

Nietzsche's
Mature
Philosophy

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A Brief Introduction to the Genius of Nietzsche

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NIETZSCHE'S MATURE PHILOSOPHY

SCENE 1: BEYOND GOOD AND EVIL

Beyond Good and Evil was published in 1886 for the ostensive purpose of explaining *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. *The Genealogy of Morals* was written a year later for the purpose of expanding on *Beyond Good and Evil*. The word genealogy means "a history of descent" and is a very important word in Nietzsche, even today (see Foucault 1981). He juxtaposed and contrasted something divinely given with something which evolved all by itself, has changing phases, and contains no fixed or eternal truth.

The word "revaluation" comes up repeatedly; for Nietzsche it represents internal criticism, an effort to find hypocrisy and mendacity. In this sense Nietzsche argues that Christianity was a revaluation of the values of antiquity. Early Christianity brought a freshness, honesty, and integrity to the decaying values of late antiquity. Now, Nietzsche said, a philosopher must come forward who gives a similar freshness and honesty to the decaying values of bourgeois organized Christianity.

For Nietzsche the philosophical will to truth, the intense search to find truth, comes out of the will to power. There is no Reality behind the world of appearances; Nietzsche argued that this Reality is an abstraction. What is actually Nietzsche's philosophy, as explained, is a monistic theory in which the concept of the will to power explains *everything* in the apparent world including the will to overcome yourself, the will to overcome other people, the will of nations to overcome other nations, and even the whole evolution of the universe.

He argued that if a herd of people is deprived of its external goals for the will to power, it will destroy itself—the will to power is so strong that if you block it in one direction it comes out in another; it will then will its own nothingness as a manifestation of the will to power!

Nietzsche can be thought of as having revolutionized ethics by asking new questions. His predecessors assumed they *knew* what was good and what was evil; they assumed we all have a general sense of good and evil. They took for granted as eternal truths the cultural postulates of good and evil. Nietzsche turned that completely around. He assumed that the Judeo-Christian morality which underlies our culture and our ideals of good and evil were not given by God but rather were formed by what he

calls resentment. Some translations of Nietzsche leave this in the French: *resentment*. It represents the hatred and the resentment of their masters by the oppressed classes in which Christianity first made headway. He called this early Christianity the slave morality; according to Nietzsche slave morality makes a virtue of necessity, and underlying it is not divine inspiration but rather hatred, envy, and a wishful revenge. His argument was that slave morality, the morality of the oppressed classes, contains an antagonism against excellence, a leveling tendency, and negation; it encourages conformity and mediocrity. In the conviction that sex is sinful, it devalues this world in favor of another and it has contradicted classical morality.

"Slave morality," claimed Nietzsche, is generated by fear and inadequacy, not by divine inspiration. In *The Genealogy of Morals* he elaborated at length on this thesis: moral systems evolve, they are not divine. Their justification, according to Nietzsche, is their use in human life as adaptational tools, not divine authority. Nietzsche was not primarily against Christ; what he was against was the established Christian church and the alliance of the state, the established church, and the bourgeois and capitalist classes. In that sense he was similar to Marx, except that he attacked middle class morality from an entirely different point of view than Marx, and he certainly would not have agreed with Marx's solutions.

Nietzsche's use of the phrase "blond beast," is often misunderstood. "Blond beast" for Nietzsche does not mean a Nazi six foot storm trooper, it means literally a lion. The Aryan-Semitic distinction, which appears in *The Birth of Tragedy* is dropped by Nietzsche later on as he becomes increasingly interested in superior and distinguished men of *all* races and backgrounds.

The point of Nietzsche's argument was that the result and hidden purpose of slave morality is to make the superior man suffer from guilt and bad conscience. The concept of "bad conscience," which began here, runs throughout all existentialist writing. When slave morality takes hold, according to Nietzsche, it puts a pressure on superior individuals to conform, to be mediocre. It causes them to engage in a self-aggression, a self-detestation, arising out of their very urge to excel. This is how the oppressed get their revenge, according to Nietzsche.

At this point Nietzsche began to vigorously attack professional philosophers. His quarrel was with establishment and academic philosophers who were apologists for their current cultural systems of

belief. The most notorious of these, of course, was Hegel, whose whole philosophy can be interpreted—perhaps wrongly—as an apology for the Prussian state as the highest culmination of dialectic. Nietzsche detested philosophers who argued that the culturally accepted morality and political climate—whatever it happened to be in their time—is eternally true, and tried to give philosophical arguments to show that it is both eternally true, should be as it is, and is forever justified by immutable Reality or immutable metaphysical foundations. He insisted these philosophers were "lobbying," they were not doing philosophy. It is above all the use of metaphysics to justify any given moral or political system that Nietzsche was quarreling with. He believed this to be a very dangerous and inexcusable lack of integrity.

