Nietzsche's Will-to-Power Ontology: An Interpretation of Beyond Good and Evil § 36

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Abstract:
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Will-to-power is the central component of Nietzsche's philosophy, and passage 36 of Beyond Good and Evil is essential to coming to an understanding of it. I argue for and defend the thesis that will-to-power constitutes Nietzsche's ontology, and offer a new understanding of what that means. Nietzsche's ontology can be talked about as though it were a traditional substance ontology (i.e., a world made up of forces; a duality of conflicting forces described as 'towards which' and 'away from which'). However, I argue that what defines this ontology is an understanding of valuation as ontologically fundamental—the basis of interpretation, and from which a substance ontology emerges. In the second chapter, I explain Nietzsche's ontology, as reflected in this passage, through a discussion of Heidegger's two ontological categories in Being and Time (readiness-to-hand, and present-at-hand). In a nutshell, it means that the world of our desires and passions (the most basic of which is for power) is ontologically more fundamental than the material world, or any other interpretation, which is to say, the material world emerges out of a world of our desires and passions.

In the first chapter, I address the problematic form of the passage reflected in the first sentence. The passage is in a hypothetical style makes no claim to positive knowledge or truth, and, superficially, looks like Schopenhaurian position for the metaphysics of the will, which Nietzsche rejects. I argue that the hypothetical form of the passage is a matter of style, namely, the style of a free-spirit for whom the question of truth is reframed as a question of values. In the third and final chapter, I address the charge that Nietzsche's interpretation is a conscious anthropomorphic projection. I suggest that the charge rests on a distinction (between nature and man) that Nietzsche rejects. I also address the problem of the causality of the will for Nietzsche, by suggesting that an alternative, perspectival form of causality is possible.
Beyond Good and Evil § 36:

Suppose nothing else were “given” as real except our world of desires and passions, and we could not get down, or up, to any other “reality” besides the reality of our drives—for thinking is merely a relation of these drives to each other: is it not permitted to make the experiment and to ask the question whether this “given” would not be sufficient for also understanding on the basis of this kind of thing the so-called mechanistic (or “material”) world? I mean, not as a deception, as “mere appearance,” an “idea” (in the sense of Berkeley and Schopenhauer) but as holding the same rank of reality as our affect—as a more primitive form of the world of affects in which everything still lies contained in a powerful unity before it undergoes ramifications and developments in the organic process (and, as is only fair, also becomes tenderer and weaker)—as a kind of instinctive life in which all organic functions are still synthetically intertwined along with self-regulation, assimilation, nourishment, excretion, and metabolism—as a pre-form of life.

In the end not only is it permitted to make this experiment; the conscience of method demands it. Not to assume several kinds of causality until the experiment of making do with a single one has been pushed to its utmost limit (to the point of nonsense, if I may say so)—that is a moral of method which one may not shirk today—it follows “from its definition,” as a mathematician would say. The question is in the end whether we really recognize the will as efficient, whether we believe in the causality of the will: if we do—and at bottom our faith in this is nothing less than our faith in causality itself—then we have to make the experiment of positing the causality of the will hypothetically as the only one. “Will,” of course, can affect only “will”—and not “matter” (not “nerves,” for example). In short, one has to risk the hypothesis whether will does not affect will wherever “effects” are recognized—and whether all mechanical occurrences are not, insofar as a force is active in them, will force, effects of will.

Suppose, finally, we succeeded in explaining our entire instinctive life as the development and ramification of one basic form of the will—namely, of the will to power, as my proposition has it; suppose all organic functions could be traced back to this will to power and one could also find in it the solution of the problem of procreation and nourishment—it is one problem—then one would have gained the right to determine all efficient force univocally as—will to power. The world viewed from the inside, the world defined and determined according to its “intelligible character”—it would be “will to power” and nothing else.—

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Comments on the Nachlass:

The question is what weight should be given to ideas Nietzsche did not publish. Linda Williams uses the name ‘lumpers’ for those commentators who lump the unpublished notes together with the published material and make no distinction between them. The commentators who make some distinction between published and unpublished works, giving more value to either, are called ‘splitters’. According to these categories, I consider myself a lumper-with-a-twist. I agree that if the goal is to portray ‘Nietzsche’s philosophy’, then primary importance should be given to the material Nietzsche designated for publication. A higher value should be placed on the published works. But I find it difficult to accept the idea that the notes are without value for understanding Nietzsche’s philosophy. They are, after all, Nietzsche’s notes. The unpublished notes must have some value in fleshing out the published philosophy. I am inclined to the view that the importance of some position reflected in the unpublished writings with regard to ‘Nietzsche’s philosophy’ can be roughly determined by how often that position appears – that is, the number of passages that deal with it. The value of the notes for understanding any given published position is determined by the quantity of notes that go to supporting that position. I have used this only as a rough guide.

My position here is at odds with the suggestion (which I will make later) that the number of times Nietzsche presents some idea has nothing to do with the importance of it (with reference to the published material). However, I do not think this is a contradiction – I think it goes without saying that the published and unpublished works need to be treated differently. The quantity of passages taken up with a certain idea in the

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unpublished writings is a good indication how absorbed Nietzsche was with that particular idea at a particular time. This is not the case in the published material for stylistic reasons. Nietzsche never published a work on will-to-power. I am in no position to speculate whether Nietzsche ran out of time, or rejected such a work. Frankly, it would make no difference to me. As Alistair Moles points out, many famous authors have not been the best judges of their own work. Nor does Nietzsche not repeating the importance he places on will-to-power in more passages than he does deter me from thinking will-to-power is as significant for Nietzsche as it is. The importance he places on will-to-power in the few published passages that he mentions it suffices for me.

Linda Williams writes, “The prudent position would be a cautious and sensitive approach to these controversial notes.” I do not see any agreement on what would count as criterion for being ‘cautious’. Perhaps being cautious would mean taking as many different notes into account as possible and not jumping to conclusions. This is somewhat like what I intend to do. I do not intend to give great weight to an idea that is not represented in the notes repeatedly.

Moles believes that commentaries that do not make a distinction of value between published and unpublished writings are generally more illuminating on truth, knowledge, and the nature of life. Thus Moles uses the unpublished writings to ‘flesh out’ important but skeletal published passages. Moles believes that any revision by Nietzsche to unpublished passages before publishing them was merely stylistic or literary.

2 An example Moles uses is all of Kafka’s masterpieces which he wanted destroyed after his death. Alistair Moles, *Nietzsche’s Philosophy of Nature and Cosmology*. (New York. Peter Lang Publishing Inc, 1990), 11


improvements. Nietzsche made his published work ‘more cogent and better written’ but not more philosophically defensible or better integrated – there is no evidence for such a view according to Moles. Moles believes that Nietzsche’s intuitive ability is his remarkable feature, not his ability to re-work enigmatic thoughts into publishable quality. Thus the notebooks provide extra insight to compliment published texts. Moles believes that Nietzsche has a set of conceptions which can be integrated with those of any other period of his life; there is an essential unity to Nietzsche’s thought. Moles does not emphasize the chronological development of Nietzsche’s ideas; he is similar to Arthur Danto in this respect: the development of Nietzsche’s ideas does not create essential ruptures in a basic philosophical position.

Williams advocates a ‘middle way’ of cautious and qualified use of Nachlass entries. Williams divides Nietzsche’s Nachlass in three ways; (1) lectures and writings while he was employed at Basel, probably polished, and (2) the polished works that were later published as Ecce Homo, Nietzsche Contra Wagner, and The Antichrist, and (3) Nietzsche’s notes – widely regarded as highly problematic. The status of this last division is controversial. Whether or not the notebooks represent rough drafts, or an area of experimenting with ideas, or more like a trash bin of discarded thoughts is debatable. It seems to me the status of the notebooks will forever remain controversial because it seems plausible that all three are the case. In other words, some of the ideas in notebook passages Nietzsche would reject, and so certainly these notes he experimented with, and since some passages virtually mirror published passages, they can be considered rough

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6 Ibid, 3.
drafts as well. Williams intends to point out that some passages from the Nachlass are very different than some published ones. For any given passage, there is the question of whether or not to consider it indicative of what Nietzsche thought.

Martin Heidegger values the unpublished writings as a more accurate and in depth reflection of Nietzsche’s philosophy. Compared with how all of the secondary sources I have researched treat this question, Heidegger’s conclusion is radical. Williams claims that Heidegger values the unpublished writings more because he views the published writings as literary and designed for stylistic effect, less so for clarity. William’s rebuttal that a few of the notebook entries are similar stylistically to published entries only need suggest that some published entries are less stylized. However, Williams does think the language of the unpublished writing is more “scientific”.

The radical extreme, which opposes that of Heidegger, is that of Hollingdale. Hollingdale rejects all entries where will-to-power seems to be treated metaphysically in the Nachlass because he believes Nietzsche rejected such an idea in the published writings. The ‘middle way’ that Williams takes involves giving interpretive priority to the published writings but not ignoring the unpublished ones. As Williams explains,

Under this sensible position, positions ascribed to Nietzsche ought to have textual support from the works Nietzsche had authorized for publication. Additional support could be garnered from the Nachlass and this source should be duly noted as more questionable than the published sources. Positions supported by only Nachlass entries would need more strenuous justification than those supported by only the published works or by both the published works and Nachlass entries.

