

NIETZSCHE AND THE NOTION OF TRUTH

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NIETZSCHE AND THE NOTION OF TRUTH

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Nietzsche and the Notion of Truth

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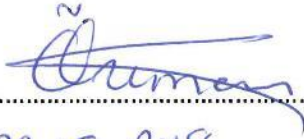
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ABSTRACT

Nietzsche and the Notion of Truth

The aim of the thesis is to focus on the notion of truth as it constitutes one of the core problems in Nietzsche's philosophy. After making some preliminary remarks on certain technical and approach-related problems, it starts with Nietzsche's criticisms directed against the traditional philosophy, analyzing why Nietzsche thinks that in their search for truth philosophers were prejudiced and became hostile to life, in his terms formed a *décadent* culture. A genealogical research on the belief in truth is carried out throughout the third chapter as the reasons for such a belief are very important for both Nietzsche's critique and his own philosophy. My purpose is to show what Nietzsche seems to oppose, but at the same time acknowledge in terms of belief in truth. Once the ambivalent nature of Nietzschean philosophy becomes clearer, a broader discussion on his own position is presented in the fourth chapter. In this regard, I will further dwell on some possibly contradictory arguments of Nietzsche, juxtaposing *truth* with *falsity*, *illusion* with *reality*, *moral* with *nonmoral* and *metaphorical* with *literal*. Appealing to various accounts of Nietzsche from different periods of his life, I will finally attempt to offer a subjective reading of Nietzsche freed from fundamental contradictions which, yet, tends to underline the irony pertaining to human existence.

ÖZET

Nietzsche ve Hakikat Kavramı

Bu tezin amacı, Nietzsche'nin felsefesini oluşturan temel problemlerden biri olarak hakikat kavramına odaklanmaktır. Bu çerçevede ilk başta bazı teknik ve yaklaşıma dair problemlere değinildikten sonra, Nietzsche'nin geleneksel felsefeye yönelttiği eleştiriler ele alınmakta, Nietzsche'ye göre felsefecilerin neden ön yargılı oldukları ve hakikati ararken neden yaşama karşıtlık, Nietzsche'nin deyiimiyle bir *dekadan* kültür oluşturdıkları incelenmektedir. Üçüncü bölümde, hakikate duyulan inancın altında yatan nedenlerin hem Nietzsche'nin felsefesi hem de eleştirileri açısından önemli olması sebebiyle, bu inanca ilişkin soykütüksel bir araştırma yürütülmektedir. Amacım, hakikat inancına dair Nietzsche'nin neye karşı çıktığını, fakat aynı zamanda neyi kabul eder gibi görüldüğünü sergilemektir. Nietzscheci felsefenin ikircikli yapısı daha açık bir hâle geldikten sonra dördüncü bölümde, Nietzsche'nin hakikat konusundaki tutumuna dair geniş çaplı bir tartışma ortaya konulmaktadır. Bu bağlamda, Nietzsche'nin muhtemel çelişkili savları üzerinde ayrıca duracak, *hakikat* ve *yalan*, *illüzyon* ve *gerçeklik*, *ahlaki* ve *ahlak dışı*, *mecazi* ve *tam anlam* kavramlarını karşılaştırmalı olarak ele alacağım. Son bölümde ise, Nietzsche'nin farklı dönemlerde kaleme aldığı pek çok eser ışığında, temel çelişkilerden uzak, fakat insan doğasına ait olan ironiyi savlayan öznel bir Nietzsche okuması önereceğim.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 2: TRADITIONAL UNDERSTANDING.....	6
2.1 <i>Décadence</i>	6
2.2 The beginning of <i>décadence</i>	8
2.3 Plato and Platonism onward.....	12
CHAPTER 3: NIETZSCHE ON TRUTH	26
3.1 Nietzsche's question.....	26
3.2 Genealogy of the will to truth	29
3.3 Truth as a metaphor	38
CHAPTER 4: RECONSIDERING THE NOTION OF TRUTH.....	48
4.1 The problem of consistency	48
4.2 "On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense"	51
4.3 Not truth, but metaphors	64
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION.....	76
REFERENCES.....	84

ABBREVIATIONS

AC: The Antichrist

BGE: Beyond Good and Evil

BT: Birth of Tragedy

EC: Ecce Homo

GS: The Gay Science

HH: Human, All too Human

TI: The Twilight of the Idols

TL: On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense

WP: The Will to Power

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

A thesis titled “Nietzsche and the Notion of Truth” seems to require some preliminary remarks on the striking contrast between the philosophical notion of truth that historically led up to Nietzsche and his own famous ideas on this “notion.” It is mainly related with Nietzsche’s well-known opposition to what he names traditional understanding or a certain attitude dominated the Western philosophy and also the notion of truth that he believes to be the product of this tradition. Thus, dealing with such a subject matter, one has to be careful in juxtaposing Nietzsche and the notion of truth together for it is highly controversial whether that notion itself is applicable to his philosophy. In this context, the title of the thesis can be construed as an indication of my attempt to question the exact place — and point out, where appropriate, the significance — of the notion of truth in Nietzsche’s philosophy in connection with his refutation of traditional metaphysics.

To that end, Chapter 2 starts with what Nietzsche seems to mean by the traditional understanding. Focusing on his claim that the Western tradition became hostile to life, it aims to display the reasons why and in what way Western culture — emphatically thinkers like Plato, Descartes or Kant — and Christianity were prejudiced regarding the notion of truth. However, Nietzsche’s writings do not provide a detailed account of the philosophers that he criticizes. Nor do they include a systematic and complete analysis of their philosophy. For most of the time, Nietzsche seems to speak about whole tradition as if the differences between philosophers are irrelevant for the subject matter. What is more, some of his writings appear to be sketchy or dubious for various reasons, as in the case of *Will to Power*,

for instance. Still, Nietzsche seems to be pretty much satisfied with showing that common philosophical ideas — “the prejudices against life” in Nietzsche’s words — constitute certain type of hostile attitude shared by traditional metaphysics, Christianity or scientific dogmatism. Accordingly, I will try to trace what Nietzsche believed to be common in various thinkers and ways of thoughts in order to understand what he opposed regarding the tradition, under the idea of *décadence*. I will primarily focus on his books called *Twilight of Idols*, *Beyond Good and Evil* and partly *Human, All Too Human* for the second chapter, exploring how, according to Nietzsche, the “true world” finally became a fable, while making some references to certain secondary resources where I deem explanatory. Yet, it is not an attempt to provide any conclusive study of the tradition mentioned or Nietzsche’s critique of a certain philosopher or a doctrine as I believe his criticisms are open to further discussion that could go beyond the conceptual framework of my thesis. Hence, I will first try to provide a general picture of Nietzsche’s thought on *décadence* and his critique that seems to play an important role considering his own philosophy.

In a similar vein, Chapter 3 begins with Nietzsche’s question posed against the tradition, “Why there is will to truth?” Not just he claims that such a question has never been asked and problematizes the will to truth itself for the first time, he also no longer needs to answer questions like what truth is or how it is possible. It is for a similar reason I believe that the Nietzschean question might be the best way to introduce his own understanding on truth, which is the basic aim of the third chapter. In the direction of his question, he investigates why philosophers believe in truth, using genealogy as a method of inquiry. Following the same path, I would like to portray how and why Nietzsche thinks that philosophers believed in the will to truth, re-introducing his criticisms about Descartes and Kant in the hope of rendering

clearer Nietzsche's objections and his difference, if any. I will again analyze his arguments in *Beyond Good and Evil* together with the article called "On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense" since I believe that such a reading may be interesting and useful in terms of portraying his opinion on the concept of truth.

Still, there is a difficulty in dealing with his unpublished early article and the book called *Will to Power* which I refer mostly, but not only, in the third chapter. It may be fair enough to question if and to which extent they can represent Nietzsche's own perspective. Certainly, it would not be scholarly justified to write a thesis on Nietzsche based solely on these two unpublished, hence highly debatable accounts. Yet, with respect to the value of his early article and the possible relation between Nietzsche's published and unpublished works (the concept of illusion in the early article and the understanding of necessary fictions in *Beyond Good and Evil*), my choice and why I believe it might be a rewarding reading will be further grounded in the last chapter. Concerning the situation of *Will to Power*, on the other part, I intended not to place it onto the center of the thesis, referring to it in places where it seems mostly parallel to Nietzsche's published works. The version I am using, the English translation by Walter Kaufmann, often refers to those similarities both between the paragraphs of the book and the other published works of Nietzsche. Although the reliability of this version is debated vis-à-vis Nietzsche's philosophy, I believe that those notes still might allow the reader to make a compare and contrast among his writings.¹

¹It is necessary to indicate, at this point, that only the Colli&Montinari (1967-77) version of especially Nietzsche's late notes is scholarly accredited, while Kaufmann's edition is often disputed as in the case of Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche's edition of the *Will to Power*. However, the Colli&Montinari version has not yet been fully translated into English. Stanford University Press started the translations, but has yet to do the later writings and only a selection of Nietzsche's late writings based

Once again, Chapter 3 is solely based on Nietzsche's own thought and does not contain a further discussion on his views or possible problems. In order to alleviate the difficulties that the structure of my thesis might cause, I will provide certain explications (mostly in footnotes) with regard to some of Nietzsche's critical claims that are going to be discussed in the fourth chapter. In this regard, the last section of the chapter can be understood as a presentation of Nietzsche's perspective on truth as also implied by its title. Sticking to the reading offered above, it aims to illustrate a coherent picture and highlight certain issues that require further argumentation. It is also the reason why it ends with few remarks on potential problems, paving the way for the next chapter that is mainly devoted to the discussion.

Chapter 4 reconsiders the notion of truth in order to examine Nietzsche's perspective illustrated in the second and third chapters. Dealing with the difficulty of his language, his somehow radical claims and their potential self-referential inconsistency, I aim to construe what could possibly be Nietzsche's general stance on truth in the face of the criticisms, in reference to both his early and later, published and unpublished works. However, such an attitude (which will be seen to persist throughout the thesis) might be open to criticisms if, from a historical perspective, Nietzsche is believed to change his view concerning truth. Yet, I would rather like to offer a coherent and subjective reading of Nietzsche based on what is available to a reader today, questioning if such a reading itself is advisable — as well as its meaning and consequences. Within this framework, I aim to offer a narrative around the issues I found striking in his account on truth, appealing to his writings from different periods of his life since it is also possible to believe that he did not fully

on Colli&Montinari version is published by the Cambridge University Press. Hence, my choice for Kaufmann's edition is rather inevitable, yet bearing in mind the problematic nature of it.

reject his early writings, “(...) but rather does his best to integrate some of its central claims into the course his thinking was later to take, to find in it the germs of ideas that he was later to develop more fully” (BT, p. x).² In this regard, my aim is to challenge the perspective delineated here, rather than being merely historical.

The concept of “perspective”, on the other hand, seems to be compatible with Nietzschean philosophy taking into account his concepts like “metaphor” or “fiction” in the context of truth, that I will dwell further in the last section of the fourth chapter. Once the meaning of such concepts is clearer, I will introduce and discuss the possible effects of metaphorical/perspectival thinking with respect to Nietzsche’s view as well as philosophy and science in general. Finally, I will provide some concluding remarks concerning my reading of Nietzsche in conjunction with future subjects of discussion that might or perhaps even should be taken into consideration.

²Whenever I refer to Nietzsche’s own works, I will use proper abbreviations in parentheses inside the text.

CHAPTER 2

TRADITIONAL UNDERSTANDING

2.1 *Décadence*

A great deal of Nietzsche's writings consists of his critique, a critique of a certain attitude which prevailed in the history of Western thinking. Starting with Ancient Greeks, especially the Socratic-Platonic tradition, he claims that a hostile attitude towards life dominated different areas like philosophy, religion and science, that one can recognize the symptoms of it. This tradition however, is the history of a *décadence*, an impoverishment of life since it is opposed to see the reality of life that we humans live, that seemingly changes and to which becoming and perishing also belong. It shows a kind of weakness on the part of the *décadents* (philosophers, scientists, priests) and their inability to cope with this reality.

Rather than affirming life, philosophers became hostile to life according to Nietzsche, mistrusted the senses, went against the instincts by favoring rationality and hate the idea of change. They invented an unchanging, ideal, a "real", hence better world against to the world we live, as he puts it:

The history of philosophy is a secret raging against the pre-conditions of life, against the value feelings of life, against partisanship in favor of life. Philosophers have never hesitated to affirm a world provided it contradicted this world and furnished them with a pretext for speaking ill of this world. (WP, §461)

At first, they invented what they call "a real world" juxtaposed with the world of appearances. The real world has been constructed out of an opposition to the actual world which became merely an apparent world in the end (TI, 'Reason' in philosophy, §6). As opposed to change, destruction, finitude, diversity and multiplicity of senses, they invented concepts like unity, self-identity, ego, being,

substance, rationality and infinitude, according to Nietzsche. But, the division of real and apparent world is a symptom of an impoverished life: “The apparent world and the world invented by a lie — this is the antithesis. The latter has hitherto been called the ‘real world,’ ‘truth,’ ‘God.’ This is what we have to abolish” (WP, §461). In other words, what is understood in the name of real world is actually the anti-thesis of this world we live, which became more “real”.

Consequently, Nietzsche aims to understand the reasons why traditional thinking was in the situation as to deny life, where it came from and how it is undertaken within the different aspects of life. To this end, like a symptomatologist, he takes up different cases within the history of Western thinking that are the signs of *décadence*. He finds out that many philosophers, scientists, or priests are prejudiced against life. Objectivity in science, morality of duty, Christianity and dogmatism in philosophy are different symptoms indicating the hostile morality shared within those different domains. However, as Nietzsche says: “They are all advocates who do not want to be seen as such; for the most part, in fact, they are sly spokesmen for prejudices that they christen ‘truths’ (...)” (BGE, §5). In other words, what counted as truth, real world, God, etc., were mere prejudices of those who advocated them, but they are considered to be true. Though within the traditional understanding one can find many conflicts between different approaches, they should be taken as a whole, for Nietzsche, so far as they believe in the truth of their prejudices.

Hence, the problem of traditional thinking and his critique of it become quite central to Nietzsche’s own understanding and philosophy as he aims to abolish and go beyond it. What is more, the fact that prejudices are presented as truth, thus the role of truth are also very crucial in his criticism. Following the same reasoning, it might be better to look at, first, what Nietzsche considers as the prejudices of

philosophers in detail and how they are taken to be true. Only then, the place of truth in his critique will become more visible.

2.2 The beginning of *décadence*

According to Nietzsche, especially in the light of Socratic/Platonic tradition in favor of dialectics and logocentrism, Greek thought undergoes a change and departs from Hellenic tradition and its polychromatic nature. He suggests that the old Greek tradition (the myth, Homer, tragedy, etc.) was coming to an end. It is the consequence of an exchange between cultures that “[t]he *polis* loses its faith in the uniqueness of its culture, in its right to rule over every other *polis* — One exchanges cultures, i.e., ‘the gods’ — one thereby loses faith in the sole prerogative of the *deus autochthonus*” (WP, §427). In other words, the exchange of cultures, and hence gods yielded to the situation where good and evil from different origins were mixed. Here, *gods* appear to have a double meaning where Nietzsche seems to talk about both the Gods that are worshiped by religious people and also what was taken as true and the subsequent moral understanding of the good and bad according to a certain culture. Consequently, the traditional judgment mechanism, from Nietzsche’s point of view, was to be questioned in the light of newly introduced perspectives, ideas and morality.

But before Socrates, it was immoral (neither desired nor appreciated) referring to dialectics in order to defend one’s opinion, claims Nietzsche; it was the last chance to consult dialectics since it was not found to be convincing. Rather, it was a sign of weakness if a person appeals to her/his reasoning rather than accepting what is already, traditionally taken to be true. In spite of the fact that dialecticians were seen as mere buffoons, Socrates was, according to Nietzsche, “the clown who

made himself be taken seriously” by the citizens who eventually executed him” (TI, The problem of Socrates, §5). Socrates was the first person taken seriously by noble Athenians, that mentioned the difference between knowledge and opinion/belief and hence the fight between instincts and reason (BGE, §191). He used dialectics in order to question commonly held opinions. He engaged in discussions where he brought forth contradictory arguments as a way of testing traditionally held beliefs. By means of dialectics Socrates created a new *agon*, as Nietzsche tells: “The dialectician puts the onus on his opponent to show that he is not an idiot: the dialectician infuriates people and makes them feel helpless at the same time” (TI, The problem of Socrates, §7). In doing so, Socrates took the side of reason as opposed to Hellenic culture to show people how they are incapable to justify the foundations of their beliefs. Unfortunately, his resistance against the instincts and beliefs of the noble Athenians, once taken seriously, resulted in his execution.

