis for any understanding of Nietzsche's writings.

In order to make Nietzsche's conception of truth clear, I shall first consider his attack on three different ways of establishing the truth of a proposition, and in order to do this I will consider the way in which particular people have attempted to establish the truth of three propositions: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor," "X is the cause of Y" and "The world is composed of unities." After seeing Nietzsche's objections to these three ways of thinking about the truth, I can show what Nietzsche's own conception of truth is and how it arises from his criticisms.

A concluding section will show the relevance of Nietzsche's conception of truth to wider issues.

Chapter I. The truth of the statement, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor"

The view

The principle that people should obey the Christian moral imperative to love one's neighbors was supposed to be true by virtue of its foundation—the will of God. The imperative was supposed to be a necessary principle for a moral Christian society. Furthermore, it was thought that those who followed the principle of neighbor love could thereby attain a higher spiritual state than those who did not, and would continue to improve themselves by the continued practice of this principle. Because it was though to have been proclaimed by God, the principle of neighbor love was not considered to be open to rejection or modification on the basis of its actual results or the will of men.

Nietzsche argued that the statement, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor," had an immoral origin in the hate or fear of neighbors. He thought that a society that truly believed in neighbor love would not make a virtue or morality out of it and that if neighbor love were completely accepted than its very *raison d'etre* would disappear and it would no longer be accepted as a rule. According to Nietzsche, those who investigated and preached the principle of neighbor love were of low or only average spiritedness; they feared the stronger instincts of their neighbors and were disinclined to self-improvement. Neighbor love, Nietzsche thought, leads to conformity and stagnation. Moreover, any moral judgment is susceptible to criticism and replacement if it proves unacceptable by empirical standards of the utility of its results. The fact that morality does not have a divine origin deprives it of any *a priori* superiority to any other possible system of how to lead one's life.

> Morality in Europe today is … merely one type of human morality beside which, before which, and after which many other types, above all *higher* moralities are, or ought to be possible. But this morality resists such a "possibility." (BG&E 202)

Outline of a criticism of morality

Morality as the work of Immorality.

      1.   In order that moral values may attain to *supremacy*, a host of immoral forces and passions must assist them.

      2.   The establishment of moral values is the work of immoral passions and considerations.

  A. *Morality as the work of error*.

  B. *Morality gradually contradicts itself*.

  C. To what extent was morality *dangerous* to life? ….

  D. Contra-account: the *usefulness* of morality to life. ….

      4.   Morality may be a preservative measure opposed to the terrible outbursts of the mighty: it is useful to the "lowly."

  (WP 226)

Morality as the work of immorality

In times such as the "best period of the Romans," strong instincts like the desire to be a powerful master were diverted, according to Nietzsche, to activities outside the society. Romans became involved in conquering other lands. When energies are then later centered within the societies, the instincts of the previously honored strong became a threat to the majority. Rear of the neighbors arises in the weak masses who once praised their strong neighbors. Those who were praised as "chosen by the gods" and honored for their piety are now condemned as immoral. "Love of the neighbor" is preached by those who fear their neighbors in the hopes of preventing their neighbors' strength from doing then any harm. "Love" has its origin in fear. Morality results from a reversal of the older morality, not from an absolute commandment. Morality is proclaimed out of the fears of weak men, not by revelations of an all-powerful god.

> In the last analysis, "love of the neighbor" is always something secondary, partly conventional and arbitrary—illusory in relation to *fear of the neighbor*…. Certain strong and dangerous drives like an enterprising spirit, foolhardiness, vengefulness, craftiness, rapacity, and the lust to rule, which

had so far not merely been honored… are now experienced as doubly dangerous, since the channels to divert them are lacking and, and, step upon step, they are branded as immoral and abandoned to slander…. Fear is again the mother of morals. (BG&E 201)

Morality as the work of error

Nietzsche claimed that the morality of neighbor love was an excuse to avoid the hard work of improving oneself in the sense of overcoming the temptations of conformity to set and strive to attain personal goals based on personal needs. The charitable response is an avoidance of the proper task: creating ones own life. Neighbor love represents a lack of real love and concern for oneself due, quite possibly, to a self-repulsion and a weakness of the will to create. Creating a virtuous appearance through manifesting neighbor love impresses others and leads to a deceptive sense of self-satisfaction with ones own virtuosity when it is really an escape from dissatisfaction with oneself.

<div align="center">On Love of the Neighbor</div>

You crowd around your neighbor and have fine words for it. But I say unto you: your love of the neighbor is your bad love of yourselves. You flee to your neighbor from yourselves and would like to make a virtue out of that; but I see through your "selflessness"…. You invite a witness when you want to speak well of yourselves; and when you have seduced him to think well of you, they you think well of yourselves. (Zar., PN. 172-3)

Morality as contradictory

Nietzsche thought that the very fact that neighbor love and all it stood for were consciously considered virtuous and moral was a proof that they were not instigated as virtues by a moral (in these terms) force of group of people. Nietzsche argued that the concept of "moral" entails that the given action not be done in order to be virtuous, but rather because of the actor's virtue. If people loved their neighbors because

they really loved their neighbors, there would never have arisen the notion of calling this moral.

> Supposing that even then there was a constant little exercise of consideration. Pity, fairness, mildness, reciprocity of assistance; supposing that even in that state of society all those drives are active that later receive the honorary designation of 'virtual' and eventually almost coincide with the concept of 'morality'—in that period they do not yet all belong in the realm of moral valuations; they are still extra-moral. (BG&E 201)

Here Nietzsche apparently thinks that "morality" only pertains to principles of behavior that are not naturally accepted and must be consciously imposed by preaching. In a time when nobody would thing of not "loving their neighbors," nobody would proclaim "Thou shalt love thy neighbor" as a moral principle. Only when people begin to hate their neighbors, must the principle of neighbor love be preached as morality. As long as everyone in society remains "decently" dressed, nobody proclaims "Thou shalt dress" as a principle, but when some people stop following the "natural" conventions, then dress becomes a moral issue. Thus, on Nietzsche's view, principles of behavior become moral issues when they are not being followed; morality arises from immorality.

Similarly, when a moral imperative is completely successful, it is obeyed naturally and no longer considered "morality." Thus, Nietzsche thinks that the fact that neighbor love is considered a virtue shows both that it arose out of un-virtuous circumstances and that the adoption of the virtue has not been entirely successful. Neighbor love leads, Nietzsche thinks, to the abolition of danger and hence to the disappearance of fear. Without fear, the origin and foundation of neighbor love—there would no longer be any need for the morality of neighbor love. "Supposing that one could altogether abolish danger, the reason for fear, this morality would be abolished, too, *eo ipso*: it would no longer be needed, it would no longer consider itself necessary." (ibid.) If successful, the morality of neighbor love must gradually contradict itself as morality. It can neither start nor end as morality.

Morality as danger

Neighbor love is, according to Nietzsche, a way of avoiding the task of creating ones own life in a way superior to its present state. The danger inherent in the morality is this forgetfulness of oneself—often purposefully out of dislike and weakness of the will to create something better.

> I teach you not the neighbor, but the friend. The friend should be the festival of the earth to you and an anticipation of the overman. I teach you the friend and his overflowing heart. But one must learn to be a sponge if one wants to be loved by hearts that overflow. (Zar., PN 174)

Rather than avoiding ones own concerns by loving his neighbors, men should form friendships which result in reciprocity of assistance, furthering the development of both participants through each helping the other to help himself and each using the other's assistance to strive toward the goals that he has posited on the basis of his needs or at least to reach the stage at which his goals are based upon his own needs.

Morality as useful

The morality of neighbor love is, Nietzsche thinks, only useful to men of mediocre or average ability to command (and who would therefore be commanded by the stronger without the policy of neighbor love), those who are self-satisfied until someone of superior ability and achievement shows up their mediocrity by comparison. (Even this utility is limited by the contradictory nature of this morality, as Nietzsche showed previously.) The valuations derived from the principle of neighbor love are opposed to the accomplishments of these men who, by concerning themselves with their own betterment, rise above the average level of achievement. These values honor the weak, average man who, through laziness or an aversion to himself, turns his interest away from himself.