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9 Ibid, 455.
Williams believes there is a significant difference between will-to-power in the published and unpublished notes. As evidence of this Williams claims that there is a one-to-one correlation between a commentator’s position on the notes and the position that will-to-power is a metaphysic. However, the main difference that I could locate in her article was that in the published works will-to-power is not connected with forces and drives.

It seems reasonable to assume that some of the will-to-power passages in the Nachlass captivated Nietzsche at one point, otherwise no book by that title would have been proposed. Certainly, some of the will-to-power passages would have been rejected—otherwise the proposed work would not have been rejected. My criterion for being cautious with Nietzsche’s notes is to be insensitive to it; to pay more attention to the ideas and positions which appear recurrently.

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13 Williams writes, “The question has to be asked why Nietzsche, who was writing about Wille zur Macht in terms of forces and force-combinations in the Nachlass, chose not to connect it with forces and drives in the published works”.

Linda Williams, “Will to Power in Nietzsche’s Published Works and the Nachlass,” *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol.57 no.3 (1996): 455
Development of ‘will-to-power’:

Walter Kaufmann argues that the theory of will-to-power develops from the accumulation of empirical evidence, specifically analyses of human behavior. Moles attempts to answer the objection that Nietzsche has generalized will-to-power beyond the empirical evidence from which it arose, thereby making it a faulty concept. Moles alleges that this objection ‘misses the point’.\(^{14}\) Firstly, Moles argues that Nietzsche’s supposed analyses of human behavior cannot be considered ‘evidence’; he writes, “Nietzsche’s experience of the world cannot be described as ordinary or familiar; it could not be offered as ‘evidence’.”\(^{15}\) Moles understands Nietzsche to be offering the ground of a new paradigm that will revolutionize science.\(^{16}\)

Even if, as Moles thinks, Nietzsche’s experience of the world is anomalous, it can still count as ‘evidence’, just not such as will prove an already established theory. More importantly, Moles writes,

> The conception of the world as will to power is a way of illuminating this fresh experience of the world, just as much as the experience illuminated the conception. Nietzsche’s conception is not empirical in the usual sense; it is not based on ordinary experience. Nor is it metaphysical, in the sense of downgrading the value of experience altogether.\(^{17}\)

While this is certainly the case in so far as it is the ground of a new paradigm, and thus based on anomalous experience, it begs the question why this experience is not still empirical ‘in the usual sense’. An experience can be un-ordinary (or anomalous) and still be empirical. Moles here rejects the notion that will-to-power develops metaphysically,


\(^{15}\) Ibid, 23.

\(^{16}\) Moles writes, “Instead, he is seeking to create a new philosophical theory of nature, expecting that it would become the grounds of a revolutionary new paradigm of scientific understanding”.


\(^{17}\) Ibid, 23.
i.e., through reason to the disparagement of the senses. At this point, it is unclear how Moles thinks the objection misses the point; it still seems to be a problem if Nietzsche’s new world conception had developed from analyses of human behavior.

George Stack clearly thinks the myth of will-to-power develops from will-to-power as a psychology; he writes, “The myth of will to power is derived from this psychological theory of the springs of human behavior”. Stack claims that Nietzsche had an ‘intuitive sense’ of immanent forces, which was then reinforced by his reading of the physical scientists of his day. Stack believes the development of will-to-power can be traced from an insight into our psyche that holds our striving for power over others to be an overcompensation of feelings of inferiority or expression of ressentiment to an empirical assumption about our having a biophysiological drive for power/dominance.

Williams traces the development of will-to-power from Nietzsche’s early works. In the early works, Nietzsche used ‘power’ (Macht) in a familiar way as meaning an ability to effect change. Nietzsche began using ‘power’ in the term “desire for power” or “lust for power” (Machtgelust). Williams claims that, in this way, Nietzsche associated power with a psychological motivation. In Daybreak, Nietzsche began using the phrases “feeling of power” or “power-feeling” (Gefühl der Macht and Machtgefühl). Williams suggests that this represents a shift from thinking of ‘power’ as a physical force, to power as an internal condition. The shift, as Williams claims, is a broadening of the notion of power to encompass more, i.e., physical expressions as well as psychological

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19 Ibid, 10.
20 Ibid, 43.
expressions. *Wille zur Macht* first appears in the notebooks at the end of 1876 to the summer of 1877\(^2\). Only in 1885 does the appearance of the term increase in frequency. Will-to-power developed out of a need to encompass in a concept more than a sense of physical power, thus *Machtgelust* which gives a sense of 'inner' motivation.

In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, will-to-power is introduced as that which decides value (TSZ 170). Kaufmann argues will-to-power developed as an empirical observation about human conduct, and extended all the way to the inorganic realm only as an experiment in nonsense. It is intended to persuade us that therefore it could not be a metaphysic, because such a generalization is noticeably unjustified. Evidence that will-to-power is empirical comes from Section 22 of *Beyond Good and Evil* where Nietzsche claims he can 'observe' the same phenomena as scientists and offer a different description of it, namely, as will-to-power. The generalization is facilitated by Nietzsche's not distinguishing between the organic and inorganic, and thus, as is the trend in science, not clinging to some form of dualism between living and non-living; there is no dead matter for Nietzsche. Science is overtaking the last stronghold of dualism and explaining the organic in terms of physical processes. Human behavior is being explained in terms of physical processes obeying the same laws as sand and rocks. The charge against the dualists is that they hold to a metaphysical distinction in thinking that man and rock are essentially different.

Williams points out that in late 1884 to early 1885, the treatment of will-to-power changes, and it becomes expressed in much more sweeping language, even metaphysical

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\(^2\) Williams writes, "During the last six years of his philosophical writing, Nietzsche attached 'will to' to over one hundred and fifty different nouns". Linda Williams, "Will to Power in Nietzsche's Published Works and the Nachlass" *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol.57 no.3 (1996): 450
language. Nietzsche had read Lange’s *History of Materialism*. For Lange, ‘forces’ underlie the material interpretation of the world, that is, inorganic ‘matter’ is reducible to ‘forces’. Nietzsche connects will-to-power and forces, and writes the aphorism that becomes #1067 of *The Will to Power*. In that passage, Nietzsche calls the will-to-power a ‘play of forces’, and concludes that the “world is will to power – and nothing besides” (WP 1067)! This is an affirmation of the conclusion of *Beyond Good and Evil* 36, supposing that argument were to be successful.

Introduction:

In Section 36 of *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche presents the will-to-power. Earlier in the same work, he had referred to philosophy as "the most spiritual will-to-power; the drive to the 'creation of the world'" (BGE 9). Nietzsche had also earlier claimed that "life itself is will-to-power" (BGE 13), and more than that, he had claimed that physical laws could be seen to be will-to-power (BGE 22). As Laurence Lampert rightly points out, the subjects of philosophy, physics, and psychology reach their primordial ground in will to power.\(^{24}\) Much later in *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche refers to will-to-power as the essence of the world (BGE 186). Will-to-power is one of the most important notions in Nietzsche's writings, and yet, as Linda Williams points out, it is scarcely dealt with in either the published or unpublished writings.\(^{25}\) The importance of will-to-power can only be drawn from how it is referred to in the few passages that mention it (the above as examples), and especially how it is presented in Section 36 of *Beyond Good and Evil*. Only *Beyond Good and Evil* 36 is an explicit discussion of the world as will-to-power in the published writings.

Nevertheless, coming to an understanding of this passage is problematic for a number of reasons. Maudemarie Clark claims that the reasoning of *Beyond Good and Evil* 36 is impeccable; she writes, "if we had reason to accept the premises, we would

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\(^{24}\) Laurence Lampert, *Nietzsche's Task: An Interpretation of Beyond Good and Evil* (Yale University Press, 2001), 85.

\(^{25}\) Evidence for this is given by Williams when she writes, "(Will to power) is found in only 32 aphorisms in the published works and in 147 entries of the Colli and Montinari edition of the Nachlass. These references comprise less than 5% of Nietzsche's entries in the Nachlass, and an even smaller percentage in the published works." Williams also believes that the importance of will-to-power is universally acknowledged by Nietzsche scholars.

have a right to its conclusion that ‘the world viewed from the inside’ is will-to-power’. However, Clark claims Nietzsche cannot possibly accept the argument because he rejects most of the premises. Similarly, George Stack does not think Nietzsche is without the trickery traditionally ascribed to true metaphysicians. Stack writes,

The effort to convince us that there is such a hypothetical cosmic will to power is an elaborate, cleverly devised deception. This elaborate deception is given in Beyond Good and Evil 36.

Stack thinks this is “the strongest argument for the ‘hypothesis’ of a dynamic will-to-power. Stack argues that Nietzsche ‘strenuously and consistently’ rejected all of the assertions made in this argument. Thus Stack calls this argument “cunningly misleading”. According to Williams, the passage is problematic because of its hypothetical form. As Williams explains, “Thus, its ‘conclusion’ that the world is will to power could be considered less the conclusion of an argument and more the end of a string of hypothetical possibilities that Nietzsche suggests methodology runs ‘to the point of nonsense’”. A problem common to all of these secondary sources in dealing with Beyond Good and Evil 36 is that Nietzsche does not, or cannot, make a single claim to positive knowledge or truth. But, Nietzsche does not present the conclusion as true. The conclusion, as I will argue, is a presentation of will-to-power as a power-ontology.