When it comes to Nietzsche’s Plato, on the other hand, he utilized his master’s name and succeeded in converting the Homeric culture into a kind of Socraticism, introducing a new (to wit, Socratic) type of morality that is alien to Hellenes. Yet, Nietzsche reads Plato both from a positive and negative perspective. The Epicurean joke in *Beyond Good and Evil* might be helpful in order to understand in what way Plato was a genuine philosopher for Nietzsche and stands at the beginning of a tradition that he made out of Socrates. According to Epicure, Plato and his followers were *Dionysiokalakes*, mere actors lacking originality, that there is nothing genuine about them (BGE, §7). Nietzsche finds this epithet meaningful so far as it fits what he has in mind when he calls Plato a genuine philosopher despite the fact that he opened the way to the biggest mistake — reason dominating the history of Western thought. Here, it is better to state Nietzsche’s distinction between

genuine philosophers and philosophical laborers.³ While genuine philosophers — what Nietzsche calls law givers— believe the necessity to lead the society in one way or another, scholars are incapable of directing their times, remain at the level of already existing ideas. In that sense, Nietzsche's Plato is a genuine philosopher, a pious liar who, by means of his acting talent, could create laws and direct his culture. Just like Epicure, Nietzsche wants to say that what was posited as truth by Plato was rather a lie, but indeed a pious lie. Contrarily to Epicure, from Nietzschean perspective, Plato's genuineness comes from its ability of telling lies, acting as if real. Even the fact that Epicure needed such a comparison between actors and Plato is significant for Nietzsche's point. As Lampert (2004) also mentions:

Plato's hiddenness and Sphinx-nature led him to guard his master with Plato-like front and rear, part of the successful theatrics so envied by Epicurus, the act that made philosophy moral and therefore palatable to pious citizens like those who executed Socrates. (p. 215)

Put differently, Nietzsche's Plato was a very talented actor who invented pious lying that eventually overpowered even the ones who were against Socrates and dialectics.

Hence, the positive sense in which Nietzsche's Plato is a genuine philosopher comes from his ability to create a long tradition of Platonism. Concerning the above-mentioned fall of Hellenic culture, Nietzsche thinks that Socrates recognized the tyranny of instincts and understood that "(...) an even stronger *counter-tyrant* needs to be invented" (TI, The problem of Socrates, §9). The situation of Socrates was not abnormal; in fact it was the case for all Athenians, as Nietzsche says: "Rationality was seen as the *savior*, neither Socrates nor his 'patients' had any choice about being rational, — it was *de rigueur*, it was their *last resort*" (TI, The problem of Socrates, §10) Hence, Plato's pious lying was also a part of his belief in the necessity of social order, "(...) fear for his friends, fear for a whole civil order threatened by the ruin

³For further information see the section called "We scholars" in *Beyond Good and Evil* cited.

through the death of its gods” (Lampert, 2004, p. 217). Along the same lines, Lampert draws attention to the Odyssean fear for his friends, who chooses to close his friend’s ear while he is not in need of caution for himself. It might be a good example to show Nietzsche’s Plato who does not believe his own doctrine. The choice made by Plato to use the name of his teacher to introduce his ideas appears to be a good reason to believe such a reading. Similarly, it might be possible that by wearing a mask as a part of his performance, he could actually place a distance between himself and his philosophy under the name of his hero, namely Socrates. In this sense, Nietzsche might be right for his interpretation of Plato as a genuine philosopher.

Yet, according to Nietzsche, and perhaps it is the core point of his objection against Plato and all kinds of Platonism, that he completely turned against the instincts and what is Hellenic. It appears to be the reason why he recognizes “(...) Socrates and Plato as symptoms of decay, as agents of Greek disintegration, as pseudo-Greek, as anti-Greek” (TI, The problem of Socrates, §2). It was Plato’s one-sidedness that created Platonism, secured Socraticism tied to a transcendent ideal supposedly attainable by the reason alone. In his justification of Socrates and the equation of reason with virtue and happiness, Nietzsche finds Plato reckless in so far as he made tyranny of reason as if reasoning is the only way through man’s happiness. But, other than the unattainability of knowledge, his philosophy created a denial of instincts, turning against the nature, desires and become hostile to life. Rather, it became a type of sickness since Platonism opened the way to Christianity

(what Nietzsche calls “Platonism for the ‘people’”), theology to rule over philosophy.⁴

Hence, from Nietzsche’s point of view, Plato’s philosophy is crucial for Occidental thought. Socratic/Platonic tradition introduced a different type of morality than Hellenic (in support of truth and reason), that paved the way from Christianity to modernity (Lampert, 2004, p. 214). From this standpoint, why for Nietzsche this turning point is the greatest error of all becomes clear. Similarly, Plato as the creator of Platonism, becomes a *décadent* from such a perspective. Despite his success in conducting the turning point just like a genuine philosopher, Plato is the pioneer of the tradition of *décadence* that ruled over the history of Western thought.

Therefore, it might be a good idea to take a closer look at Plato’s epistemology and ontology from Nietzschean perspective in order to see how his ideas dominated Occidental thinking.

2.3 Plato and Platonism onward

First, it was Socratic reasoning, according to Nietzsche, that made challenging the difference between belief and knowledge. The quest for the foundations of our beliefs brought forth the question whether the beliefs or reasoning deserves more authority. And, most of the beliefs and what was considered to be truth were highly dubitable. Hence, they appeared to be mere opinions once the foundation is questioned. Consequently, concluded Socrates in Nietzsche’s words:

Why free ourselves from the instincts?” he asked to himself. “Why should give them their fair dues, *along with* reason — we have to follow our instincts but persuade reason to come to their aid with good motives. (BGE, §191)

⁴For more detailed information see the “Preface” of *Beyond Good and Evil* cited.

However, even if it was not Socrates himself, according to Nietzsche, an over-trust in reason clearly created a certain kind of morality in which reason is praised and in its Platonic form became the reason to completely deny senses. Since then, Western philosophy is never freed from the domination of reason. Yet, such a tendency turned against life, desires and instincts of human beings as Nietzsche says, once “[r]eason’ makes us falsify the testimony of the senses” (TI, Reason in philosophy, §2). From this perspective, whether in its Platonic and eventually Christian or in its Kantian form, a similar moral choice against life appears to be at work.

In case of Plato, for instance, it was a strong belief in reason and a deep mistrust to the senses that made him *décadent* for Nietzsche. He talks about how Plato, at the beginning, created a transcendent ontology and epistemology by dividing the world into two different realms: The world of mere appearances (sensible world) and the world of forms, ideas (intelligible world). The world of ideas can be reached by the wise and pious people, the philosopher. By positing the idea of the Good in itself as the source of all things, he could secure the belief in reason and create a “divine dialectic” in Nietzsche’s words. As Plato (1997) writes:

So that which imparts truth to the things to known and the power to know to the knower is the form of the good. And though it is the cause of knowledge and truth, it is also an object of knowledge. (p. 1129)

To this end, one has to turn towards the direction of the source of all things, the Good that is the reason of each and everything, both the intelligible and the sensible world. The world of appearances becomes a mere copy of what is real, ideal, the world of ideas/forms. It is the soul, reasoning or understanding that resides in each of us and only the wise might attain knowledge of forms although he somehow seems to be prisoned in the world of mere appearances.

Despite the fact that Plato ensured that philosophers can have an access to forms or essences, in the end the real world became a myth according to Nietzsche. For the sake of certainty and absolute knowledge, Plato relied on the capacity of reason as if he is able to fix the world (WP, §521). He thinks that Plato's concept of the Good comes from his belief, that "(...) the highest should *not* grow out of the lowest, it should *not* grow at all" (TI, 'Reason' in philosophy, §4). Being caused by something else was devalued since it originally indicates dependence on something else, which means in turn, to scorn and misunderstand the idea of the most perfect. When it came to the idea of the highest good, since such an idea cannot come from a deficient being like us stuck in the world of appearances, it should be existent. It was the logic behind Plato's belief in the existence of a transcendent source, a divine being from Nietzschean reading.

On the other hand, nothing other than the idea of the Good (the most perfect being) seems to justify its existence itself so far as it was understood as "(...) *causa sui*" (TI, 'Reason' in philosophy, §4). As Lampert (2004) nicely summarizes, this is the main reason why Nietzsche's Plato "(...) invented a notion of *Geist*, of mind and spirit, that dogmatically maintained that the human mind could be so purified of its prejudices and limitations that it could gaze upon a permanent unitary ground of all things" (p. 208). In doing so, according to Nietzsche, Plato actually invented another — a better/ideal — world which is eternal, perfect and absolute. He created the real world with regard to what is contradictory to this (apparent) world, the world of senses. He furnished it with the ideas like unity, ego, substance, being, knowledge, truth and the Good. Interestingly though, for Nietzsche, the concepts that have been derived in contradiction to the senses taken to be the better, more real or true.

However, in as much as they get better, more real and true, they become transcendent, unconditioned and eternal — hence life-less. In the end, according to Nietzsche, what is promised to the wise turns out to be generalizations that are empty of life. The love of wisdom turns out to be a love of “(...) an assured nothing than an uncertain something” (BGE, §10). Not only that such concepts dogmatically imposed to be real, but also that they promoted a kind of indifference both to the senses and the world we live in since it’s a mere copy. Plus, human being is reduced to its ability to reason, hence other drives or instincts are suppressed in search for a better life. But, even if it promised to the wise as a real, hence as a better world, “the real world” contained nothing but the falsification of what pertains to the senses.

This is the reason why Nietzsche writes that philosophers believed in conceptual mummies where one can find no sign of life. Here, the reasons why according to Nietzsche *décadence* is a kind of nihilism become apparent. As Deleuze (2006) writes with reference to Nietzsche: “Life takes on a value of nil insofar as it is denied and depreciated” (p. 139). At the same time, there is a second sense in which philosophers’ love of sure nothing is related. It is the emptiness of the presupposed concepts that makes philosophers like Plato, a nihilist. The ideal world is furnished with the concepts that do not exist in the world of senses, daily experience. Therefore, they are empty of life.⁵

After what has been said so far with respect to Plato’s dogmatism, what Nietzsche calls Platonism, in the second formulation of “How the ‘true world’ finally became a fable”, Nietzsche talks about the Christian formulation of Plato, namely, Platonism for people. For Nietzsche, there is so much to be found in Christianity that one might blame Plato. From the concept of the Good, the God — in fact, even a

⁵Yet, why Nietzsche thinks such concepts are empty of life will hopefully be clearer in the following chapter where the process of building concepts will be further investigated.

good God — derived. Or, the concept of the eternal soul and realms of forms generated the idea of after life, promised to the religious man. As Nietzsche puts it:

The Church combats the passions by cutting them off in every sense: its technique, its ‘cure’, is *castration*. It never asks: ‘how can a desire be spiritualized, beautified, deified?’ – it has at all times laid the weight of its discipline on eradication (of sensuality, of pride, of greed, of the thirst to dominate and exact revenge). (TI, Morality as anti-nature, §1)

Put differently, just like what Plato did, Christian doctrine also became enemy to life, to what pertains to body, senses — namely, passions. The belief that God sees into our hearts similarly shows how threat against the deep desires of our body is posed in Christian religion according to Nietzsche. Thus, from his perspective, Christianity becomes a way that we use “(...) phantasmagoria of an ‘other’, a ‘better’ life to *avenge* ourselves on life” (TI, ‘Reason’ in philosophy, §6). The position of God’s beloved saint is the obvious example of this castration. It is a self-revenge since it is directed against deepest desires, trust in senses, passions as the needs of our body.

From such a perspective, it is not difficult to see the hostile character of the Christian doctrine and Nietzsche’s reaction against it. For him, it is the highest form of condemning life. For the sake of an ascetic ideal, the love of the God or heaven, this life we have in our hands becomes valuable only as a transitional stage. It is valuable so long as another, a better world, an after-life is promised in mercy of God. As Nietzsche puts it in the section “How the ‘true world’ finally became a fable”:

“The true world, unattainable for now, but promised to the man who is wise, pious, virtuous (‘to the sinner who repents’)” (TI, §2). But, the very other-worldliness, apart from being a mere religious dogma, promoted a kind of self-sacrifice that became one of the most dangerous forms of revenge against life.

Fortunately, says Nietzsche, no one follows what is dictated by Christianity since “[l]ife comes to an end where the ‘kingdom of God’ *begins*” (TI, Morality as

anti-nature, §4). However, even the greatest fight against Christianity, namely the European Enlightenment could not totally free itself from Platonism as Nietzsche says:

Truth in religion. — In the period of the Enlightenment the significance of religion was not adequately appreciated, of that there can be no doubt: but it is just as certain that in the reaction to the Enlightenment that followed it was appreciated much too highly, inasmuch as the religions were treated with love, almost amorously indeed, and were for example adjudged to possess a profound, indeed the profoundest possible understanding of the world; science had only to remove their dogmatic dress in order to possess the ‘truth’ in mythical form. (HH, The religious life, §110)

As long as modern philosophy and science believed in objective knowledge, universal morality and free subjects together with the idea of progress, they are vulnerable to criticism just raised above. Put differently, Enlightenment became another kind of Platonism, what might be called post-Platonism in its imagination of the modern man, still in pursuit of truth and knowledge.

Descartes, for instance, was the creator of the modern understanding of the subject as he took everything to be dubitable until he could arrive at what was indubitable for him. Yet, his belief in the “immediate certainty” of his thoughts caused him to pose a hazy conclusion that “he exists so far as he thinks”, according to Nietzsche. From Nietzschean perspective, several premises, though unjustified, are also left unsaid. First and foremost, Descartes seems to already have in mind a definition of what “thinking activity” is, though whether it is an activity is even a question, yet to be asked. As Nietzsche puts:

Enough: this ‘I think’ presupposes that I *compare* my present state with other states that I have seen in myself, in order to determine what it is: and because of this retrospective comparison with other types of ‘knowing,’ it has absolutely no ‘immediate certainty’ for me. (BGE, §16)

In the Cartesian formulation, subject is also taken to be given, as that which the activity of thinking belongs, the famous ego — ‘I’. However, it is the basic

presupposition of traditional thinking, the habit coming from the metaphysics of language that manifests itself in Cartesian reasoning as Nietzsche puts it:

It sees doers and deeds all over: it believes that will has causal efficacy: it believes in the 'I', in the I as being, in the I as substance, and it *projects* this belief in the I-substance onto all things — this is how it *creates* the concepts of 'thing' in the first place... (TI, 'Reason' in philosophy, §5)

The subject 'I' posited as the unitary ground to which the thinking activity belongs.

But still, it is not clear for Nietzsche what kind of a being the thinking subject is.

Even more, the meaning of existence is again uncertain.

However, as also Nietzsche accepts, it seems impossible for human beings to think otherwise, to get rid of the idea of the unity of subject and consciousness. It is difficult to think a world without causal relations, subjects or substances. Our thinking involves those beliefs without which one would be unable to think and live. Therefore, Nietzschean problem about Cartesian thinking cannot simply be understood as a refutation of those ideas. Rather, the emphasis of his argument here seems to be on the dubitable character of such presuppositions as Nietzsche declares that "(...) a belief can be a condition of life and nonetheless be false" (WP, §483).