> The highest and strongest drives, when they break out passionately and drive the individual far above the average and the flats of the herd conscience, wreck the self-confidence

of the community, its faith in itself, and it is as if its spine snapped. Hence just these drives are branded and slandered most. High and independent spirituality, the will to stand alone, even a powerful reason are experienced as dangers; everything that elevates an individual above the herd and intimidates the neighbor is henceforth called *evil*; and the fair, modest, submissive, conforming mentality, the mediocrity of desires attains moral designations and honors … the "lamb" even more than the "sheep," gains in respect. (BG&E 201)

Critique of Nietzsche's view of neighborly love

Nietzsche's attack on the morality of neighbor love is basically two-fold: because it has its origin in immorality and error, there is no *a priori* proof of its validity on the basis of a moral origin; and because it has certain consequences, it is an undesirable rule for at least some people. Nietzsche claims that the commandment to love ones neighbors was foisted upon society by the powerless people who feared the strength of their neighbors. However, the origin of the morality of neighbor love is open to another interpretation equally plausible but diametrically opposed to Nietzsche's: that the morality of neighbor love was instigated by the powerful to keep the deprived masses from rebelling and to make them identify with and help the powerful. This certainly seems to have been how Christian morality was used in Europe of the Dark Ages, in Spain during the Inquisition and in the American slave South, to mention just a few examples. Either account, however, would serve to destroy popular faith in the divine origin of the imperative to love ones neighbors and would result in awakening people from a dogmatic acceptance of the truth of the statement that on ought to practice neighbor love. This would force them to question the validity of Christian morality in the absence of a belief in the God that originally justified that morality. It also raises the issue of what interests or values Christian morality supports, and thereby places that morality with any other principle for guiding human behavior.

The claim that love of ones neighbor is a hypocritical expression of self-hate is, as far as can be known, probably true in many cases. Since the motives of fictional characters can often be known with greater

certainty than those of real people, the clearest substantiations of Nietzsche's analysis of neighbor love are found in literature. The narrator in Albert Camus' *The Fall*, Jean-Baptiste Clamence, provides a perfect example of a person who practices love of his neighbors as a way of self-glorification. His public acts of charity are clear instances of what Nietzsche calls inviting "a witness when you want to speak well of yourself." On the other hand, we must admit the possibility that many people do practice love of their neighbors in a way that Nietzsche would approve of—though these examples may be few compared to those who preach and practice love of their neighbors hypocritically.

Nietzsche's "proof" that the morality of neighbor love is contradictory because in a state of its complete fulfillment it would no longer be considered "morality" seems rather irrelevant even if true; it merely shows that the conscious recognition of that morality is necessary before achieving the goal of unselfconscious neighbor love

Nietzsche's substitution of friendship as a way of furthering ones own development rather than ignoring oneself to help others sounds like an excellent idea. Consider the saying, "Behind every great man there is a woman." While it may not be true in every case (e.g., in Nietzsche's), it is likely that the close companionship of a wife or mother or good friend has been of enormous assistance in the development and productivity of most great men, by giving the necessary encouragement or providing the pair of eyes in which the men wanted to look great, if nothing else.

The notion that morality is useful to the mediocre masses is derived from Nietzsche's analysis of the origins of Christian morality and is open to the same possible counter-examples. Was it really better for the slaves and peasants to be kept quiet and satisfied by the morality of neighbor love and the promises of a glorious after-life? Certainly not from the standpoint of Nietzsche's view that men should creatively develop their lives to meet their personal desires.

Nietzsche has raised the question of whether the principle of neighbor love is the best principle of social behavior by showing that it has no a priori justification and he has suggested an anarchism of individualism augmented by close friendships. Because it is by no means clear that our civilization could exist under anarchism—although its impossibility is not proven either—it may well be that something similar to neighbor love or at least Kant's categorical imperative (to which Nietzsche

objects equally strongly) must be accepted to avoid absolute dictatorship for all (but one) or utter annihilation of mankind. Somehow a compromise must be established between solitude and solidarity. Camus suggests that at least some people can reach this compromise through political rebellion or artistic creation rather than through a general moral principle.

Chapter II. The truth of the statement, "X is the cause of Y"

The view

Before Nietzsche, rationalist philosophers held that, for two events x and y, if x is the cause of y, then y happened because x somehow forced y to happen. Many if not all physical events were thought to be explainable by finding their causes. It was thaought that by finding such a cause one discovered the reasons for the event and the mechanism by which it came about. Furthermore, if it is true that x is the caues of y, then no alternative interpretation of why y occurred is true.

Nietzsche had five major objections to this conception of causality: (1) The statement "x is the cause of y" contains only the information that y can be expected to follow x. There are no grounds for assuming that x mechanically forces y to occur. (2) The only valid inference from a long sequence of instances in which y follows x is that it is likely they that y will continue to follow x. (3) Causality is a classification imposed on events by men and there is no reason to suppose that it says anything about the events themselves. (4) The causal interpretation arose out of human needs and fears, and not because of the nature of the events to be so interpreted or because men so structure their perceptions. (5) We must be careful not to place values in the causal view of the world because that would result in the feeling of a loss of value when we discard the causal interpretation.

For Nietzsche, the statement "x is the cause of y" may be a convenient expression in that it relates a particular instance of y following x to similar instances in a conventional language understandable to other people, but it does not explain *why* the event occurred or what the *purpose* of it was or *how* it was able to occur. Such a causal statement can communicate known information and point out relationships to previous experience, but it does not reveal new information about the world. Nor does the term "cause" imply that such things as causes really exist in themselves.

It is we alone who have devised cause. Sequence, for-each-other, relativity, constraint, number, law, freedom, motive and purpose; and when we project and mix this symbol world into things as if it existed "in itself," we act once more as we have always acted—mythologically…. One should use "cause" and "effect" only as pure concepts, that is to say as conventional fictions for the purpose of designation and communication—not for explanation. (BG&E 21)

Cause as force

Nietzsche combats the belief that when x is the cause of y then x has forced y to occur by arguing that this belief is based on an analogy with the false assumption that the mind causes the limbs to move. Nietzsche things the underlying argument behind a belie in forceful causation runs as follows: a person decides to move his arm; then he feels his muscles working, tensing, overcoming resistance; finally he sees the arm move. By illegitimately separating the action into that of the ego, the muscles and the arm, the inventor of causality sets the general purpose which determines what the action will be and gives it its value: there is a definite force which makes the action come about but is distinct from the causer and the caused, and there is the caused event. On this model, there are answers to the questions of why, how and for what the causation took place. Now, given a situation in which event x is followed by event y, one can say that there was a force exerted by x which caused y. Having labeled the sequence x, y with the title "causation," one can feel that he understands what has happened (y was "caused" by x) and how it has happened (by x "causing" y). New understanding has somehow been gained about the "nature" of the events under consideration merely by naming their temporal relation "causality" and taking this to mean the relation is like that between a person thinking of moving his arm and actually moving it when this is interpreted in the manner previously indicated.

In general, Nietzsche strongly objects to the imposing of terms of human significance onto inanimate objects, but that point will be saved for the end of this section. The objection we will now consider is that the analogy is based on a false analysis of the bodily causality. The

tensing of the muscle is, Nietzsche claims, part of the movement of the arm and not the cause of it. Furthermore, we cannot separate the consciously thinking ego from the acting body as though they were two billiard balls, unconnected except by the force of our muscles. Nietzsche held that our ego is not a separate entity, but a mere technique adopted by our body as a useful way of understanding itself under the pressure of the need for communication (cf. JW 354). The body has a need to move; this need may be made conscious in the ego, but that is irrelevant; the body (arm and muscle) moves. Then the inventor of causality comes along and separates the organic whole into a teleological triad.