My thesis examines competing interpretations of section 36 with an eye to showing how problems with these interpretations lead to the problems raised by them. I

27 George Stack, Nietzsche’s Anthropic Circle: Man, Science, and Myth. (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2005), 197
28 George Stack, Nietzsche: Man, Knowledge, and Will to Power (Durango: Hollowbrook, 1994), 271.
argue for an interpretation of will-to-power as Nietzsche's power-ontology, which I explain via a discussion of Heidegger's two ontological categories in *Being and Time*. In the first chapter, I examine in detail the first premise of the argument of section 36. I argue that the hypothetical form of the passage is a matter of Nietzsche's writing style, and not necessarily an indication he would withhold his consent from the conclusion. Furthermore, I argue against understanding 'given' as 'known immediately', which leads Clark to interpret the first premise as 'Schopenhauerian', and to reject the passage as a whole. I argue instead that, by asking us to suppose a new 'given', what is being prefigured is the ground of a new interpretation. I understand 'given' as internal to an interpretative framework.

In the final two sections of the first chapter, I work toward an understanding of perspective as a falsifying mechanism, and thereby, why there can be no 'immediate' knowledge for Nietzsche. The goal is to understand the word 'given' as a perspectival fiction, until eventually the word 'fiction' must be re-interpreted as not the opposite of 'literal'. In the final section of the first chapter, I work toward an understanding of why there can be no 'knowledge' at all, as traditionally conceived, through a discussion of truth. It is not at all my project to decide somehow, if it can be done, Nietzsche's concept of 'truth'. Nietzsche reframes the question of truth to a question of values. The value of truth is the enhancement of this world. The goal as in the last section is to work towards an understanding of how Nietzsche's interpretation is not 'only' or 'merely' interpretation.

I begin the second chapter by characterizing the project of *Beyond Good and Evil* 36 as an experiment. I contrast Nietzsche's interpretation with that of a physicist; I argue
will-to-power is not a physical theory. I suggest that there will be no conclusive proof or verification in a traditional sense. By asking us to suppose a new ‘given,’ we are being asked to suppose a new ontological foundation: one that on the basis of which is sufficient for understanding the material world. This is not traditional substance ontology.

Ontology is typically defined as the study of the fundamental categories of being or existence. Traditionally understood, the basic question of ontology is: “What exists?” Or rephrased a bit differently but essentially the same, “What is the world made of?” The kind of ontology I argue Nietzsche is doing is different from traditional substance ontology, but it can be talked about as if it were one, and sometimes, it is hard not to.

‘Power-ontology’ is the term attributed to Nietzsche in the secondary literature. For my title, I have called it ‘Will-to-Power Ontology’, to emphasize that it is an ontology of forces, a duality of opposing forces. Nietzsche calls these forces ‘toward which’ and ‘away from which’, however, to emphasize valuations as fundamental I often exchange that with ‘for’ and ‘against’—which is the same. In the context of Nietzsche’s philosophy, a less misleading way of phrasing the basic question of ontology is “What exists, for me?”—however, this is not without its own confusions. The essential point is that interpretation and valuation are ontologically most fundamental, and that the ‘substance’ of the world emerges out of such.

There is an important similarity between Nietzsche’s project and that of Heidegger in Being and Time. I argue that Nietzsche’s ‘given’ stands to the material world in roughly the same way that ‘ready-to-hand equipment’ stands to ‘present-at-hand things’ for Heidegger. That is to say, the material world interpretation emerges out of an ontologically prior world of our will-to-power. Dasein first and foremost stands in a
relationship of involvement prior to theoretical cognizing. Readiness-to-hand cannot be discovered by the bare perceptual cognition which is what is put to use in purely theoretical investigations. The distinction here between ready-to-hand and present-at-hand is rooted in ontology. The world of significances and functional relations is most basic. For Nietzsche, a world of significances or values is ontologically more primordial than a substantial, extended, material world.

In the final sections of this chapter, I compare Heidegger's and Nietzsche's use of 'world' as a contexture of relations. I claim that the creation of the world as will-to-power has to do with imposing values. The suggestion here is that the world as a significant whole is inseparable from human valuation, and vice versa. Interpretation is inextricably linked to valuation, which requires a 'view of the whole'. Furthermore, I argue will-to-power is not a traditional metaphysical principle for Nietzsche. I examine the takes on this question by others, particularly Ruediger Grimm, who addresses the circularity problem faced by the metaphysician. I leave the possibility open that Nietzsche is somehow an untraditional metaphysician.

In the third and final chapter, I examine what are thought to be some of the major problems for interpreting *Beyond Good and Evil* 36, either as a key statement for a power-ontology, or as one that Nietzsche could accept. For Stack, reducing modes of causation to will-cause is the most revealing supposition of all. He claims Nietzsche simply rejects the causality of will as an error. I attempt to come to an understanding of this claim. I end up siding with Arthur Danto's position, that, it is not a criticism of causality to say that it is false, or that such would be grounds for Nietzsche not accepting it somehow. The problem, here as elsewhere, is not one of truth but one of value. I argue
that the danger of the error of causality is in supposing that any particular ‘cause’ and ‘effect’ apply the same way across perspectives specifically because they hold true independent of any perspective. Thus I argue an alternative, perspectival causality is possible. I argue that Nietzsche uses a style of equivocation, where ordinary meanings are modified and transformed.

In the section on how to understand ‘metaphor’, I analyze what could be meant by claims that some part of what Nietzsche offers in Beyond Good and Evil 36 is metaphorical. I address a variation of the liar’s paradox (i.e., if language is metaphorical, and everything is an interpretation, then are not Nietzsche’s own statements equally interpretation, and metaphorical, and thereby literally false?) I argue that we understand ‘interpretation’ by distinguishing it from other interpretations, and that ‘metaphor’ must be understood in the same way. I look to Arthur Danto’s suggestion that a way to conceive of the difference between ‘literal’ and ‘metaphorical’ is as a matter of degree. The suggestion is that the deepest metaphors are what are taken as literal.

Furthermore, I address the charge of anthropomorphizing. I argue that to eliminate a false dichotomy between nature and man would render the term ‘anthropomorphizing’ senseless. To suppose that there is no distinction between ‘nature’ and ‘man’, as Nietzsche is doing, is effectively to remove the possibility of anthropomorphic projection at that level of interpretation. One way to escape the ‘human’ perspective is by making it a matter of perspective that there is nothing essentially unique about the human. The goal in all of this is an understanding of will-to-power as Nietzsche’s power-ontology.
Maudemarie Clark rejects the position that the doctrine of will to power in Nietzsche's published writings is either a power-biology or a power-ontology. However, she does not deny that these positions can be found in his unpublished writings. Clark's position on will-to-power is that it is tantamount to what you study when you study human psychology. She denies that will to power characterizes anything about the nature of reality, whether it be via the world, being, or life. When Nietzsche does seem to present such positions, he is in fact, according to Clark, using metaphors which literally only apply to human life. According to Clark, the doctrine of will to power offers us a vision of life "from the viewpoint of (Nietzsche's) values". Clark thinks this position offers the most plausible reading of will to power. But plausible in relation to what? And what would it mean to present Beyond Good and Evil 36 as true?

My thesis is an examination of the premises of Beyond Good and Evil 36 and the reasons for thinking Nietzsche cannot accept them. The importance of such an examination is in working out an understanding of the central notion of Nietzsche's philosophy, will-to-power, and thereby allowing for a richer understanding of everything else Nietzsche has written.

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On the Hypothetical form:

Section 36 of *Beyond Good and Evil* offers an elaborate argument for a power-ontology (perhaps the only one in the published writings); on this point, I am in agreement with Maudemarie Clark. However, the argument is presented in a hypothetical form; most of the premises are in the conditional and the conclusion is in the subjunctive. In this section, I address a question raised by Clark: why would Nietzsche present such an elaborate argument and refrain from giving his assent to it? I argue that the hypothetical form of the passage is a matter of Nietzsche's writing style, and not necessarily an indication Nietzsche has withheld his consent from the conclusion, or worse as Clark maintains. Understanding the hypothetical presentation as a matter of style is not done by Clark and it renders the passage interesting. Only interpreted this way does it become worthwhile to futher investigate the premises and what Nietzsche has to say about them, as Clark does. If the hypothetical form of *Beyond Good and Evil* 36 can be shown to be a matter of Nietzsche's writing style—and not necessarily an indication that he rejects the conclusion—then a thorough investigation of the premises becomes warranted.

Clark attempts to answer why Nietzsche presents such an elaborate argument and refrains from giving his assent. She writes,

My conclusion is that if we look at the actual arguments of the only three passages in *Beyond Good and Evil* that present and seem to argue for a power-ontology or -biology, we see that Nietzsche is not defending these arguments or presenting their conclusions as true. Instead he is showing us three bad arguments that he could give for a power-ontology or biology if he followed the models supplied by Schopenhauer, Spinoza, and contemporary physics.\(^\text{31}\)

Clark understands Nietzsche to be merely showing us how little is needed to construct a traditional philosophical system of the kind he rejects. Presumably by ‘bad argument’ Clark just means that it is not one Nietzsche would accept, because she had earlier referred to its reasoning as ‘impeccable’. Clark goes on to explain that part of Nietzsche’s writing style is not to straightforwardly tell us what he wants us to see, and as Clark points out, to get us to learn to laugh, especially at ourselves. As Clark puts it, Nietzsche is ‘up to his trick’ of illustrating what he is trying to show. Clark interprets Beyond Good and Evil 36 as a “trick” of illustrating what he wants to call to our attention.