His problem appears to be more related with certain concepts like immediate certainty or objectivity of our thoughts that cannot be justified by reason alone simply because of the limits of human reasoning, and because we lack objective criteria for such a comparison.⁶

When it comes to the reason why Descartes might be accused for his Platonism, Nietzsche claims that a similar over-trust concerning reasoning echoes in Cartesian philosophy. The idea of clarity and immanence of his thoughts is the

⁶However, concerning the subject matter of this chapter, it might be better to leave Nietzsche's position to the next chapter that I plan to re-investigate in which way he criticizes the concepts like subject and object. In addition, what means Nietzsche by the necessity and falsity of certain judgments will be further questioned and a detailed discussion on this subject can be found in the last chapter.

reflection of the value he attributes to human intellect, in deed over-valuing consciousness and underestimating the complexity of our thoughts, according to Nietzsche. Against Descartes, he draws attention to unconsciousness, emotions, desires, intuitions, bodily needs that seem to be also active in one's thinking while conscious states described with respect to the criteria of clarity and immanence seem to capture only some part of it. So far as Descartes ignores "what belongs to body" and over-values reasoning and consciousness as Nietzsche describes, he as well turns against life.

Another important objection of him is related with Descartes' appeal to the Platonic idea, hence the existence of God, as Nietzsche writes:

Even Descartes has the notion of the fact that in a fundamentally Christian moral mode of thought, which believes in a *good* God as the creator of things, only God's veracity *guarantees* to us the judgment of our senses. (WP, §436)

Such an appeal, according to Nietzsche, shows the weakness of Descartes' argument concerning the validity of his thoughts. Famously though, Descartes adopts the old Platonic and Christian concept of God in order to refute "Evil Demon" argument, that he is not being continuously deceived by an evil god. For this cause, according to Nietzsche's reading, he repeated the old idea that an evil God is *contradictio in adjecto*. In doing so, however, his effortful skepticism turns out to be, once more, Platonic and as well, Christian. It is the reason why Nietzsche says "even" Descartes repeated the old idea, making reference to his skepticism or claims that Christianity is at work in modern ideas. In so far as he borrowed the idea of the God and for the sake of God believed in concepts like immediate certainty, subject, object, truth, innate ideas etc., as the justification of his thoughts, he became *décadent* according to Nietzsche. Once more, he re-built the traditional idea of subject soul who is granted by a divine being in his ability to reason and his search for wisdom.

What is more, after Descartes' attempt to doubt even the most indubitable, the mind/body (the intelligible/material) duality constituted the core of the modern discussions on the concept of subject and the relation between apparent and real world. It created a problem of relation between those essentially different realms. Unless one introduces the existence of God as the justification of our thoughts, it remained unclear how reason alone can justify Descartes' belief in reason. Put differently, the question was that if we can have a right to affirm our belief in subject, the ego and ego as a substance, or substances in general (that there is a correspondence between mind and body), scientifically and philosophically unless one appeals to transcendent being, the idea of the Good or the God.

Kant, on the other hand, aimed to give a critique of pure reason in order to see if reason can provide a ground for universal knowledge. To this end, he proposed the faculty of pure reason that provides phenomenal knowledge constituted by a priori synthetic judgments. Here, Nietzsche says that if asked how it could be possible, Kant would reply "by virtue of a faculty" (BGE, §11). In other words, in his critique, Kant seems to claim that he can understand the limitations of a faculty by means of the same faculty that which he cannot but have to operate with, according to Nietzsche.⁷ Therefore, Nietzsche points out the difference between discovery and invention claiming that the faculty of pure reason was an invention, rather than a discovery.

Not interestingly though, in the third formulation of "How the 'true world' finally became a fable", Nietzsche accuses Kant in relation to his Platonism and his

⁷Here, one may claim that the same case is applicable to Nietzsche himself or an inquiry like philosophy. But, the emphasis of Nietzsche here seems to be on Kantian "claim to know the limits of reasoning". Thus, one may rightfully expect that Nietzschean reasoning will not end up with such a claim. Yet, for the purposes of this chapter, I leave the discussion on how Nietzsche does not claim to know truth, to the last chapter.

trust in reason and objective knowledge. According to Kant, laws of reason, the concepts like space and time seem to exist in all experiences. They belong to human reasoning and therefore, prior to any possible experience. In doing so, Kant takes reasoning as an active faculty with regard to experience. It means that we have certain capacities, hence a certain way of experiencing reality. Although senses alone are incapable to provide an objective knowledge — but provides the “synthetic” content of our judgments in Kantian terms — faculty of pure reason is capable of producing synthetic a priori judgments which are necessary and hence universal if human beings are concerned.

In case of the Kantian thought, on the other hand, truth (or universal knowledge) is phenomenal, not related with noumena (that which is unknown for the creatures like us), but related with the faculty of pure reason — synthetic a priori judgments. In doing so, Kant offers a solution to the Cartesian problem of bridging the subject and the object of knowledge. What we as human beings know is not a disclosure of the essence of a thing as the thing-in-itself or noumena in Kantian terms. Nevertheless, noumena despite being inaccessible, remain in the Kantian account, if what we are experiencing is not originated from nothing. Yet, the incomprehensibility of noumena is not an obstacle against universal knowledge that is transcendently possible.

It is the same old sun (the belief in reason, universal knowledge and morality etc.), says Nietzsche, that shines once again in the Kantian project. Nietzsche thinks that Kant takes for granted that synthetic a priori judgments exist and derives the idea of objective knowledge from the fact that we experience according to the laws of reason and it is impossible to comprehend the world without spatial-temporal relations as well as going against the laws of logic or give up the principle of

causality. Hence, that they are necessary and objective for creatures like us was the Kantian reasoning according to Nietzsche. However, it is problematic for him to drive the necessity and hence objectivity of our judgments from what rather seems to him merely a human need, as Nietzsche writes: “That insight that occurs a priori, therefore independently of all experience, out of sheer reason, is ‘a *pure* form of knowledge’” (WP, §530). On part of Nietzsche why one should believe that reason provides us necessary and universally valid judgments is not justified. Contrarily, the belief in certain judgments might seem necessary for us and nevertheless they might be false. He mainly argues against Kant, that the very limits of reasoning keep us away from reaching universal knowledge in any sense of the term.⁸

Even worse, Kant similarly adheres to the tradition he criticizes since he seems to share the same moral ontology that he labelled *décadent* as Nietzsche writes:

To divide the world into a ‘true’ half and an ‘illusionary’ one, whether in the manner of Christianity or in the manner of Kant (an *underhanded* Christian, at the end of the day), is just a sign of decadence — it is a symptom of life *in decline*... (TI, ‘Reason’ in philosophy, §6)

By keeping noumena (once again unknowable) within his philosophy, Kant seems to preserve the two-fold perspective of the world. Even more important, though Kant was the first to mention about the limits of knowledge with respect to the faculty of reason, he seems to re-establish the old trust in reason. Ultimately, for Nietzsche, he was after the same old sun when he was talking about the pure knowledge of things that is objective and universal. His transcendental idealism seems to allow him not just to praise reason for its ability to acquire pure form of knowledge, but also to dictate a certain type of morality based on the same trust.

⁸A more detailed account on Nietzsche’s criticisms concerning Kant can be found in the following chapter.

Kant appears to believe in the concepts like pure reason, truth, universal knowledge, morality, free will, etc. However, the moral faculty that he was supposed to discover is also an invention for Nietzsche who rather thinks that the drive towards truth as well as our judgments are affected by different existing drives like emotions.⁹ But, Kant seems to exclude those drives such as certain intuitions, instincts, bodily needs and emotions when he talks about the concept of “pure reason” or “pure will”, for instance. After what has been said with respect to *décadence* and its hostile attitude against what belongs to body, it is not surprising that Kantian account is similarly prejudiced against body, in favor of pure reason according to Nietzsche.

On the other side, different from Kant, Hume’s anti-representationalism appears to be significant with regard to Nietzschean perspective. As Allen (1995) puts it:

Hume’s *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (1748) is the *locus classicus* for the ‘usual objection’ against correspondence theories of truth—that since any effort to confirm the correspondence of perception or a belief must lead to more perceptions and beliefs for supposing that perceptions *represent* anything at all or that their truth consists in a correspondence to something that is not itself another perception. (p. 27)

Hence, Hume’s rejection was directed against the possible philosophical, logical justification of the correspondence between experience and the object of experience since what is present to human reason is already an experience, a representation. But, despite the possible similarities between the two philosophers, Hume’s skepticism concerning the possibility of correspondence seems to be insufficient for Nietzsche.

Considering Nietzsche’s own target, one possible reason for that might be

Nietzsche’s emphasis on refuting the duality of real and apparent together with

⁹The importance of a more holistic, pluralistic account of human beings and life for Nietzsche will become clearer in coming chapters. Until then, the similarity between what Nietzsche claims here and the phenomenon, widely accepted by psychologists these days, that our emotions are effective in decision making process, seems noteworthy. The problem of the concept of purity in reasoning, for Nietzsche, seems to become more understandable from such a perspective.

correspondence theory. Inasmuch as Hume's denial is not directed against the duality itself, the real world is left without its ideal as Nietzsche mentions in the section of "How the 'true world' finally became a fable":

The true world — unattainable? At any rate, unattained. And as unattained also *unknown*. Consequently, not consoling, redeeming, obligating either: how could we have obligations to something unknown? (TI, §4)

Because of the fact that Hume's rejection is limited to the inaccessibility of an ideal, one cannot refrain from the idea of a *merely* apparent world that is left without its ideal, truth, knowledge, etc. Therefore, unattainability of an ideal world is problematic and insufficient for Nietzsche. It seems problematic because in the absence of an ideal, our judgments or experiences are in danger of becoming worthless again. This kind of attitude might result in negativity towards life, not so much different than its Platonic or Christian forms. It is a kind of (negative) nihilism that Nietzsche might correctly be said to go against and can be added to the other two senses mentioned above (see p. 15).

However, when Nietzsche talks about the insufficiency of philosophers, he seems to have a different picture in his mind: In so far as one denies the accessibility of the real world, one should demolish it. As Nietzsche maintains in the section called "How the 'true world' finally became a fable", "*we got rid of the illusory along with the true one*" (TI, §6). From Nietzsche's point of view, philosophers could not refrain from the duality he aims to refute. Rather, the *décadent* culture dictated a certain type of onto-logy, morally constructed (according to prejudices), dividing reality into two opposing parts in the name of reality/appearance, subject/object, the-thing-in-itself/representation, etc. Kant's critique turned out to be another commitment to this tradition. Moreover, as Nietzsche puts in the same section,

though the “first yawn of reason”, Hume could not yet accomplish this target (TI, §4).

To do so, Nietzsche wants to overcome the tradition pictured above and hopes to be able to go beyond the imposed ideas of this tradition, beyond truth, good and evil in his terms. Therefore, I would like to first mention his question formulated against the tradition since it seems as much important as the answer. More importantly, Nietzsche claims that such a question has never been asked before. Therefore, I would like to start the next chapter with this Nietzschean question believing that it also paves the way to his own understanding concerning the notion of truth.

CHAPTER 3

NIETZSCHE ON TRUTH

3.1 Nietzsche's question

So far, I have indicated why and how Nietzsche thinks philosophers became *décadent* as long as they depreciate “life,” despising what belongs to the body, instincts or senses. As Nietzsche puts it, over-trust in reason or the belief in truth simply shows that they were prejudiced against life and they believed the truth of their prejudices. He thinks that the idea of a true world fascinated them so much that first they took it to be existent, better, more real than an ever-changing world. According to Nietzsche, their logic was that the things that have a higher value cannot come from its opposite which is less valuable. The idea of the Good, perfect Being, or the God cannot simply be the product of human mind. Similarly, love of truth cannot come from love of deception or from error as Nietzsche writes:

This way of judging typifies the prejudice by which metaphysicians of all ages can be recognized: this type of valuation lies behind all their logical procedures. From these “beliefs” they try to acquire their “knowledge,” to acquire something that will end up being solemnly christened as “the truth.” (BGE, §2)

Within such reasoning, the existence of the God and as well the truth from Nietzsche's perspective, was not questioned. For the very reason, he thinks that they became dogmatic lovers of their prejudices so long as they all tried to show how truth is possible, before yet answering the question if truth is possible.

At the beginning of *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche makes a reference to the tragic hero Oedipus who killed his father and ended up marrying his mother without knowing the fact that they are his parents. He makes an analogy between philosophers who have unconsciously fallen into the trap of their prejudices and

Oedipus who, by trying to avoid his fate, actually fulfilled it. Here, it might be important to note that regardless of his efforts as a wise man Oedipus was desperate against his ill-fated nature that caused him to be a tragic hero. From such a perspective, Nietzsche seems to think that despite their wisdom, philosophers failed to understand the desperateness of man against nature, the irony belonging to our nature.

According to Nietzsche, the fact that Oedipus was also the one who solved the riddle of the Sphinx is remarkable.¹⁰ He was destined to kill his father, solve the riddle and marry his mother. Yet, the wisdom of Oedipus was not a natural one. His kind of wisdom could not be the product of ratio or reasoning but was prophetic, related with fate or destiny. One might think that the question of the Sphinx was actually not asked, just like he is not really guilty, an incest person to marry his mother. Similarly, Nietzsche claims that philosophers tried for centuries to show how truth is possible, yet never questioned why it should be possible. Nietzsche makes an analogy between the wisdom of philosophers and the wisdom of Oedipus, with regard to their trust in reason about solving the riddle of the Sphinx which meant in their case to understand the order, the nature of things — knowing the truth.

Even though philosophers considered themselves capable of doubting about everything, it never occurred to them to question the *will to truth* in us, according to Nietzsche. A similar kind of question can be asked with respect to the story of Oedipus. He wanted to know the reality, though in the end, it remained questionable whether it is better to know the reality considering his position. If Oedipus had known beforehand what would have happened later, he could as well choose not to know the prophecy, the truth that he killed his father and married his mother. In case

¹⁰Although different versions of the riddle exist, one commonly known version can be formulated like this: “What goes on four feet in the morning, two feet at a noon, and three feet in the evening?”

of philosophers, why we need to value truth similarly was never occurred as a question, as Nietzsche claims. Rather, philosophers presupposed that we want truth, positing truth as a value. But, since it was their value, they actually posited themselves, their morality before the question. Consequently, contrary to what they hoped, their philosophy is constituted by value judgments as opposed to presupposed pure, objective, universal knowledge — the truth as Nietzsche says:

I have gradually come to realize what every great philosophy so far has been: a confession of faith on the part of its author, and a type of involuntary and unself-conscious memoir; in short, that the moral (or immoral) intentions in every philosophy constitute the true living seed from which the whole planet has always grown. (BGE, §6)

Not just that philosophers are immoral in the sense that they become hostile to life, but also that their philosophy is affected by their (hostile) morality. At the bottom of their philosophy, there is always a moral choice on behalf of a better, more real world. At this point, the reason why Nietzsche makes reference to the psychology of metaphysics and why with regard to epistemological questions he deals with the genealogy of morals become clear.¹¹

He starts his criticism by asking the question: Why it cannot be the case that we want untruth rather than truth, or uncertainty rather than certainty? For instance, it could be preferable in the case of Oedipus not to know the reality (the oracle about himself), but continue with the illusion that he is not the son of the King Polybus and the Queen Merope. Likewise, in an ironic way, truth might be a special kind of error that is necessary for the preservation of human beings as Nietzsche puts it:

For example, that the determinate is worth more than the indeterminate, appearance worth less than the “truth”: despite all their regulative importance

¹¹Since *Genealogy of Morals* is the work of Nietzsche that broadly deals with ethical problems, it might be a good idea to note that I used the term here in a restricted sense, related to the epistemological problems for they are connected with the subject matter of my thesis. I believe that it successfully indicates the Nietzschean way which he considers truth and knowledge to be moral issues.

for us, these sorts of appraisals could still be just foreground appraisals, a particular type of *niaiserie*, precisely what is needed for the preservation of beings like us. (BGE, §3)

Perhaps, Nietzsche continues, the value attached to those presupposed truths might essentially come from their relation with supposedly bad, evil things. From such a perspective, even truth and error may be essentially identical, produced by the creatures like us.

