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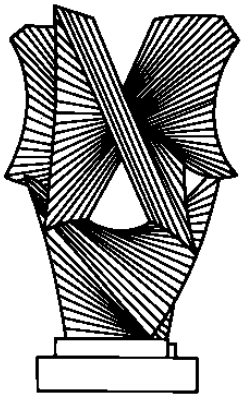

NIETZSCHE AGAINST THE PHILOSOPHICAL CANON

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Introduction

Socrates is the patron saint of Western philosophy, the defining figure in the canon, primarily in virtue of representing commitment to three theses widely thought to be distinctive of philosophy. These three theses are, of course, not precisely claims So7crates himself endorsed, but they do capture, I believe, his legacy in Western philosophy. We may characterize these theses as follows:

1. Philosophy, as the "love of wisdom," aims for knowledge of timeless and non-empirical truths, including truths about the good and the right.
2. Knowledge of the truth is the overriding value in philosophy and is also essential for living well.
3. Philosophical knowledge is acquired through the exercise of reason, understood as a faculty that can operate independently, in whole or in part, of *a posteriori* evidence.

Descartes, Leibniz, Kant, and Hegel can happily endorse that vision of philosophy; others, such as Husserl and Dummett, can endorse much of it. Some radical empiricists will have more trouble with parts of the first and third propositions, thoug7h many other empiricists, from Hume to Carnap, can agree to them, as long as it is admitted, perhaps, that there are no truths about the good and the right to be had. Socrates is so central to the philosophy canon because of his faith in truth, in the value of truth to living well, and in the power of reason and rational inquiry in discovering truth, all defining features of the discipline of philosophy more than two thousand years later.[1]

[1]As one Socrates scholar puts it: "The Western philosophical tradition is deeply indebted to the figure of Socrates. The question 'How should one live?' has rightly been called 'the Socratic question.' Socrates' method of cross-examining his interlocutors has often been seen as a paradigmatic form of philosophical inquiry, and his own life as an epitome of the philosophical life." Heda Segvic, "No One Errs Willingly: The Meaning of Socratic Intellectualism," in S. Ahbel-Rappe & R. Kamtekar (eds.), *A Companion to Socrates* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), p. 171. As she also notes, however, Socratic intellectualism has often been found "disappointing" (p. 171):

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If Socrates is the patron saint of the philosophy canon, then Nietzsche, unsurprisingly, is the patron saint of the anti-Socratic—or what I will call the "anti-philosophy"--canon; that is, Nietzsche holds that:

1. The aim of philosophy is the legislation of values, not knowledge of the truth; indeed, there are no timeless, non-empirical truths,and no truths at all in the realm of value.
2. Knowing the truth sometimes has value, sometimes does not, but it is certainly not the overriding imperative of philosophy and its relentless pursuit is, in fact, incompatible with living well.
3. The faculty of reason is inadequate to secure knowledge and truth *a priori*; indeed, the deliverances of philosophical reason are both hostage to the *a posteriori* inputs supplied by the world and subservient ultimately to the non-rational, or affective, parts of the psyche.

Thus, while the Socratic philosophy canon celebrates reason, truth and knowledge, both for their intrinsic value and as essential to the good life, the anti-philosophy canon associated with Nietzsche questions the value of theoretical knowledge and truth, views discursive rationality as practically ineffective, emphasizes the dominant role of the non-rational or *affective* character of persons, and denies philosophical reasoning a privileged role in discovering the truths that there are.

Nietzsche has, admittedly, a certain affection for Socrates, for his role as "gadfly" in opposition to dominant opinion. But that occasionally expressed affection belies Nietzsche's much deeper hostility to everything Socrates really stands for. From Nietzsche's first work, *The Birth of Tragedy*, with its polemic against "Socratic rationalism," to one of his very last works, *Twilight of the Idols*, where Nietzsche

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"He holds that living a good life is a matter of living ina ccordance with a certain kind of knowledge. Since knowledge is an accomplishment of reason, the Socratic view is in some sense intellectualist or, perhaps more appropriately, rationalist." *Id*. at 173. In the famous Socratic dictum, "the unexamined life is not worth living for a human being" (Plato, *Apology*38a).

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devotes an entire chapter to "The Problem of Socrates," Nietzsche's entire conception of philosophy—in both substance and, as everyone knows, style—stands wholly opposed to the Socratic.

Let us begin with the style. Nietzsche, as every reader knows, can be funny, sarcastic, rude, wicked, scholarly, offensive, clever, and scathing. He writes aphoristically, polemically, lyrically, and always very personally. He eschews almost entirely the typical discursive form of philosophicial writing: he almost never tries to persuade through the power of rational argumentation and dialectics (even though there are arguments aplenty in his work, but the rhetorical form in which they are presented always dominates the discursive form). Reading Spinoza or Kant, and then reading Nietzsche, one might be surprised to discover they are part of a single genre called "philosophy," although there is considerable overlap in subject-matter. Yet in the course of examining philosophical subjects, Nietzsche will invoke historical, physiological, psychological, philological, and anthropological claims, and almost never appeal to an intuition or an *a priori* bit of knowledge, let alone set out a syllogism.

Nietzsche's philosophical style is no accident; it is precisely the approach one would expect him to adopt given his naturalistic conception of persons. For Nietzsche, influenced as he was by Schopenhauer and the German Materialist movement of the 1850s and 1860s, thinks the conscious and rational faculties of human beings play a relatively minor role in what we do, believe, and value; that far more important are our unconscious and subconscious affective and instinctive lives (and ultimately the physiological bases of the latter). And he thinks this is especially true of philosophers! As Nietzsche puts the point early in *Beyond Good and Evil*, what inspires "mistrust and mockery" of philosophers is that,

> They all pose as if they had discovered and arrived at their genuine convictions through the self-development of a cold, pure, divinely indifferent dialectic…while what really happens is that they take a conjecture, a whim, an "inspiration" or, more typically, they take some fervent wish that they have sifted through and made properly abstract—and they defend it with

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rationalizations after the fact. They are all advocates who do not want to be seen as such…. (BGE 5)

Philosophical systems do not arise from disinterested rational inquiry, contrary to the pretense of the Socratic canon; the dialectical justifications philosophers produce for them come later, aimed at vindicating conclusions which the philosophers already find morally attractive given their psychological needs. Philosophers are, as Nietzsche says, all really lawyers advocating for a cause. As Nietzsche explains, again in *Beyond Good and Evil*, "the moral (or immoral) intentions in every philosophy constitute the real germ from which the whole plant [e.g., the metaphysical system] has always grown" and thus "there is absolutely nothing impersonal about the philosopher," for his moral (and immoral) intentions "bear decided and decisive witness to *who he is*—which means, in what order of rank the innermost drives of his nature stand with resepct to each other" (BGE 6). Nietzsche, crucially, will not partake of this charade of offering post-hoc rationalizations for metaphysical theses that simply reflect his evaluative judgments which, in turn, reflect the psychological facts about who he really is. If psychology determines values, and values determine metaphysics, then to change people's evaluative and metaphysical views, one must affect their psychology, more precisely, their drives (drives being dispositions to have certain kinds of affective or emotional responses[2]). But non-rational drives can only be influenced, Nietzsche thinks, through non-rational devices, including all the stylistic devices noted above: if you provoke, amuse, and annoy the reader, you thereby arouse his affects, and thus can change the reader's evaluative attitudes.[3] The discursive mode of most philosophy, by contrast, is usually inert when it comes to reorienting the non-rational psyche—but reorienting the affects and values of at least some of his readers is a paramount concern for Nietzsche. (Nietzsche does think

[2]See Paul Katsafanas, "Nietzsche's Philosophical Psychology," in *A Handbook of Nietzsche*, ed. K. Gemes & J. Richardson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming).

[3][couldn't non-rational drives be influenced, as a contingent matter, by rational devices?]

Socratic dialectics was somewhat effective in the particular historic epic in which it arose, as a kind of Freudian reaction formation, a point to which we return below.)

Even if the rational discursiveness characteristic of most philosophy is usually practically ineffective, it might still be essential for understanding the truth, which even Nietzsche allows is sometimes useful. But here Nietzsche's *substantive* dispute with the Socratic canon comes to the fore. First, Nietzsche denies that there is a faculty of practical reason capable of discovering moral truths. The Sophists, he says in a famous passage from his *Nachlass*,

> verge upon the first *critique of morality* [*Moral*], the first *insight* into morality:--they juxtapose the multiplicity (the geographical relativity) of the moral value judgments [*Moralischen Werthurtheile*];--they let it be known that every morality [*Moral*] can be dialectically justified; i.e., they divine that all attempts to give reasons for morality [*Moral*] are necessarily *sophistical*—a proposition later proved on the grand scale by the ancient philosophers, from Plato onwards (down to Kant);--they postulate the first truth that a "morality-in-itself" [*eine Moral an sich*], a "good-in-itself" do not exist, that it is a swindle to talk of "truth" in this field. (WP:428; KSA 13:14[116]).