If this is the case, then the content of this passage could not in any sense be said to be Nietzsche’s—not literally, nor even metaphorically. And presumably the hypothetical form is an indication of this. Under Clark’s understanding of the style employed in this section, this section could not count as evidence for a power-ontology, but neither would it provide very good evidence to the contrary, or for a power-psychology, since it is just an example of the simplicity of traditional system building. Clark’s understanding of the hypothetical nature of the passage renders the passage useless except as an example of the kind of philosophy Nietzsche rejects. This is the case for Clark despite the fact that Nietzsche explicitly distinguishes his experiment in the passage from that of the philosophy of Berkeley and Schopenhauer.33

Not every part of Beyond Good and Evil 36 is clad in the form of a hypothesis; for instance, the part where Nietzsche comments on his method. Nietzsche says that the

33 In Beyond Good and Evil 36, Nietzsche writes, “is it not permitted to make the experiment and to ask the question whether this ‘given’ would not be sufficient for also understanding on the basis of this kind of thing the so-called mechanistic (or ‘material’) world? I mean, not as a deception, as ‘mere appearance,’ an ‘idea’ (in the sense of Berkeley and Schopenhauer) but as holding the same rank of reality as our affect...” (BGE 36).
experiment of making do with a single form of causality is demanded by the ‘conscience of method’ (BGE 36). Contrary to Clark, Wolfgang Müller-Lauter argues that Nietzsche is not speaking only hypothetically, namely, because Nietzsche emphasizes the passage in question as ‘his proposition’.34 As Müller-Lauter explains, “By inserting that remark, Nietzsche actually goes beyond the reflections presented in the aphorism as questionable assumptions and names his fundamental conviction. Surely there is no lack of confidence here”.35 Nietzsche gives the vote of confidence to the proposition that holds our entire instinctive life to be the effect of will-to-power. However, the vote of confidence given to that proposition need not apply to the rest of the premises still clouded in hypothetical form. Thus the two parts of Beyond Good and Evil 36 that are not presented as suppositional are Nietzsche’s method, and Nietzsche’s conviction that our entire instinctive life is the effect of will-to-power.

Müller-Lauter opens the possibility that the hypothetical form of the passage is more a matter of writing style than a sign that Nietzsche does not accept the argument. He does this by pointing out that this passage is in the chapter entitled “The Free Spirit”, and that free spirits are “philosophers of the dangerous ‘maybe’ in every sense”.36 This point is not expanded on by Müller-Lauter, but I believe that the context from which Müller-Lauter takes the quotation reinforces his position. In Beyond Good and Evil 2, Nietzsche raises the question of how something could originate out of its opposite, and

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34 Nietzsche writes, “Suppose, finally, we succeeded in explaining our entire instinctive life as the development and ramification of one basic form of the will—namely, of the will to power, as my proposition has it” (BGE 36).
then proceeds to doubt that there are any opposites at all—the belief in opposite values, he says, is the fundamental faith of metaphysicians (BGE 2). Nietzsche writes,

> It might even be possible that what constitutes the value of these good and revered things is precisely that they are insidiously related, tied to, and involved with these wicked, seemingly opposite things—maybe even one with them in essence. Maybe! (BGE 2)

The hypothetical form of this quotation is clearly a matter of style because Nietzsche does, in fact, think that valuations and seemingly opposite valuations arise from a will-to-power in the sense of a desire for power. Not even Clark disagrees, but in fact, that is the extent of what we can make of Nietzsche’s will-to-power according to her.

The removal of oppositions is a continuous theme within Nietzsche’s writings—for example, the distinctions between appearance-reality, subject-object, and organic-inorganic. The ‘dangerous maybes’ of the free spirit – an example of which is in section 2 of *Beyond Good and Evil* – have to do with the possibility of removing such oppositions. The dangerous maybes of the free spirit are ‘dangerous’ because these oppositions have served to ensure our survival. One can see in *Beyond Good and Evil* 36 a similar ‘dangerous maybe’—in the same hypothetical form. In *Beyond Good and Evil* 36, the opposition is not between valuations directly, but between the material world interpretation and the idealist world interpretation in the sense of Berkeley and Schopenhauer, between the reality ‘below’ and ‘above’. The experiment is whether both these interpretations can be understood sufficiently as deriving from the reality of our drives (desires and passions). The removal of oppositions could also be seen in Nietzsche’s proposing to explain all causality as will-causality—the seeming oppositions

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37 Nietzsche writes, “Suppose nothing else were ‘given’ as real except our world of desires and passions, and we could not get down, or up, to any other ‘reality’ besides the reality of our drives” (BGE 36). This metaphor reminds me of the painting by Raphael of Plato motioning upward to the realm of pure forms (idealism) and Aristotle motioning downward to the earth (empiricism).
being between the two chief forms of causality with which Nietzsche often concerns himself, namely, teleological and mechanistic causality.

Let us return to the question raised by Clark of why Nietzsche would present an elaborate argument and refrain from giving his assent to it. A passage in Human, All-Too-Human provides an answer; Nietzsche tells us that we associate with our thoughts as with individuals, against whom we must fight or support. As Nietzsche explains,

Let us watch or listen to ourselves at the moment when he hear or discover a new idea. Perhaps it displeases us because it is so defiant and autocratic, and we unconsciously ask ourselves whether we cannot place a contradiction of it by its side as an enemy, or fasten on to it a 'perhaps' or a 'sometimes': the mere little world 'probably' gives us a feeling of satisfaction, for it shatters the oppressive tyranny of the unconditional (HATH Part II, 26).

When we are presented with a strong and overbearing individual, we often feel overwhelmed and thereby that it is a personality with which we must struggle somehow, to regain our balance, so to speak. Likewise for a strong and overbearing thought; according to Nietzsche, we try to weaken it with a 'suppose'.

Why Nietzsche offers an argument to which he does not give his assent can be reframed as a question about why Nietzsche does not present the conclusion as true. In section 25 of Beyond Good and Evil, Nietzsche implores free spirits to have their masks and subtlety, and to beware of suffering for the truth's sake. Nietzsche addresses the free spirits with that advice when he writes,

After all, you know well enough that it cannot be of any consequence if you of all people are proved right; and that there might be a more laudable truthfulness in every little question mark that you place after your special words and favorite doctrines (and occasionally after yourselves) than in all the solemn gestures and trumps before accusers and law courts (BGE 25).

38 HATH Part II, 26
This quotation is as close to a statement of the style in which Beyond Good and Evil 36 is presented as one could hope for. A partial answer to the question is offered in the same section; Nietzsche explains that to defend the truth as the truth can make you "headstrong against objections and red rags" (BGE 25). Furthermore, Nietzsche explains that these coming philosophers are not dogmatists; Nietzsche writes, "It must offend their pride, also their taste, if their truth is supposed to be a truth for everyman—which has so far been the secret wish and hidden meaning of all dogmatic aspirations" (BGE 43).

To answer more fully why Nietzsche would not have presented the conclusion of Beyond Good and Evil 36 as true will require an understanding of what Nietzsche means by 'truth', and its attachment to the enhancement of power, as well as to contrast that with the traditional understanding of truth. Only after an understanding of why, no matter what Nietzsche's truth is, it can be true for one person, and false for another will it become clear why Nietzsche would not present the conclusion as 'true'. For now, we are prepared to investigate the premises of Beyond Good and Evil 36.

The much more obvious (and common) answer why Nietzsche would not present Beyond Good and Evil 36 as true is that he rejects all or some of the premises. Clark takes this position, and so does Stack. Both attempt to substantiate the claim that Nietzsche repudiates every premise made in this passage, and Stack does so by drawing from the unpublished notebooks. Clark's position is limited in this regard because she is unwilling to draw from the unpublished notebooks. For now, we can move to examine the passage more closely.
“Suppose nothing else were ‘given’ as real except our world of desires and passions…” (BGE 36).

Toward an understanding of ‘given’:

Maudemarie Clark takes the word ‘given’ in the first premise to mean ‘known immediately’. She understands this premise to be the supposition that the world of desires and passions (the world of ‘will’) is known without distortion, and is more secure knowledge than that of the mechanistic or material world. Clark presents the problem when she writes,

Here is the problem: Nietzsche does not believe we have any immediate knowledge, and there is no plausible interpretation of will (even if understood as drives or affects) such that Nietzsche believes that our knowledge of it is better or more secure than our knowledge of the material world.

Clark’s main point of contention with Beyond Good and Evil 36 is the ‘Schopenhauerian’ first premise. That we have some sort of privileged, unmediated access to the Will is the position of Schopenhauer—and Clark sees this position reflected here in the first premise. This is evidently the case for Clark when she calls Beyond Good and Evil 36 a “thinly disguised variation of Schopenhauer’s argument for the metaphysics of the will”. Clark claims that Nietzsche cannot accept the first premise because, “Nietzsche believes that all cognition is mediated”, and thereby all cognition is interpretation. The important point for Clark is that Nietzsche’s doctrine “is not the truth about nature but is ‘only interpretation’”. Without this first premise, the entire argument fails.

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40 Ibid, 121.
42 Ibid, 124.
Clark defends her position by arguing that *Beyond Good and Evil* 16-19 rejects the immediacy of the will. In *Beyond Good and Evil* 16, Nietzsche names Descartes’ cogito and Schopenhauer’s Will as alleged ‘immediate certainties’. What Nietzsche means in that passage by ‘immediate certainties’ is knowledge without any falsification on the part of the subject or object—a thing-in-itself. Nietzsche rejects Kant’s concept of a thing-in-itself as an absurdity, and, for Nietzsche, all knowledge is a matter of interpretation according to perspectival falsifications. Section 22 of *Beyond Good and Evil* is a declaration of this point; Clark uses it to show that what is being offered is not true, but only interpretation. Along the same lines, George Stack argues that there are no immediate data for consciousness in the sense of pure uninterpreted ‘givens’. Stack writes, “(Nietzsche) typically questions the value of self-observation and considers the ‘facts’ of consciousness, including putative ‘facts’ about our immediate affects, as interpretations which have been schematized and simplified as internal ‘phenomena’.”