However, Nietzsche thinks that his way of thinking is alien to traditional thinkers and his philosophy endangers the moral principles as they have been acknowledged hitherto. Since recognizing untruth as a condition of life seems to threaten our basic physiological and psychological needs, Nietzsche feels the necessity to warn his readers and calls for people who are brave enough to go beyond existing morality — namely beyond good and evil. In this way, he problematizes the will to truth for the first time and hopes to arrive at a better philosophy which is freed from hostile morality and able to associate itself with life (or existence) in a nonmoral sense.

Hence, it is necessary to see what he understands from truth drive and where it comes from as he makes use of genealogy in search of possible reasons of our belief in it.

3.2 Genealogy of the will to truth

In his essay called “On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense”, Nietzsche caricatures the situation of men whose existence is not more than a moment comparing to the history of the universe. Nevertheless, it is by means of consciousness that human beings seem to sustain this moment in existence. In other words, we are conscious of our existence by means of intellect that which is elevated for the knowledge it

supposedly provides us. Without such awareness (consciousness of existence and a belief that we are not constantly deceived), we would lose even the moment, the sense of the reality (the sense of ourselves as subjects together with everything that seems to constitute the objects of our knowledge). Here, there might be two senses regarding how we might lose the moment of existence. First and foremost, without consciousness and memory, we surely would not be aware of existence. And secondly, Nietzsche puts the emphasis on the fact that without our intellect, we would vanish as a species, would not be able to survive. For this reason, according to Nietzsche, philosophers exaggerated the value of intellect by overestimating the role of conscious thinking and believing the facts of consciousness. In doing so, they were too arrogant that they misinterpret the value of our existence, as Nietzsche puts:

And just as every porter wants to have an admirer, so even the proudest of men, the philosopher, supposes that he sees on all sides the eyes of the universe telescopically focused upon his action and thought. (TL, p. 14)

On the other hand, continues Nietzsche, even a gnat possibly thinks in the same way and “(...) feels the flying center of the universe within himself” (TL, p.14). In other words, it is reasonable to think that a giant could likewise trust that the world is just as he experiences it, though most probably he has a very different idea of reality from us. From such a point of view, he would be just as right as we are to suppose that the world is like we understand it, that we can have the knowledge of the world as it is. However, it is not possible, neither for the gnat nor for us to be otherwise and judge that one is better than the other. We lack the criteria of such a comparison since we do not have the possibility to jump out of our minds and see the reality independent of ourselves. As Nietzsche says, by also making a reference to the Kantian critique:

The intellect cannot criticize itself, simply because it cannot be compared with other species of intellect and because its capacity to know would be revealed only in the presence of “true reality,” i.e., because in order to criticize the intellect we should have to be a higher being with “absolute knowledge.” (WP, §473)

It was for a similar reason Nietzsche thinks that Descartes’ argument leads to nothing certain as mentioned in the second chapter. Yet, it reflects a strong belief in the facts of consciousness by which first we get the sense of existence and the reality in general, from Nietzsche’s perspective. Descartes is not justified in his reasoning (alone) to infer that there is a thinking being, a substantial being — namely, the subject. Even what thinking means, or if it is an activity is not clear. Descartes’ appeal to the existence of God is remarkably interpreted by Nietzsche to be the sign of his inability. However, without such a justification Cartesian doubt would lead to a tautology since he would not be able confirm nothing more than what he already stated, that there are thoughts which are, yet, in need of a further justification in order to be true. From such a perspective, Cartesian doubt seems unable to justify even the facts of consciousness that are crucial to us as human beings.

Nietzsche rather thinks that subject as a unity (of mind and body) is presupposed to be the cause of different thoughts that arouse in the intellect, because without such a unity, we would “(...) vanish in the multiplicity of change” (WP, §270). Here, he is more concerned with the conditions of human existence rather than truth as he talks about the presupposition of subject as a unity. It seems almost impossible for a human being not to imagine a subject behind the variety of thoughts, as Nietzsche also accepts. As long as the process of reason depends on such a presupposition from which we ascribe reality in general, Nietzsche thinks that without supposing subject, human beings as species would become extinct (WP,

§487 & §497). Yet, this need alone cannot be a justification of the truth, universality or objectivity of our thoughts.

It seems to be the reason why Nietzsche thinks that the concept of “subject” was an invention by means of which philosophers interpreted every *deed and doer* and for the sake of which they supposed to know truth (WP, §485 & §547). First, the subject became the cause of thoughts. Just as they consider thoughts arousing in the intellect belonging to a subject, philosophers as well think different sensations to be caused by an object (what Nietzsche calls “thing-ontology”). But, according to him, it is only a *semblance* of a unity that we first attribute to ourselves as subjects and consequently apply the same logic to all things (WP, §521). On the part of Nietzsche, however, it is clear within Cartesian questioning that reasoning alone cannot justify anything material. It seems to be the same reason why for Nietzsche, Kantian philosophy is a critique of the faculty of reason that which cannot even describe itself (WP, §486).

Still, the psychological derivation of the belief in subject shows that, though unjustified, we are in need of a belief in the facts of consciousness. Certain logical fictions like ego, ego as a substance, or cause and effect seem indispensable to us, that it is almost impossible for us even to imagine a world without those logical principles, a constant — to imagine a world which is in the end, always in flux and change. In fact, according to Nietzsche, Kant was fascinated by the same idea that our thinking is constituted by metaphysical-logical postulates that seem indubitable for us. Once again though, he was after the truth of our thoughts, rather than a merely apparent reality in so far as he was talking about pure knowledge and universally bidding moral principles (WP, §530). To this end, according to Nietzsche, he supposed a faculty of pure reason that transcendently provides us objective knowledge of

things. Only with the help of such a criteria Kant could advocate that certain synthetic judgments are a priori possible and we have phenomenal but universal knowledge, according to Nietzsche. But in so doing, he overrated our subjective (both physiological and psychological) need to not to contradict by misunderstanding the role of conscious thinking.¹²

Here, Nietzsche's claim that we are not free from phenomenology in introspection is important with regard to his reaction against Kant and also his own position. Indeed, by showing how subject as a being is imaginary, Nietzsche thinks that he overcomes the duality between mind and body since one loses anything immaterial if one denies what is material (WP, §488). Thus, he de-constructs the modern understanding of the concept of subject as he goes against the very duality between subject and object, mind and body. According to Nietzsche, the idea of immaterial is an unscientific reflection of what is material (subject soul as a body), that which is already presupposed first for our survival (WP, §491). Hence, he understands subject only as a body — meaning that our mind/intellect is just like another organ not only for getting knowledge of things but also necessary for our survival. He thinks that many philosophers like Kant derived the idea of mind because first they needed to believe in existence, a bodily subject.¹³ In the same way, the concept of subject constituted the epistemological standpoint that is ultimately deceptive. The concepts like clarity, distinctness or purity are invented and many philosophers like Kant believed in the power of mind, intellect, pure reason or conscious thinking enabling the pure, objective knowledge of things. The

¹²“The pride connected with knowing and sensing lies like a blinding fog over the eyes and senses of men, thus deceiving them concerning the value of existence” (TL, p. 15).

¹³It should be noted here, that Nietzschean criticism cannot be true particularly for Plato or Descartes while it might be applicable to Kantian philosophy that is the main target of the paragraph.

superstitions like pure reason, knowledge and truth in general were the consequences of a belief in subject in the first place.

Those criteria seem to be superficial to Nietzsche just as the duality between mind and body. Rather, what we experience and actually can be consciousness of is already simplified, schematized, interpreted, abstracted and ordered. We always experience, hence able to think in terms of beings, unities, causal relations, etc. Although what enters to our consciousness is extremely complex, our thinking involves a belief in unities; “(...) to let it go means: being no longer able to think” (WP, §487). Because of this reason, he thinks that the inner world is also constructed just like the outer, substantial (or in Kantian terms “phenomenological”) world. What has been hitherto considered as inner has to be “phenomenalized” just like the outer, as Nietzsche claims. This kind of attitude, on the other part, trivializes the very distinction of subject/object or outer/inner world.

Conscious thinking that is believed to be clear and distinct, introspection as a method, or the idea of pure reason seems to be problematic from such a perspective. Contrarily, Nietzsche thinks that conscious states may not be so much purified as it was imagined by various philosophers. The connections between our thoughts, desires and emotions are mostly hidden from us as he writes:

On the other hand, the direction or protection and care in respect of the co-ordination of the bodily functions does *not* enter our consciousness; any more then spiritual accumulation: that a higher court rules over these things cannot be doubted — a kind of directing committee on which the various chief desires make their votes and power felt. (WP, §524)

Here, he seems to make a further reference to the unconscious states and desires that undermine the idea of purity of consciousness.¹⁴ Instead, he claims that unconscious

¹⁴For it is impressive on the part of Nietzsche, it might be a good idea to note how Oedipus was later referred by Freud whose works are appreciated for their insight showing the unconscious region operative in human's psyche. Even though Freud denied such a connection and his version of the

states have an impact on conscious states and that there are different impulses active in one's thinking process. Philosophers seems to ignore that we are always affected by some other derives and that our conscious thinking is not detached from what is unconscious, instinctive or that both physical and psychological demands are simultaneously operative in one's conscious thinking.

A further example here might be the fact that we can hardly claim to have control over what to be aware of or not. It is true that human beings have limits concerning perception, that we can hear certain sounds or see certain colors and feel certain things, think in certain way etc. Also, our memory works indifferent to our will to a considerable extent, that we forget what has to be remembered or elsewhere we are not able to forget and get rid of a traumatic memory. That seems to be the reason why Nietzsche also claims that the subject is a multiplicity, rather than a unity as philosophers wanted to believe. That the unity they feel seems to be those different impulses felt at once in the name of consciousness, immediate certainty or pure reasoning. Yet, it is not possible to overcome the limits of consciousness as he states that the nature locked us within the chamber of consciousness and "[s]he threw away the key" (TL, p.15). For that matter, those criteria seem hardly applicable, or more precisely, they are merely imaginary. Our inner world (what we are conscious of) too is an appearance.

When Nietzsche uses the term 'appearance' though, he claims to be different than Kant, as his distrust with Kantian philosophy must have been apparent by now. First of all, Nietzsche clearly rejects the idea of immediate certainty as well as the thing-in-itself as he remarks:

analogy is different, it might be exciting to see the similarity with respect to the importance of unconsciousness. Moreover, I believe that it helps to understand what Nietzsche meant by making the analogy of Oedipus as to indicate the unconscious region of philosophers that which also played an important role in constructing his own ideas on truth.

But I will say this a hundred times: “immediate certainty,” like “absolute knowledge” and the “thing in itself” contains a *contradictio in adjecto*. For once and for all, we should free ourselves from the seduction of words! (BGE, §16)

Therefore, when Nietzsche talks about appearance he does not use term in the sense of which it is often juxtaposed with the thing-in-itself. For Nietzsche, the thing-in-itself cannot even be thought of or spoken about. Having certain cognitive capacities means that our knowledge is always affected by what belongs to us. As far as reasoning is concerned, what appears to us cannot be related with something independent of us, like the thing-in-itself or object, but belongs only to us as subjects, human beings.

Hence, concerning Nietzsche’s distrusts in senses and rationality, he is distinguished from traditional rationalist or empiricist philosophers (Schacht, 1983, p. 54). Concerning the problem of correct perception, Nietzsche further contends that a correct perception, that is “(...) the adequate expression of an object in the subject — is a contradictory impossibility” (TL, p. 19). Traditionally, terms like representation, appearance or phenomena was introduced to account for some kind of a correspondence between object and subject, though for Nietzsche it is impossible to justify objectively as we lack the criteria of such a comparison.

The supposed causal relationship (between subject and object of knowledge) is the product of the belief in subject. In other words, the cause of an appearance is something that does not exist for human beings simply because it cannot be conceived or thought. That is the reason why for Nietzsche terms like thing-in-itself or objective reality are self-contradictory. It is our (bad) habit that we think a cognitive fiction as a subject being and some external causes of our perceptions as objects. Initially, sense perception is already an appearance, already the product of

our minds and there is no perception independent of a subject. Besides, they often involve value judgments like good, bad, harmful or satisfying — also related with pleasure and pain. In case of rationality, consciousness never provides us the list of different impulses operative in one's thinking process, as Nietzsche claim. Nor can a person be aware of causes and effects concerning thoughts (WP, §523).

This seems to be the logic behind the Nietzschean assertion that the inner world is an appearance. Yet, he carefully uses the word to indicate the complexity and the problems of introspection as a method. Also, he draws attention to the possible misunderstandings that might be caused by his usage of appearance, especially the Kantian echo of the term as Nietzsche adds:

The sore spot of Kant's critical philosophy has gradually become visible even to dull eyes: Kant no longer has a right to his distinction "appearance" and "thing-in-itself" — he had deprived himself of the right to go on distinguishing in this old familiar way, in so far as he rejected as impermissible making inferences from phenomena to a cause of phenomena — in accordance with his conception of causality and its purely intra-phenomenal validity — which conception, on the other hand, already anticipates this distinction, as if the "thing-in-itself" were not only inferred but *given*. (WP, §553)

Therefore, for creatures like us (the creators of language) thing-in-itself does not exist for Nietzsche. "The antithesis of the apparent world and the true world is reduced to the antithesis 'world' and 'nothing'" (WP, §567). Hence, when he uses the term 'appearance', what he means is different from the pronouncements of Kant since there is neither immediate certainty nor absolute knowledge for him. It also seems to be the reason why Schacht (1983) thinks that Nietzsche relativizes Kant (p. 62). Unlike Kant who takes the fact that human perception is ordered, has certain limits as a base of truth, Nietzsche rather understands it to be the evidence of why we human beings essentially are mistaken with respect to what traditionally taken to be truth and objective knowledge. In this sense, what was considered by Kant a priori,

beyond experience and irrefutable seem to be “(...) the expediency of a certain race and species” (WP, §514). On the part of Nietzsche, our inability to think and experience without supposing unities or pure concepts like the space and time is not related to their truth. Rather, we are in need of them as he puts:

All our organs of knowledge and our senses are developed only with regard to conditions of preservation and growth. Trust in reason and its categories, in dialectic, therefore the valuation of logic, proves only their usefulness for life, proved by experience—*not* that something is true. (WP, §507)

As he goes against the notion of objective truth, Nietzsche seems to change the value attached to human existence and alter the *décadent* morality. Yet, rather than supporting another type of morality, Nietzsche seeks a nonmoral language to speak about existence, philosophizes in the absence of objective truth. To do this, he concentrates on why there is drive to truth and what it might mean if it is not the guarantee of objective truth. The understanding of truth as a metaphor seems to allow him to speak the ironic situation of human beings, willing to truth in the absence of objective truth. He investigates into the logic of language as the origin of metaphor, if not the truth.

Consequently, a discussion on what Nietzsche seems to mean by “truth as a metaphor” is in order since it is the point where Nietzsche becomes clearer about his own perspective concerning the notion of truth.

3.3 Truth as a metaphor

Despite his discontent and criticisms, Nietzsche continues to talk about will to truth as it appears to be a certain kind of habit, certain type of delusion belonging to human beings. Yet, such an understanding is possible only if man is translated back into nature (BGE, §230). In this regard, Nietzsche claims that the philosophers before

him lack any historical sense and knowledge of physiology (WP, §408). That seems to be the reason why he feels the necessity speak about the conditions of human existence, history, human relations with each other and with their environment.

At this point, he considers language, how it is created and understood. According to Nietzsche, metaphysical-logical dogmatism (subject-object oriented world view) is also reflected in our grammar. In this sense, it seems to be the compulsion of language that involves “[t]he *valuation* ‘I believe that this and that is so’ as the *essence* of “*truth*” (WP, §507). Yet, he goes against the idea that language is capable of revealing the world as it is, the essence of things, either understood as the thing-in-itself or in Kantian form of objective knowledge. Instead of truth and knowledge, he prefers to talk about metaphors, making use of perception and language in relation to their life-sustaining character.