Hume said you can never derive what should be from what is, and that is the center of Nietzsche's argument. One cannot derive an eternally true system of morality from *any* system of metaphysics. One cannot derive how people ought to behave from any argument about what is Reality. This has always been one of the basic schisms in philosophical debate.

The title *Beyond Good and Evil* means, What is the value of this or that value? When we start to ask such a question we are now going "beyond good and evil," we are now challenging whether we even know what is good and what is evil.

Nietzsche asked, why do foolish traditions— which no longer have any adaptive value—persist? He answered: because any rule is better than no rule at all. Without rules there cannot be a civilization and it is civilization which gives people a sense of meaning to their life. He suggested that we can do better than that. He wanted us to sublimate or "spiritualize" our urges and then express them. His argument against bourgeois Christian morality, as already hinted at even in *The Birth of Tragedy*, was that it represses and stupefies the passions, leaving them in a position of explosiveness. It is inimicable to life and to the attainment of greater achievement, of greater excellence, according to Nietzsche. It holds down both the ordinary man and the superior man.

His crucial point in *The Genealogy of Morals* was that when a morality outlives its purpose, it stunts civilization. It starts out as something which is useful to civilization because it holds the society together. For instance early Christianity was extremely useful because it bore into the decaying disintegrating Roman Empire and produced from it a great new society and held that society together by the strength of

its originality and its imagination. Nietzsche argued however, that by 1883 the great imaginative spirit of early Christianity has now congealed into a rigid doctrine and into an authoritative organization which he argues now stunts the growth of civilization.

These arguments are parallel to some in *The Birth of Tragedy* where myths are given this energizing force. They are first put into some kind of expressible shape by the Apollonian force, but then Socrates and Euripides for Nietzsche here represent intellectualization, dogmatization, and structuralization of these mythological forces; the whole thing becomes sterile. The same kind of thinking was now in *The Genealogy of Morals* transferred from his arguments about tragedy and culture to philosophy and the evolution of civilization itself.

Nietzsche was in a state of agony over what he perceived to be an encrustation of Christianity over barbarism—over a vacuum—and he perceived that it was going to explode. Yet this whole argument about an encrustation over an explosive force is another example of what Nietzsche meant by the will to power—that *all* phenomena, human or inanimate, can be understood in terms of a striving of this will to power against various things that stand in its way. This is more than a moral theory or ethical theory, it is a *metaphysical* theory.¹

An important current example of Nietzsche's argument about slave morality will perhaps help to explain his often misunderstood concept. Consider a "truth" that was assumed as self-evident in Victorian culture in 1883: women are inferior to men, should be ruled by men, and "the woman's place is in the home." Even Freud never rose above this, so ingrained was it in the culture of the Victorian era. For *centuries* this was accepted as a self-evident eternal divinely-given truth because, said Nietzsche, it was necessary for the survival of the family in the stone age. The physically weaker woman indeed in the stone age really did have to stay home and there had to be a division of primitive labor for the family to survive at all.

Even our language, he wrote, contains prejudices that originate from the stone age need to survive, to adapt, and to get power. Feminists today have emphasized the innumerable depreciating aspects of everyday language usage in referring to women, for example, "girl-Friday" for a female assistant. This is a fundamental argument of Nietzsche's philosophy; our very language and our very concept of what is

self-evident—what is "obviously" true, what is "obviously" good—has hidden behind it the power needs and the adaptation needs of the culture that produced it.

This "truth" that women are inferior to men and should be ruled by them and belong in the home was important in the stone age. The modern age, of course, has changed this—a woman doesn't have to stay in the home and the family won't be destroyed if she goes out and gets a job. Her children won't die if she pursues a career. According to Nietzsche the "truth" now must change! He argued further that it is a hypocritical religion which still teaches women now to be satisfied with such a "truth." The women who accept this traditional morality and the intellectuals who work for the establishment and therefore must rationalize traditional morality are the people who Nietzsche was bitterly attacking. Women who accept traditional morality of this nature, especially, for example, basing it on the Christian Bible, are accepting what Nietzsche called a slave morality, a morality which justifies their slavery and attempts to get their masters to be compassionate. They imply, "I will stay in my house, I'll be barefoot and pregnant, and by my devotion to you I'll hope that you will be compassionate to me and give me something to eat." Nietzsche convincingly argued that this kind of morality has hidden secretly behind it a hatred, a resentment, and a fear of the strength of the master.