For Nietzsche, as Stack points out here, the ‘inner’ world of our mental life as we observe it is still interpretation, as is the ‘outer’ world.

Both Clark and Stack insert a word that Nietzsche does not use in their interpretation of the first premise, namely, the word “immediately”. For Stack, the supposition is whether anything is “immediately ‘given’” and, for Clark, it is whether anything is “known immediately”. There are no unmediated cognitions for Nietzsche; every perception and every piece of knowledge is a matter of interpretation according to perspectival fictions. Thus Clark and Stack are led to the position that Nietzsche would

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not accept the first premise. But in what sense would he not accept it? By inserting the word “immediately”, Clark and Stack are led to exclude the possibility that what Nietzsche means by ‘given’ is internal to an interpretive framework, as is any piece of knowledge. In other words, they are led to suppose that the sort of knowledge this ‘given’ implies about the world of desires and passions is not being presented as an interpretation according to perspectival fictions. Of course, if that were the case, Nietzsche would not seriously accept the first supposition. However, if we put the first premise into the context of Nietzsche’s perspectivism, then we do not need to interpret the first premise as one that Nietzsche would reject. More importantly, we do not need to interpret the first premise as one that Nietzsche does not accept in any important sense, namely, as being true in the traditional sense.

It is not a matter of arguing whether the material world or the world of desires and passions is more securely known than some other. As I will show, it is a matter of viewing both as interpretations, and of not understanding the word ‘given’ to imply some sort of immediate knowledge more accurate to an uninterpreted cognition, and thereby more secure. Firstly, Nietzsche does not use the word “immediate”, nor does it need to be taken as implied by the word ‘given’. By supposing a new ‘given,’ what is being prefigured is the ground of a new interpretation, the statement of which is the conclusion of section 36 of Beyond Good and Evil. Moreover, the first premise becomes one that the truth of which Nietzsche does not absolutely insist upon. In other words, the world of desires and passions is not an unmediated cognition of a noumenal realm—an absurd proposition. I will show that the position that Nietzsche would not accept this first premise in the same sense that he would accept any proposition is unfounded. Moreover,
I will show that the position that Nietzsche does not accept this proposition as true in a traditional sense is ultimately uninteresting.

The impetus to interpret in this way is given by the end part of Beyond Good and Evil 16. In that part, the philosopher finds a series of metaphysical questions raised by the people’s immediate certainty (use any example). The ‘philosopher’ in this case is Nietzsche himself, because he speaks with a smile and two question marks. Instead of adopting the popular prejudice of the people and exaggerating it, thus embracing the resulting metaphysical questions (as he accuses Schopenhauer of doing), the philosopher in this case questions the status of its truth. Nietzsche writes, “‘Sir,’ the philosopher will perhaps give him to understand, ‘it is improbable that you are not mistaken; but why insist on the truth’—” (BGE 16)? Thus at the end of this section, the problem is not that we might be able to ‘know something immediately’ but that we insist on what kind of knowledge it is, that is, the certain truth of it, with a certain conception of truth as extending beyond our own perspective to a metaphysic.

According to Laurence Lampert, Beyond Good and Evil 36 is an experiment “to determine whether the reality of the nongiven, of what can never be given, can nevertheless be inferred”. Lampert’s understanding is misleading; Nietzsche never uses the word ‘non-given’. The word ‘given’ suggests synonyms such as ‘appearance’ or ‘phenomenon’—i.e., perspectival fictions. But what is ‘non-given’ cannot mean a thing-in-itself, because for Nietzsche that concept is absurd. Lampert interprets Beyond Good and Evil 36 as an attempt to reach a “probable conclusion about the ultimate character of the world”. Moreover, Lampert thinks this passage is the apparatus for a “comprehensive conclusion about the unknowable

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47 Laurence Lampert, *Nietzsche's Task: An Interpretation of Beyond Good and Evil* (Yale University Press, 2001), 86.
48 Ibid, 86.
world''. This makes me think that by 'nongiven', Lampert does in fact mean a noumenal realm—because that is precisely what an unknowable world is. However, Nietzsche does not use the word 'nongiven'; he uses 'material or mechanistic world'—a world we think we already know about having adopted that perspective.

I want to suggest we can better understand the word 'given' if we understand what is offered as 'given' as internal to an interpretive framework. For example, if we adopt a material world interpretation, then what is 'given' is the material world. In other words, it is a 'given' that the world consists of material atoms as a matter of the material world interpretation—but not Nietzsche's. What is being asked of us in supposing a new 'given' is to suppose a new interpretation, that is, of the material/mechanistic world—the interpretation thereof.

Essentially, what is being asked of us is to suppose an interpretation of the material world interpretation that holds the 'material' to be imbued with the same stuff as our world of desires and passions (i.e., drives, forces, will-to-power). In English, 'given' implies something that goes unquestioned. In other words, 'given' implies something the absolute truth of which is not insisted upon—does not need to be insisted upon.

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On perspective and falsification:

An investigation of why Nietzsche cannot accept that we could have ‘immediate knowledge’ will clarify how we are to understand a ‘given’ for Nietzsche. In this section, I work toward an understanding of why there can be no ‘immediate’ knowledge for Nietzsche. To do this, I work with the presumption that there is some way the world is apart from an interpretation of it—eliminated in the next section. In the next section, I work toward an understanding of why there can be no ‘knowledge’ at all, as traditionally conceived, through a discussion of truth. In that section, I eliminate the above presumption, which I argue Nietzsche does not hold. The goal is to understand the word ‘given’ as a perspectival fiction, until eventually the word ‘fiction’ must be re-interpreted as not the opposite of ‘literal’.

There can be no ‘immediate’ knowledge because all knowing is perspectival, and a perspective is a mediating mechanism that allows for knowledge through what Nietzsche calls ‘fictions,’ ‘falsifications,’ and ‘errors’. In other words, we simplify, distort, organize and shape our experience according to concepts and distinctions that are constructed and do not correspond to facts. We do this in order to make sense of reality, and in order thereby to survive. This process of simplification or conceptualization is a process of falsification producing errors.

In The Gay Science, Nietzsche holds that the intellect cannot determine for certain whether all existence is essentially engaged in interpretation, because “the human intellect cannot avoid seeing itself in its own perspectives, and only in these. We cannot look around our own corner.” (GS 374) In other words, we cannot make a determination about all existence apart from our perspective of it. Any determination we make will be a
reflection of ourselves, through our own perspective. However, in the same passage Nietzsche then calls it a “ridiculous immodesty” that would claim that it is only beings such as us that have perspectives. Later on, in *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche claims to be situated in a perspective is the basic condition of all life (BGE preface).\(^{50}\) One can detect here what only seems like an inconsistency, namely, Nietzsche makes a determination about all life, even though he claimed that we are locked into our own perspective. I will deal with this issue in the section on anthropomorphism. Suffice it to say for now that what is at work is a broadening of perspective, not a departure from perspective. Nietzsche can make a claim about all life if, firstly, he does not distinguish between his life and human life, and secondly, he does not distinguish between human life and life in general. The broadening of perspective is a matter of Nietzsche not interpreting himself as essentially different from life in general. Thus the claim that we can not say for certain whether all existence is engaged in interpretation, and the claim that the condition of life is to be situated within a perspective are not incompatible insofar as not all existence is alive—for example, ‘dead matter’.

Only a handful of sections after Nietzsche claims that to be situated in a perspective is a basic condition of all life, Nietzsche claims that “untruth” is a condition of life (BGE 4). ‘Untruth’ and ‘perspective’ can only be understood in terms of each other. A perspective is a condition of life because it produces the ‘untruths’ that allow for, and are necessary for, life. In place of the term ‘untruth’, Nietzsche also uses ‘error,’ ‘falsification,’ and ‘fiction’. There can be no ‘immediate knowledge’ because all knowledge is perspectival, and a perspective is a falsifying mechanism.

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\(^{50}\) The same idea is presented in *Beyond Good and Evil* 34.
The easiest way of understanding the language Nietzsche uses here is to contrast it with ‘truth’ as traditionally conceived, and then suggest that we have no means of reaching beyond our perspectival falsifications to some real way the world is. Nietzsche writes,

We simply lack any organ for knowledge, for ‘truth’: we ‘know’ (or believe or imagine) just as much as may be useful in the interests of the human herd, the species; and even what is here called ‘utility’ is ultimately also a mere belief, something imaginary, and perhaps precisely that most calamitous stupidity of which we shall perish some day (GS 354).

Here Nietzsche claims that knowledge is a matter of utility, not correspondence to facts. This theme is a constant throughout Nietzsche’s writings. For example, in Human All-too-Human, Nietzsche writes,

That which we now call the world is the result of a mass of errors and fantasies which arose gradually in the general development of organic being, which are inter-grown with each other, and are now inherited by us as the accumulated treasure of all the past,—as a treasure, for the value of our humanity depends on it (HATH Part I, 16).