He rather supposes an aesthetic relationship between man as the creator of language and what can be spoken about. He claims that the process that begins with nerve stimuli and ends up with an image, produces the first metaphor from which a second metaphor, a sound expression/word is created. In each and every step from nerve stimuli to a word “(...) there is complete overleaping of one sphere, right into the middle of an entirely new and different one” (TL, p.16). Put differently, between those essentially different spheres the relationship is metaphorical since it is unknown to us what might be behind the first metaphor. Similarly, between the first metaphors and the words, the relationship is metaphorical. According to Nietzsche, such a claim is also supported by the existence of different languages. If it was necessary the relation between the sense impressions and the language, there would

not be many different words in different languages for the same plant, as Nietzsche seems to claim.¹⁵

Moreover, considering the unique and entirely individual experiences to which words own their origin, some characteristics are preferred over others, omitting certain characteristics, forgetting differences and making them equal at the expense of their distinguishing aspects. After they fit innumerable and more or less similar experiences and are repeated many times, they become words to communicate and build concepts. But, just like each and every leaf is unique, never the same with each other, words and concepts are the equation of unique things (TL, p.17). It seems to be the reason why he thinks that concepts are impoverished if the variety of senses is considered. Here, sense seems to be understood as sense perception, experience, thus connected with life. In fact, in as much as one uses principle of abstraction and simplification, concepts become emptier of life, as Nietzsche thinks. It is the reason why assertions concerning thing-in-itself, hence truth and objective knowledge, are the result of what Nietzsche calls *sensualistic prejudice* (WP, §516).

Men volatilize perceptual metaphors in a schema, and thus dissolve an image into cooler concepts to communicate, constituting only the residue of first metaphors (TL, p. 18). It seems to be related with why he thinks that the pyramidal conceptual order men constructed with respect to certain castes resembles the Roman columbarium where people used to put cinerary urns. As much lifeless as a columbarium, the structure created by concepts is a logical fiction, metaphors that lost their colors and distinctness. Following the principles like abstraction, simplification or subordination, men create an order, laws, privileges and put limits,

¹⁵Here, it is necessary to mention that Clark (1990) criticizes Nietzsche's claims concerning language in his article called "On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense". For now, I would rather like to confine myself with Nietzsche's opposition against the objectivity of language, leaving the broader discussion on language to the next chapter.

losing in each step the variety of the first metaphors. In this way, world becomes understandable, ordered, predictable for us as the creators of language.

Historically speaking, the cause of a nerve stimulus was mistakenly taken to be the object of experience, the thing-in-itself or noumena so far as philosophers believed in their independent existence. However, considering sense perception, a stimulus — in as much as it is an image (what we see, feel, hear, etc.) — is already the first metaphor as Nietzsche says: “Even the relationship of a nerve stimulus to the generated image is not a necessary one” (TL, p. 19). In other words, we have no access to what might be beyond this nerve stimuli or an image, hence no reason to consider them necessary. Similarly, the intellect processes the image into a word which is conceptualized and understood. As Nietzsche says: “With ‘end’ and ‘means’ one takes possession of the process (one invents a process that can be grasped); with ‘concepts,’ however, of the ‘things’ that constitute the process” (WP, §503). From such a perspective, the idea of a self-identical being (the thing-in-itself) is an invention, illusion. The object is a metaphor just like the words and concepts which are already equated, simplified, abstracted and ordered. As Nietzsche puts it, seeing the same dream every night might as well produce a sense of reality.

However, inferring the cause of phenomena from phenomena is impossible as Nietzsche already declared. Nietzsche’s claim here is strongly related to his previous argument about the inner world as appearance. Similar skepticism concerning the purity, neutrality of language seems to be at work in the Nietzschean account on language. The presupposed essence, something independent of subject does not exist. Hence, the object itself cannot be expressed since its even cannot be thought by human beings. The very example of a deaf person claiming that s/he must know what sound means by looking at Chladni’s figures clearly indicates that Nietzsche thinks

of such a reasoning. In the same way, men as the creator of language pretend to know essence of things. Yet, just like a deaf person lacking the apparatus necessary for hearing, men lack the ability to know what is undefinable, and, thus does not exist. But, whether or not language is an adequate expression of the essences of things is a question that also cannot be answered from Nietzsche's perspective.

It is important to note that he carefully avoids the claim that things do not correspond to reality, since "(...) it would of course be a dogmatic assertion and, as such, would be just as indemonstrable as its opposite" (TL, p.17). It seems to be the reason why Nietzsche (2005a) calls the cause of phenomena *mysterious X* (the unknown) since it is unthinkable, even before possibly spoken and asks himself:

What then is truth? A movable host of metaphors, metonymies, and; anthropomorphisms: in short, a sum of human relations which have been poetically and rhetorically intensified, transferred, and embellished, and which, after long usage, seem to a people to be fixed, canonical, and binding. Truths are illusions which we have forgotten are illusions; they are metaphors that have become worn out and have been drained of sensuous force, coins which have lost their embossing and are now considered as metal and no longer as coins. (TL, p. 17)

The metaphor of coin that Nietzsche himself is using in order to explain truth as metaphor is as much challenging as it is meaningful. When coins are considered, first they are simply metals without being perceived as coins in a given civilization. Hence, losing the embossing means to erase the involvement of civilizations — which in case of coins means becoming metal again. It is the same way men forget the involvement of themselves with respect to truth. Just like behaving as if a hundred dollar is not a piece of paper, men pretend to know the essence of things ignoring the fact that they are the creators of metaphors that are the anthropomorphic translations of mysterious X.

It seems to be the reason why Nietzsche thinks that men built the edifice of concepts on an unstable foundation. He uses the metaphor of running water and compare the situation of men with spiders' web that are intelligently created to survive on the water and strong enough not to be broken at the first strike. For the very reason spider spins, "[t]he drive towards the formation of metaphors is the fundamental human drive, which one cannot for a single instant dispense with in thought, for one would thereby dispense with man himself" (TL, p.21). In fact, he also admits that for the ability to form metaphors, men are distinguished from other creatures and might even be appreciated. Yet, such an appreciation is not related to the possession of essences, truth or objective knowledge. Claiming to know those things is akin to congratulate a person for first hiding something behind a bush and then finding it, as he exemplifies. However, in such a searching and the ensuing discovery, there seems nothing surprising. In the same sense, men's truths (absolute, metaphysical, a priori knowledge) turn out to be mere tautologies. Yet, men should be admired for their creation, metamorphisms of world into men, not truth (TL, p. 19). Since metaphors are creations of man, they are valuable from an artistic point of view in as much as having survival importance. According to Nietzsche, just like another species such as spider that spins, men use intellect for in order to preserve individual and maintain themselves in the war against each other.

On the other hand, Nietzsche as well claims that through language, "(...) a uniformly valid and binding designations is invented for things, and this legislation of language likewise establishes the first laws of truth. For the contrast between truth and lie arises here for the first time" (TL, p. 15). As a result, truth as well as knowledge becomes a social, moral impulse and actually means to lie according to established conventions. "The venerability, reliability, and utility of truth is

something which a person demonstrates himself from the contrast with the liar, whom no one trusts and everyone excludes” (TL, p. 18). In the case of liar, for instance, what is not desired by the society seems far beyond the lie itself, but its consequences, according to Nietzsche. Also, truth apart from consequences is something impossible to understand for the creatures like us from the Nietzschean perspective. In that sense, he claims that will to truth is related with its pleasing consequences rather than the truth itself. An agreement about truth is desired by the society as well as individual, not for itself, but for its pleasing, enduring consequences. Nietzsche even says that man has created truth in order to be socially engaged, to maintain himself against the other individuals and with the herd. Truth, then, appears to be a kind of social contract, agreement signed by the members of a certain society.

Nietzsche further recognizes a symptom of forgetting that what has been understood as truth is actually metaphors which are creations of men. Men not only have an inclination to create metaphors (aesthetically, hence subjectively present things), but also have a tendency to forget that they are so — believing that metaphors present things in themselves, and to follow what is presented by the society. “Thus he lies in the manner indicated, unconsciously and in accordance with habits which are centuries old; and precisely *by means of this unconsciousness* and forgetfulness he arrives at his sense of truth” (TL, pp. 17-8). As such, men forget the fact that language is an artistic creation. Just like forgetting individuality of perceptual experience while building concepts, they forget that truths are metaphor. Forgetting seems to be an inclination to follow social habits, duty and the established order.

From such a point of view, however, forgetfulness seems to be a part of human nature and important for social existence since Nietzsche also says that “(...) man is sustained in the indifference of his ignorance” (TL, p. 15). In as much as it is an inclination and it is unconscious, forgetting does not seem to be a choice, but something belonging to human beings. Similarly, certain kind of illusion as well as forgetfulness, or belief in truth might also be legitimate to a certain degree since to be social seems to be a part of human nature. Put differently, it may also be possible that not only forming metaphors but also believing that they are true, forgetting that they are dissimulation belong to human beings. It is also not clear enough if it is possible to form a community that does not forget the metaphoric character of truth. That is mainly because, according to Nietzsche, men possess nothing but those metaphors and forgetting seems to be a part of our nature. Hence, praising the drive to truth, forgetting the metaphoric character of truth might be legitimate from such a perspective.

But, Nietzsche sounds inconsistent when he talks about the necessity of certain types of delusions, forgetting or will to power like the conditions of human existence. What I have in mind is the following. First, Nietzsche seems to reject the concept of truth so far as he understands it being originally a dissimulation, an illusion, the prison of the intellect. In this sense, he might be regarded to defend a radically sceptic point of view with respect to truth, meaning to reject any objectivist, traditional/metaphysical discourse. Thus, searching the truth as done by traditional metaphysics becomes a desire in vain. Man is left with metaphors that are *all too human* made. But after saying this, he seems to contradict himself when he talks about the conditions of human existence that somehow exceed the limits of metaphor and become the truth for humanity. In other words, in as much as he seems to have a

general understanding of human existence, he sounds to propose a metaphysical understanding in the traditional sense.

This point is crucial if Nietzsche is to maintain his consistency, if he is not to fall in the same trap with traditional philosophers who could not refrain from making dogmatic assertions. Such a mistake first and foremost makes meaningless his criticisms about the traditional metaphysics as well as constituting a great danger against his own philosophy. For that reason, what Nietzsche means by “necessity,” “conditions of human existence,” “metaphor,” “illusion” or “human nature” should be reconsidered in order to solve this problem. Otherwise, the questions like why metaphors should be considered as metaphors and why we need to avoid from deluding ourselves, or what might mean to know the conditions of human existence if all knowledge is metaphorical, remain unanswered.

Such a reading however, requires a critical understanding of the meaning and function of metaphor in Nietzsche’s account of truth. Both the subjectivity and objectivity related to his account may be more than relevant to the discussion about the place of knowledge and sciences in general after truth becomes a metaphor. Also, it is highly possible that Nietzsche does not actually devalue the desire of forming metaphor but the belief in objective truth, the belief that metaphors represent things as they are in themselves or truth in general. He too seems to give a certain kind of value to the will to metaphor as he pays considerable time and care to explain its meaning. However, he contends that they stand not on a firm ground, but rather on an ongoing flux — as he puts, “on running water” (TL, p. 15).

To this end, focusing on the Nietzschean notion of truth, I want to investigate his appeal to both rational and intuitive parts of human beings and the irony he seems to construct in between. In this way, it may also be possible to see if Nietzsche’s

account is able to successfully counter the criticisms that are mentioned above as well as the others that it gave rise to.



CHAPTER 4

RECONSIDERING THE NOTION OF TRUTH

4.1 The problem of consistency

Concerning Nietzsche's severe criticisms about metaphysics (tradition of *décadence*) and the metaphysical understanding of truth (that is absolute, objective, etc.), it seems reasonable to think that his aim was to refute them. As a matter of fact, in the last two parts of aforementioned formulation of "How the 'true world' finally became a fable", he clearly demonstrates that the so-called ideas, the real and apparent world are now refuted and we have to abolish them.

As shown in the second chapter, Nietzsche's genealogical quest into the origins of the will to truth plays an important role in his refutation of metaphysical truth. Asking why we will truth, rather than showing how truth is possible, he seems to overcome the historical dilemma that someone needs to know what truth is, before answering the question how it is possible. Hence, genealogy appears to be the method Nietzsche uses in order to show why there is will to truth without attempting to answer what truth is, as Winchester also (1994) puts it: "He interrogates these 'truths' and the mentality that erected them, and deflates their grandiose claims without erecting new truths to take their place" (p. 3). To do so, he makes use of history, psychology or sociology talking about the society and language as to investigate the origin of the will to truth.

On the other hand, it is not so much clear for everybody that if there is no truth for Nietzsche or if he did or did not replace his own truths instead of the refuted ones. Firstly, if he rejected truth, the truth value of Nietzsche's criticisms and his own claims seem to be in danger. If there is "no contact with reality" according to

Nietzsche, as Westphal (1984b) puts it: “Nietzsche’s own concepts have no cognitive contact with the Christians, moralist, philosophers, and modernist whom he criticizes” (p. 352). In other words, renouncing the contact with reality endangers his genealogical, hence historical claims as well as trivializes his own perspective. What Westphal calls the inconsistency of Nietzsche’s claims seem to be worthy of consideration if one still wants to think that Nietzsche is not simply contradictory and his claims might have a certain kind of value.

In order to overcome the inconsistency, however, one needs to answer first the question whether Nietzsche really denies the contact with reality. The absence of objective reality is often considered to mean that there is no contact with reality. But, to make such an inference, one needs to be clear whether the denial of objectivity necessarily implies the loss of reality — even whether it is a loss. Concerning Nietzsche for instance, such ideas like objectivity or truth is “(...) now an obsolete, superfluous idea, *consequently* a refuted idea: let’s get rid of it” (TI, How the ‘true world’ finally became a fable, §5). Hence, it seems hard to believe that a useless idea is a real loss for Nietzsche. What then, one should understand from the absence of objective reality and truth in his account? Can any truth be legitimately attributed to Nietzsche’s own claims? Can he possibly claim to know reality and what kind of reality it would be? Or, can he plausibly make any historical or philosophical claim that actually constitute great part of his critique?

Those questions are not easy to answer and it gets more complicated especially when Nietzsche repeatedly compares and contrasts truth and lie (illusion, delusion, deception, or dissimulation) with respect to traditional understanding in opposition to his point of view. For this reason, it is easy to get confused as much as it is difficult to conceive his stance. For instance, he often seems simultaneously

rejecting and claiming truth. As Westphal (1984a) also underlines, despite his criticisms, Nietzsche seems to praise truth in several places as he says: “*Nititur in vetitum*: my philosophy will triumph under this sign, because it is precisely the truth that has been absolutely forbidden so far” (EC, Preface, §3). Considering that his aim was to go beyond the ideas like truth, lie, and real versus apparent, he sounds highly contradictory as he uses these terms to explain his own ideas. Additionally, when he asserts that truth is a lie, an illusion or a metaphor, his sentences seem to have a certain kind of truth value, that what he claims is not simply contradictory and wrong. But what kind of truth value can be attributed to a lie or an illusion?

The difficulty involved here is also related to the fact that Nietzsche himself does not use clear distinctions (like metaphysical or practical truth) between different senses of truth which might or might not be acknowledged according to his perspective. In other words, he does not identify each and every time what kind of truth or which sense of truth he is talking about, if not badly contradicting himself. Boyer (1997) refers to the same difficulty found in Nietzsche’s works with reference to Heidegger:

As Heidegger pointed out, Nietzsche’s doctrine of truth never stops being ambiguous. One cannot simultaneously speak and refuse every conception of truth. One can only contest one conception of truth in the name of another. That is, without a doubt, what it means to be unable to “step outside metaphysics.” (p. 16)

Yet, it is even a question that if it was Nietzsche’s intention to overcome this difficulty. Taking into account his criticisms, his works appear to question “(...) the possibility of attaining truth and the usefulness of systematicity (...)” together (Winchester, 1994, p. 4). It is equally reasonable to think that his style was a reflection of his thoughts, rather than being accidental. Similarly, it might be

reasonable to think that it was hardly a problem for him, that he did not consider himself to be self-contradictory.

However, in order to make sense of his stance, one seems to be in need of clarifying different senses of truth that Nietzsche might be talking about. In this regard, his denial of objective truth seems to require a detailed review before answering the questions just raised above. At this point, I want to reconsider Nietzsche's early denial of truth in his unpublished article, "On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense", since it appears to be one of the most controversial texts among Nietzsche's interpreters. As Maudimarie Clark (1990) admits, it as well "(...) constitutes an important piece of evidence (the most important I believe) for the radical interpretation, and against the neo-Kantian interpretation, of Nietzsche's position on truth" (p. 64).