> A criticism of the concept "cause."
> We have absolutely no experience concerning *cause*; viewed psychologically, we derive the whole concept from the subjective conviction that we ourselves are causes—that is to say, that the arm moves…. *But that is an error*. We distinguish ourselves, the agents, from the action, and everywhere we make use of this scheme—we try to discover an agent behind every phenomenon. What have we done? We have *misunderstood* a feeling of power, tension, resistance, a muscular feeling, which is already the beginning of the action, and posited it as a cause; or we have understood the will to do this of that, as a cause, because the action follows it. (WP 551)

When we see the collision of two billiard balls, there is a billiard ball collision (an event), not a ball (subject) which hits (action) another ball, as though the first ball were not part of the action but "caused" it, the hitting was something in itself and the other ball was affected as a result of the hitting. For Nietzsche, the separation of the event is nothing but the result of the structure of our language. The first ball did not cause the action—it was part of the action. To say that "I move" as though there were an I (ego) which caused my body to move, is to distort the event. There was simply a motion in my body. To avoid the error of causal interpretation, we must not be misled by the way in which we speak about events.

We must avoid

> our absurd habit of regarding a mere mnemonic sign or abbreviated formula as an independent being, and ultimately as a *cause*; as, for instance, when we say of lightening that "it

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flashes." Or even the little word "I." A sort of double-sight in seeing, which makes sight a *cause of seeing in itself*: this was the feat in the invention of the "subject" of the "ego." (WP 548)

Cause as inference

Hume showed that it does not follow from the fact that x has consistently been followed by y for a long sequence of repetitions, that x caused y in any sense of forcing y. Such a sequence may lead us to expect y to follow x in the future, but we may infer nothing more. Nietzsche accepts Hume's critique of the belief in causality as an inference from a long sequence of recurrences:

> In this respect Hume is quite right. Habit (but not only that of the individual) allows us to expect that a certain process, frequently observed, will follow upon another, but nothing more! (WP 530)

A causal statement can therefore summarize our predictive power but it does not mean that we know why of how x causes y to happen. To say that rolling one ball at another along a collision course will cause the other to start moving in a predictable manner is only to say that y follows x, which we already know from our sequence of observations. The statement of causality is limited to the realm in which the observations take place (i.e., to billiard balls, but not colliding people or atoms) and tells nothing further about the causal "force" than its effect on two billiard balls. The statement that x is the cause of y is now nothing more than a long sequence of occurrences under fixed conditions: x was always followed by y.

Cause as given

Nietzsche accepted the implications of Kant's "Copernican Revolution" for the understanding of causality. Kant's conclusion was that the view that two events are causally related is the result of the human way in which we structure our perceptions rather than the result of the

structure of the un-interpreted world. Kant argues that our sense of spatiality, temporality reality and causality are not based on our lived experience. In the case of causality, for instance, Hume had shown that all that can be based on our experience of repeated causal sequences is the prediction that y will continue to follow x under certain conditions. Yet out "sense of causality" is not confined to this limit and includes the belief that x forced y to occur. Furthermore, the sense of causality between two events appears before we have observed a large number of repetitions of the events following each other. Kant wants to go so far as to say, even before we have any experience of the events at all (*a priori*). If, however, causality is an interpretation imposed by men on their perceptions, then the sense of causality can meet the demand that it precede our perceptual experience.

> Hitherto it has been assumed that all our knowledge must conform to objects…. If intuition must conform to the constitution of objects, I do not see how we could know anything of the latter a priori; but if the object (as object of the senses) must conform to the faculty of our intuition, I have no difficulty in conceiving such a possibility…. I assume that the objects, or what is the same thing, that the experience in which alone, as given objects, the can be known, conform to the concepts. (Kant 22)

Causation is, then, for Nietzsche as well as Kant. A feature of the way in which men structure perception rather than a feature of the objects perceived. The question now is, whether or not it is necessary that we structure our perceptions in terms of causal explanations and if it is not necessary then why people have so structured their experiences and whether men should continue to do so.

Cause as *a priori*

Kant included causality in "the list of all original pure concepts of the synthesis that the understanding contains within itself *a priori*" (Kant 113). Kant realized that these categories were not justifiable on the basis of any analytic truth but still believed that they were *a priori* true, that is, that their application was justifiable without appeal to lived experience. TO express this conviction, Kant went to great pains to

establish the concept of "synthetic *a priori*" truth, which he then ascribed to his system of categories. It is this claim to a synthetic *a priori* character for causality to which Nietzsche objects:

> Synthetic judgments *a priori* should not "be possible" at all; we have no right to them; in our mouths they are nothing but false judgments. Only of course the belief in their truth is necessary as a foreground belief and visual evidence belonging to the perspective optics of life. (BG&E 11)

Nietzsche claims that there is no *a priori* necessity to the interpretive category of causality; its value is determined solely by its usefulness to living. Human life may require a belief in its "truth" (in the Kantian or pre-Kantian sense) and it may to some extent be validated by the evidence of experience (life), but this, says Nietzsche, is no proof that it tells anything about the events which it categorizes or about the things-in-themselves which. Nietzsche claimed, Kant thought lie behind our experiences. In order to show that our "sense of causality" is not an instinctual "faculty," Nietzsche shows how it arose form our experiences.

By trying to show how the concept of causality as explanation arose, Nietzsche is adopting that very position in arguing that the cause of causality is such that causal explanation has no validity. Nietzsche claims that it is a fear of the unfamiliar or at least a dissatisfaction with events which are not explained in familiar terms that brought about the belief in causality.

> There is no such thing as a *sense of causality*, as Kant would have us believe. We are aghast, we feel insecure, we will have something familiar, which can be relied on…. The so-called instinct of causality is nothing more that the *fear of the unfamiliar*. (WP 549)

The construction of explanation in dreams provides a good analogy, Nietzsche thinks, to the kind of thought behind the use of causal explanation. Consider, for instance, what happens when a sleeper is disturbed from his dream by an external influence: the sleeper incorporates the noise into his dream by dreaming up a cause for it in the context of his dream. Thus the dreamer first hears the noise and then "explains it from afterwards, so that he thinks he first experiences the condition responsible for the noise and then the noise." Nietzsche

takes this as a paradigm case of causal thought: "As man still reasons in dreams, so he reasons when awake, for many millennia. The first cause which entered his mid as explaining something which required explanation satisfied him and passed for the truth" (HAH 13).

When someone saw, e.g., two balls colliding and could not understand which they should act as they did, he turned in his need for explanation to the only example of something happening in which he had a sense of what was happening, the previously discussed example of moving ones arm. In analogy to our false analysis of how we cause our arm to move, we impute (on Nietzsche's analysis) the character of acting with purposes in mind (the character of an ego) to the "cause," the idea of force (as efficient cause) to the "causing," and the restriction of obedience to the "effect" (cf. WP 551).

> That which gives us such an extraordinarily firm faith in causality, is not the rough habit of observing the sequence of processes; but our inability to interpret a phenomenon other wise than as the result of design. It is the belief in living and thinking things as the only agents of causation; it is the belief in will, in design—the belief that all phenomena are actions. And that all actions presuppose an agent; it is the belief in the "subject." …. In every judgment lies the whole faith in subject, attribute or cause and effect (in the form of an assumption that every effect is the result of activity, and that all activity presupposes an agent). (WP 550)

The use of causal thinking leads to its own repudiation when Nietzsche adopts it. In his analysis of the dreamer and the noise, Nietzsche shows how the causal interpretation assumed by the dreamer was caused by a causality exactly the opposite of what the dreamer thought. Here one view of the causation (The dreamer's) is repudiated by the "objective" view with which every wide-awake defender of causality would have to agree. In Nietzsche's view, ordinary causal thought had its origins in a process similar to the creation of the dream, in that both the dreamer and the causal thinker are willing to accept the first explanation that does away with the disturbance: in the one case the noise, in the other the feeling that an event is incomprehensible.