Along the same lines, in The Gay Science, Nietzsche writes,

Over immense periods of time the intellect produced nothing but errors. A few of these proved to be useful and helped to preserve the species: those who hit upon or inherited these had better luck in their struggle for themselves and their progeny (GS 110).

Similarly, in Beyond Good and Evil, Nietzsche writes,

...without accepting the fictions of logic, without measuring reality against a purely invented world of the unconditional and self-identical, without a constant falsification of the world by means of numbers, man could not live (BGE 4).

The ‘errors’ produced by the intellect are the conceptual means we have for dealing with life, for example, things, substances, and cause and effect. Through a perspective, reality is simplified and in that way an organism is able to secure its survival. The human organism owes its survival to just these perspectival falsifications.
It is important to understand that for Nietzsche the form and order imposed on the world by our interpretations is always a falsification. In *Twilight of the Idols*, Nietzsche writes,

Today, on the contrary, we see ourselves as it were entangled in error, *necessitated* to error, to precisely the extent that our prejudice in favour of reason compels us to posit unity, identity, duration, substance, cause, materiality, being; however sure we may be, on the basis of a strict reckoning, *that* error is to be found here. (TI 'Reason' in Philosophy 5)

Likewise, in *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche writes, "Whatever philosophical standpoint one may adopt today, from every point of view the erroneousness of the world in which we think we live is the surest and firmest fact that we can lay eyes on" (BGE 34). We feel constrained to understand what 'error' means here by contrasting that with something, some fact, which is not itself an error. In other words, we understand on the basis of opposites. For Nietzsche, there is no 'truth' as traditionally conceived as correspondence to some way the world is apart from interpretation. This is why 'error' or 'falsification' designates all articles of interpretation. We interpret according to categories and concepts that do not exist before they are created.

In some places, Nietzsche seems to introduce and attempt to characterize a world for our falsifications to be falsifications *of*. In *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche appears to depict this world; he writes;

The total character of the world, however, is in all eternity chaos—in the sense not of a lack of necessity but a lack of order, arrangement, form, beauty, wisdom, and whatever other names there are for our aesthetic anthropomorphisms (GS 109).

The world our perspectival falsifications has falsified is, as Arthur Danto points out, a world without distinctions.\(^{51}\) It is thereby a world which is unknowable for us—who

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understand on the basis of stable, enduring distinctions. This is the key feature of our
‘falsifications’; we distinguish on the basis of opposites which do not correspond to any
real oppositions. However, it would be misleading to think that Nietzsche is here
attempting to characterize a world as it is in itself. On this point, I am in agreement with
Arthur Danto, who writes, "(Nietzsche) was less interested in stating what was true than
in telling what was false". For Nietzsche, the concept of a world-in-itself is just as
nonsensical and unknowable as a thing-in-itself—and for the same reasons.

Ruediger Grimm writes,

It is, I believe, sufficiently accurate to claim that any theory of truth which is not
completely vacuous must be grounded within a particular view of reality,
whether this takes the form of the naïve realism of the natural attitude, or an
elaborate ontology and epistemology.53

The traditional correspondence theory of truth presupposes that there are stable entities,
which exist independently of the perceiver. That is the ground for a correspondence
relationship. Grimm claims that since there are only substances, things, facts, and objects
in a relative interpretive sense, this is enough to compromise the correspondence theory
of truth. For Grimm, the correspondence theory survives only on the supposition of an
independently existing realm. Furthermore, the correspondence theory requires that the
subject-object distinction not be a perspectival fiction. That is to say, there must be a
distinction between the thinker (the subject) and the thought (the object). Nietzsche
rejects any such distinction; his position is that both are identical with thinking (the
activity).

53 Ruediger Grimm, Nietzsche’s Theory of Knowledge. (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1977),
44.
Linda Williams understands language as a falsifying mechanism because it ‘overlooks many differences’ between things. A word is a category that experiences or phenomena fall into based on similarities. As Williams explains,

Common nouns are ‘false’ in the sense that a common noun, such as leaf, must overlook many differences among the individual leaves of a maple tree, not to mention differences among leaves...\(^5^4\)

Furthermore, Williams writes,

Because words and concepts concentrate on similarities among things, they ignore differences for economy’s sake, but they do this at the cost of any direct correspondence between them and human experience.\(^5^5\)

The position here is that because language distorts experience, truth, in the sense of correspondence, is impossible. This position suggests that truth is impossible because it necessarily gets lost in translation – the translation of lived experience into language. However, I want to suggest that even if everything had its own proper name (which is ‘difficult to imagine’ for Williams, and impossible for me), there would still be no grounds for the correspondence theory of truth at issue here because there is no true world for words to correspond to. Words are ‘lies’ before the distortion mentioned by Williams because the senses distort, and are an even prior falsifying mechanism.


Some points about truth:

We are necessitated to 'error' and 'falsification' because our perspectival fictions oppose our traditional notion of truth, that is to say, they do not correspond to the way the world is apart from our interpretation of it. This is a problem for claiming knowledge at all, insofar as when we say we 'know' something, we also mean to say that it is 'true'. Thus arises the problem of obtaining truth and knowledge; the two are intertwined.

Laurence Lampert formulates this problem when he writes, "Does perspectivity condemn the perspectival knower to insurmountable skepticism about the truth of any perspective?" Lampert does not think that because philosophy is perspectival, it is incapable of claims to truth. Lampert writes,

But even though philosophy is always prejudiced for Nietzsche – always situated or from a perspective, always interested or driven by passion – that condition need not be fatal to philosophy’s task of winning the truth.

It is possible to agree with the conclusions Lampert draws without having to believe that Nietzsche comes full-circle to endorse the old dogmatic conception of truth, namely, that truth resides somehow outside of any perspective. This quotation by Lampert suggests that truth can be won despite philosophy being perspectival. I will argue that it is precisely because of (not despite) philosophy being perspectival that ‘truth’ is possible.

In other words, it is because of the reality of competing perspectives that a perspective can be affirmed as true. ‘Truth’ is a relation born out of competing perspectives – it is a designation that arises out of the inequality of competing ‘errors’, and always from a perspective. So how is it that a perspective is affirmed as true?

56 Laurence Lampert, Nietzsche’s Task: An Interpretation of Beyond Good and Evil (Yale University Press, 2001), 12.
57 Laurence Lampert, Nietzsche’s Task: An Interpretation of Beyond Good and Evil (Yale University Press, 2001), 18. (emphasis added)
58 A commitment to truth does not need to mean a commitment to dogmatic truth.
What are behind any determination of truth, for Nietzsche, are particular valuations that motivate it. In the opening of *Beyond Good and Evil*, it is clear that Nietzsche’s plan is to reframe the question of truth to a question of value, and to thereby dissolve the problem.\(^{59}\) Moreover, Nietzsche writes, “Indeed, if one would explain how the abstrusest metaphysical claims of a philosopher really came about, it is always well (and wise) to ask first: at what morality does all this (does *he*) aim” (BGE 6)? The metaphysical claim at issue is the essential opposition of ‘truth’ and ‘falsity’. Nietzsche refers to Plato in the preface of *Beyond Good and Evil*, for whom the ‘good as such’ inhabits some other realm – is otherworldly – and the truth is tied to the good. Nietzsche calls this the “worst, most durable, and most dangerous of all errors so far” (BGE Preface). What motivates this conception of truth is a perspective from which a negative valuation of this world is made. The metaphysical view Nietzsche investigates holds that truth cannot actually be an error, or arise out of an error; truth must be something or somehow some part of a relation that exists outside of a perspective – a ‘thing-in-itself’ – it must be real. What this conception rests on, Nietzsche accuses, is a faith; the faith in opposite values (BGE 2), which is to say that a valuation sustains this faith, and it is one that Nietzsche will attempt not to share. As Nietzsche would have it: “For all the value that the true, the truthful, the selfless may deserve, it would still be possible that a higher and more fundamental value for life might have to be ascribed to deception, selfishness, and lust” (BGE 2).

To Nietzsche, what has been considered true by the philosophy he mentions is considered ‘true’ because it complies with the certain values by which it has been

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\(^{59}\) Nietzsche writes, “Suppose we want truth: *why not rather* untruth? and uncertainty? even ignorance? The problem of the value of truth came before us—or was it we who came before the problem” (BGE 1)?
motivated. Rather than attempt to locate a truth apart from any perspectival motivating valuations, Nietzsche turns the problem of truth into a problem about the value of truth. This is a beginning step to his offering his own truth, namely, that the world is will-to-power. To understand Nietzsche’s truth, we need to inquire about the value of truth for Nietzsche. Nietzsche places value squarely in ‘this world’, the world of perspectival falsifications or ‘appearances’, and the world of which it is our condition of life to inhabit. Nietzsche writes,

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

The question about the value of truth is actually a question about valuing one falsity over another – one error over another. As Nietzsche explains, “It is no more than a moral prejudice that truth is worth more than mere appearance; it is even the worst proved assumption there is in the world” (BGE 34). The value between errors is determined by the extent to which they are life-promoting and life-preserving.