This is a *Nachlass* passage, but it has many analogues in the published corpus. In *Beyond Good and Evil,* Nietzsche refers derisively to Kant's moral philosophy as "[t]he…stiff and decorous Tartuffery of the old Kant, as he lures us on the dialectical bypaths that lead to his 'categorical imperative'—really lead astray and seduce" (BGE: 5). Kant's "Tartuffery" and Spinoza's "hocus-pocus of mathematical form" in his *Ethics* are simply, Nietzsche says, "the subtle tricks [*feinen Tücken*] of old moralists and preachers of morals [*Moralisten und Moralprediger*]." Pointing at Schopenhauer's attempt to supply a rational foundation for morality, Nietzsche says "we can draw our conclusions as to how scientific a 'science' could be when its ultimate masters still talk like children" (BGE 186). The real significance of the claims of moral philosophers is "what they tell us about those who make them" for they are "a sign-language of the affects" (BGE 187), betraying things about the psychological needs and condition of those who make

them. Talk of "practical reason," Nietzsche says, was "invented precisely for those cases where reason has nothing to do with it" (A:12).

But even in the domain of theoretical reason, philosophy fares not much better, since theoretical reason, especially in the guise of philosophical metaphysics, is also really subservient to values. Nietzsche, pointing to the Stoic metaphysics of nature, observes that their "pride wants to dictate and annex [their] morals and ideals onto nature" (BGE 9), but in doing so they are just exemplifying the general tendency of philosophers to invent a metaphysics that vindicates the philosopher's values. As Nietzsche writes: "what happened back then with the Stoics still happens today, just as soon as philosophy begins believing in itself. It always creates the world in its own image, it cannot do otherwise; philosophy is this tyrannical drive itself, the most spiritual will to power, to the 'creation of the world'…." (BGE 9). Metaphysical accounts of reality—from Plato's and Kant's denial that the empirical or phenomenal world comports with the real or noumenal world, in which morality finds its vindication, to Hume's claim that, by nature, human beings have essentially sympathic, or moral, feelings, to G.E. Moore's thought that humans are, fortuitously, endowed with a capacity to detect the evaluative truths out there in the world--all these are simply projections of the philosopher's values, so theoretical philosophy, its pretensions notwithstanding, is the mere handmaiden of the legislation of values, which is the actual aim of all great philosophy, from Plato to Kant.

Second, Nietzsche denies that knowledge of the truth is essential to living well—indeed, it is just the opposite in Nietzsche's view, since falsehood and illusion are essential conditions of life. Of course, that claim, in the dramatic form Nietzsche ordinarily favors, requires some qualifications. Obviously we need to know some *mundane truths*, like whether it is safe to cross the street, or whether what we are eating is edible! But Nietzsche is not concerned with these, nor is most of the philosophical canon. Nietzsche's claim is directed at deeper and more existential truths about the human situation, such as the inevitability of death and suffering, the fact that most of our beliefs about the world are, strictly

speaking, false, and that most of life would have to be adjudged immoral by the standards to which we profess commitment.[4] It is *these* truths, ones philosophers ought to acknowledge were they not motivated by ulterior moral objectives, that Nietzsche thinks are incompatible with living well.

That the "truth is terrible," in the senses just noted, and thus incompatible with carrying on is a theme he sounds throughout his philosophical career. While lauding the Presocratic Thales as the first philosophical naturalist--"for the first time the man of science triumphs over the man of myth" as he puts it—it is also the case that in Thales, "the man of wisdom [*Weisheit*] triumphs in turn over the man of science [*Wissenschaft*]" (PT, p. 145). What distinguishes Thales from the mere man of science has to do with their respective valuations of truth and knowledge:

> Science rushes headlong, without selectivity, without "taste," at whatever is knowable, in the blind desire to know all at any cost. Philosophical thinking, on the other hand, is ever on the scent of those things which are most worth knowing, the great and the important insights. Now the concept of greatness is changeable in the realm of morality as well as in that of aesthetics. And so philosophy starts by legislating greatness. (PTAG 3)

What distinguishes, in other words, the non-Socratic philosopher from the scientist (or the Socratic philosopher), is that the latter is committed to knowledge *for the sake of knowledge itself*, and thus pursues knowledge "at any cost." Of course, Socrates himself presents the quest for knowledge as one that is in the service of the good, but Nietzsche, of course, denies that there is any such thing to be had as "knowledge of the good." He is thus concerned with what he takes to the effect of the Socratic valuation of truth—"Socratic optimism" as he dubs it in his first book, *The Brith of Tragedy*—namely, the idea that *truth* matters above all else. The philosopher--the "man of wisdom"--by contrast is interested in knowledge for the sake of some particular value (Nietzsche's example, above, is "greatness"), other than the presumed absolute value of truth which the scientist takes for granted (cf. GS 344). This is why,

[4]See Brian Leiter, "The Truth is Terrible," in D. Came (ed.), *Nietzsche on Morality and the Affirmation of Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming).

for Nietzsche, "*Genuine philosophers...are commanders and legislators*: they say, '*thus* it *shall* be!'" (BGE 211). The philosopher explicitly legislates those values in whose service knowledge is then enlisted. This is clear in Nietzsche's own naturalistic approach to philosophical speculation: he is interested in precisely those "terrible truths"—the absence of free will, the superficiality of ordinary self-understanding, the "immoral" motives that move most people most of the time—that will help undermine the dominant morality, which he takes to be incompatible with the realization of various kinds of human excellence

Nietzsche makes these same general points throughout his career, in *The Birth of Tragedy* (e.g. 17-18), in the *Untimely Meditations* (III:6), in *Beyond Good and Evil* (e.g. 204-213) in the new additions (of 1885-86) to *The Gay Science* (e.g., P:4; GS 344), and in the *Genealogy* (III:23-25). Notice, in particular, that raising a question about the *value* of knowledge or truth is manifestly *not* an attack on the existence or possibility of knowledge or truth; rather, it expresses the lesson Nietzsche takes himself to have learned from the early Greeks:

> No, this bad taste, this will to truth, to "truth at any price," this youthful madness in the love of truth, have lost their charm for us: for that we are too experienced, too serious, too merry, too burned, too *profound*....Today we consider it a matter of decency not to wish to see everything naked, or to be present at everything, or to understand and "know" everything....
>
> Oh, those Greeks! They knew how to live. What is required for that is to stop courageously at the surface, the fold, the skin, to adore appearance, to believe in forms, tones, words, in the whole Olympus of appearance. Those Greeks were superficial--*out of profundity [Tiefe]*.... (GS P:4)

It is not, then, that the Greeks lacked knowledge; rather they *chose* to remain superficial because they knew all too well the *deep* truths--for example, about "the irrationality and suffering of human existence" (PT, p. 136). They understand--as Socrates and his heirs do not--that knowledge can be

dangerous and terrible, that we may want to put limits on knowledge for the sake of other values: e.g., preserving the will to live in the face of a terrible and irrational world.

What is objectionable for Nietzsche about Socrates and the arrival of Socratic rationalism is precisely that it marks a "new and unprecedented value set on knowledge" (BT 13). Socrates, as "the prototype of the theoretical optimist...ascribes to knowledge and insight the power of a panacea" (BT 15). Socrates, in short, fails to realize what the Presocratic writers like Thales (on Nietzsche's rendering) understood all too well: that knowledge need not be a panacea, that the pursuit of truth is simply one *value*, a value whose realization may be incompatible with others.

Third, to the extent that theoretical reason has a domain over which it can operate, it is wholly dependent on *a posteriori* considerations (Nietzsche is a radical empiricist on this score), with any attempt to reach beyond the empirical evidence merely a foray into metaphysics, which is, as we have seen, nothing more than an attempt to legislate values by masquerading as a cognitive achievement. This last point, and Nietzsche's general opposition to the philosophical canon inspired by Socrates, receives a striking articulation in one of his late works, *Twilight of the Idols*, which I would like to examine in some detail in what follows. Unlike some of Nietzsche's other well-known works—*Also Sprach Zarathustra, Zur Genealogie der Moral,* or *Jenseits von Gut und Böse*--it has not received nearly as much scholarly scrutiny as its philosophical breadth and depth warrants. More importantly for our topic, it is directly relevant to Nietzsche's challenge to the Socratic canon of philosophy.