Cause as nihilism

Causal thinking of the kind that Nietzsche imputes to Kant and to which many non-philosophers still adhere is dangerous because it can lead to a deterministic and teleological view, which holds a false set of valuations. The danger inherent in using such concepts as obedience to laws, cause and purpose in discussing inanimate objects is that it leads to the belief that the view of the value of life is intimately related to the (anthropomorphic) view of the non-living world. This belief ends in a feeling of complete lack of values, nihilism, when the teleological interpretation of causality is discarded. In an argument "to combat determinism and teleology," Nietzsche states:

> Owing to the very fact that we fancied existence of subjects "*agents*" in things, the notion arose that all phenomena are the *consequence* of a *compulsory force* exercised over the subject—exercised by whom? Once more by an "agent." The concept "Cause and Effect" is a dangerous one, so long as people believe in something that causes, and a something that is caused. (WP 552)

Nietzsche thought that the danger inherent in the belief in a Kantian form of causality as the necessary way of viewing the world rather than as one possibly useful approach was an urgent problem. He saw, in the first glimmers of the view of scientific theories as merely models, the beginning of this loss of belief that world works in terms of teleological values and, hence, the immediate likelihood of a psychological feeling of valuelessness. "It is perhaps just dawning on five or six minds that physics, too, is only an interpretation of the world (to suit us, if may say so!) and not a world explanation" (BG&E 14).

The Kantian categories—notably causality and all the interpretations implied by a causal view of events—are, for Nietzsche, just as much a part of the "True World Error" as Plato' Ideals and the Christian after-life because they consist in a misplacing of values and the loss of their believability results in the nihilistic feeling of worthlessness.

> The feeling of worthlessness was realized when it was understood that neither the notion of "purpose," nor that of "Unity," nor that of "Truth," could be made to interpret the general character of existence…. In short, the categories

"Purpose," "Unity," "Being," by means of which we have lent some worth to life, we have once more divorced from it—and the world now appears worthless to us. (WP 12)

Critique of Nietzsche's view of causality

Nietzsche's comments on causality sound very plausible, especially in view of current theories of physiology and matter. Nietzsche's claim that out "sense of causality" arose from our feeling of muscular movement seems true to the experience of that "sense." The interpretation of reflexes as phenomena in which a person's limbs move before his mind (ego) could command them to move and views of the body as an organic whole without any division into commanding mind and obedient limbs are examples of current scientific notions which agree with Nietzsche in ruling out the ego/body distinction as explanation of bodily behavior.

Nietzsche's arguments on linguistic grounds—that certain interpretations result from taking ways of speaking as true descriptions of the world—seem at first valid; one cannot get something for nothing, new information by merely new ways of expressing old knowledge. However, Nietzsche seems to ignore tow points: our loquations are usually derived from our views and the creation of an "agent" may be for explanatory reasons rather than through "our absurd habit of regarding a mere mnemonic sign … as an independent being." Thus these linguistic arguments are not sufficient grounds for the rejection of causal statements.

Just because Nietzsche overlooks (perhaps) the explanatory role of causal ways of talking, does not prove that he was wrong in calling them interpretations and insisting that they were only "true" to the extent that they were useful and that they said no more about the world then the descriptive statements which they purport to explain. Both psychology and biology have had to abandon simple stimulus-response models to search for theories that better summarize the data. Although later theories still talk about "causes," the causes are merely the *reasons* for events are far removed from the conception of "agents" which Nietzsche argued against. Furthermore, the criterion for the acceptance of explanations is clearly the explanations' utility in

accounting for and predicting data, rather than any "self-evident" arguments.

Certainly the most interesting variations on causal explanations are to be found in the two recent theories in physics, general relativity and quantum mechanics. In the quantum mechanical view of the world, most elementary events take place un-caused. For example, particle decay is described as an instantaneous event that happens after a random (sic) time interval (whose *statistical* half-life depends on the nature of the particle), is spontaneous and is not caused by anything. Relativity theory has often been thought to picture the universe as a static (so, of course non-causal) four dimensional manifold in which nothing happens except when viewed from a limited and changing perspective. "First Minkowski, then Einstein, Weyl, Fantappis, Feynman, and many others have imagined space-time and its material contents spread out in four dimensions. For these authors, … relativity is a theory in which everything is 'written' and where change is only relative to the perceptual mode of living beings" (Beauregard 430).

The question of why the world follows the nice mathematical laws which science has discovered cannot be answered. The universe does not follow these laws, it does not obey commandments as though the universe were a human slave. The "laws" are merely concise ways of summarizing certain characteristics of the universe, characteristics partially based upon our perceptions of the world, but largely a result of our way of structuring these perceptions. The concept of time, for instance, is (at least on the relativity theory) largely a result of out memory processes and is very difficult to apply to the universe without running into many problems; and the concept of cause and effect (so intimately related to the nature of time) is not much easier to apply to the inanimate world.

Perhaps Nietzsche's most useful insight as far as helping people on the personal level (but also his most grossly misunderstood advice) is his idea that the feeling of nihilistic despair is the result of a mis-valuation. Having gone through a period of pessimism like so many other people since Nietzsche, I have come to the feeling (independently of Nietzsche) that this pessimism was the result of a childhood indoctrination into the values and assumptions of Judeo-Christian morality and the distortions of out-of-date science and philosophy, which have filtered through the "cultural gap" into the living rooms and

kindergartens of America, only to be contradicted in college. The discovery that morality does not have any divine sanction once the belief in God is gone results in a feeling of freedom because the value of life had been thought to be linked to divine purposes. Similarly, the realization that mathematics is just a game of definitions, which is sometimes useful but does not explain anything real frustrates many potential mathematicians. In just this way, an aspiring scientist who thought he was on the trail of the "will to truth," which would bring him to the "secret of the universe" has his hopes demolished when and if he finds that the causal interpretations of science are not explanations. I think Nietzsche is plausible in saying that if people want to do physics or mathematics or philosophy, they should realize that they are just playing; there are no values which they can lose in the game yet they can still fulfill their desire to play the game.

Chapter III. The truth of the statement, "The world is composed of unities"

The view

Most people in the Western world have, since Socrates, adopted a view of the world as composed of fixed entities, "thing-in-themselves,' in order to be able to make sense of their perceptions and to feel more comfortable in a comprehensible environment. They invented a view of society as composed of independent "individuals" conscious of their "own" identity, their "ego." ("Verily, the individual in himself is still the most recent creation" Zar., PN 171.) Behind the perceptions of the world were supposed to be "things" with inherent properties and it was the properties that men perceived. This view, adopted because of its usefulness, was given the character of belief by calling it the "truth."

Nietzsche has several objections to this view of the world. He questions the usefulness of viewing the many aspects of a human personality as a unified whole. More importantly, he raises doubts as to the feasibility of considering an ego in isolation from other egos. But most importantly he criticizes the separation of an ego with "causes" what a person does from the person who does it. The same considerations apply to all "things" as to the "ego." Nietzsche points out that the positing of a "thing" behind a group of qualities is an illegitimate inference. He concludes that the view of the world as constituted of fixed unities is the lazy man's way out: "'The will to truth' as the weakness of the will to create."

The ego as divided

Men have adopted a belief in the existence of "unities" which compose the world. Nietzsche thinks that these unities or "things-in-themselves" are modeled on a view of the self, the human ego. Nietzsche argues that this view of the self is not the only possible view of the ego, that the ego could just as well be seen as composed of two or more parts.

> We are in need of "unities" in order to be able to reckon; but this is no reason for supposing that "unities" actually *exist*. We borrowed the concept "unity" form the concept "ego," … our very oldest article of faith (WP635).