It could be at least maintained that an important component of Nietzsche's anger at women, which runs throughout his writing, is based on the fact that women of his time (and even many today) so passively accepted this kind of morality. He felt that such women were in a sense just like the philosophers of the establishment; they were justifying and even advocating an acceptance of slave morality, which terribly inhibits the development of women.

This is an evolutionary philosophy. Nietzsche was profoundly influenced by Darwin as were many philosophers, and his whole concept is that "truths," like myths, arise in the context of a culture; there is no Absolute Reality "out there" to which they correspond at all. Darwin argued that there is no "ideal" of man "out there," that man has evolved and changed from the lower animals; he wasn't just suddenly created in terms of some ideal or image in the mind of God. Nietzsche said the same about "truth"; he was translating Darwin into the realm of philosophy.

Myths and truths arise in a culture. In an early culture they have an important adaptive value, they

hold the civilization together, they give a sense of coherence, people are willing to die for them, and as such they enable a smaller group sometimes to overthrow a larger group--so they are useful in the struggle for power. Then as time passes the force of these "truths" congeals, encrusts, solidifies, and becomes obsolescent. At this point in the culture it becomes a repressive force—an obstacle—and sets up a situation that is explosive, because of the increasing pressure of the will to power in every civilization and in every person. As these truths are no longer useful in expressing these forces by sublimation, but now become a block, the result is an irresistible force against an immovable object—which results in an explosion. That, he correctly argued, was the situation in 1883.

He got into deeper philosophical trouble as we shall see over the subject of master morality or noble morality. In master morality obedience and rules are out; one does not follow blindly any set of rules. The *person* rather than the act is judged. He said that *the person confers a value on himself* by self-overcoming, by discipline, and by triumph over impulses with much unavoidable suffering. In other words, as Sartre borrowed this straight out of Nietzsche, *man creates himself*. He is responsible and cannot plead moral codes or rules for what he did. So Eichmann's defense, "I was just following orders" would be an anathema to Nietzsche; actually Eichmann is probably an excellent example of who Nietzsche had in mind by slave morality. Following orders, according to bourgeois morality, for a soldier is a highly valued thing to do. The general tells you to shoot those ten people; if you are a good soldier you shoot them; it is only a step from this to the whole history of the twentieth century. Nietzsche would abominate such behavior.

Nietzsche was what you might call a moral revolutionary not a moral reformer. He was not interested in changing our moral codes, he was interested in attacking the whole notion of morality and where it comes from, and so going "beyond good and evil." In this sense Nietzsche said philosophers must be "legislators," they must be *creators* of value.

There is an important counter-argument against Nietzsche's attack on Christian morality as based on resentment. Nietzsche was right in attacking hypocritical morality—the businessman who goes to church on Sunday and then robs everybody all week long. That is true, but that is not the way Christian morality was originally conceived. It was primarily directed by Jesus at man's spiritual core, at man as a member of the Kingdom of God—which Jesus thought was literally at hand. It was not presented by Jesus

as a series of rules on how to conduct yourself in this particular world—which He thought was about to end. It was aimed at much much higher spiritual values and aimed at a cataclysmic change.

Nietzsche unfortunately ignored the specific depiction of master morality. Often one gets the feeling he was really describing Christ's morality all over again, and yet in those areas where he was not describing the same old morality all over again he brought up dreadful "superior" examples like Napoleon or Caesar Borgia! This is obvious hyperbole which he himself admits. We never really get a very clear picture of Nietzsche's overman or superman, what he is really going to be like, and just how different he is going to be from a really decent spiritual Christian.

In *Beyond Good and Evil* (sections 188 and 198) he emphasized discipline but also emphasized that there is no such thing as an eternal universal morality. This is one of Nietzsche's most important points. No moral code is applicable to all men at all times. Notice that this is a direct contradiction to Kant. Yet in *Beyond Good and Evil* he was constantly saying that the will to power is a universal eternal drive in all men and it is the key to all human psychology. He argued that it should be bent to self-overcoming here and now, rather than to try to achieve some kind of eternal perfection for another world. In this sense Nietzsche described himself as the Antichrist.