***Twilight of the Idols* Against the Canon**

The German title, *Götzen-Dämmerung* is, of course, a pun on the name of Richard Wagner's opera, the last of his *Ring* cyle, *Götterdämmerung.* Whereas Wagner, borrowing from Norse mythology, was presenting his own version of the "Twilight of the Gods," Nietzsche's polemic was directed at *Götzen,* that is, idols or false gods. "There are more idols than realities in the world," as Nietzsche declares in the Preface, and his "little essay is a great declaration of war" against "not just the idols of the age, but

eternal idols," which, as he famously says, "are here touched with a hammer as with a tuning fork" which then shows them to be "hollow."[5] What are these hollow idols that Nietzsche exposes?

The first five chapters of the book quite clearly attack the "eternal idols" of the philosophical tradition, and they shall be my focus here. In brief, Nietzsche attacks (1) the Socratic elevation of reason and dialectics to pride of place in Greek philosophy and culture; (2) metaphysical reasoning, the kind of reasoning by which philosophers purport to reach conclusions about the allegedly non-empirical, ahistorical, and atemporal aspects of reality; (3) the moralizing tendency of philosophy, the attempt of philosophers from Plato onwards to *defend* objective and universal moral requirements; and (4) the tendency of philosophers to defend the idea of free will and moral responsibility (one closely connected to (3)). Let us consider each of these in turn.

The first chapter of *Twilight*, "The Problem of Socrates" attacks the Socratic elevation of reason above the instincts, but primarily by way of treating it as a symptom requiring diagnosis: the Socratic worship of reason is, variously, said to be a "symptom[] of degeneration" (TI I:2), a "decadence" involving the "wantonness and anarchy of [the] instincts" which then required the "hypertrophy [*Superfötation*] of the logical faculty" to control it (TI I:4); and a case of "the rabble ris[ing] to the top" with the triumph of "dialectics" (TI I:5). "One chooses dialectic only when one has no other means," Nietzsche declares, because "[o]ne knows that one arouses mistrust with it, that it is not very convincing" (TI I:6). Nietzsche adds, "Nothing is easier to erase [*leichter wegzuwischen*] than a dialectical effect" (TI I:6), which reflects his general skepticism about the efficacy of reason in fixing belief and epistemic commitment. But if dialectics is a feeble weapon, it is the one that Socrates correctly perceived that Greek culture more generally needed, since "old Athens was coming to an end…[e]verywhere the instincts were in anarchy" (TI I:9). "The fanaticism with which all Greek

[5] *..an die heir mit dem Hammer wie mit einter Stimmgabel gerürht wird,--es giebt überhaupt keine älteren, keine überzeugterene, keine aufgeblasneren Götzen..Auch keine hohleren* [they are here touched with a hammer as with a tuning fork—there are altogether no older, no more convinced, no more puffed-up idols—also no more hollow].

reflection throws itself upon rationality," Nietzsche says, "betrays a desperate situation" (TI I:10). As Nietzsche sums it up:

> Reason-virtue-happiness, that means merely that one must imitate Socrates and counter the dark appetites with a permanent daylight—the daylight of reason. One must be clever, clear, bright at any price: any concession to the instincts, to the unconscious, leads *downward*…. Socrates was a misunderstanding; *the whole improvement morality, including the Christian, was a misunderstanding*. The most blinding daylight; rationality at any price; life, bright, cold, cautious, conscious, without instrinct, in opposition to the instincts—all this too was a mere disease….To *have* to fight the instincts—that is the formula of decadence; as long as life is *ascending,* happiness equals instinct. (TI I:10-11)

Apart from claiming that dialectics is not effective in bringing about belief revision, notice that Nietzsche's "critique" is more of a *diagnosis*, than an argument—not a surprising posture, of course, given his view of dialectics! That is, Nietzsche claims that the overvaluation of the rational faculties is, in Freudian terminology, a kind of reaction formation, a defense mechanism against the non-rational parts of the psyche which are experienced as threatening. No reason is given for why the rational faculties actually do not deserve to be highly valued in the way Socrates values them, except Nietzsche's noting that they are not effective in practice.

In a Socratic spirit, one might ask why this diagnosis, if it were correct, should interest us? I take it Nietzsche's strategy here shares something with both the Marxian critique of ideology.[6] In the Marxian case, the thought is that a certain kind of etiology of a belief defeats the warrant of that belief. If I believe the second law of thermodynamics *because it came to me in a dream*, then that fact about its etiology is a reason not to take oneself to be justified in the belief (though it does not settle the question of the truth of the belief). If I only believe in the power of reason *because it is my only means for*

[6]For a more extensive discussion, see my "The Hermeneutics of Suspicion: Recovering Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud," in *The Future for Philosophy*, ed. B. Leiter (Oxford: Oxford University Pres, 2004).

defending myself against unruly desires, then that fact about its etiology gives us no reason to think reason and dialectics are epistemically reliable (however effective they are as a mechanism of self-discipline). It may seem hard, of course, to take some of Nietzsche's diagnoses seriously—how does he know that the Greeks had become afraid of their "dark appetites," for example? But if Nietzsche is right that, ordinarily, dialectical effects are easy to erase (he surely is), then the triumph of Socratic dialectics at a particular moment in Greek history does cry out for some kind of non-rationalizing explanation.

In the second chapter of *Twilight*, Nietzsche attacks the philosophical tradition's idea of "Reason" (*Vernunft*), the faculty by which we purportedly discover truths which are neither historically nor temporally contingent, those which are beyond what sensory experience can teach us (TI II:1). Thus, Nietzsche's attack is clearly not directed at those (like Heraclitus) who do not, as Nietzsche puts it, "reject[] the testimony of the senses" (TI II:2). It is only philosophical "reason" that "introduces lies" such as "the lie[s] of unity…thinghood…substance…permanence" (TI II:2). By contrast, Nietzsche says,

> [W]e possess science [*Wissenschaft*] precisely to the extent to which we have decided to *accept* the testimony of the senses—to the extent to which we sharpen them further, arm them, and have learned to think them through. The rest is miscarriage and not-yet-science—in other words, metaphysics, theology, psychology, epistemology—or formal science, a doctrine of signs [*Zeichen-lehre*], such as logic and that applied logic which is called mathematics. In them reality is not encountered at all…. (TI II:3)

It was rhetoric of this kind that led modern radical empiricists like Rudolf Carnap to read Nietzsche with appreciation, since he not only expresses empiricist-style doubts about metaphysics, but seems to recognize logic as an *a priori* domain of non-empirical truths.[7] Nietzsche even suggests that since the "categories of reason"—which "force[] us to posit unity, identity, permanence, substance, cause, thinghood, being"—"could not be derived from anything empirical," the best explanation for

[7] [it is not clear that N. consistenly treats logic as *a priori*—add a brief discussion]

metaphysical speculation by philosophers is a kind of seduction by language: as Nietzsche famously puts it, "I am afraid we are not rid of God because we still have faith in grammar" (TI II:5).[8]

This memorable if enigmatic statement warrants some further consideration, which will also help explain Carnap's favorable opinion of Nietzsche. What Nietzsche is calling attention to here is what he calls, earlier in the same section, "the basic presuppositions of the metaphysics of language," which just are, he says "the presuppositions of reason" (TI II:5): metaphysical theorizing, in short, is shaped by reifying certain aspects of syntax. The example he immediately gives is this: "Everywhere it [that is, language and metaphysical reason] sees a doer and doing; it believes in will as *the cause*; it believes in the ego, in the ego as being, in the ego as substance, and it projects this faith in the ego-substance upon all things" (TI II:5). What Nietzsche must have in mind here is the characteristic syntactic feature of all the Indo-Germanic languages that active verbs with direct objects—except those in the imperative mode—must have subjects who perform the action. "I write the book" or "Ich shreibe das Buch" are grammatically correct, but drop the "I" or the "Ich" and the sentence makes no sense, unless converted into the imperative (which in the German would also require re-writing "schreibe" as "Schreiben" and adding a pronoun). Nietzsche's point is that metaphysical philosophers treat the syntactic structure as reflecting the worldly reality, that is, that the "I" and "Ich" required by grammar must refer to some entity that causes or does the writing. (And, thus, since Biblical lore tells us that "God created the world," there must be an actual referent of the subject of that sentence!) Nietzsche is making the same kind of point in his critique of the Cartesian cogito in *Beyond Good and Evil* when he observes that,

> a thought comes when "it" wishes, and not when "I" wish, so that it falsifies reality to say the subject "I "is the condition of the predicate "think. "It" thinks: but this "it" just that old famous "I" is, to put it mildly, only a supposition, an assertion, above all, no "immediate

[8] *Ich fürchte, wir werden Gott nicht los, weil wir noch an die Grammatik glauben…*

certainty"…[E]ven this "it" contains an interpretation of the process and is not part of process itself. (BGE 17)

We may know with certainty that there is *thinking*, but we don't know with certainty that there is a subject that *does the thinking*, unless, of course, we simply treat the syntactic form as metaphysically reliable.