The unity of the ego as a unique thing, a self, is by no means obvious. To have a unified self would mean to unify all the past and present experiences, needs and outlooks under a single description and as following a single purpose. But people have different "selves": the role of lover, student and worker may be pursued at different times by the same body. An "individual" might be a lover to satisfy his needs of close companionship and sexual fulfillment; pursue religious, scientific or philosophic studies to satisfy his "will to know" or his religious and intellectual needs; and work at a job to fulfill a need to be productive, a social need or his needs for clothing, food and shelter. A person's many needs necessitate the adoption of several selves for their fulfillment. The various selves are manifested on the basis of the relative strengths of the various needs. The present selves are embodiments of the needs, partially determined by the needs but also giving definite form and content to the needs as well as satisfying them partially or temporarily. (This analysis of the manifestation of needs relates back to the proof that the "ego" does not "cause" movement in limbs. Here the ego does not cause different selves but is nothing but these selves.) Such considerations as these led Nietzsche to the position that, "the assumption of a single subject is perhaps not necessary; it may be equally permissible to assume a plurality of subjects, whose interaction and struggle lie at the bottom of our thought and our consciousness in general" (WP 490). Thus one can view the self as a unity because all its aspects relate to a single body. One can view the self as composed of two parts: the inherited part derived from the body, the past, society and the immediate situation *versus* the transcendent conscious realization of freedom in future possibility. One can consider "ego" the collective name for the various "selves" which a physical body adopts in attempting to satisfy its numerous needs. Or one may completely dispense with the "ego" as a misleading fiction. What on may not do is to claim that the ego is a unique "thing" which "causes" the body to adopt various poses.

The ego as related

Nietzsche believes that the "ego" cannot be considered as a "thing-in-itself" because it is by its very nature and origin inextricably related to other egos and things external to "itself." What is the ego? It is that "thing" that is conscious of a person's background, his present behavior, his feelings and his ideas. Why did consciousness develop? At first thought, consciousness seems to Nietzsche to be of little use. According to Nietzsche, "we could in fact think, feel, will and recollect, we could likewise 'act' in every sense of the term, and nevertheless nothing of it all need necessarily 'come into consciousness'" (JW 354). Nietzsche then asks "*What* then is *the purpose* of consciousness when it is in the main *superfluous*?" and answers that:

> Consciousness generally has only been developed under the pressure of the necessity for communication.… Consciousness does not properly belong to the individual existence of man, but rather to the social and gregarious nature in him; … consequently each of us, in spite of this best intention of understanding himself as individually as possible, and of "knowing himself" will always just call into consciousness the non-individual in him. (*ibid*.)

Since its very beginnings, then, the ego as consciousness has not been a self-contained unity but rather "only a connecting network between man and man" (*ibid*.).

Things as related

Nietzsche thinks the Kantian view of the existence of things-in-themselves that have causal powers and inherent properties and objective inherent existence is a misleading one. In his argument against the view of "cause as force," Nietzsche states it is an invalid inference from the structure of our language that makes us posit things behind actions: lightening that flashes or an ego that thinks. Nietzsche also argues that the concept of a "thing" is derived from the qualities gained in perception and attributed to a unity as the "pole" of those qualities. On the later analysis as well as the former, the "thing" concept is shown to be an illegitimate inference from our experiences

rather that an a priori or inherent property of either the human mind or the world.

> Ultimately, of course, "*the thing-in-itself*" also disappears; for at bottom it is the conception of a "subject-in-itself." But we have seen that the subject is an imaginary thing. The antithesis "thing-in-itself" and "appearance" is untenable; but in this way the concept "*appearance*" also disappears. (WP 552)

Starting from Kant's conclusion that we only know about objects that which we learn through perception, Nietzsche argues that "things" exist. All we know about a thing are its qualities, its effects directly upon us (color, shape, etc.) and upon other things or people from which we can learn about the results. A thing can appear red, but it is only red because it is so perceived by someone. By itself, it could not be said to be red. Size is only relative to other objects, which determine the scale of such terms as "large." From such consideration, Nietzsche makes the point that a "thing" has no properties in itself but only in relation to other "things."

> The qualities of a thing are its effects upon other "things." If one imagines other things to be non-existent, a thing has no qualities, That is to say, *there is nothing without other things*. That is to say: there is no "thing-in-itself." (WP 557)

Man invented the concept of a "thing" to create order, to define and comprehend, "to correlate that multitude of relations, qualities, and activities" (WP 558). The thing is once more invented by men to fill the linguistic position of subject (of a sentence), to answer the question, What is large? What is red? The "thing" concept was also invented in analogy with the human subject (ego), to answer the question, What is causing the movement? What is causing the noise? It is a difficulty in thinking about predicates without objects and effects without causes that led to the invention of the "thing."

> The thing-in-itself is nonsense. If I think all the "relations" away, all the "qualities" away, all the "activities" of a thing, away, the thing itself does not remain; for "thingness" was only invented fancifully by us to meet certain logical needs. (WP 558)

Since the concept of "thing" does meet certain human needs, Nietzsche does not want to discard the concept entirely, he merely insists that we

recognize the nature of the concept and not take it to express more than it does, For Nietzsche, "a 'thing' is the sum of its effects, synthetically united by means of a concept, an image" (WP 551). Accordingly, all we can know of an object is a collection of appearances from various viewpoints. Men gave their perceptions meaning and intelligibility by forming syntheses of the parts into which they divide their perceptions. They give these parts names (sometimes) and the character of "thingness," and associate an essence or meaning to each "thing" in a continuing process of synthesizing the appearances into what have—on the basis of past (primarily infantile) experiences and influence from other people—already fixed as the meaning in their perceptual field. Because we have commerce with other people, we can also know what an object "is" for them. A "thing" can only be known in terms of its meaning for those other things which give it meaning.

> The answer to the question, "What is that?" is a process of fixing a meaning from a different standpoint. The "essence," the "essential factor." Is something which is only seen as a whole in perspective, and which presupposes a basis which is multifarious. Fundamentally, the question is "What is that for me?" (for us, for everything that lives, etc., etc.). (WP556)

Nietzsche includes the "ego" among the "things" which philosophers have thought they knew in-themselves but which (Nietzsche claimed in his discussion of the ego as divided) are synthesized into one essence or another on the basis of reflective observation. Knowledge of the ego has no more certainty, immediacy, or completeness than objects of external perception. Because we give something a name ("ego", "table") and fix it with a temporary meaning, we are allured by our language into believing that the character of the object is complete when it is only at a temporary pause in the incompleteable complet*ing* of its nature.

> That "immediate certainty," as well as "absolute knowledge" and the "thing-in-itself," involve a contradictio in *adjecto*, I shall repeat a hundred times; we really ought to free ourselves from the seduction words! (BG&E 16)

Belief in things as a weakness of the will to power

Men have adopted the way of thinking in terms of static objects with eternal, inherent properties and determinate meanings. Nietzsche has already claimed that this way of thinking derives partially from a fear of the unfamiliar and unintelligible, to satisfy man's need for comforting and orderly surroundings. Nietzsche claims that this is the cowardly way of interpreting the world and that it results from laziness. Nietzsche favors a dynamic view of the world—no permanent constants, no objects, only change, only relations. In such a world, men can creatively structure their own interpretations, thereby skillfully satisfying their own needs, including the will to control and create.

> First proposition. The easier way of thinking always triumphs over the more difficult way…. Second proposition. The teaching of Being, of things and of all those constant entities, is *a hundred times more easy* that the teaching of *Becoming* and of evolution. (WP 538)
> Belief that the world that ought to be now is, that it actually exists, is a belief of the unproductive ones who do not wish to create a world as it ought to be. They presuppose it as present…. "The will to truth" as the weakness of the will to create. (quoted in Jaspers 192)

Critique of Nietzsche's view of unities

I agree with the view that it may be more useful to view ones ego as composed of two parts than one, as Harry Haller (in *Steppenwolf* by Herman Hesse) and as many other people who feel at once part of and yet alienated from their society often do. Sartre, for instance, has claimed that the concept of a uniting ego is misleading and should not be used (cf. *Transcendence of the Ego* by Sartre).