The *Antichrist* in 1888 offered a summary of his attack on Christianity, which here he defined as the religion of Paul. So, in spite of the title, it was not an attack on Christ but on the religion of Paul. In this short shrill book he again stressed the concept of resentment. Organized Christianity and the resentment of the slave morality embedded in organized Christianity he considered opposed to the basic spirit of Jesus and the basic life-style of Jesus. In this work he again denounced anti-Semitism, in much contrast to Wagner. He actually admired the Man Jesus; his notion of Jesus was more like Dostoevsky's notion of Jesus in his novel *The Idiot*, portraying a Jesus- like figure who is an "idiot" in his simplicity. Nietzsche's use of the term Antichrist is *not* meant to name Christ's enemy of the second coming, and it is not a theological term. It is borrowed from Schopenhauer. Schopenhauer used the term Antichrist to represent a view that the world has no eternal or God-given moral significance. That is why Nietzsche called himself the Antichrist—because it was his view that the world does not *per se* have any moral significance but only the values that men give it.

SCENE 2: THE WILL TO POWER

Nietzsche produced a pre-Socratic cosmology, what is known technically as an immanent metaphysics. For him the nature of Being is a continual clashing, a continual overcoming, a continual shaping and breaking, creating and destroying, in flux and change. This occurs in everything, and this is all there is. That is his definition of the will to power; *everything* is a manifestation of this Will to Power.

The Will to Power (Nietzsche 1968), especially Book III, I consider to be the most important and exciting of Nietzsche's work (although, as stated, it consists of unpublished notes) and I do not think has yet been sufficiently appreciated by modern scholars. In section 481 of Book III Nietzsche said there are no such things as facts, there are only interpretations. He beats this drum again, and again, and again. The first section of Book III, called "The Will to Power as Knowledge", carried his attack on knowledge to the extreme.

Descartes' absolute certainty—"I think therefore I am"—was taken to pieces by Nietzsche in section 484 (as well as in *Beyond Good and Evil*) because it already contains a value judgment, namely that there is an I, a thinking subject. Nietzsche pointed out there is no reason to make that judgment, there is no certainty about that, it is just a belief or "prejudice." Similarly, in section 494 he asked the extraordinary question, What *right* do we have to assume that our knowledge should ever extend further than what would be strictly necessary for the preservation of life? That we should know "anything more than what we absolutely have to know for the survival of the species" was questioned by Nietzsche, again consistent with the theory of evolution. He pointed out (in section 496) that our apparatus for acquiring knowledge is not designed for "knowledge" and that it is a mistake to think we are given some kind of a divine mind which is designed specifically by its Creator to learn eternal truths. He adopted an evolutionary view of the mental apparatus and sees it as evolving for the purpose of survival.

From this view there is no reason to believe that our knowledge would be other than strictly in the service of survival. Thesis: the mental apparatus or psyche was given to us by our Divine Creator for the purpose of our reaching out towards eternal truth. Antithesis: the mental apparatus evolved over the centuries strictly for the purpose of preserving the species and therefore the "knowledge" we have is strictly in the service of adaptation. In sections 505 and 506 he pointed out that even our sense perceptions are permeated with value judgments, a revolutionary idea in philosophy, for he attacked

what is often believed in philosophy to be the most objective of all knowledge, so-called empirical data or even "atomic facts."

One of the reasons science has been overvalued is because of the mistaken notion that science discovers "truth." He argued that science does not discover truth because there is no truth to discover. There is no objective Truth. Science for Nietzsche is a tool, which can be used for life or against life. The value of science is that of a useful adaptational tool in the struggle for power—ask any army general.

When Kant asked "How are synthetic *a priori* judgements possible in physics?" He assumed that they *were* possible. Nietzsche said: What is the value of such judgments, why do we have to make judgments like that, why do we need them? His answer was, because we need to put together these structures in a science—it gives us a tool, a weapon, which is good for ourselves. Thus he makes a *very* important statement: "every action requires illusion." At the bottom of *V* every action there has to be illusory belief in something ascertain. Without such beliefs we tend not to take any action at all.

This is the problem of Hamlet. In spite of the ghost—for perhaps it is a demon—he can never be absolutely sure that the events really happened to his father. Therefore, he can never get himself to take action. It is only when he himself is actually stabbed and poisoned that he feels a certainty that he has been wronged; then he takes action at once. A very famous analysis of Hamlet was provided by Nietzsche. His point was that our behavior in every culture is based on certain illusions and the basic illusion is that these premises are absolutely true.

What Plato called Eternal Ideas Nietzsche would call illusions—this is the reason that Nietzsche over and over again said that his philosophy is the exact opposite of Plato!