Again, one can see what Carnap found so appealing about Nietzsche, so much so that in his famous 1932 attack on metaphysics[9]--and, in particular, on Hegel and Heidegger--he singles out only Nietzsche for praise among German philosophers of the prior 150 years. It will be recalled that Carnap thought metaphysical statements were nonsensical, or lacking in meaning, in one of two ways: either because a particular word "is erroneously believed to have meaning" (61) or meaningful words are used in a syntactic form that renders the resulting statement meaningless. So, for example, Carnap claims, *contra* Heidegger, that ordinary language misleads us into thinking that "nothing" can be a subject noun (as in "The Nothing nothings…" or "The Nothing exists only because…"), when a logical analysis of language shows that the word "nothing" is only "a logical particle that serves for the formulation of a negative existential statement" (71). Interestingly, and less often remarked upon, is that Carnap finds an error in the Cartesian cogito ("I think, therefore I am") similar to Nietzsche's. Carnap says the Cartesian Cogito,

violates…the logical rule that existence can be predicated only in conjunction with a predicate, not in conjunction with a name (subject, proper name). An existential statement does not have the form "*a* exists" (as in "I am," i.e., "I exist"), but "there exists something of such and such a kind." The second error lies in the transition from "I think" to "I exist." If from the statement "P(a)" ("a has the property P") an existential statement is to be deduced, then the latter can assert existence only with respsect to the predicate P, not with respect to the subject *a* of the

[9]Rudolf Carnap, "The Elimination of Metaphysics Through Logical Analysis of Language," trans. Arthur Pap in _____. All further page references are included parenthetically in the text.

premise. What follows from "I am a European" is not "I exist," but "a European eixsts." What follows from "I think" is not "I am" but "there exists something that thinks." (74)

Carnap and Nietzsche do not quite agree here, since Carnap allows that the "I think" justifies the ascription of a subject—a "something"—that does the thinking, thus showing Carnap's own beholdenness to the metaphysics of even logical syntax. Still, Carnap and Nietzsche agree on the general point about the misleading character of grammar.

Carnap, much like Nietzsche, views all metaphysics as technically meaningless because it tries "to discover and formulate a kind of knowledge which is not accessible to empirical science" (76), but like Nietzsche, Carnap does understand metaphysics to have a *meaning*, not in a logical or referential sense, but instead an expressive one. Carnap writes: "The (pseudo) statements of metaphysics do not serve for the *description of states of affairs*….They serve for the *expression of the general attitude of a person towards life*" (78). That, of course, was precisely Nietzsche's diagnosis of Stoic metaphysics noted earlier, and his more general diagnosis of "every great philosophy" as "a type of involuntary and unself-conscious memoir" which betrays "the moral (or immoral) intentions" at work in the philosopher. For Carnap, recall, all value theory—including, therefore, the Socratic equation of reason, virtue and happiness—falls under "metaphysics," and thus Carnap has as much reason as Nietzsche to adopt a *diagnostic* approach to metaphysical systems and moral philosophies, that is, an approach which tries to figure out what attitude towards life they express and what that attitude tells us about the one who expresses it. Such an approach contrasts with one that tries to examine the cogency of the reasons offered in support of it. Here again is Carnap:

> [M]etaphysics…arises from the need to give expression to a man's attitude in life, his emotional and volitional reaction to the environment, to society, to the tasks to which he devotes himself, to the misfortunes that befall him. This attitude manifests itself, unconsciously as a rule, in everything a man does or says….[A]rt is an adequate, metaphysics an inadequate means for the

> expression of the basic attitude…[M]etaphysics [unlike art]…through the form of its works it pretends to be something that it is not. The form in question is that of a system of statements which are apparently related as premises and conclusions, that is, the form of a theory….The metaphysician believes that he travels in territory in which truth and falsehood are at stake. In reality, however, he has not asserted anything, but only expressed something, like an artist. (79)

Here we have a logical positivist reason to adopt Nietzsche's approach, and *diagnose* metaphysical philosophers, rather than argue with them: what they say is strictly speaking nonsense, its only significance is what it expresses about their "attitude" towards life. And it is precisely Nietzsche's strategy in the sections of *Twilight* we have considered so far to treat them accordingly.

Carnap famously concludes his attack on metaphysics by singling out Nietzsche, who "had artistic talent to the highest degree" (80), as the exception in the sorry history of German metaphysics, as the one German philosopher who "almost entirely avoided the confusion" of theory (expressed by statements with cognitive content) and attitude (expressed by statements that have no cognitive content), to use Carnap's terms. Carnap observes,

> A large part of [Nietzsche's] work has predominantly empirical content. We find there, for instance, historical analyses of specific artistic phenomena, or an historical-psychological analysis of morals. In the work, however, in which he expresses most strongly that which others express through metaphysics or ethics, in *Thus Spoke Zarathstra,* he does not choose the misleading theoretical form, but openly the form of art, of poetry. (80)

Given the many decades of distortions of Nietzsche's corpus that followed—especially in Germany, and at Heidegger's hands--it is really quite remarkable to notice how apt Carnap's 1932 assessment of Nietzsche is: he correctly perceives Nietzsche as offering a naturalistic or empirical account of human practices, such as morality, and he also correctly understands why Nietzsche adopted the style he did,

and not only, but perhaps most prominently, in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*: namely, to make clear (as Nietzsche puts it) that "there is absolutely nothing impersonal about the philosopher" (BGE 6), that it is, in other words, Nietzsche who is expressing his drives, his attitudes towards life.

It bears noting, however, that even Nietzsche allows that there are scholars (*Gelehrten*), "truly scientific ones" for whom "there might really be something like a drive for knowledge, some independent little clockwork mechanism [*Uhrwerk*] that, once well wound ticks bravely away *without* essentially involving the rest of the scholar's drives" (BGE 6). For these merely "scientific men" or "philosophical laborers" as he calls them later (BGE 211), "it is almost a matter of indifference whether this little engine is put to work in this or that field of research, and whether the 'promising' young work turns himself into a philologist or a fungus connoisseur [*Pilzekenner*] or chemist" (BGE 6). The work of such "clockwork" scholars is largely affect-free, they are largely uninvested, morally and emotionally, with the outcome (their interests lie elsewhere, in family, for example). What then would Nietzsche say of Carnap: is he a "great" philosopher imposing his own evaluative vision on the world, or is he merely a philosophical laborer, driven by an interest in truth? I think the answer has to be that Carnap is a philosophical laborer, as the familiar facts about his politics would suggest: a socialist and anti-Nazi, he defended a picture of what the world was like that provided no solace or support for those values. And, in that regard, he was admirably honest, unlike some contemporary philosophers who share some of his moral sympathies but not Carnap's integrity, clockwork-like or not. We shall return to that topic shortly.

Let us return now to the argument against the Socratic canon in *Twilight of the Idols*. Chapter 2's empiricist attack on metaphysics concludes, once again, with a diagnosis of what would lead thinkers to construct a "true" world in contrast to the world revealed by the senses, and the diagnosis, again, is that such metaphysical speculation—"whether in the Christian manner or in the manner of Kant (in the end, an underhanded Christian)" (TI II:6)—is, like the Socratic elevation of reason, "a symptom of the

decline of life" (TI II:6).[10] Chapters 2 sets the stage for Chapter 3's famous short"history of an error" (as Nietzsche calls it), namely the recognition of the error of positing a "true world," in roughly the Carnapian sense of a metaphysically real world, i.e., one "which transcends the realm of empirically founded, inductive science" (Carnap, 80). The history, which has often been interpreted as describing Nietzsche's own intellectual evolution, proceeds in six stages.