There are many phenomena which suggest that it is hard to draw a line between two egos, even in a milieu so consciously individualistic as ours. Without considering ESP, mysticism or even Jung's theories, we can find a perfectly good example of consciousness overflowing the physical limits of an individual's body in the inter-personal communion experienced in love. In the act of "making love," i.e., establishing the

maximum of communion (both physical and mental—of the ego), the egos of the two partners are, to a certain degree, merged so that the pleasure of one is experienced as pleasure by the other. In a close personal relationship, pain or joy "in" one person is accompanied by a similar, sympathetic feeling in the other—just as illness in one eye is often accompanied by a "sympathetic" pain in the person's other eye. Identification with an actor on stage or the hero of a novel is, perhaps, another case of the ego being conscious of the emotions received through "its" external perceivers and accepting them as its own—but here always with the felt knowledge of the unreality forming the experiential horizon of the perceptions.

Heidegger's position entails the view that the qualities of a thing are its effects on other things (for Heidegger, on *Dasein*). The conclusion that "things" are man-made syntheses of appearances was worked out in detail by Husserl (*Ideen I*). For an example of the human constitution of unities at a very elementary level, consider the example of the ladder lying on the ground. A nomad might very well perceive the ladder as a number of sticks lying in close proximity to one another and think that they would be useful for feeding several fires. An urban man would, however, perceive a unity, a single instrument. These two men have synthesized their perceptions to the categories, which they and their society have formulated on the basis of their lived historical experience.

Recent developments in theoretical physics support Nietzsche's position that "things" are merely an interpretation of a sum of effects. During the past century, physics has dissected matter further and further to show that it is just a system of fundamental particles of increasingly smaller size interrelated by mysterious forces. Now essentially nothing is known about the elementary particles except their effects on other particles. As far as physicists can say, these particles may have no spatial extension, no color, perhaps no mass (other than as a manifestation of their inter-actions). The concept of a "thing" seems to have been all but discarded in the field of particle physics. The intimate relation between the human observer and the description of a quantum mechanical event or the dependence of the entropy of a system (a description of its thermodynamic state) upon the human knowledge of that system casts serious doubt upon the validity of the view that physics describes inanimate things-in-themselves, independent of their interactions with men.

It is clear that science has had to overcome the idea of "things" to some extent in order creatively to formulate its recent theories. Similarly, great artists have had to reject previous methods of expression and create from the previous methods their own techniques. Perhaps Nietzsche is right that it is time for philosophers to stop discussing "things" which "objectively" exist, stop trying to discover the moral world order, and start creating their worlds or showing how such creation is accomplished, including the creation of systems of "morals" by which to lead ones life. Contemporary philosophy seems to accept Nietzsche's conclusion to a large extent because many philosophers now analyze the world and morality from the viewpoint of their origin in men. Phenomenologists following Hussserl's lead analyze how men constitute the world for themselves, ordinary language philosophers beginning with Wittgenstein have tried to get at men's view of the world by looking at human expressions of that view and moral philosophers like John Rawles are often content to describe moral beliefs without attempting any proof that these beliefs are "true."

Chapter IV. Nietzsche's conception of truth

The view

It is usually thought that for any proposition, that proposition is either true or false. And it is supposed that men can, in principle, discover whether a statement is true by means of one discovery or another. Christians thought that they could prove that "Thou shalt love thy neighbor" by showing that it was a commandment of God. For Kant, the statement, "x is the cause of y," can be proven true by demonstrating that it is a result of the way men necessarily perceive the world. The truth of a particular statement was thought to be permanently fixed and objectively valid for all time, that is, not dependent upon the personal characteristics or preferences of the judges of the truth of that statement.

Nietzsche is strongly opposed to the belief that one system of non-experiential criteria for truth is the necessary one or even that it has an a priori presumption in its favor. He thinks that each statement must be subjected to experimentation to determine its practical utility in meeting the needs of its believer. Even once it has passed this test, however, it must not be accepted as the ultimate, fixed truth. The truths thus established must now provide the starting point for their own overcoming. For example, when a scientist has formulated a theory to accomplish some purpose, he must not stagnate by restricting his thought to this theory, but go on from this theory to further exploration; for it is the developing of theories rather than the developed theory that Nietzsche observed to be important to theoreticians. The developed theory is not a final goal, but a basis for further theorizing. Similarly, an artist who remains true to his artistic drive will not stop developing his technique even when he finds the method which he had been searching for to express himself. Nietzsche's own life provides a good example of the process of constancy and overcoming. He gave up philology in favor of philosophy as his life's work, but his philosophy drew heavily upon his previous work. Constantly searching for new means of expression and proof, Nietzsche used terminology and

historical illustrations from his background in philology for his philosophical work.

To really understand Nietzsche's conception of truth, one should see how it derived from his critique of previous conceptions of truth.

Derivation

Nietzsche's first task is to show that the traditional methods of determining the truth are unjustified in their claim to a unique validity in deciding issues of truth. Christians claim there is only one moral force in the world, God, and that He declared that men should love their neighbors. Nietzsche's reply to this is that there is no reason to believe in God or that He proclaimed a morality of neighbor love other than that it might be useful to believe it. But then Nietzsche shows that it is not even useful to believe because it leads to undesired consequences, On the other hand, there are historical reasons to believe that neighbor love arose form a fear and hatred of neighbors, an origin which if anything gives a presumption against believing in neighbor hate as a consistent principle of living. Nietzsche showed that causality is not justifiable by inference from a sequence of repetitions because of Hume's proof. Neither could causality have a claim to truth because it was true of the things-in-themselves, as Kant showed. Finally, causality was not true synthetic a priori because our "sense of causality" is derived from our interpreted experiences. The causal interpretation must be judged on an equal basis with all other ways of interpreting our perceptions and actions in terms of its usefulness in fulfilling our various needs—for explanation in terms of the familiar, for predictability, and so forth.

By more general arguments, Nietzsche claimed that all three methods of determining truths—by an explanatory system, by philosophical argument and by human creation—are equally vulnerable and equally subject to change. One general argument for this (which is beyond the scope of this thesis to defend) is that the basic principles of explanatory and philosophic systems have their origin in their inventors' expression of personal needs and are therefore essentially derived from the same basis as created truths.

Much of Nietzsche's discussion is a "socio-psychological clarification of the circumstances under which things are taken to be true" (Jaspers 187). Through this study, Nietzsche is able to see what "truth" means, that is, he can formulate the goals which men sought in the "search for the truth." Then he can analyze the mistakes that have led to failure in the quest. After this, he is in a position to suggest modifications in specific goals and methods that may increase the chances of success and avoid the nihilistic despair that has so far resulted. Hence, before Nietzsche can propose the criteria for establishing the truth or falsity of a statement, he must decide what reasons have led to the search for truth, that is, he must determine the value of truth as a category before deciding what the criteria for membership in that category are.

> It might seem as though I had evaded the question concerning "certainty." The reverse is true: but while raising the question of certainty, I wished to discover the weights and measures with which men had weighed heretofore—and to show that the question concerning certainty is already in itself a dependent question, a question of the second rank. (WP 587)

The first question is then: What is the value of the kinds of truths men have been striving to discover? Christians hoped that widespread belief in the truth of the statement "Thou shalt love thy neighbor" would result in a society in which they would not have to fear their neighbors. Moral truths were supposed to provide the rules for a way of life which would be "good" or the valuable in the inventor's system of valuations The acceptance of the statement "x is the cause of y" as the true explanation of the sequence of events x, y was supposed to provide a familiarity to the inhuman events. Teleology was invented to ease man's bewilderment at the fearful acts of nature by providing anthropomorphic characterizations. Thinking about the world on the basis of a belief in the truth of the statement that "The world is composed of unities" is much easier than believing the opposite because this statement orders an otherwise chaotic world. Without constituting the world into "things," appearances make no sense and the whole universe is a mass of inter-relationships with nothing to be related. Men need to order the world.