Laurence Lampert points out that life-promotion and life-preservation are not the same, and furthermore that Nietzsche believes the truth he will offer is dangerous and even deadly involving significant risk (Lampert 29, op ed. BGE 2). Danger is the case because the question about the value of truth is one that calls into question the value of what have been taken as ‘truths’ up until now—the ‘truths’ that are the errors that have sustained life. So there is risk involved. The impetus to question the value of old ‘truths’ that have sustained life up until now does not come from there possibly existing truths equally capable of also sustaining life, but because the value of truth has more to do with life-promotion, rather than life-preservation.
That the truth would be what is most life-promoting sounds like a pragmatist theory of truth— one that holds that the true is what works. Guillermo Barron’s main argument for rejecting a pragmatist theory of truth in Nietzsche, according to Ric Brown, is that ‘what works’ for Nietzsche happen to be falsifications, which are not the same as truths. In rejection of this, Brown writes,

This does not strike me as being particularly fair either to pragmatism or to Nietzsche because it seems to hold the pragmatist standard for truth (namely, whatever works is true) against a second and obviously higher standard for truth, namely, correspondence or adequacy and once held to this standard, it is found wanting.60

As Brown explains, ‘truths’ are errors because they do not correspond with reality.61 However, Brown sides with Maudemarie Clark in advocating a minimalist correspondence theory where ‘truths’ correspond to appearances, the perspectival falsifications given by the human perspective—the human reality. Barron’s is not a plausible rejection of what might be Nietzsche’s pragmatism because it seems to be based on the suggestion of an essential opposition between ‘truth’ and ‘error’, which Nietzsche rejects. Truths are not the opposite of errors (or ‘lies’), and indeed, truth is a matter of degree of erroneousness, with no pure truth ever being possible insofar as we recognize the perspectival condition of all life. As Brown explains, truths are ‘true’ from within a perspectival use of conventional language, as well as ‘untrue’ as soon as the purported truth attempts to go beyond the condition of all life—i.e., to correspond to Reality.

Brown advocates a minimalist correspondence theory in Nietzsche, one where a proposition is true if it corresponds to a world of appearances and linguistic

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Contrary to the idea that Nietzsche might be getting rid of a pragmatist theory of truth by "calling the value of truth itself into question, experimentally" as Clark thinks, Nietzsche is affirming the pragmatic theory of truth because what is being questioned is how well a particular conception of true has worked up until now – and at the same time, whether or not to consider that truth 'true'. There does seem to be a connection between pragmatism and a minimalist correspondence theory as long as truths are tested for how well they work. However, eventually even a weakened correspondence theory, such that a perspectival fiction (a statement) corresponds to a perspectival fiction (an image) would not be compatible with Nietzsche. That moment would be when Nietzsche's doctrine would entail the perspectival falsification that would have us entertain the idea of not even using the subject-object dichotomy as a perspectival fiction.

In other words, the choice to maintain a subject-object dichotomy is a matter of what works best, allows for and enhances life. But, because Nietzsche's project is to call into question the fictions we rely on the most, and thereby to open the possibility of new avenues to further growth and power, it would not make sense to ascribe to Nietzsche this weakened correspondence theory, as if that were his final position. Some weakened correspondence theory, one that relies on the correspondence of subject to object, with the new proviso that these are just perspectival fictions, is not part of Nietzsche's philosophy, though he may adopt such a theory provisionally if it works the best.

Ruediger Grimm points out that Nietzsche's intention is not to disprove the correspondence theory of truth. The truth of the statement that the world is will-to-power

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will rely on a new perspective that replaces the assumptions of the correspondence theory, not disprove them. Grimm writes,

Nietzsche’s assertion that there is no ultimate nature of things might be construed as tacitly claiming a correspondence to some ultimate but unknowable state of affairs. This, however, is a problem of language rather than an inconsistency on Nietzsche’s part.\textsuperscript{64}

As Grimm explains, Nietzsche is not claiming that his theory more accurately describes a perspective-independent objective reality. Utility is a justification, not a proof.\textsuperscript{65}

According to Ruediger Grimm, Nietzsche makes two points about truth: (1) there is no truth; and (2) truth is what enhances power. As Grimm explains,

When we normally make a statement about truth, this ‘truth’ is derivative of a more fundamental increase in power. Therefore, Nietzsche’s own criterion for ‘truth’ does not claim to be an inflexible, universally valid criterion: Nietzsche offers it to us as ‘illusion,’ as a ‘useful fiction’ which, if implemented in our own sphere of activity, will lead to an increase in will to power. \textit{That is to say, if I believe that whatever increases my will to power is true, this belief will serve to increase my power.}\textsuperscript{66}

Nietzsche does not mean that an increase of power is ‘true’, but that an increase of power accompanies and is responsible for the designation ‘true’. The important point is that the content of a proposition is irrelevant to the truth or falsity of a proposition. Grimm writes, “Truth is not a property of statements, but a function of activity; more specifically individual activity”.\textsuperscript{67} ‘Truth,’ as Grimm understands Nietzsche, is a designation made ‘after the fact’, so to speak. The same statement or proposition can be both true and false depending on the perspective that makes the judgment.

Grimm tends to use 'power' seemingly synonymously with 'growth,' 'potential,' 'vital signs, or life'. This would make sense insofar as truth is tied to value. A value judgment is interconnected with truth, for both strong and weak forms of life. For a descending line of life, permanence and stability are highly valued (i.e., are 'good'), because change and instability represent danger and potential loss of power. For the ascending line of life, constant change and flux represent potential for growth, and are valued highly.

In Human All-to-Human, Nietzsche describes the dangerous curiosity of the free spirit as a reversal of valuations. Nietzsche writes,

Cannot all valuations be reversed? And is good perhaps evil? And God only an invention and artifice of the devil? Is everything, perhaps, radically false? And if we are the deceived, are we not thereby also deceivers? Must we not also be deceivers (HATH Part One, preface, 3)?

The free spirit is illuminated to the enigma of a 'great emancipation'. The goal of the free spirit is to become master over himself and his virtues; the goal is power. The illumination of the enigma of the 'great emancipation' of the free spirit is to see what has been taken as the standard and measure of things up until now as an injustice carried out "where life has developed most punily, restrictedly, necessitously, and incipiently" (HATH Part 1, Preface, 6). For Nietzsche, the correspondence theory might well have been the standard and measure of truth.

After all that has been said, we arrive back at the question of how to understand the word 'given' in the first premise of Beyond Good and Evil 36. I suggested that it was to be understood as internal to an interpretive framework, as a perspectival fiction. The only understanding any 'given' could be given, such that Nietzsche would accept it, is as perspectival falsification. Nietzsche writes, "Knowledge-in-itself in a world of becoming
is impossible; so how is knowledge possible? As error concerning oneself, as will to power, as will to deception” (WP 617). The intent has been to show that there is no other way that Nietzsche would accept any proposition. Understanding it this way allows us to move to and consider seriously the other premises. The goal is to work towards an understanding of how Nietzsche’s interpretation is not ‘only’ or ‘merely’ interpretation.

II. Some Concluding Remarks about Logical Consistency:

Perspectives are falsifications of reality for Nietzsche, in the sense that they do not accurately reflect a perspective-independent reality. This is so according to the traditional notion of truth that holds ‘truth’ to be an accurate reflection of reality. A perspective is a condition of life because it is on the basis of perspectival falsifications that life firstly survives, and then thrives. At the same time, ‘untruth’ is a condition of life, insofar as these falsifications are ‘untruths’. If we were to change or disregard the traditional notion of truth, then the meaning of ‘falsification’ changes, or ceases to have one.

For Nietzsche, there is no realm independent of any perspective from which to draw a truth. When a question about the truth of some perspective on truth arises, I believe that Nietzsche turns it into a question of value—more specifically, of the value of competing perspectival falsifications. It is not my project to distinguish where between utility, coherence, correspondence, or something else that truth or value lies. Nor is it my project to decide whether Nietzsche’s interpretation is true or even valuable. My project is to present my interpretation of Nietzsche’s interpretation as true according to how it coheres with his texts.
A question can be raised about whether there is a logical inconsistency in what has been said. Is perspectivism perspectivally true, or does it reduce to a species of fallibilism? I do think that Nietzsche thinks we have been mistaken about beliefs about even elementary logical principles and often about the character of one’s current feelings, but I would hesitate to call it a fallibilism, if that would promote uncertainty in a perspective and thereby a weakening. Strength and utility are justifications, not a proof. The problem, according to some, is that what Nietzsche might be offering is ‘merely’ another perspective. I deal with this question in the chapter on how to understand metaphor (p.68). According to Ruediger Grimm, this is not a problem at all if one does not suppose an appearance-reality distinction. I distinguish between two levels of speaking to handle the question whether perspectivism is perspectivally true. That I think Nietzsche takes a meta-perspective facilitates this. That every form of life is situated in a perspective is absolutely true from Nietzsche’s meta-perspective. The inconsistency or paradox arises from crossing the distinction between two levels of speaking. Furthermore, I use Ruediger Grimm to point out that Nietzsche uses contradiction and paradox as a matter of style. At one level, the meta-level, Nietzsche is creating a reality. And at another level, where the original question probably seems most problematic, Nietzsche is operating within that reality. I think this fits nicely with my characterization of the kind of ontology that Nietzsche was doing, and the distinction between two ontological categories of Heidegger, with which I explained it (p.38-). Certain problems, self-referential inconsistency, solipsism, arise only at the ontological level which is not as primary as Nietzsche is characterizing in his power-ontology.
A further problem is that if each interpretation creates its own facts, then it would seem to be impossible to determine which interpretation is correct. I suggest that Nietzsche is not trying to determine which perspective is 'correct' in any sense of correspondence, or utility, or coherency. I believe Nietzsche uses utility and possibly coherence as a justification of his views, but not a proof. That one would present the difficulty of how to prove the truth of his view as a problem—that is the problem! It is not my project to determine once and for all what Nietzsche might mean by truth, and I am not even sure if such a project is possible. Alexander Nehamas argues that some interpretations are better than others, and that sometimes we can know this is the case. My project is an interpretation of paragraph 36 of Beyond Good and Evil, not a proof of it. [On page 35], I claim it is a misguided question to offer a proof of the experiment. [On page 53-55], I use Ruediger Grimm to show how Nietzsche addresses the circularity problem of metaphysicians and turns the problem around on those who would ask for a conclusive and objective proof of some circular position.