In the first stage of this history, which Nietzsche associates with Plato, the "true world" is understood to be "attainable for the sage, the pious, the virtuous man," or as Nietzsche sarcastically glosses that idea: "'I, Plato, am the truth.'" Christianity, as Nietzsche says in the preface to *Beyond Good and Evil,* is just "Platonism for the people," and so the second stage is the Christian idea that the "true world," while "unattainable for now" is nonetheless "promised for the sage, the pious, the virtuous man ('for the sinner who repents')." The third stage marks the Kantian twist on the idea: as Nietzsche aptly puts it, the "true world"—now Kant's noumenal world--is deemed "unattainable, indemonstrable, unpromisable; but the very thought of it—a consolation, an obligation, an imperative." Stage four propels us into the 19th-century and, as Nietzsche puts it, "the first yawn of reason…[t]he cockrow of positivism" which declares that if the Kantian "true" world is "unattained" then it is also "unknown," and thus can not be "consoling, redeeming, or obligating: how could something unknown obligate us?"[11] Stages five and six of Nietzsche's history bring us to his own views. In the fifth stage, Nietzsche declares that the idea of a "true world" ought to be abolished, since it is useless (*unnütz*), since we can know nothing about it: how could we conform our behavior or beliefs to the unknown? And stage six then draws the crucial consequence that if we get rid of the idea of a "true" world beyond

[10]Nietzsche here also makes clear that his attack on the metaphysical distinction between the "true" world and the merely "apparent" world has nothing to do with his high estimation of the artistic use of appearance: "For 'appearance' in this case means reality *once more*, only by way of selection, reinforcement, and correction" (TI II:6). See also my "The Truth is Terrible," in *Nietzsche on Morality and the Affirmation of Life*, ed. Daniel Came (Oxford University Press, forthcoming).

[11]There is a striking echo here of McDowell's Wittgenstein-inspired critique of the Platonic model of rule-following…..

that of empirical science, we must also abandon the idea of an "apparent" world: "*With the true world we have also abolished the apparent one*."

In the context of *Twilight*, this short chapter is perhaps most striking for offering an argument, rather than *simply* a diagnosis. The argument is essentially pragmatic in character: the reason given for why we should "abolish" the idea of the true or noumenal world is not that it is unintelligible or incoherent or contrary to the perspectival character of reality—those would be arguments depending on controversial metaphysical or epistemological premises, arguments that Nietzsche arguably gives elsewhere[12]--but rather that the idea of such a world is not useful. Such a world is not useful because we can know nothing of it, and what is beyond the cognitive capabilities of creatures like us is of no use to creatures like us.

In fact, that way of putting it actually understates the pragmatic worries about positing an unknowable world. As Nietzsche notes in the *Nachlass*: "It is of cardinal importance that one should abolish the *true* [i.e., noumenal] world. It is the great inspirer of doubt and devaluator in respect of the world *we are*: it has been our most dangerous attempt yet to assassinate life" (WP 583). He sounds the same theme in a series of "propositions" at the end of Chapter 2 of *Twilight,* passages written around the same time as the *Nachlass* passage; I quote only the two most relevant ones:

> *Second proposition*. The criteria which have been bestowed on the "true being" of things are the criteria of non-being, of *naught*; the "true world" has been constructed out of contradiction to the actual world....
>
> *Third proposition*. To invent fables about a world "other" than this one has no meaning at all, unless an instinct of slander, detraction, and suspicion against life has gained the upper hand in us: in that case, we avenge ourselves against life with a phantasmagoria of "another," a "better" life. (TI III:6)

[12][cite my discussion in NOM]

The idea of a "true" world beyond our cognitive grasp is, in short, not simply useless, it is actively pernicious, and those attracted to it have ulterior motives; with respect to the world we can know, moreover, naturalistic and empiricist methods reign supreme.

The final two chapters of *Twillight* I would like to consider take on two different idols of the philosophical canon, though ones implicated in the prior sections: on the one hand, morality; and on the other, free will. Chapter 4, "Morality as Anti-Nature," begins by offering his familiar diagnosis of Christian morality, that is, a morality which sets itself against "sensuality…pride…the lust to rule…avarice…vengefulness" which are "the roots of passion [*Leidenschaft*]" and thus "the roots of life" (TI IV:1). Nietzsche's diagnosis of such a morality is similar to the one he earlier offered about Socrates: whereas Socrates chose excessive rationality as remedy for unruly passions, the Christian moralist chooses "castration, extermination" [*Verschneidung, Ausrottung*]" of those instincts, but that is merely symptomatic of "those who are too weak-willed, too degenerate, to be able to impose moderation on themselves" (TI IV:2). "The radical hostility…against sensuality…is always a symptom to reflect on," and in this category Nietzsche includes "the priests and philosophers," who were unable to become ascetics, so preached hatred of sensuality instead as a "reaction formation" (as Freud would say) against their unruly instincts (TI IV:2).[13]

The existence of such "anti-natural" moralities (TI IV:4), as Nietzsche calls them, simply poses once again the familiar diagnostic question that Nietzsche addressed in the third essay of his *On the Genealogy of Morality*: namely, why would human beings, animals who, as he puts it, "instinctively strive" for "the maximum feeling of power" (GM III:7), embrace "ascetic" moralities, basically the kinds of "anti-natural" moralities he is now writing about in *Twillight*? Nietzsche's answer in *Twlight* echoes his answer from the *Genealogy*: an anti-natural or ascetic morality "is only a value judgment of…[a] kind of life," namely, "declining, weakened, weary, condemned life" (TI IV:5). Nietzsche's thought, I take it,

[13]Sometimes sensuality (*Sinnlichkeit*) is subject to "spiritualization" (*Vergeistigung*), or what Freudians would call sublimination: it becomes "love" (*Liebe*) (TI IV:3), though that need not concern us here.

is that precisely declining or weak persons feel overwhelmed by their sensual desires, and so it is precisely those persons who embrace extirpation of those desires as a last defense, as a last attempt to preserve themselves, "the drive to self-preservation" being, as Nietzsche puts it, one of the "disguised" forms of the will to power (WP: 774).

Nietzsche's speculative moral psychology is intriguing, and perhaps correct in some cases: but what has any of this to do with the philosophical canon? The only "great" philosopher he singles out in this chapter is Schopenhauer, and so we are invited, it appears, to take this diagnosis of a defense of Christian morality as a diagnosis of him. But is it also a plausible diagnosis of all academic defenders of essentially Christian moralities—for example, Habermas, Parfit, Nagel, Korsgaard—such that we should regard their discursive justifications for their moral views with suspicion? I think we know rather too little of most of these philosophers to say.[14] Even if we do not accept Nietzsche's psychological diagnosis of why certain moral values are attractive to philosophers, we may still accept his diagnosis that great philosophers are motivated by moral aims or purposes, and that their philosophical systems are at the service of their morality to which the philosophers are committed for non-rational reasons.[15]

Nietzsche concludes Chapter 4 of *Twilight*, however, with a claim that can survive rejection of his diagnosis of anti-natural morality as a symptom of degeneration. For in the final section of this

[14]A remarkable, recent profile of Derek Parfit—see Larissa MacFarqhuhar, "How To Be Good," *The New Yorker* (September 5, 2011), __-__--invites some speculation. In this article, we learn that "[t]here is something not-there about [Parfit], an unphysical, slightly androgynous quality" (2), that he is "helplessly, sometimes unwillingly empathetic: he will find himself overcome by the mood of the person he is with, especially if the person is unhappy" (3). Parfit's relations with family, we are told, were somewhat estranged—he would neglect to call his sister Theo when in the U.S., a lapse she excused (7), and while he fought to insure, after another sister's death, suitable custody arrangements for her son, "Parfit never saw" the child thereafter (7). As a brilliant student, Parfit went to boarding school, and then was quickly taken into the Oxford womb, All Souls College in particular: "he was housed, fed and paid, and nothing in the way of emotional output was required of him….He had become, he realized, what psychiatrists call institutionalized—a person for whom living in an institution feels more normal than living in a family" (5). We learn that Parfit's passion for photography arose from his sense that "most of the world looked better in reproduction than in life" (5). Would it be absurd to suggest, on the basis of this revealing profile, that Parfit's moral philosophy is itself a symptom, as Nietzsche would say, of "declining, weakened, weary, condemned life" (TI IV:5)? It is certainly the product of a philosopher who seems extremely estranged from ordinary human life.