Nietzsche thought he discovered that men sought "truth" in order to satisfy such human needs as the need for order, intelligibility, familiarity, meaning and the "good: life by eliminating fear, chaos and

alien phenomena, Only after enunciating these values was Nietzsche able to criticize the various procedures for determining truth by showing that they did not, in one way or another (primarily because of their view of truth as fixed), adequately meet the needs for which they were established. The approach to the problem of truth through the question of value is the origin of Nietzsche's very important criterion of utility, which so mysteriously appears in his published works and results in his conception of truth-as-value rather than the traditional truth-as-certainty. On the basis of this value-based criterion of utility, Nietzsche is able to propose the necessary modifications for fitting the truth-producing procedures to the goal of producing valuable truths. Since he had reduced all the approaches to truth to the same original values, Nietzsche could combine them into one coherent method. Nietzsche's "attack" on the traditional methods of establishing truth is, in the end and despite his strong language, an improvement and uniting of those methods through a re-evaluation of them

> There is no struggle for existence between ideas and observations, but only a struggle for supremacy—the vanquished idea is not annihilated, but only driven to the background or subordinated. There is no such thing as annihilation in intellectual spheres. (WP 588)

In the first three chapters, we say how Nietzsche explores the limits and inherent dangers of representative statements, whose truths were established in the three ways he considers: those based upon inclusion in a system, those proven by a philosophic search for truth and proof, and those created by men which give satisfaction by meeting their needs. Confidence that any of these methods leads to eternal, Determinate truths results, Nietzsche claims, in contradiction and the opposite of the original goal: love of neighbors leads to ignoring friends and oneself; belief in causality results in a disproving of itself through the analysis of the cause of that belief (on the dream analogy); the creation of "things" produces a dearth of creativity. Nietzsche further argued (although his arguments will not be considered here) that at the limits of abstraction, science is divorced from the physical world it sought to describe and explain; Christian morality leads to immorality and Christian hope leads to nihilistic despair; knowledge as knowledge of Platonic ideals entails Socratic ignorance as the highest attained wisdom; the "will to truth" concludes that "all is false," that all

truths were invented by men and are not true in themselves; the outcome of the invention of truths on the basis of need has led to the impossibility of satisfying needs; and the creation of "true" values has resulted in a nihilism of values.

As a result of his analyses, Nietzsche is faced with the following problem: if all the previous means of establishing the truth of propositions have resulted in such disastrous consequences, how can anything be salvaged from the concept of truth? Despite Nietzsche's frequent use of absolute locutions ("All is false!" "We have abolished the apparent world!"), his criticisms (especially as seen in his unpublished personal notes of *The Will to Power*) of the different methods of establishing truth are quite specific. He is able to so modify the three traditional methods as to eliminate the sources of difficulty and synthesize the resultant methods into a mutually supportive system. The moral principle of love of ones neighbors is but one of many alternative rules for ordering ones life. The fact that this particular principle has unwanted consequences for some people (e.g., Nietzsche and an *Uebermensch*) merely means that these people should—and can—search for a different moral principle which does suit their personal felt needs. To carry on such a search and to establish new morals, Nietzsche details a method based on the use of the valid aspects of all three previous methods of establishing the truthfulness of statements, moral and otherwise. Let us first see what remains of these old methods under Nietzsche's critique and then see how they can supply Nietzsche with a new method.

The causal view of the world, according to Nietzsche, is merely one interpretation or one possible verbalization of human perception of the world; it is not legitimately a teleological explanation of that (or any other, "true," "in-itself") world. Nietzsche demanded of causal science that it forego the presumption of explaining and restrict itself to describing and ordering the apparent world of our senses.

> Today we possess science precisely to the extent to which we
> have decided to *accept* the testimony of the senses…. The rest
> is miscarriage and not-yet-science. (Twil. III 3, PN 481)

The goal to which Nietzsche subordinates causal interpretation is that of establishing a humanly hearable order of the world and helping men to understand themselves.

> We have one more grown completely obscure to ourselves.…
> *Owing to the fact* that we find consistency in science alone, we
> must *order* our lives in accordance with it so that it may help
> us to *preserve it*. (WP 594)

But since Nietzsche so frequently says that causal interpretation does
not provide explanation, how are we to understand his statement that
science is "*not* a world-explanation; but insofar as it is based on the
belief in the sense, it is regarded as more, and for a long time to come
must be regarded as more—namely as an explanation." This could
perhaps be explained by arguing that Nietzsche merely meant that
people would go on believing in science as explanation because they
are too stupid to see science's limitations as soon as they are
discovered. Such an explanation would, however, leave unanswered the
question of why, as a result of its relation to the senses, it "*must*" be
believed. The answer can only be given in terms of what Nietzsche
conceives to be truth.

In his analysis of philosophic truth, Nietzsche concluded that claims of
synthetic *a priori* truth for statements like those of causal explanation
are unjustifiable: "We have no right to use them; in our mouths they are
nothing but false judgments. Only of course the belief in their truth is
necessary" (BG&E 11). What does Nietzsche propose to do with such
statements, which are not legitimately proven true but merely believed
true? Clearly he does not want to reject beliefs that may be necessary
for life.

> The falseness of a judgment is for us not necessarily an
> objection to a judgment; in this respect our new language may
> sound strangest. The question is to what extent it is life-
> promoting, life-preserving, species-preserving, perhaps even
> species-cultivating. (BG&E 4)

Nietzsche proposes a rather complicated procedure of arriving at truth
through the processes of establishing a level of constancy and then
overcoming this level. Belief in eternal truth provides the level of
constancy, which anticipates the creation of truth, provides the aspect
of constancy at attainment, and furnishes the foundations from which it
will be surpassed. Thus, just as many specific beliefs are illegitimate
but required, so the process of belief is itself illusory but necessary for
truth to be attained.

> Man projects his drive to truth beyond himself in the form of a world that is already at hand. His need as a creator invents the very world on which he is working—he anticipates it. Such anticipation (such "belief" in the truth) provides his support. (quoted in Jaspers 192)

The will to truth and belief in eternal truths are retained for their role in men's creative enterprise, and the belief in causal explanation is retained to provide order to the world of human perceptions.

Nietzsche led traditional philosophy to the position of having reduced the world of "causes" and "things" away and has left only men and their creations. It is now the job of men to create the world that they had taken in their "laziness" to be already "given." Where philosophy has come to the Husserlian position that what we know of things is nothing but a synthesis of their subjectively perceived appearances, men must take up the job of creating the world for themselves. In Nietzsche's words, "The belief, 'It is thus and thus,' must be altered into the will, 'Thus and thus shall it be'" (WP 593). Nietzsche's new philosophers will therefore have to be "commanders and legislators."

> With a creative hand they reach for the future, and all that is and has been becomes a means for them, an instrument, a hammer. Their "knowing" is *creating*, their creation is a legislation, their will to truth is—will to power. (BG&E 211)

Now men—at least those outstanding men, the Uebermenschen—use the belief in causes and things as tools or completely forego their use and, overcoming the laziness of the past, create their world to satisfy their own needs. Nietzsche calls the creative urge "will to power," but it can perhaps better be though of as the will to fulfill our needs.

Now we see Nietzsche's fundamental difference with the proponents of previous views of truth, Truth-as-certitude involves fixed beliefs, but men's needs cannot be satisfied with fixed solutions, they grow with their fulfillment and eternally recur. The kind of truth men need is truth-as-value, where

> The viewpoint of "value" is the viewpoint of the conditions of constancy and surpassing with a view to the complex structures of life which have a relative duration within the process of becoming. (WP 712, quoted in Heidegger 210, my translation)

"Moral" guidelines for living, causal explanations of the world and views of the human perceptions as deriving from unities in the world should not be considered necessarily and eternally fixed, but should be judged on their usefulness to the fulfilling of the individual's needs and the achieving of his personal goals.