The Twilight of the Idols is a hundred page summary, written in 1888, of Nietzsche's philosophy that should be high on any reading list. It has a subtitle about "philosophizing with a hammer" that has been constantly misunderstood. The hammer he is talking about does not mean the hammer of the brute who goes around smashing things with a hammer; Nietzsche means a tuning fork. If one went to an antique store and wanted to buy a real idol, to see if it was empty or full inside or if it was solid or empty, one would use a tuning fork and the reverberations would tell whether it was empty or full. What he meant here is that our idols are empty—they are the empty idols of prejudices of the philosophers,

already reviewed in Book I of *Beyond Good and Evil*, and fervently discussed in Book II of *The Will to Power*. Francis Bacon in his early philosophical work listed "idols of the crowd," "idols of the market place," and so on, in one of the first attacks on philosophical prejudices and medieval philosophy—Nietzsche had him in mind.

Nietzsche argued that science, religion, art, and morality are useful fictions and they are all instances of the Will to Power. In other words, reality is essentially chaotic and art, religion, morality, and science impose a form, a structure, an intelligibility on it which enable us to mastery and control. This was Nietzsche's basic philosophical point: nothing is absolutely true, a total nihilism—there is no way ever to find absolute truth since there *is* no such thing. There is nothing except the eternal strife of will against will.

How can you make a statement like that if nothing is true? Any statement about what is true or what is out there in the world, by your own definition must also not be true! Here is a logical paradox in Nietzsche's argument, again reminiscent of Socrates, and just as deliberate.

SCENE 3: NIETZSCHE ON TRUTH AND SCIENCE

The need for humans to preserve their sense of dignity and importance is what all conceptual schemes arise from, said Nietzsche. Societies differ in what their basic conceptual schemes are; their religions, their sciences, their morality, their art differ. Even individual persons differ about their conceptual schemes. Art illusions make life bearable and science illusions help us adapt to life, but primarily it is art for Nietzsche which supplies metaphors and precedes science. Many modern social psychologists agree with this, and in the evolution of cultures it is usually artistic metaphors and myths which come first and then out of these emerge the sciences of the culture.

The role of art changed over Nietzsche's writing. In *The Birth of Tragedy* it was given the highest importance. One might claim that the whole of Nietzsche's mature philosophy was an attempt to find something to replace art—to fill the space left empty by his disillusionment with Wagner and his disillusionment with art as giving meaning to life.

Nietzsche argued that philosophy should be the science of the origins of thought rather than the

pursuit of absolute truth, so that the crucial problem of philosophy is not to provide solutions to problems which philosophers have quarreled about for ages, but to show how and why the quarrels between philosophers have really arisen.

This is a theme taken up by many contemporary philosophers. For instance, modern language philosophers argue that the quarrels in philosophy arise from mistakes in language—when one hypostasizes grammatical concepts. He added to this something even more unique when he proclaimed that science is *also* an invention, just like philosophy.

That leaves Nietzsche with a sort of pragmatic criterion of truth. There can be no correspondence theory of truth because there is nothing in an eternal objective order to correspond with as far as Nietzsche is concerned. The so-called objective world of common sense is an evolved creation of the human mind. There are no facts, there are only rival interpretations; it is will versus will.

This doctrine is usually called *perspectivism*, and it is considered his major philosophical doctrine. Thus, for Nietzsche, so-called common sense would be a mass metaphysics or the metaphysics of the herd. His argument was that, constituted as we are, it is extremely difficult to break out of this—to break out of mass metaphysics. Human life, according to Nietzsche, is sunk in falsehood, and his philosophy can be thought of as a compulsive effort to break out of this morass of falsehood. There are only *prevailing perspectives*, there is no truth, and these perspectives are the prevailing prejudices of the time.

This is more extreme than the pragmatism of William James because, according to Nietzsche, no philosophical system has truth—not even pragmatism, not even Nietzsche's system; there is no such thing as truth.

He had very high esteem for the scientific method of questioning and testing hypotheses, but he argued that science does not reach truth—it just reaches temporary truths. In other words, men will always have to live on hypotheses, never on truth, and although the results of science may endure they do not endure absolutely. The most famous example of course, is Newton's science which was thought to be enduring for all times; it was thought by Kant to be an absolute synthetic *a priori* science and yet it was completely overturned by Einstein. As previously explained, Nietzsche answers Kant's question about how are synthetic *a priori* judgments possible in physics with the question, *why* is the belief in such

judgments necessary? This is a question that never occurred to Kant; he just took it for granted that there were such judgments and that they were true for all times. Nietzsche answered his own question—that survival and power become greater if one can make generalizations.