[15]This may or may not be true of recent philosophers like Donald Davidson, David Lewis, and Saul Kripke, though, like Carnap, they are much more likely to be "philosophical laborers" and "scholars" in Nietzsche's way of looking at things, then "great" philosophers like Plato or Kant.

chapter Nietzsche raises a very different objection, *not* to the particular normative content of any moral philosophy but to the very idea of *prescribing* what people should do. Nietzsche writes:

> Let us finally consider how naïve it is altogether to say: "Man *ought* to be such and such!" Reality shows us an enchanting wealth of types, the abundance of a lavish play and change of forms—and some wretched loafer of a moralist comments: "No! Man ought to be different." He even knows what man should be like, this wretched bigot and prig: he paints himself on the wall and comments, "*Ecce homo!*" But even when the moralist addresses himself to the single human being and says to him, "You ought to be such and such!" he does not cease to make himself ridiculous. The single human being is a piece of *fatum* from the front and from the rear, one law more, one necessity more for all that is yet to come and to be. (TI IV:6)

Nietzsche's objection to the moral philosopher here presupposes his distinctive fatalistic doctrine, his idea that no person is simply free to be other than he is. His fatalism, I have argued elsewhere, supposes that there are what I call 'type-facts'—psycho-physical facts about persons—that circumscribe what people can possibly become, and which are beyond our autonomous control. If that were true, then the idea of a moral philosophy instructing someone how they ought to be would indeed be ridiculous, much like someone reading a stern moralistic sermon to a dog about how "good dogs" ought to behave. But the analogy with non-human animals is important, since, of course, one can modify the behavior of dogs, and of humans too. But the effective mechanisms for doing so do not involve rational argumentation, on Nietzsche's view—an uncontroversial point in the case of dogs, but given the causal limitations of consciousness and reason, also true about humans on his view. Only behavioral and emotional stimulie that produce arousal of human affects at a sub-conscious level will be effective, which explains Nietzsche's style, as we noted early on. (It also explains, of course, the techninques of all successful political movements in human history.)

The conclusion of Chapter IV of *Twilight*—namely, that one can not prescribe through a moral philosophy how a person should be--leads naturally then to Chapter V's polemic against "the four great

errors." Three of the errors Nietzsche discusses here pertain to causation: he calls them "the error of confusing cause and effect" (1-2), "the error of false causality (3), and "the error of imaginary causes" (4-6). The fourth "great" error, by contrast, is "the error of free will" (7-8), though there is, in fact, no argument given in these concluding sections of the chapter for why free will is an error (instead Nietzsche offers one debunking explanation of why people might be motivated to believe in free will apart from its reality). The inference the reader is plainly supposed to draw is that the "error of free will" follows from the errors about causation discussed in the preceding sections.

The first error, that "of confusing cause and effect," can be summarized as follows: given two regularly correlated effects E1 and E2 and their mutual "deep cause," we confuse cause and effect when we construe E1 as the cause of E2, missing altogether the existence of the deep cause. Let us call this error "Cornarism" after the example Nietzsche uses:

> Everybody knows the book of the famous Cornaro in which he recommends his slender diet as a recipe for a long and happy life...I do not doubt that scarcely any book (except the Bible, as is meet) has done as much harm... The reason: the mistaking of the effect for the cause. The worthy Italian thought his diet was the *cause* of his long life, whereas the precondition for a long life, the extraordinary slowness of his metabolism, the consumption of so little, was the cause of his slender diet. He was not free to eat little *or* much; his frugality was not a matter of "free will": he became sick when he ate more. (TI VI: 1)

In other words, what explains Cornaro's slender diet *and* his long life is the same underlying fact about his metabolism. Cornaro's mistake was to prescribe his diet for all without regard for how individuals differed metabolically, metabolism being the relevant type-fact in this context.

Even if we grant Nietzsche all the facts as he presents them, this would not yet show that there is no free will, unless the error involved in Cornarism extended beyond cases such as diet and longevity.

But that is exactly Nietzsche's contention, since in the very next section he saddles morality and religion quite generally with Cornarism. According to Nietzsche, the basic "formula on which every religion and morality is founded is: 'Do this and that, refrain from that and that—then you will be happy! Otherwise...." Cornaro recommended a slender diet for a long life; morality and religion prescribe and proscribe certain conduct for a happy life. But, says Nietzsche,

> [A] well-turned out human being...*must* perform certain actions and shrinks instinctively from other actions; he carries the order, which he represents physiologically, into his relations with other human beings and things.

So morality and religion are guilty of Cornarism: the conduct they prescribe and proscribe in order to *cause* a "happy life" are, in fact, *effects* of something else, namely the physiological order represented by a particular agent, one who (as Nietzsche says) "*must* perform certain actions," just as Cornaro *must* eat a slender diet (he is "not free to eat little *or* much"). That one performs certain actions *and* that one has a happy life are themselves both effects of the physiological order. If we grant Nietzsche that there are explanatory type-facts about persons, then there is indeed reason to think that Cornarism is a feature of morality too, since morality fails to recognize the crucial role of type-facts in determining what one does, even what morality one accepts.

That brings us to the next "error," that of "false causality," the mistake of thinking we know what causation is because of our introspective confidence in what we take to be the causal powers of our own mental life. Nietzsche explains:

> We believed ourselves to be causal in the act of willing: we thought that here at least we caught causality in the act. Nor did one doubt that all the antecedents of an act, its causes, were to be sought in consciousness and would be found there once sought—as "motives":

else one would not have been free and responsible for it. Finally, who would have denied that a thought is caused? That the "I" causes the thought? (TI VI:3)

It is Nietzsche, of course, who denies that thoughts are caused by the "ego," by some internal agency, such that one would be "free and responsible" for them. And Nietzsche soon makes clear in this section of *Twilight of the Idols* that his view remains unchanged from *Beyond Good and Evil*:

> The "inner world" is full of phantoms...: the will is one of them. The will no longer moves anything, hence does not explain anything either--it merely accompanies events; it can also be absent. The so-called *motive*: another error. Merely a surface phenomenon of consciousness--something alongside the deed that is more likely to cover up the antecedents of the deeds than to represent them.....
>
> What follows from this? There are no mental [*geistigen*] causes at all. (TI VI:3)

In the last line, Nietzsche must mean only that there are no *conscious* mental causes (or, at least, no conscious mental causes of those actions with which morality is concerned).[16] Indeed, in other passages, he is explicit that the target of this critique is the picture of conscious motives as *adequate* to account for action.[17] Thus, if morally significant actions and the conscious mental states that precede them are themselves the product of type-facts, then it follows that *the conscious mental states* that precede the action and whose propositional contents would make them appear to be causally connected to the action are, in fact, epiphenomenal, either as *tokens* or as *types*: that is, they are either

[16] [cite Katsafanas, Leiter, Riccardi on epiphenomealism issue]

[17] As he writes in *Daybreak*, "we are accustomed to exclude all [the] unconscious [*unbewusst*] processes from the accounting and to reflect on the preparation for an act only to the extent that it is conscious" (D 129), a view which Nietzsche plainly regards as mistaken, both here and in the passage quoted above. Indeed, the theme of the "ridiculous overestimation and misunderstanding of consciousness" (GS 11) is a recurring one in Nietzsche. "[B]y far the greatest part of our spirit's activity," says Nietzsche, "remains unconscious and unfelt" (GS 333; cf. GS 354). Notice that the fact that conscious mental causes are not *adequate* to account for morally significant actions does *not* mean they are irrelevant to the best account. What is at stake in the claim about their lack of adequacy is only the thought that they are *type*-epiphenomenal, that is, their causal relevance is dependent upon the relationship in which they stand to physiological or unconscious causes.

causally inert with respect to the action *or* causally effective *only in virtue of* other type-facts about the person.

That brings us to the final error about causation, what Nietzsche calls the error of "imaginary causes" (TI VI: 4). This error occurs when we invent, *post hoc*, causes to explain certain phenomena in our experience, phenomena that are, in reality, the cause of our invention. Nietzsche uses the striking example of dreams, though I'll modify the content of his example. Suppose while dreaming in the early morning hours, a police car, with siren wailing, passes by my window, but does not wake me. More often than not, in to my dream will emerge a narrative which *explains* the sound: perhaps in my dream I suddenly find myself being pursued by police, in their cars, with *their* sirens wailing. As Nietzsche puts it: "The representations which were *produced* by a certain state have been misunderstood as its causes" (TI VI:4). That is, the dream police car, and the dream siren—themselves *actually* the product of the real, external sound of a siren—are now, in the dream, treated as the *causes* of that sound.