Critique of Nietzsche's view of truth

In his recent commentary on Nietzsche, Danto raises the obvious philosophic problem concerning Nietzsche: "Was his philosophy, too, a matter of mere convention, fiction, and Will-to-Power?" (Danto 230). He then claims that Nietzsche recognized this difficulty and quotes from him: "Supposing that this also is only interpretation?—and you will be eager enough to make this objection—well, so much the better" (BG&E 22). Danto falsely implies that Nietzsche is referring to his theory that all "truths" are just interpretations. We must distinguish between the two aspects of Nietzsche's philosophy, which Danto confuses in his discussion: the view of truth as interpretation and the view that the interpretation of "Becoming" is more useful to some people than the interpretation of "Being." In Nietzsche's quote, what he recognizes to be interpretation is the assertion that the world "has a 'necessary' and 'calculable' course, *not* because laws obtain in it, but because they are absolutely *lacking*, and every power draws its ultimate consequences at every moment" (*ibid*.). Nietzsche recognizes that his basic theory of will to power, preaching of "not the neighbor, but the friend" and his view of the world as formed of relations rather than things are but alternative interpretations which, he argues, are more useful that the traditional notions. The utility of Nietzsche's interpretation of the world must be decided on the basis of lived experience and does not form part of a philosophic consideration of Nietzsche's conception of truth.

We must, however, consider the problem of the truth status of Nietzsche's view of truth as interpretation, a problem Nietzsche did not have to face because of his unsystematic approach. Perhaps we can gain some insight into the solution of the problems—although by no means a satisfactory solution—by considering the lack of

systematization in Nietzsche's work. Danto points out a characteristic of philosophy that is apparently valid in Nietzsche's case:

> The problems of philosophy are so interconnected that the philosopher cannot solve, or start to solve, one of them without implicitly committing himself to solutions for all the rest. In a genuine sense, every philosophical problem must be solved at once. He may work piecemeal at isolated problems only insofar as he accepts, if only tacitly, a system within which to conduct his inquiries. (Danto 24)

Nietzsche's early writings were composed of sketchy aphorisms and jumped from subject to subject, yet the various ideas and outlooks expressed in these aphorisms are all intimately related when viewed from the perspective of his final philosophy. Nietzsche must have started with an indefinite viewpoint and developed it little by little, pulling himself up by his bootstraps, until at the end he had a well-formulated philosophy capable of being systematized as in this thesis. In 1888 Nietzsche wrote in a letter that he was able "to see my entire conception from top to bottom, with the immense complex of problems lying, as it were, out beneath me, in clear outline and relief…. It all hangs together" (quoted in Danto 23).

The view that all outlooks are interpretations was part of the starting point for Nietzsche, perhaps derived from his background in philology. It was thus one of the assumptions that cannot be proven from within the system. Although one can say that his view is a useful interpretation, and remain consistent, one cannot easily say that all views are interpretations. The attempt to state in general that all views are interpretations runs up against what may be the kind of limit that Wittgenstein encountered (in his *Tractatus*), that is, what you want to say is self-excluding. Perhaps because "truth" is defined (as it truly is, because it is useful for Nietzsche to think of the meaning of words in terms of the fulfillment of needs for which the words were invented) as the system of useful interpretations, the concept of "truth" is inapplicable to such questions as, What is truth? Clearly the problem of the truth status of Nietzsche's basic claim that all truths are interpretations is the hardest puzzle to solve about his philosophy and apparently no one has given an adequate solution to it.

Conclusion

One way of summarizing the preceding analysis of Nietzsche's philosophy is to see how it stands up to Kaufmann's critique of Nietzsche. On page 180 of his commentary, Kaufmann says,

> The most obvious objection at this point is, no doubt, that it seems empirically untrue that our minds are so constituted that, when we consider phenomena and think as carefully and cogently as we can, we are driven to assume that the will to power is the basic principle of the universe. This criticism seems not only relevant, but, in the end, unanswerable.

The first point to note is that, according to the argument of this thesis, the view of the will to power as the basic principle of the universe, in the sense that the world is conceived of in dynamic and relational terms rather than as composed of static and self-contained unities or of "things," is proposed by Nietzsche as an alternative and possibly more useful view that the traditional belief in "Being," not as the view to which everyone is necessarily driven. The static view of reality "is interpretation, not text; and somebody might come along who with opposite intentions and modes of interpretation could read out of the same 'nature,' and with regard to the same phenomena, rather the tyrannically inconsiderate and relentless enforcement of claims of power—an interpreter who would picture the unexceptional and unconditional aspects of al 'will to power'" (BG&E 22). While Nietzsche may think he would admire the "somebody" who adopted a view of the universe in terms of will to power, he does not claim that everyone should or could do it and he does not claim that the world "really" follows the will to power in any sense other than that it can be interpreted by men as following it.

In the interpretation of will to power as the need to fulfill human needs, an interpretation proposed in this thesis, the views of the universe are seen as being derived from men's need for order, intelligibility, and so on. The universe is, in the sense that it is interpreted on the basis of our needs and these needs are the foundation of the will to power, an expression of will to power. It is in this way that we can make sense of the claim that will to power is the basic principle of the universe.

The question of which outlook to adopt—that of Being or Becoming—seems to be of particular relevance today, when the "technological mentality" has spread to the everyday lives of many people and resulted in what may be a great loss to those lives. The tendency in at least the United States is to think in terms of final results rather than the processes leading to the results as the important thing to attain. While there may be no reason to criticize this trend, it is certainly a move away from the traditional values and could well result in some form of sterility of life. Examples of this tendency can be found in many phases of public and private life. Most people want the results of science (technology) rather than the experience of creatively pursuing science, which Nietzsche pointed out was the goal of scientists in his time. Contemporary philosophy is often a dry presentation of analytic results instead of a wonder-inspiring intellectual adventure, which Nietzsche's philosophy is. Many people want a sun tan, but not because they enjoy the sensual pleasure of being baked in the sun, so they use lotions, etc. to get the result while by-passing the process, which use to be the main point of sun bathing. Even love has turned into a goal, which people seek as impersonal sex or marriage or being in love, rather that the process of "falling" in love, loving and being loved. Perhaps all of these examples are instances of positing a result as a goal and value, rather than valuing the process of living, of striving for the goal, not as an end but as something to give life a direction and to be overcome when reached by striving further. It could well be that many basic human needs cannot fully be met by the attainment of fixed goals but demand rather a continual process of fulfilling.

The last comment suggests a serious criticism of Nietzsche's writings. While it is certainly true that they provided the germ of much philosophizing in the decades since their publication and may well present ideas that have not yet been but could profitably be investigated, there is but little deep analysis of the ideas presented within Nietzsche's writings. The major exception to this is the belief that Christianity is unuseful, and this point is not too important to many people now. In the discussion of his conception of truth that we have just analyzed, Nietzsche claims that the world which we "know" is merely our own (or society's) interpretation of the world and that this interpretation is founded upon our needs. However, Nietzsche never indicated very clearly how much of our interpretation is created and how much corresponds to the world, which is the foundation for all

interpretations. Nor does he give any analysis of human needs: what are some examples, what kind are there, where do they come from, how much of them do we create, can they be permanently fulfilled, how are they met, etc. Of course there is an excellent reason why Nietzsche ignored such questions: they are too difficult to answer readily! Almost a century after Nietzsche's writings we are just beginning to find answers to these questions, and the answers seem to give Nietzsche's philosophy much support, although this could partly be attributable to Nietzsche's influence.

By considering the implications of Nietzsche's conception of truth and noting contemporary substantiations of his ideas, we have seen the importance of Nietzsche's work. But how successful was Nietzsche in overcoming the problem of the nihilism of values that confronted him? Despite the fact that many philosophers and other writers—for instance Albert Camus and Martin Heidegger—have considered Nietzsche to represent the ultimate in nihilistic thinking, the interpretation set out in this these shows that Nietzsche, perhaps more than anyone before or since, presented and argued for an alternative to nihilism, By basing values on human needs through his conception of truth-as-value, Nietzsche makes human life the basis of valuations. Nietzsche has eliminated the feeling that life has on value by making life the root of all value, probably the only escape from nihilism acceptable to most people in our age.

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