4.2 "On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense"

Although the article in question is not published by Nietzsche, it nevertheless, as an early text, has been interpreted and criticized by various thinkers from different philosophical traditions, especially working on Nietzsche's own understanding of truth. Yet, in contrast to Nietzsche's published works and with regard to its own coherence as a text, some parts of it seem dubious and a further discussion is required in order to decide how to interpret the text and its value.

One common problem arises when Nietzsche claims that truth is a deception, dissimulation, an illusion. It is possible to interpret this sentence as a denial of truth, a negation, that truth is false, a lie. But can Nietzsche plausibly make such a claim? Having said that truth is false, he cannot escape from the self-referential consequence regarding the truth value of his own sentence, as just mentioned above. Maudemarie

Clark (1990) refers to the same problem involved here and argues against Nietzsche that he cannot plausibly claim that a belief is both true and false (at the same time, in the same respect, etc.) since it would be rejecting logic, that we might also lose the necessity to understand him anymore (p. 66). It is similarly against logic and commonsense, hence hardly acceptable that my sentence “here is my cat” is false, even though I am sure that it is my own cat on the table. Consequently, Nietzsche should mean something else when he claims that truth is an illusion if not simply being absurd and rejecting logic together with even the most commonsensical claims. But in which sense truth can be an illusion?

Here, Clark (1990) argues that Nietzsche’s views concerning language seem to be the main reason why he talks about illusions as she adds:

The distinction between truth and lie in the extra-moral sense arises, according to Nietzsche, only with the establishment of ‘uniformly valid and obligatory designations’ for things — that is, with the establishment of linguistic conventions. (p. 66)

However, it seems to be necessary to note here the two different senses of truth that Nietzsche seems to be using throughout the text.¹⁶ As the name of the article suggests, he aims to talk about truth and lies in a nonmoral sense, though he quite often refers to the moral sense of truth through the text for the purposes of his refutation. Indeed, the whole text appears to be a continuous compare and contrast between those two different senses of the terms truth and lie. Nevertheless, he obviously does not always indicate which sense of the term he is talking about and often causes an extra confusion. For instance, he claims that the distinction between truth and lies first arises once language established, but he does not make explicit if he is talking about truths and lies in the extra-moral sense as Clark notes. In fact,

¹⁶It is important to bear in mind that Nietzsche himself might not accept the division concerning the different senses of truth. Nor he would accept that there are different truths. Hence, I would like to introduce this division only as a tool for a careful reading since it seems easy to get confused.

Nietzsche points to the moral sense of truth as he writes in a later passage from the same text as such: “From the sense that one is obliged to designate one thing as ‘red,’ another as ‘cold,’ and a third as ‘mute,’ there arises moral impulse in regard to truth” (TL, p. 18). Language, accordingly, appears to be a kind of obligation to use certain common designations. As it is related with the drive to truth and it is a kind of compromise on the true meanings of words between the subjects of a given society, it as well defines the moral sense of truth that eventually gave rise to the metaphysical notion of truth. Hence, in contrast to Clark, it might be better to think that Nietzsche was talking about the moral sense of truth when he speaks about language that determine the difference between truth and lies (in a moral sense) for the first time.

Following the same reasoning, Nietzsche might have thought that the truth in a moral sense is an illusion, not truth in a nonmoral sense. But, what about the meaning of illusion in his sentence? Clark justifiably take illusion equivalent to falsehood or lying as long as Nietzsche writes:

For so far, we have heard only of the duty which society imposes us in order to exist: to be truthful means to employ the usual metaphors. Thus, to express it morally, this is the duty to lie according to a fix convention, to lie with the herd and in the manner binding upon everyone. (TL, p. 17)

At first sight, Nietzsche seems to be talking about truth in a moral sense which is a lie imposed by the society. Yet elsewhere, he admits that who is called the liar in the society uses the valid designations in a wrong way and does not obey the duty imposed by the society. The liar goes against what is established by the society as the truth in a moral sense, which society does not appreciate. Hence, lying in a moral sense means lying not in accord with the duty. In the passage just quoted, however, Nietzsche talks about another kind of lying, that is lying in accordance with the duty, society. Thus, one may legitimately think that those lies are not the same. In other

words, what is understood from lying in a moral sense can be different than what Nietzsche wants to talk about, namely lying in a nonmoral sense.

The meaning of lying in accordance with duty, on the other hand, seems to be strongly related with Nietzsche's rejection to truth in a moral sense. Thus, even though he looks like speaking morally in the quoted passage, he rather seems to speak about his standpoint concerning the morality itself (the truth in a moral sense). He looks from outside, distances himself from existing morality and speaks about his truth in a nonmoral sense. The passage Westphal (1984a) also quotes might be a good example as Nietzsche says: "(...) the truth speaks from out of me. — But my truth is *terrible*; because lies have been called truth so far" (EC, Why I am destiny, §1). He speaks the truth which might be understood as Nietzsche's truth that is in a nonmoral sense, that truth in a moral sense is a lie for him. The necessity he feels to explicitly warn his readers concerning the strangeness of his language seems to also support this reading; that one has to be careful about what Nietzsche means by the concepts of truth versus lie and should not simply misunderstand. Following the same path, Nietzsche's claim that truth is an illusion, a lie might be re-written like this: Truth in a moral sense is a lie for Nietzsche, a lie in a nonmoral sense. Such a claim seems to be not vulnerable against the criticisms related with logical absurdism explained above because Nietzsche seems not claiming that the same thing being true and false at the same time and in the same respect.

On the other side, the meaning of illusion according to Nietzsche 'illusion in a nonmoral sense' is crucial before arriving at the conclusion that Nietzsche does not contradict himself. What one should understand that a sentence, even though it might be true in a moral sense, is an illusion in a nonmoral sense? So far, following Nietzsche, truth in a moral sense is understood with reference to the establishment of

language. Hence, in order to understand the meaning of illusion (in a nonmoral sense) with respect to truth in a moral sense, one needs to re-consider why Nietzsche thinks language is illusory. At this point, one argument Nietzsche proposes in the early text is related with the existence of different languages, mentioned also in the third chapter. As he claims: “The various languages placed side by side show that with words it is never a question of truth, never a question of adequate expression; otherwise, there would not be so many languages” (TL, p. 16). However, as Maudimarie Clark rightly mentions, not the words but the sentences constitute the minimum truth value. Hence, the fact that what English speakers call ‘tree’ is called ‘der Baum’ in German is not related with the truth or what might be related with any discussion concerning truth.

Given that Nietzsche cannot arrive at the illusory character of truth with reference to the existence of different words, he should have meant something different. Yet, the truth value of a sentence, too, seems hardly related with the existence of different languages. As Clark shows, if my sentence ‘it is raining’ in English is true (meaning that it describes the world as it is), then the correct translation into German ‘es regnet’ would be true as well, regardless of which language one is using. Truth value of a sentence is not dependent on which language or, let’s say convention someone sticks to. “As Aristotle would have thought, the fact that signs are arbitrary does not imply that the relations between judgments and their referents are also arbitrary” (Boyer, 1997, p. 11). Similarly, Clark (1990) admits: “Thus the truth of an utterance or inscription depends on two factors: what it means and what the world is like” (p. 69). It seems to be the reason why she thinks that Nietzsche’s argument about language cannot establish that truth is illusory.

From another perspective, Nietzsche's insistence on arbitrariness of sign and language seems to be related with his rejection of correspondence theory, the idea of language as an adequate expression of the essences of things. In fact, he is strongly against the correspondence between words and the essence of things like a theory supported by Socrates in Plato's *Cratylus*. As pictured in the Chapter 3, he rejects the unjustified belief in some kind of a correspondence between the unknown X and words. From Nietzsche's point, truth in a moral sense is an illusion in a nonmoral sense since X was unjustifiably related with things in themselves, objective reality or truth. He rather refers to the metaphoric character of language, that the relationship between words and X can only be metaphorical. As such, if metaphors are forgotten that they are metaphors but taken as things in themselves or truth, metaphors turns out to be lies, delusions with respect to X which is unknown to the creator of language. Hence, rather than deluding himself, Nietzsche finds another way of speaking, namely Nietzsche's truth as a metaphor. However, this brings us to the meaning of metaphor for Nietzsche, as he claims that truth is a metaphor. Can metaphor be a reason why Nietzsche calls truth in a moral sense is an illusion? Does illusion mean "false", or does metaphor mean the opposite of "literal" for Nietzsche? What about the metaphoric character of his own sentences? Or, should we take him metaphorically, but not seriously?

As Maudimarie Clark (1990) writes: "Nietzsche calls our utterances 'metaphors' because they fail to 'correspond to the original essences,' that is, to things-in-themselves" (p. 78). In that sense, truth (in a moral sense) leading to knowledge of the essences is false, a lie or an illusion since words do not correspond to the essences. It is the falsification thesis which is often taken to constitute the basis of Nietzsche's denial of truth in the early article. Indeed, the early essay has several

parts where Nietzsche arguably seems to know enough that there is no correspondence or knowledge. One apparent example is the claim that metaphors do not correspond to the original entities. A similar over confidence concerning how things are, can be seen in the following sentences:

We obtain the concept, as we do the form, by overlooking what is individual and actual; whereas nature is acquainted with no forms and no concepts, and likewise with no species, but only with an X which remains inaccessible and undefinable for us. (TL, p. 17)

Another problematic idea which somehow echoes in the early article is related with the radical flux thesis to which Nietzsche seemingly refers with respect to the metaphor of “running water”, re-appearing in his later book called *Beyond Good and Evil* as the thesis that the world is in a constant flux. Going against the traditional theory of correspondence, Nietzsche seems to claim that language is incapable of providing what is constantly changing. In this context, illusion seems simply equivalent to falsity as Clark understands.

Yet, from such a reading, Nietzsche’s argumentation appears to be somehow affected by the traditional philosophers and concepts that he goes against. He aims to criticize the traditional understanding of correspondence but he seems to somehow incorporate it as he apparently claims that words and concepts do not correspond to the essences of things and there is no logical, adequate correspondence between words and things-in-themselves as traditionally understood. According to such a narrative, illusion as a falsification thesis seems to originate from language, or metaphor that is not equivalent to the essences. However, by making such a claim Nietzsche sounds similar to Kant whom he criticizes for postulating some inaccessible thing-in-itself. It also seems to be the reason why many readers found text in question closer to either Kantian or Neo-Kantian accounts. As also Winchester

notes, this semblance becomes more obvious when Nietzsche additionally claims: “All that we actually know about these laws of nature is what we ourselves bring to them — time and space, and therefore relationships of succession and number” (TL, p. 20). Although he does not seem to consider them ideal or pure as Kant, he seems to be sure about the fact that we produce them and all that we know is those intuitions (Winchester, 1994, p. 113).

On the other part, it is crucial to note that the statements, “there is no truth,” or “metaphors do not correspond to original entities” are too much dogmatic with respect to Nietzsche’s position. After his criticisms concerning traditional philosophers and metaphysics as shown in the previous chapters, he seems to have no justification for such claims. As mentioned and explained in the second section, he rather seems to remain agnostic with regard to the questions like whether or not metaphors correspond to the essences or the reality is as we know it, keeping in mind that along the same lines he warns his readers about making a dogmatic mistake. His denial of objective truth seems to prevent Nietzsche from making such claims. As Winchester also seems to agree, Nietzsche does not ever seem to know reality. Contrarily, he obviously has problem with such dogmatic claims. It would be blatantly against Nietzsche’s intentions to claim to have knowledge of reality (as in “our judgements are false with respect to the essences of things”) or the truth of nature as it is (as in “nature is essentially in a constant change”).

But even more important, such questions are out of Nietzsche’s interest, simply because of the fact that we lack the criteria and, hence, those questions can never be answered. Likewise, whether or not the nature is in constant flux or consists of forms and/or concepts cannot be answered by human beings as Nietzsche would also acknowledge. He explicitly claims that such a disorder is hardly intelligible for

what he calls the creator of language. He refuses the intelligibility of such a multiplicity and suggests that we are unable to give up reasoning or facts of consciousness without which we are unable to even live and think. Hence, the reason why Nietzsche talks about illusion might be different than stating illusion as a falsification, to wit, the claim that they do not correspond to the original entities. Neither Nietzsche nor any other human being can know this.

Having in mind this impossibility, Nietzsche's seemingly atheist claims like the "thing-in-itself does not exist" or "the words do not correspond to essences" may better be re-evaluated. One possible option can be that the thing-in itself is not thinkable, expressible and because of this, it does not exist for the creator of language. Nietzsche's insistence on the concept of X (the unknown) rather than using the traditional concept, namely the thing-itself, is very important at this point, emphasizing the fact that it is unknown, cannot be named and even cannot be thought. Hence, rather than a mere refutation/falsification of the thing-in-itself, Nietzsche's assertion seems to have an emphasis on the limits of human capacities. But, if he cannot even deny the correspondence between what appears to us and what might be essences, how can he claim that truth is an illusion?

In this context, Winchester draws attention to *Beyond Good and Evil* where Nietzsche is clearer about what he thinks concerning the concept of illusion in contrast to falsification thesis, as Nietzsche writes:

We do not consider the falsity of a judgment as itself an objection to a judgment; this is perhaps where our new language will sound most foreign. The question is how far the judgment promotes and preserves life, how well it preserves, and perhaps even cultivates, the type. And we are fundamentally inclined to claim that the falsest judgments (which include synthetic judgments *a priori*) are the most indispensable to us, and that without accepting the fictions of logic, without measuring reality against the wholly invented world of the unconditioned and self-identical, without a constant falsification of the world through numbers, people could not live — that a

renunciation of the false judgments would be a renunciation of life, a negation of life. (BGE, §4)

Hence, rather than a simple refutation, the concepts like falsity or illusion seem to have a different meaning for Nietzsche. Certain fictions like the concepts of space and time might be false, but they are indispensable in as much as they are necessary for us. From Nietzschean perspective, falsehood of logical fictions does not mean that they are unnecessary or useless. It is the reason why he as well speaks about falsehood as a condition of life, presents it as a kind of erring belonging to human beings against the tradition advocating truth of certain fictions. Hence, his main problem appears to be the value traditionally attached to those logical fictions and he wants to trivialize the traditional values.

Falsification thesis and the illusionary character of truth “On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense” can (perhaps, even should) be reinterpreted in a similar way; illusion is not a falsification or an objection and it should be understood in a different way. So far, illusion is considered to be originated from language, because reality is unordered and words do not correspond to essences. But, taking into consideration what is said so far, falsification or natural flux thesis is no longer applicable to Nietzsche’s standpoint. According to Nietzsche, falsehood seems to originate from the belief that language reveals the essences of things. Put differently, the falsehood originates from the thought that there is a correct expression, perception — not that what we perceive or express is necessarily false in the traditional sense. The reason why he referred to illusion with regard to language seems to be also related with his idea of language as the equation of unequal things. Since each perception and experience is unique in its own way, words are built after countless of more or less similar experiences, according to Nietzsche. “When we say ‘that chair is red,’ we

believe that the object shares an identical color with other things we call 'red' and has the same essence as other structures we call 'chairs'" (Clark, 1990, p. 77). It is the most logical argument that Nietzsche could support, concludes also Clark, considering the illusionary character of truth something related with language. From such a perspective, the idea of constantly changing world (the natural flux thesis) also makes more sense and the emphasis on metaphor becomes significant again.

Yet, in the early essay, Nietzsche talks about another reason that remained in the background by now. As he still pays attention to the social phenomenon and moral sense of truth, he mentions the symptom of forgetting prevailing in the society; forgetting the anthropomorphic, metaphoric character of truth and unjustifiably believing that the language reflects the essences of things and we can arrive an objective notion of truth. Such a belief constitutes the moral sense of truth, according to Nietzsche. Yet from his standpoint, by grasping the fact that we human beings are the sole creator of language and truth, such a belief becomes false, an illusion, a lie. Yet, as the falsity is not simply an objection and the lie in this case is not equivalent to lie in a moral sense (against to duty) as explained before, we can say that it is a kind of lie in a nonmoral/Nietzschean sense. Similarly, once his stance against to traditional/metaphysical understanding of truth is taken into account, he speaks about lying and truth in a nonmoral sense that is strongly different from the moral sense of the terms. In his case, lying in a moral sense means lying in accord with the duty while truth in a moral sense is the Nietzschean truth that the objectivity is not attainable. Indeed, while he speaks about truth in a moral sense he refers to illusion, but in a nonmoral sense (beyond good and evil), truth is a metaphor.