Once again, what is significant for Nietzsche is that, as he puts it, "*the whole realm of morality and religion belongs under this concept of imaginary causes"* (TI VI:6). Let us take just one of Nietzsche's examples. Christians, he says, might "explain" "agreeable general feelings" as being produced by "faith, charity, and hope...the Christian virtues" (TI VI:6). One feels well, at peace, content, because one practices these Christian virtues—or so the religious explanation goes. But, objects Nietzsche,

> [A]ll these supposed explanations are resultant states and, as it were, translations of pleasurable or unpleasurable feelings into a false dialect: one is in a state of hope *because* the basic physiological feeling is once again strong and rich.... (TI VI:6)

So the Christian says, "That you have practiced the Christian virtues explains why you feel well and are at peace with yourself." In fact, says Nietzsche, there is a physiological explanation for why an agent who feels at peace with himself feels that way, and it is also an explanation for why he practices hope,

faith, and charity. The structure of the criticism suggests, in fact, that the "error of imaginary causes" is just an instance of the first error, that "of confusing cause and effect," since, once again, one mistakes an "effect" (e.g.,, the feeling of hope) for the cause of something else (e.g., being at peace with oneself), when both are effects of an unrecognized "deep cause," i.e., "the basic physiological feeling" as Nietzsche has it in this example.[18]

How does it follow from the three errors about causation—really, *two* errors, since the last is just an instance of the first—that "free will" is also an error? The error of confusing cause and effect is a *general* error that afflicts morality because morality is based on a mistaken picture of agency: we think that certain moral prescriptions will bring about certain consequences for those who follow them, yet the ability and disposition to act on the prescriptions, and the enjoyment of the consequences are possible only for certain *types* of persons. An exercise of free will plays no role.

The error of false causality is an error because we wrongly infer that we know what causation is from our *experience* of the will being causal; but the will is not, in fact, causal, only the type-facts about a person are causal in action. But, on any account of free will and moral responsibility, the will must be causal (even if not *causa sui*), in order for agents to have free will and be morally responsible for their actions. Therefore, if the error of false causality is a genuine error, then it follows that there is no free will, contrary to almost every major figure (Spinoza excepted[19]) in the modern philosophical canon.

Nietzsche and other "Anti-Philosophical" Philosophers

Nietzsche's opposition to the philosophical canon is, I want to suggest, quite *sui generis* in the history of philosophy: he denies that reason deserves pride of place in philosophy, claiming instead

[18] So, too, in the case of dreams: one treats the dream police car as cause of the dream siren, when in fact both are caused by the *real* siren. What makes the case of "imaginary causes" a special instance of the error of confusing cause and effect is that in this case, E2 is itself a reflection of the deep cause. That difference, as far as I can see, does not matter for our purposes in the text.

[19] See the illuminating discussion in Donald Rutherford, [*Inquiry* paper].

that its elevation is merely symptomatic of psychological disorder, given the centrality of (some amount of) instinctive behavior and false belief to flourishing human lives; he denies, moreover, that the metaphysical reasoning so characteristic of the philosophical tradition has any cognitive value, claiming, instead, that it is simply nonsense by comparison to the delivery of the empirical sciences and that its persistence is also itself symptomatic of psychological disorder; he denies that the ascetic or instinct-denying moralities that have enjoyed the allegiance of almost all major philosophers for two millenia have any rational foundation, and they are instead, yet again, merely of interest as symptoms of psychological disorders; and, finally, he claims that the whole idea of a moral philosophy instructing people how to live is based on mistakes about the nature of human agency, especially freedom of the will. It might seem, on this Nietzschean rendering, that most philosophers should be sent to a doctor, not a classroom!

There are, to be sure, other "anti-philosophical" philosophers, philosophers who reject many aspects of the canonical tradition, but if we take the most important and serious examples—namely, Marx and Quine, as well as Heidegger and the later Wittgenstein—they all prove less radical than Nietzsche.[20] Marx and Quine privilege the sciences over metaphysics, much like Nietzsche (not to mention Carnap). Both Marx and Quine are, unfortunately, also hostage to certain local prejudices about what constitutes epistemically sound scientific approaches. Marx thinks that "dialectical" reason is a privileged form of scientific understanding, as opposed to a bizarre prejudice of Hegelian metaphysics—though at least Marx, unlike Quine, recognizes the epistemic privilege of *Wissenschaften* outside the domain of natural science. For Quine, the parochialism consists in treating the scientific program of the 1930s—behaviorism in psychology, and the assumption that all special sciences are reducible to physics—as the essence of a naturalisic outlook, even though the science of the next half-century (through which Quine lived!) undermined both prejudices. To be sure, Nietzsche had his own

[20]That may be to their credit, of course, an issue I do not pretend to resolve here.

odd scientific prejudices, from his interest in the explanatory role of bile,[21] to his confidence in the anti-atomistic metaphysics of the Polish physicist Boscovich.[22] What really sets Nietzsche apart from Marx and Quine is not, then, the particular ways in which their anti-metaphysical naturalisms proved hostage to ill-fated concepts of successful science, but rather that Nietzsche sees *value creation* as central to philosophy, and that he does not acquiesce in the high valuation of knowledge of the truth that is explicit in Marx (who thinks scientific knowledge of the laws of historical change will be liberating) and implicit in Quine (whose more parochial moral horizons led him to simply assume that if a physicalistic outlook were correct, we ought to know about it). Nietzsche also lays primary emphasis on the non-rational character of the human psyche, where Marx gave no meaningful attention to individual psychology, and Quine had no interesting psychology at all, given his dogmatic commitment to behaviorism.

Much farther from Nietzsche, however, than Marx and Quine are two other "anti-philosophical" thinkers, namely, Heidegger and the later Wittgenstein. Both philosophers were anti-naturalistic (in a way Nietzsche, Marx, and Quine are not), and privileged the perspective of so-called "ordinary" people: how they use language, how they engage practically with the world around them. The two points are, of course, connected: a naturalistic conception of the world has, since the scientific revolution, run counter to "common sense," that is, to the ordinary ways we have of interpreting and coping with the world, and so it is hardly surprising that thinkers who are anti-naturalist privilege "ordinary" ways of speaking and thinking and acting. But such a posture is inherently conservative, in a way anathema to Nietzsche (and also Marx). Ordinary ways of thinking and acting are shot through with error and often ideological illusion, and since "folk" explanations of almost everything have proved epistemically feeble in the several hundred years since the scientific revolution, the Heideggerian and Wittgensteinian infatuation with the ordinary seems both perverse and contrary to the radical ambitions of someone like

[21] [cite representative passages]
[22] [cite Riccardi paper from EJP]

Nietzsche. Certaintly, Heidegger and the later Wittgenstein both share with Nietzsche a kind of skepticism about the pretensions to theoretical knowledge, the kind of knowledge to which philosophers aspire, but for both Heidegger and Wittgenstein that skepticism seems to arise primarily from the suspicion that the detached standpoint of the philosopher obscures the confident practical competence of the person who does not step back and ask detached philosophical questions. That kind of skepticism finds no ally in Nietzsche. Nietzsche shares with Marx the view that "ordinary" life is characterized by massive misunderstandings and illusions, whatever the explanation for them. Nietzsche's worry about theoretical philosophy is that it is just post-hoc rationalizations for non-rational moral commitments, and that, in the case of metaphysical philosophy, it is also nonsensical in something like Carnap's sense.

A Nietzschean Case Study and the Future of Philosophy

I want to conclude with a kind of Nietzschean case study in understanding philosophy, using a very contemporary example: namely, the backlash against philosophical naturalism in Anglophone philosophy over the past generation. By philosophical naturalism, I will mean the idea that questions about what there is and what we can know are basically scientific questions, rather than distinctively philosophical questions. That view, associated in the Anglophone world most prominently with Quine, has radical consequences for practical philosophy in particular. From its ascendance in the 1930s with logical positivism and thereafter Quine's work, naturalism has generally been taken to rule out the existence of objective moral truths, a conclusion drawn, in various ways, in the work of A.J. Ayer, Charles Stevenson, J.L. Mackie, and Gilbert Harman, among other prominent English-speaking philosophers, but one also embraced by Carnap, Axel Hagerstrom, Hans Kelsen, and other Continental European philosophers. The naturalistic view rules out moral truths because the sciences have no use for the idea of what is really morally right and morally wrong: from the standpoint of physics or biology or even cognitive science, it is a matter of no predictive or explanatory consequence. Or so it seems.

In the 1980s, there emerged a group of naturalistic philosophers in the Anglophone world—the so-called "Cornell Realists" (e.g., Richard Boyd, David Brink, and Nicholas Sturgeon), as well as Peter Railton at the University of Michigan—who argued that alleged "moral facts" are not really different than other higher-order facts in being essential to predicting and explaining observable phenomena. There are reasons to be skeptical about the cogency of this defense of moral realism,[23] but the technical details are not our concern here. What was notable was that philosophers who wanted to defend moral realism saw the need to do so within a naturalistic framework.