Therefore, science is not a summary of observations as naively used to be thought, but it is a temporary creative organization of the world and it is related to the original observations in very complicated ways, far more complicated than dreamed of in the nineteenth century. The fictions of science are useful but science claims too much when it claims to have discovered truth.

SCENE 4: NIETZSCHE AND LANGUAGE

Nietzsche was a philologist. He did not, like analytic philosophers, argue only that philosophers have been misled by language; he said *everyone* has been misled by language from childhood. All of our fundamental concepts are nothing but "lucky hits" in the struggle for life and power. If he were alive today he would give the example of the "quark" from physics—is this a "thing," a "fact," a "concept," or is it simply a fortunate explanatory fiction? Even "facts" do not exist for Nietzsche—they are interpretations; they are extractions from sense data. Every fact is an organization out of the chaos of experience. *Nothing* is rock bottom certain and there are no "basic" or "atomic" facts. Here is the absolute extreme of nihilism.

Causation, which Nietzsche said is nothing but a social and individual habit, locks us into a perspective of "things with their causes," for one cannot conceive of "causation" without discreet "things" "causing" each other. Here we have the "fiction which is dependent on fictions" according to Nietzsche. The whole perspective is embedded in our very language, which was the language necessary for survival in the stone age, the most efficient power language.

This explains Nietzsche's frenzied use of poetic diction, deliberate paradoxes, and perverted use of terms. Like the Zen *Koan* it is an attempt to wreck the shell of ordinary language and expose us to chaos — which is all there is as far as Nietzsche was concerned.

Nietzsche opposed all two-world doctrines. He called Plato "Europe's greatest misfortune" and he insisted that any idea of a world of Forms or Reality is an unnecessary reduplication. He followed what

became the pragmatic theory of truth, as explained, yet he could not accept the pragmatic theory of truth either, for he would say there is no theory of truth; nothing is true! So even the theory defining "truth" as a belief that is successful in adaptation would be rejected by Nietzsche.

His attack on so-called eternal or divinely given moral principles is simply a subclass or example of Nietzsche's whole philosophy: there is no Reality, no moral order, no divinely given rules and regulations which anything has to correspond with. For Nietzsche the apparent world is the only world that there is, and the idea that there is a Real fixed eternal world he called a lie, or to put it in Nietzsche's sometimes more tactful terminology, the intellect is an instrument but what it produces are fictions. So he (1968) wrote: "Untruth is a condition of life."

As Nietzsche became insane or at least increasingly extreme as in *Ecce Homo* and some of his last writings, he became a total solipsist. The standpoint of solipsism is to deny not only an objective eternal world behind appearances but to deny even the world of appearances as being anything except something created by one's own mind. Nietzsche in his final productive works in 1888 went towards that position and began to argue that he was God: . that he created his whole apparent world as well as other people creating their eternal worlds. This is the farthest point of his nihilism.

Nietzsche said that language causes reason to postulate entities like Real World, substance, unity, cause, things, and Being; these notions are embedded in our very language but they are nothing but articles of faith or, to put it formally, the "categories of the understanding" that Kant talks about are absolutely built into the structure of our speech. This whole perspective is a grammatical error according to Nietzsche; it is spurious and we are misled by our own grammar. We have nothing but useful fictions to operate with according to him, so concepts like space, time, lines, planes, surfaces—and all the favorite universals of philosophers—are nothing but fictions, which we need in order to live. We can't survive as well without them; beings with a different language and with a different kind of reasoning power would construct a different world. They would experience the world differently and develop a different set of laws and concepts which seem absolutely "true" to them, in order to survive with their particular mental apparatus in their environment. Again and again he wrote all these "entities" and immutable laws are nothing but "a tissue of lies and frauds" built into our very language and our experience because of their survival value. The Newtonian "laws of nature," and so on, for Nietzsche are only fictions; they are

necessities for us to survive but they have no absolute value. They do not correspond to any eternal reality or show some "purpose" in the mind of God.

This is why he constantly said that his philosophy is dangerous, for it ruins by challenging these fictions, and these fictions are most important to our culture because they give survival power value. Perceptual and linguistic presuppositions are illusory "necessities" for survival, but are neither entities nor explanations, according to Nietzsche.

Notes

1 In the present work from now on, when I wish to stress the metaphysical nature of the Will to Power, I will use some capital letters.