From such a reading, his negative attitude becomes more understandable once the concept of forgetting and its social origin are taken into account. The illusion,

then, is to forget that we created fictions, forget the metaphoric character and believe truth as understood traditionally, namely truth in a moral sense. It looks also compatible with his rejection of morality, social consensus and the sense of truth connected with it. From such a perspective, Nietzsche's arguments against traditional thinkers become significant again and his philosophy starts to look more coherent. His ideas against the *décadent* culture seem to be strongly connected with the negative content in the early text, having a societal origin. While in the early essay Nietzsche mostly relates necessity with social conventions like language, in *Beyond Good and Evil* he is concerned with necessary fictions, interested more in their usefulness and life-furthering character than their truth and falsity (Winchester, 1994, pp. 116-17). From Winchester's perspective, the difference is due to Nietzsche's fundamental aim to go beyond good and evil, and that might also explain why later he hardly uses possibly problematic term like illusion that is likely to be understood simply as a falsification. It is also understandable that he first needed to refute truth in a moral sense (as the *décadent* society imposes) before going beyond the morality society imposes. The illusion, erring or misunderstanding arise from forgetting that all we create are metaphors and believe that they are absolute, objective and universally true.

In that sense, Nietzsche is not against the creation of metaphors and rather, talks about necessity of certain fictions or creation of metaphors for human beings. However, as explained previously, the necessity does not guarantee the objectivity or universality for Nietzsche. Hereby, the conflict between the Kantian or Neo-Kantian accounts and Nietzsche becomes clear once again. Contrary to Kant who tried to show why synthetic a priori judgments are necessary, Nietzsche asks why the belief in such logical fictions is necessary. As Winchester (1994) writes, differently than

what Kant advocated, “[w]e have no right to believe in them, according to Nietzsche, but this belief is nonetheless necessary as ‘approximation’” (p. 110). As human beings, we lack the ability of such a comparison, an objective criteria or absolute knowledge in as much as we lack the ability to give up reasoning. From the Nietzschean perspective, we cannot deny or refute certain fictions, but in the same way, we cannot validly regard them objectively true. The limits of human reasoning are the justification of Nietzsche’s opposition against truth in a moral sense, namely objective/metaphysical truth.

Having in mind that Nietzsche does not claim that “truth is illusion” as a falsification, he as well successfully goes against the objectivity of our beliefs without contradicting, most importantly, the basic beliefs that feels the most essential for us. Within this context, the contact with the reality does not perish, but it certainly transforms into something different, something Nietzschean: a metaphor. It becomes subjective in the sense that it belongs to human beings whereas the objectivity is not attainable, hence objectivity is not something to strive for. This seems to be the point Nietzsche aims to arrive in both texts as also the name of the early article suggests, underlying the metaphoric, anthropomorphic, fictional character of truth together with the necessity they constitute for human domination. As Winchester (1994) writes:

To undermine the traditional truth claims and yet admit their efficacy, or even more to assert their necessity, is as Nietzsche writes ‘to confront, in a dangerous way, conventional values’ (BGE, 4). It makes Nietzsche all the more subversive. (p. 112)

Right after this point, he no longer needs to talk about truth or lies in a moral sense, but metaphors, perspectives that are neither objective nor universal, but necessary in a different sense. Yet, the sense in which those fictions are necessary and how such

the necessity affects philosophy, science and our lives in general must be spelled out. In other words, the consequences of such a radical change are still in need of a further discussion. To do so, I would like to continue with truth in a nonmoral sense, passing beyond good and evil, where finally the Nietzschean truth might be contested.

4.3 Not truth, but metaphors

Up to now, the reasons why Nietzsche's account on truth seems to be ironic and possibly ambivalent should be evident. He refutes truth in a moral sense arguing that it is an illusion while, at the same time, as a kind of erring necessary for human beings, he seems to praise certain fictions. He apparently thinks that the objective/metaphysical truth is illusion. But he at the same time talks about logical fictions that are neither refutable nor justifiable to be true. Even though those fictions can even be errors, they are necessary if human beings are concerned. Yet, the meaning of the concept of necessity here has to be further investigated as Nietzsche's language continues to sound contradictory and strange.

Nietzsche seems to make a reference to the conditions of the existence of human beings when he talks about necessity. He considers intellect as an instrument to survive as he writes:

As a means for the preserving of the individual, the intellect unfolds its principle powers in dissimulation, which is the means by which weaker, less robust individuals preserve themselves — since they have been denied the chance to wage the battle for existence with horns or with sharp teeth of beasts of prey. (TL, p. 15)

Nietzsche's discussion on the presupposition of subject as a substantial being (shown in detail in the third chapter) is only one but the most paramount example where he clearly talks about the necessity of certain logical presumptions concerning human

beings. Hence, apart from their truth or falsity, he is also interested in useful, necessary aspects of those fictions produced by the intellect. Another obvious example is Nietzsche's claim that the society is established out of boredom and necessity (TL, p. 15). Again, he makes a reference to human nature from an evolutionary perspective and considers the formation of society necessary for survival. In doing so, Nietzsche seems to value intellect or society so far as it is life-furthering, as a means for the preservation of life.

Yet, his reliance on human nature and the concept of necessity creates an impression that Nietzsche as well imposes some natural values. In other words, once it is understood necessary for our survival, the reason why one should go against society and what is imposed by the society becomes moot. Oblivion about the metaphoric character of truth, as was mentioned previously, seems to cause the same problem since as an inclination belonging to men, it appears almost inevitable. In this sense, values imposed by society could also be praised and forgetting might not be a problem, which sounds quite contrary to what Nietzsche seems to claim. He also seems to lose the point of his criticisms concerning society, language or truth once he accepts them as natural and necessary. From such a perspective, it is not clear why Nietzsche is against the illusion that metaphors are true or why we should avoid deluding ourselves.

However, just like the concept of illusion that does not seem to be simply equivalent to the falsehood, what means necessity or usefulness for Nietzsche is arguable since it seems strictly different from the traditional understanding of necessity which is often associated with objectivity or the concept of usefulness that might possibly have some pragmatist connotations. Despite the fact that he talks about the necessity and usefulness of certain fictions, his trust to such concepts

seems highly questionable and, at best, valid to a certain degree. For instance,

Nietzsche writes:

Life not an argument. — We have arranged for ourselves a world in which we are able to live — by positing bodies, lines, causes and effects, motion and rest, form and content; without these articles of faith no one could endure living! But that does not prove them. Life is not an argument; the conditions of life might include error. (GS, Book 3, §121)

A similar mistrust frequently shows itself both in his published and unpublished works. For example, Nietzsche considers not just the truth but also untruth as the condition of human existence, talks about the useful consequences of untruth as well in his several books like the *Beyond Good and Evil*, *The Gay Science* or *Will to Power*. A belief can be necessary or useful, but it can nonetheless be false.

Consequently, Nietzsche rather questions the conditions of human existence as well as intellect that “(...) is perhaps only accidental and perhaps in no way necessary” (WP, §496). The intellect seems to be necessary for us and our survival, but from an evolutionary point of view, it can be seen coincidental as he additionally claims that evolution does not have a goal (WP, §521). Here, his statement seems to have a double meaning. Other than referring to the arbitrary and ongoing character of evolution, he criticizes the concept of intellect as it is supposedly the most developed and valuable human function from the traditional perspective. His mistrust concerning the concept of usefulness too becomes obvious as he famously claims that the belief in intellect — or in his terms “science” which he also praises — cannot be originated from “a calculus of utility” (GS, Book 5, §344). Hence the necessity and usefulness of the intellect or logical fictions are not related with their truth, according to Nietzsche. Those concepts alone do not explain why he still values certain fictions, metaphors, philosophy or science in general, rather than falsifying them and being simply skeptical as he goes against objective truth.

On the other hand, the meaning of fictions, illusions or metaphor as well as why and how they are important for Nietzsche seem to require an understanding of a certain kind of duality and the irony of human existence that seems to constitute the significant part of Nietzsche's early essay as well as, I believe, his other writings. At this point, the contrast between "rational" and "intuitive" man might be illuminative so long as he despises both of them in a peculiar way. Neither the rational man that have "fear of intuition" nor the intuitive man that have "scorn for abstraction" are proven to be right, as Nietzsche explains:

They both desire to rule over life: the former, by knowing how to meet his principle needs by means of foresight, prudence, and regularity; the latter, by disregarding these needs and, as an "overjoyed hero," counting as real only that life which has been disguised as illusion and beauty. (TL, p. 22)

It is easy to understand why Nietzsche goes against the rational men and the tyranny of reason in the light of our discussion hitherto. Yet, one could expect that he instead praises intuitions that are generally scorned by philosophers. But, he does not seem to make a choice between rationality and intuitions but, rather, criticizes both extremes. He rather seems to think that in both cases, a part of humanity is ignored, either the power of intellect or the importance of intuitions. As Nietzsche puts in his foreword to Richard Wagner:

The more I become aware of those all-powerful artistic drives in nature, and of a fervent longing in them for semblance, for their redemption and release in semblance, the more I feel myself driven to the metaphysical assumption that that which truly exists, the eternally suffering and contradictory, primordial unity, simultaneously needs, for its constant release and redemption, the ecstatic vision, intensely pleasurable semblance. (BT, §4)

Thus, it is reasonable to think that Nietzsche values both intellect and intuitions to a certain degree, rather than ignoring one at the expense of the other. He keeps talking about will to truth and will to illusion, science and art, Apollo and Dionysius at the

same time. Yet, it is important to understand first to what extent and in what way Nietzsche values intellect, philosophy or science together with intuitions and art.

At this point, it is important to remember that Nietzsche seems to offer an understanding of philosophy or science (what he calls “natural philosophy”) in general as *the formation of metaphors*. For instance, what he calls the “scientific investigator” is a good example that illustrates his standpoint, also concerning philosophy. He places the scientific investigator “(...) right next to the tower of science so that he will be able to work on it and find shelter for himself beneath those bulwarks which presently exists” (TL, p.21). The need for a shelter is further emphasized when Nietzsche claims that the scientific investigator requires a certain kind of protection since there are different kinds of powers that continuously go against what passes as the scientific truth. Nietzsche’s discontent with the intuitive man who is irrational to reject rationality can be another reason to believe that Nietzsche somehow valorized intellect and science and, hence, had a positive attitude towards them. Denying rationality and science altogether is not welcomed by Nietzsche because it means to deny a “pressing need” where we might also lose the chance to learn from experience and fail continuously.

However, Nietzsche’s understanding of science as the continuous formation of metaphors seems to differ from science as the search for the adequate explanation of beings, the truth. His disfavor of “rational man” is a good example since, according to Nietzsche, he finds no happiness in life. Apart from lacking what is intuitive and artistic, his happiness has to do with how much he can avoid pain, rather than reaching his aim which, in a traditional sense, would be knowing the truth. As Nietzsche argues, in their search for the objective knowledge or absolute truth, science and philosophy are actually influenced by religious ideas even though

Scientific Revolution was once to be appreciated for questioning religion. For instance, Nietzsche complains about science that is “(...) regarded *not* as a passion but as a condition and ‘ethos’” (GS, Book 3, §123). In other words, according to Nietzsche, science has been mistakenly valued in its capacity to know the truth, not as a passion belonging to men. Indeed, along the same lines, Nietzsche exemplifies the situation with reference to the Pope Leo X who, though astonished by scientific progress, distrusted science since it is “(...) changeable and unstable enough” (GS, Book 3, §123). Similarly, for Nietzsche, science and philosophy was regarded as an attempt to reach knowledge of things, absolute and unchanging, though it is historically proven to be mistaken quite a lot time.

In contrast, Nietzsche seems to acknowledge that scientific knowledge is not absolute and things might be so much different from what was called once our best scientific theory. It is rather this changing character, the possibility of erring, and hence continuous questioning which Nietzsche seems to find most valuable since for him “[c]onvictions are prisons” (AC, §54). Science as a passion continuously “re-fashions” itself as “(...) this drive is not truly vanquished and scarcely subdued by the fact that a regular and rigid new world is constructed as its prison from its own ephemeral products, the concepts” (TL, p. 21) Enlightenment as the victory of science over religion is one example Nietzsche uses, telling that scientific questioning (or, will to know) could not be suppressed even by the Christianity and religious dogma. The existence of such a passion proves itself historically and continuously; it even goes against to itself.

This seems to be the reason why Nietzsche thinks that science and philosophy would still exist even without the idea of “knowledge more than a means” and talks about a joyful science that is free of convictions (GS, Book 3, §123). In fact,

Nietzsche describes truth as inertia, which is significant concerning his standpoint (WP, §537). First of all, as it is conceived to be absolute, truth implies a state of inactivity which may be negative. For instance, if science could explain everything truly as they are and the end was achieved, science would cease to exist simply because it would be no longer necessary. Thus, the metaphoric understanding of science and philosophy seems to allow them continue to be as what they are, according to Nietzsche. Getting rid of the chains of convictions and truth qua inertia, science actually celebrates its freedom and becomes joyful.

No wonder the idea of joy rather than a sorrow is surprising especially if the subjectivity of what Nietzsche seems to be offering concerning science as well as philosophy is considered. At first sight, it looks more like a loss of an aim than something to celebrate. One may wonder whether science and philosophy might not be taken seriously any more since they are possibly mistaken and bound to change over time without no truth, no final gain. In this context, a further question seems to be helpful to understand Nietzsche's perspective: What — and, in the first place, whether — does one actually lose if it is something that is never owned? The situation of science and philosophy as well, according to Nietzsche, seems to be the same. To put it more clearly, truth as it is understood traditionally is not lost; actually, it is never owned, never existed. It also seems to explain why he does not regard his perspective as negative, but claims to be affirmative and positive towards life, science and philosophy. As Nietzsche writes:

It is enough to view science as an attempt to humanize things as faithfully as possible; we learn to describe ourselves more and more precisely as we describe things and their succession. (GS, Book 3, §112)

Put differently, as long as it is a fundamental human drive, neither science nor philosophy needs the phantasmagoria of truth, objectivity or universality. Philosophy

or science are valuable precisely because they belong to us as human beings and tells about us so long as they are anthropomorphic translations of the world, metaphors.

This brings us to the second and the last part of the present section, to what Nietzsche chooses to talk about instead of truth, namely metaphors. So far, Nietzsche seems to promote a conception of science, philosophy and art as a continuous formation of metaphors, various metaphoric drives. But still, one may wonder what the statement “truth is a metaphor” exactly means. For instance, just like the truth does not necessarily means the antithesis of error, metaphor does not seem to be the opposite of the literal (WP, §535). His claim, apart from being the last word concerning the discussion on truth, an explanation of what truth is, seems to have a metaphoric character itself. Here, it might be helpful to remember that in the beginning of the *Beyond Good and Evil* Nietzsche also claims that truth is a woman. However, we normally do not suppose that he literally thinks that truth is a woman. Rather, it is considered as a metaphor he uses, we may suppose, to tell that truth cannot be possessed. Likewise, the sentence that truth is a metaphor seems to be a metaphor itself. By giving different explanations of truth once as a woman, then a metaphor, or elsewhere as the will to power, Nietzsche rather seems to imply the metaphoric character of his own sentences and his philosophy, other than giving a final description of the phenomenon of truth.