Even in the 1970s and 1980s, there were philosophers sympathetic to moral realism, but not to Quinean naturalism, such as John McDowell and David Wiggins. Their "sensibility theories" of the objectivity of value tried to exploit analogies to the objectivity of color properties, and so even to that extent were sensitive to naturalistic worries: for the question of the objectivity of color was a standing philosophical question after the scientific revolution, and many philosophers of course thought that color, even if only a secondary property, could nonetheless be objective in a world naturalistically conceived.

But in the late 1990s in Anglophone philosophy, something quite strange began to happen. In 1996, Ronald Dworkin, the recently deceased legal and political philosopher,[24] published a quite unusual paper in metaethics attacking naturalistic moral realists and defending the idea that the objectivity of moral truth does not depend on whether such truths can be located in a natuarlistic picture of the world.[25] If you can give a good moral argument for a moral claim, that, on Dworkin's view, is enough to secure its truth. The criteria for a "good" moral argument was a topic on which Dworkin, alas, was

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[23] See my "Moral Facts and Best Explanations" (2001), reprinted in my *Naturalizing Jurisprudence*; for responses, see Alex Miller, *An Introduction to Contemporary Metaethics* _____, and Ralph Wedgwood, *The Nature of Normativity* _____.

[24] See Simon Blackburn, _____

[25] See Ronald Dworkin, "Objectivity and Truth: You'd Better Believe It," *Philosophy & Public Affairs* __ (1996): ___-___. For criticism, see Leiter, "Objectivity, Morality, and Adjudication," reprinted in *Naturalizing Jurisprudence*.

silent; one worries that Dworkin thought if it passed peer review among his friends at *Philosophy & Public Affairs* that was enough. Dworkin's paper, in any case, was ignored, indeed, regarded as something of a professional embarrassment, especially after being excorciated by Simon Blackburn.[26] But then Thomas Nagel, a colleague of Dworkin's at New York University, began defending a smiilar view,[27] and then, a few years later, T.M. Scanlon,[28] and then, most recently, Derek Parfit in his two-volume magnum opus (2011). These other defenders were more philosophically adept than Dworkin, but their basic posture was the same: objective moral truth does not depend on satisfying naturalistic criteria for objective truth. For the first time in a century—really since the Bloomsbury group in England, of which G.E. Moore was a member—you had a group of well-known philosophers defending the objectivity of their moral opinions on the grounds that they were confident in the good reasons they had for them (or in their apparent truth), and quite independent of whether there was evidence for them of the kind we would expect in any other domain of human inquiry thought to be epistemically reliable.[29]

This strange turn of philosophical events shares something else with the phenomenon of the intuitionists of the Bloomsbury group, namely, that it emerged among a socially insular and economically elite group of like-minded people with considerable institutional power. Nagel and Scanlon, both students of John Rawls at Harvard, were colleagues at Princeton for many years, and close friends. Parfit teaches regularly at Harvard (where Scanlon now teaches) and New York University (where Nagel teaches), and, teaches frequently with both of them; indeed, Parfit dedicates his magnus opus, *On What Matters*, to these two friends. Parfit, whose main appointment was at Oxford, was a

[26][cite to B.E.A.R.S. website]

[27] See Thomas Nagel, *The Last Word*_____; for criticism, see Sigrun Svavarsdottir, _____, in *Objectivity in Law and Morals*, ed. B. Leiter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

[28][paper in Caro volume; cf. lecture II of his Locke lectures]

[29]The most ambitious defense of this view comes from a student of Nagel's and Parfit's: see David Enoch, *Taking Morality Seriously* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011). His defense has the virtue of making clear that the whole argument is driven by "taking morality seriously."

colleague of Dworkin's there for many years, and Dworkin co-taught with Nagel for a quarter-century at New York University.

One might think this exemplifies a well-documented phenomenon in social psychology, namely, the tendency of like-minded individuals who interact and talk a lot to move to the most extreme version of the position to which they are all initially sympathetic. The phenomenon in question is known in the social science literature as "group polarization."[30] Indeed, *discussion* among like-minded individuals *magnifies* the effect, but if individuals with the same attitude—say, that their moral opinions must be true, because they and their friends think them true, even if there is no ordinary evidence for them—are simply exposed to others with the same attitude, that alone can produce movement to the extreme.[31] Various explanations for the phenomenon have been proposed: for example, that individuals are sufficiently sensitive to social comparisons that they will opt for the most extreme position that they deem to be dominant in their group to make sure they are included[32]; or that like-minded individuals tend to come up with the best arguments for the position to which they are already disposed, but those arguments simply reinforce the antecedent position.[33] This literature should certainly, at least, make us wonder about the role of the sociology of contemporary philosophy on its most famous, or infamous, conclusions.

These kinds of psychological considerations also clearly resonate with a Nietzschean perspective. On this view, what explains the anti-naturalism of our leading contemporary moral philosophers is not any epistemically interesting consideration: it is simply that they perceive--quite correctly I should add--that a resolutely naturalistic world view is incompatible with their moral beliefs

[30]David G. Myers & Helmut Lamm, "The Group Polarization Phenomenon," *Psychological Bulletin* 83 (1976): 602-___.

[31]Daniel J. Isenberg, "Group Polarization: A Critical Review and Meta-Analysis," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 50 (1986): 1141-44

[32]See, Roger Brown, *Social Psychology* (, 1965), p. 701.

[33]Dean G. Pruitt, "Choice Shift in Group Discussion: An introductory Review," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* (1971), p. 340.

and aims: thus, their moral commitments drives their metaphysics, as with the Stoics two millenia ago.[34] This spectacle is now made explicit in Thomas Nagel's most recent work,[35] in which he declares the best-established scientific paradigm in modern biology, Darwin's theory of evolution by natural selection, "almost certainly false" on the grounds that, among other things, it is incompatible with his conviction that he, Thomas Nagel, knows some moral truths.[36] Again, the details of the argument need not concern us (they have been demolished by others), what is remarkable is the explicit structure: the best-established paradigm in the biology of the last 150 years can not be right because Thomas Nagel thinks it incompatible with the seriousness with which he takes his moral opinions. Carnap would have been astounded by what has become of the "analytic" philosophy he helped create.

Obviously this style of analysis and critique is a bit "rude," "ad hominem" even, but that charge only has a pejorative connotation from within the Socratic canon. For only if one *seriously* thought that the positions philosophers arrived at were the consequence *only* of rational and distinterested pursuit of the truth would one find irrelevant the speculations just proferred.[37] But from the standpoint of what I have been calling the Nietzschean canon, these speculations are essential, and the strange anti-

[34]Nietzsche's position should not be confused with a related view defended by the influential philosopher Burton Dreben. Dreben was a longtime member of the Harvard faculty, who produced no philosophy of note, but exploited his position in the social hierarchy of academic philosophy to enforce a distinctive view about the field, one defended by many former pupils and former Harvard junior faculty. The famous saying attributed to him, correctly as best I can tell, is that "Philosophy is garbage, but the history of garbage is scholarship." Dreben did share with Nietzsche the view that philosophical positions in metaphysics and epistemology always depended on foundational assumptions for which there was no rational warrant, but from that fact he concluded that the only worthwhile task in philosophy was to examine the history of how we came to think there were actual philosophical problems that demanded philosophical solutions. Nietzsche is closer to Hume and Quine in thinking that there are useful answers to the questions of metaphysics and epistemology, but they come from the sciences, or trying to emulate the sciences, and not from traditional metaphysical philosophy. But Nietzsche was *sui generis* in thinking that it is the distinctive task of philosophers to *legislate* or *create* values, and he did not have Dreben's hands-off attitude towards normative philosophy—but Dreben was, a bit like Quine, parochial in his psychological tastes.

[35]Thomas Nagel, *Mind and Cosmos* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

[36]Nagel has other arguments, though they are not much better. See, e.g., the critical discussions in the review by John Dupre , Peter Godfrey-Smith , Allen Orr _____, and Michael Weiseberg and myself in *The Nation*

[37]This will seem obvious, I suspect, in a generation or two, when fealty to teachers (or teachers of teachers) no longer obscures a more objective appraisals of what our famous contemporaries are writing and arguing.

naturalistic revolt of some leading moral philosophers, described above, would have seemed to Nietzsche a wonderful data point for his own view of the extent to which ulterior moral motives dictate philosophical conclusions.[38]

[38]I am grateful to Matt Evans for penetrating, critical comments on an earlier draft; he is absolved of all heresies in the final version! Thanks also to Gabriel Broughton for excellent research assistance on social psychology. An earlier version was given as a keynote address to the annual meeting of the Danish Philosophical Association at the University of Southern Denmark on March 9, 2013; I am grateful to the audience for their questions and comments.

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