From such a reading, the metaphoric character of Nietzsche’s philosophy becomes ubiquitous. He no longer appears to be badly confused between different explanations, but playing with several different metaphors to talk about truth from different perspectives. In the same way, the play with different metaphors itself seems to reflect the metaphoric, subjective character of his own philosophy without final answers that looks to be hardly a problem for him, as Nietzsche famously

writes: “Granted, this is only an interpretation too — and you will be eager enough to make this objection? — well then, so much the better” (BGE, §22). By saying that, he is *prima facie* freed from certain objections. He does not seem to be frightened from the subjectivity of the term metaphor or interpretation as well as his philosophy being subjective. Quite the contrary; since there is no interpretation beyond subjectivity, his interpretation is just like other interpretations. Nietzsche’s own prejudices are operative within his thinking as well: All epistemological, metaphysical choices are moral choices.

Yet, one may wonder how and why Nietzsche can claim that his interpretation or one interpretation is better than the other? Especially, if we consider the fact that his philosophy is principally built on his criticisms and displeasure concerning traditional ways of philosophizing. Perhaps more than any other philosopher, he seems to spend all his energy to persuade his readers that the traditional philosophy was mistaken in its search for truth and objectivity. Hence, he does not seem to value all perspectives equally neither. But, why to believe him? How to decide that one interpretation is better than the other? Why should we take his subjective perspective seriously?

A possible way of approaching those questions might be first to deal with the problem of “taking seriously”. For instance, in one interview made with a cognitive scientist Donald D. Hoffman, a similar problem about seriousness is brought forth after the scientist claims that the reality can actually be different than what we think it is. Speaking from an evolutionary perspective in 2016, he claims that even a false reality might be useful for an organism and the development of the intellect might not necessarily mean a better understanding of reality as it is. However, even if there is a chance that the reality is not real, we have to take it seriously to survive; we have

to be careful about getting hit by a car or the probability of being poisoned by the mushrooms we eat. As Hoffman adds: “I’ve evolved these symbols to keep me alive, so I have to take them seriously. But it’s a logical flaw to think that if we have to take it seriously, we also have to take it literally” (Gefter, 2016). Put differently, truth value of our beliefs are not related to and necessary for our survival. Even though it is highly possible that we are mistaken when we want to talk about true nature of things, we do not require an objective knowledge of things to exist and survive.

Apart from the striking similarity between what Donald D. Hoffman says and Nietzsche seem to be saying, the difference between taking something seriously or literally is very interesting, particularly if Nietzsche’s insistence on metaphor is considered. In a similar fashion, as a philosopher, Nietzsche may have taken science and philosophy seriously, but not literally. Just as it is enough to take the danger of the snakes seriously, it might not be necessary to claim to know their true nature. Likewise, philosophy as well as science might be understood as a human phenomenon necessary for us to survive, an anthropomorphic translation of how world is according to human beings, not an explanation of how things are in their nature independent from us.

Such a reading of Nietzsche does not seem to devalue philosophy or science in general, but seems to benefit from them. It does not go against scientific wisdom or knowledge because of its metaphoric character, it rather takes them seriously. This seriousness, however, is to a certain degree. We are justified to take philosophy or science metaphorically, not literally. Only then, playing with metaphors, philosophizing or scientific investigation becomes a serious play — which might mean more than a joy. Such an interpretation is also compatible with Nietzsche’s

somehow affirmative philosophy, his middle position, serious play in between truth and illusions, science and art, intellect and intuitions, Apollo and Dionysius.

Nietzsche's need and desire to talk about science, philosophy, art and history becomes also more understandable and grounded from such a point of view. For instance, worrying about what Nietzsche's position would be with regard to certain politically and morally sensitive topics like the Holocaust or cannibalism, might no longer be necessary since he does not claim that in the absence of objective truth every interpretation is equally valuable. On the contrary, by showing how a scientific, philosophical theory or the historiography can be, and most probably are morally prejudiced, he seems to emphasize the importance of being critical about what is given to us. He seems to promote fact-checking, considering different perspectives, thinking twice, suspending judgment and being evaluative. He does not jettison the facts, deny the connection with reality or disregard history, sociology or anthropology. He, on the contrary, takes them seriously, makes use of them like the scientist who built his tent near the tower of science. He even blames philosophers for their lack of historical knowledge as also mentioned before. In this regard, his problem with science or philosophy seems to be more related with final answers, absolutes and truth rather than theories and perspectives that are open to future criticisms and change.

Surely, the same applies to his own philosophical perspective, that it is open to further criticisms and interpretations. But even more importantly, just like there is no one true interpretation of reality for Nietzsche, there seems to be no right way of reading Nietzsche — that is also the reason why such a thesis is written. It is particularly difficult to give final answers if Nietzsche's philosophy is considered. As the reflection of his thoughts, his style (which is in many places highly poetic) makes

his account even more interpretable. Another reason for this variety seems to be related with the prejudices, the morality of the interpreter, as Nietzsche would probably add. In turn, the diversity of the interpretations concerning Nietzsche multiply demonstrates the abundance of possible readings. It must be borne in mind that the choice between objectivity and subjectivity, one philosopher, theory or interpretation rather than the other, is a moral choice, should never be forgotten.

Taking into consideration these points, so far, I aimed to stay faithful to Nietzsche as much as possible, trying to offer an interpretation of his account on the notion of truth without fundamental contradictions. Yet, it goes without saying that my reading itself is open to challenges that I have just mentioned. For this reason, I cannot claim to present a true reading of Nietzsche, which I believe is also compatible with my reading of him. Still, following the textual material I have provided, now I would like to make some final and broader remarks on my interpretation in order to further comment on why such a reading might be preferred and, in conclusion, what might be the positive consequences of the particular construal offered here.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Dealing with the notion of truth and Nietzsche, the preliminary concern of the thesis is to delineate what Nietzsche seems to think about the traditional/metaphysical understanding of truth, trying to show why he finds it *décadent*. Hence, asking why Nietzsche finds philosophers like Plato, Descartes, Kant as well as Christianity and the notion of objectivity in science hostile to life, my first aim was to reveal how love of reason and truth dominated philosophy and science, according to Nietzsche, while integral parts of life like passions, emotions or intuitions are either ignored or despised. In this regard, the fact that the traditional metaphysics as well as philosophers are prejudiced against life, according to Nietzsche, is very important to show both his rejection of the tradition and his own philosophical perspective.

Nietzsche's genealogical quest into the motivations behind the belief in truth constitutes the following part of the thesis as he, on one hand, criticizes but at the same time tries to show why there is will to truth. Rehearsing his critique of Descartes, Kant and Hume, I tried to demonstrate why and how Nietzsche thinks that truth, objectivity or universality are fictions. Focusing on the concept of subject and why it is a fiction, I followed Nietzsche tracing the motivations behind the belief in reason, intellect, truth, objectivity and universal morality. Yet, apart from Nietzsche's discontent with such concepts that he seemingly refutes, I tried to depict places where, in contrast, he talks about the necessity of certain fictions for beings like us. The concept of subject (which can be extended to certain logical fictions) constitutes the core of the discussion that is, though its illusory character, necessary for human beings, as Nietzsche also claims. With an aim to adequately reveal those

apparently conflicting parts of Nietzsche's thoughts on the concept of truth, the last section of the third chapter is reserved for what Nietzsche seems to understand from truth, as he accepts certain logical fictions but rejects truth or objectivity. To do so, that chapter is devoted to the concept of metaphor in contrast to the traditional understanding of truth as Nietzsche aims to go beyond truth and falsity, and prefers to talk about the concept of metaphor rather than the notion of truth.

However, a further discussion on his potentially contradictory claims and his own concepts like metaphor is required since even Nietzsche accepts that his language might at first sound strange. Hence, for the fourth chapter, I attempted to question whether or not Nietzsche can plausibly reject objectivity and truth, without also losing his sense of, and connection with, reality. At this point, the concepts like "illusion" and "lie" are at first sight problematic, as illustrated via reference to Westphal and Clark. Following their arguments, I tried to investigate Nietzsche's claims that appear to be either self-contradictory or presumptuous if he simply rejects the connection with reality and means *falsehood* by the terms "illusion" and "lie".

On the problem just indicated, the idea that the absence of objective truth does not mean no connection with reality for Nietzsche is very important as it seems hard to believe that he is badly mistaken to reject even the most commonsensical claims and that the rejection of objectivity causes any problem concerning his philosophy. But more importantly, due to the fact that he simultaneously rejects and claims to know the truth, the apparent contradictions are more likely to be a part of his philosophy. Focusing on the problem of illusion/falsity and its connection with language (as also Clark thought), I tried to show why Nietzsche does not simply claim the same thing to be true and false at the same time, in the same respect. While truth in a moral sense (that is objective, universal) is an illusion for Nietzsche, truth

in a nonmoral sense requires an understanding of the concept of metaphor that constitutes the base of Nietzsche's viewpoint on the notion of truth.

Yet, concerning the illusory character of truth in a moral sense and its reflections on language, a further discussion on the traditional understanding of correspondence theory is required since Nietzsche goes against the concept of language as the correspondence between words and essences. His rejection is tricky and possibly problematic if it is based on the concept of "illusion" understood as falsity. Nietzsche's somehow atheist, hence, seemingly dogmatic claims like "words do not correspond to the essences" as well as the natural flux argument seem contradictory with regard to his rejection of objective truth. At this point, I provided various examples where Nietzsche clearly refuses to make such claims as they are far beyond his duty if his standpoint against objective truth is considered. To be more precise, such assertions (i.e., our judgments are false with regard to how things are in-themselves or the reality-in-itself is in flux) require him to know the reality as it is, an information which he apparently regards as unknown. His reference to the unknown "X" when it comes to discuss correspondence, is significant underlying the inability of us naming and even thinking something in-itself, independent of our thoughts and language. The presence of a warning against "making a dogmatic mistake" is also crucial and decisive concerning how to read other seemingly dogmatic claims in the early essay and very likely his other writings. Such claims rather appear to be a sign of his general understanding since it is hard to believe that Nietzsche is easily mistaken about what he is already aware to be a mistake. In this regard, contrary to Clark who considers the early article to be momentarily agnostic, I believe that Nietzsche is wisely and constantly an agnostic rather than atheist — which would be conflicting first with his own philosophical thoughts.

Another equally significant point is, as Winchester also mentions, a remark Nietzsche makes in *Beyond Good and Evil*: that the illusionary character of a judgment is not an objection to it. Nietzsche does not mean that all judgments are illusionary, hence unnecessary or useless as he simply acknowledges falsehood to be necessary and useful as well. His interest is more directed to the “necessity” and “usefulness” of certain illusions for human beings rather than their “truth” or “falsity”. He is no longer concerned with questions that are not possible to answer, after accepting that both claiming and refuting truth is a dogmatic mistake (which is also in accord with his agnosticism). From such a perspective, his account begins to look less vulnerable to the criticisms concerning fatal contradictions and his skepticism. As long as illusionary/fictional character is no more a falsification, another way of interpreting Nietzsche seems necessary.

Still, the meaning of necessity in his philosophy and in what way Nietzsche values illusions remains ambiguous. In contrast to traditional understanding of necessity associated with objectivity, one can easily spot places where Nietzsche evidently questions the necessity he is talking about, claiming that perhaps those fictions are not even necessary. Just like the concept of illusion that does not simply mean falsity, the concept of necessity as well as usefulness seem deceptive, as he simultaneously enounces and attacks necessity, usefulness, illusion, falsehood, truth, etc. What is more, Nietzsche elsewhere makes explicit his intention by saying that he uses such concepts “(...) as conventional fictions for the purpose of description and communication, *not* explanation” (BGE, §21).

Once his relentlessly critical approach is taken into consideration, not only do such concepts cease to have their ordinary meaning, but more importantly, the ubiquity of paradoxes, dualities and metaphors in Nietzsche’s philosophy becomes

visible. Eventually, certain fictions might be considered vital for our survival, even though they might possibly be wrong and illusionary. But, forgetting the metaphoric/anthropomorphic character of those fictions and considering them as objectively certain, e.g., truth, in the simplest term a misunderstanding, an “illusion” in Nietzsche’s words. The motivation behind his choice of a relatively negative term like illusion seems to have its origin in society and the fact that metaphors are unjustifiably imposed as truth.

The justification of Nietzsche’s view can be found in his agnosticism which reminds me the story of an intelligent young fish asking its elderly whether there exists a world outside of the aquarium. The question is unanswerable simply because they would be dead outside of the water. The impossibility of having an answer somehow renders meaningless the very questioning itself as well as the questions regarding the outside of an aquarium. I believe that it is the case for Nietzsche who goes against the notion of truth since we are not able to step outside of our mind. For this reason, traditional understanding of truth is beyond our comprehension and such questioning is meaningless for human beings, hence, philosophy. All the more interesting, knowledge of this kind is also despised in the tragedy of Oedipus (as also referred in the very beginning of the thesis) that ends up with a phenomenon of incest which is excluded by the society and has to be punished. Ultimately, the wisdom of Oedipus is not human wisdom, but prophetic and related with fate. I believe that it is the reason why Nietzsche makes a reference to Oedipus to show that such knowledge is against the nature of humanity and that truth might not be desirable — contrary to the views of philosophers who are prejudiced in terms of their love of truth.

From such a viewpoint, Nietzsche’s account, which deals with metaphors as fundamental human drive, certainly becomes subjective. The variety of metaphors he

provides concerning truth is also an evidence that he “(...) prided himself on his ability to see things from a variety of perspectives, even (and especially) when that resulted in holding views that to lesser minds would have seemed inconsistent, and he also prided himself on his ability to adopt a variety of different disguises or masks for his own deeper and more considered views” (BT, pp. viii-ix). Rather than objectivity, he chooses a metaphoric, creative account of humanity apart from falsity and truth as I tried to demonstrate with reference to the dualities like reason and intuitions, art and science, Apollo and Dionysius. His understanding of irony with respect to human existence, the joyful play between these extreme parts also explains the seemingly contradictory nature of his writings.

No wonder, the subjectivity at hand as well as the concept of metaphor and play calls for a final word as it is not enough clear how to take Nietzsche seriously. In such a context, I preferred to make a reference to a contemporary article, an interview recently done with a cognitive scientist whom I deemed to have a noteworthy word on the problem of seriousness. I tried to show why Nietzsche’s philosophy based on metaphors can rightly be taken seriously in the light of what Hoffman claims. Hoffman asserts that the literal understanding (which can be translated as an understanding of truth from the Nietzschean perspective) is not necessary to take what seems real to us seriously. Put differently, as we can never be sure about truth and how things are in their own nature, we no longer need to know the truth to be serious. It is sufficient to take serious how things appear to us, even though the reality is highly likely different than what we suppose. With this point in mind, the philosophy of Nietzsche as a play (owing its origin to the irony intrinsic to human existence) may legitimately be taken seriously despite its subjective features as opposed to objectivity.

In conclusion, I find such a reading promising for multiple reasons. To begin with, it allows different perspectives to be taken seriously at the same time which, I think, despite our longing for democracy and basic human rights, is yet to be achieved. It goes without saying that not all perspectives can be permitted or are equally valuable, but I for one believe that nothing is more dangerous than to believe that only one of them is true. This way of thinking not only creates unjustified hierarchy, but also takes the advantage of any means to prove itself from its supposed truthfulness. Rather, perspectival understanding of knowledge may encourage one to look for reasons and evidences, suspend judgment and think twice. One can find the multiplicity of perspectives in the philosophy of Nietzsche who also appears to be highly evaluative and critical with regard to certain philosophers and perspectives. The emphasis on psychology seems to me to be one of the most important contributions of him, questioning under which condition and with what kinds of motivation either philosophy or history is written. Without such an approach, human beings are considered (through science, philosophy or history) to be objective, a-historical, neutral or indifferent to existing morality and power structures — which is hardly the case.

As I have already mentioned, I have no doubt that my reading is subjective just like Nietzsche's philosophy I have presented. Hence, I tried to compose my argumentation with adequate evidence as to offer a plausible perspective open to future challenges, rather than a final explanation of what Nietzsche wanted to mean. Hence, I hope that the perspective provided here is instrumental to provide a basis for further discussions on what Nietzsche have meant or how should we understand him.

The political consequences of such a reading also deserve to be further articulated. Even though it goes beyond the scope of my thesis, I trust that a fluid

understanding of truth, rather than a firm one, is far more attractive given the goals of an open and experimentally oriented society rather than a close-minded one — which Nietzsche evidently loathed.



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