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"...is it not permitted to make the experiment and to ask the question whether this 'given' would not be sufficient for also understanding on the basis of this kind of thing the so-called 'mechanistic (or 'material') world? I mean, not as deception, as 'mere appearance,' an 'idea' (in the sense of Berkeley and Schopenhauer) but as holding the same rank of reality as our affect—as a more primitive form of the world of affects in which everything still lies contained in a powerful unity before it undergoes ramifications and developments in the organic process (and, as is only fair, also becomes tenderer and weaker)—as a kind of instinctive life in which all organic functions are still synthetically intertwined along with self-regulation, assimilation, nourishment, excretion, and metabolism—as a pre-form of life" (BGE 36).

The project as an experiment:

The experiment of Beyond Good and Evil 36 is whether the 'outer' world is actually like our 'inner' one, i.e., composed of drives and desires, rather than matter. As Nietzsche explains, it is not whether the 'material' world is a mere appearance in the sense of the idealism of Berkeley or Schopenhauer, but "as holding the same rank of reality as our affect—as a more primitive form of the world of affects...as a pre-form of life" (BGE 36). Our drives are affects of will, and will is composed of forces. 'Drive,' 'will,' 'affect,' are all to be understood in terms of each other. Nietzsche writes,

A quantum of power is just such a quantum of drive, will, effect—more precisely, it is nothing other than this very driving, willing, effecting, and only through the seduction of language...which understands and misunderstands all effecting as conditioned by an effecting something, by a 'subject,' can it appear otherwise (GM I 13).

For Nietzsche, the will is composed of forces, and forces are characterized by a duality of 'towards which' and 'away from which' (BGE 19), but are united in what they reduce to: will-to-power. All force is the affect of will-to-power, and since will-to-power does not stand to forces as substance to attribute, it means that force just is will to power. For Nietzsche, it would be a mistake owing to the seduction of language to posit will-to-power as an attribute to the substance 'force', or vice versa. This is the mistake of
common people and natural scientists when they "double the doing". Nietzsche explains this mistake when he writes,

Common people basically double the doing when they have the lightning flash; this is a doing-doing: the same happening is posited first as cause and then once again as its effect. Natural scientists do no better when they say 'force moves, force causes,' and so on... (GM I 13)

Will-to-power is not a drive that a subject possesses; it is a characterization of the drives that are taken to be a subject—in other words, the subject itself. Will-to-power is what you are, because it is what you do.69

Nietzsche rejects materialistic atomism, and credits Ruggiero Boscovich for its decline. Nietzsche writes, "Boscovich taught us to abjure the belief in the last part of the earth that 'stood fast' — the belief in 'substance,' in 'matter,' in the earth-residuum and particle atom: it is the greatest triumph over the senses that has been gained on earth so far" (BGE 12). A noble way of thinking, for Nietzsche, is resistance to sense-evidence. In Beyond Good and Evil, this is the beginning of the case for thinking that what Nietzsche means by 'world' is not what is commonly thought, which includes as a part of its conception the earth as a bundle of matter. For Boscovich, instead of the earth reducing to particles of matter, the earth reduced to centers of force, making up a quantum of energy. It would be contradictory to further say that energy is material.

It is, however, a common position in philosophy of mind and science to say that energy is 'physical', or to transfer this common notion to Nietzsche's case, that forces are 'physical'. Linda Williams suggests this would be a more plausible interpretation of Nietzsche's will-to-power than not. She writes, "Even if one brings in the Nachlass notes

69 Nietzsche writes, "But there is no such substratum; there is no 'being' behind the doing, effecting, becoming; 'the doer' is simply fabricated into the doing—the doing is everything" (GM I 13).
about will to power and forces, the more plausible interpretation is that will to power is Nietzsche’s physics rather than his metaphysics.” This is a position that merits attention. I argue that forces, or wills-to-power, are not physical but the ground of such an interpretation. What is ‘physical’ is called so because it obeys the laws of physics, whatever they are or may be. The laws of physics are the laws by which the universe operates. If by ‘universe’ what is meant is denoted by a synonymous word, ‘everything’, then it seems as if forces must be physical by definition. In other words, forces would be physical by interpretation. However, this is an interpretation from which Nietzsche distances his own experiment.

That there are physical laws to which nature conforms is the basis of any physical interpretation. Section 22 of Beyond Good and Evil makes it clear how and why will-to-power is not physical, and that is the same thing as saying that forces are not physical. Nietzsche calls nature’s conformity to law a bad mode of interpretation, one that ‘makes concessions to the democratic instincts of the modern soul’ (BGE 22). Under this interpretation, every part of nature conforms to, and is equal under, the law. What Nietzsche thinks of such a position is given when he writes, “—a fine instance of ulterior motivation, in which the plebeian antagonism to everything privileged and autocratic as well as second and more refined atheism are disguised once more” (BGE 22). Nietzsche’s point is that the physical interpretation of the world is a projection of certain values, modern democratic ones. A new mode of valuation is nothing apart from a new mode of interpretation, and that is what Nietzsche offers.

Nietzsche grounds the material or physical interpretations of the world in an interpretation that is not material or physical insofar as it purports to be an interpretation of these interpretations, or said differently, a more primordial interpretation. But nevertheless, it is not offered as an interpretation of some 'matter of fact' and does not purport to be an accurate enough interpretation of some 'text' that it could pass as an ultimate explanation. The world Nietzsche creates is not seen in terms of physical laws but relations of forces. For Nietzsche, the world reduces to forces; natural laws and physical laws are really a sort of stagnation in the relations between these forces. Out of the same phenomena of apparent 'necessity' and 'calculability', Nietzsche has read the absolute lack of physical laws, and interpreted relations forged between wills-to-power as underlying physical laws. From this viewpoint, it perhaps does not make sense to characterize these forces as physical because they do not adhere to physical law (how we defined the 'physical') – they are rather the basis of it.

What happens in philosophy, according to Nietzsche, is not something that does not happen in Nietzsche’s own philosophy. Nietzsche accuses the Stoics of imposing their morality, their ideal, on nature, and then claims that this is what happens today “as soon as any philosophy begins to believe in itself. It creates the world in its own image; it cannot do otherwise” (BGE 9). To find the “germ of life from which the whole plant had grown,”71 in the case of will-to-power as an interpretation opposed to the physical one, we need only look to the moral (or immoral) intentions of Nietzsche. In Section 22 of Beyond Good and Evil, Nietzsche comes along with ‘opposite intentions’ and reads out of the same phenomena a radically different interpretation, namely, that no laws inhere in nature, but only enforcement of claims of power. Nietzsche is aware of his interpretation

71 (BGE 6)
as an interpretation. Nietzsche writes, “Supposing that this also is only interpretation—and you will be eager enough to make this objection?—well, so much the better” (BGE 22).

Nietzsche claims that physics is an interpretation, one based on belief in the senses and thereby regarded as an explanation of the world (BGE 14). Nietzsche rejects that physics offers anything like an explanation, and anything given by the senses is already an interpretation. At a certain level, this makes sense: we cannot explain the way the world appears using the same interpretive framework (the senses) that is supposed to be explained. But surely, not all physics is guided by the senses; Nietzsche praised Boscovich for his triumph over the senses in abjuring the belief in the particle-atom (BGE 12). Nevertheless, if the condition of all life is perspectival, and an interpretation owes its distinct existence to its being entertained by some perspective, then to give an ultimate explanation of the world is impossible—it would require being outside of all perspective.

What Maudemarie Clark thinks Nietzsche means by ‘interpretation’ in section 22 is displayed when she writes,

In Section 22, ‘interpretation’ is used in a very different sense, for its contrasting term is not ‘unmediated cognition,’ but ‘matter of fact [or] text’. We do not have unmediated access to this text, of course, but we do have cognitive access to it that is independent of (unmediated by) the kind of ‘interpretation’ that is Nietzsche’s concern in this passage.72

Furthermore, Clark writes,

Nietzsche is clearly not challenging the claim that physics discovers regularities in nature—e.g., the relation between the gravitational force on a falling body and its mass—or saying that the claim to discover such regularities is a way of making concessions to the modern soul. No, precisely such regularities

constitute the ‘text’ in this context, and physicists’ access to this text is independent of the ‘interpretation’ they impose on these regularities when they take them to exemplify ‘nature’s conformity to law.’

Clark holds that the regularity of gravitational force is accessible outside of ‘interpretation’ as Nietzsche means it in Section 22 of Beyond Good and Evil. The ‘interpretation’ the physicist imposes on the regularity of gravitational force has to do with nature’s conformity to law, and this interpretation Nietzsche challenges with an opposing one of will-to-power. Clark understands the regularities of nature to be the ‘matters of fact’ or ‘text’ out of which interpretations are made. Some regularity such as gravitational force is the ‘text’ to which we have cognitive access apart from interpretation. As Clark understands this passage, the regularities of nature are the text, and the text can then be interpreted in two ways: nature’s conformity to law or as will-to-power.

There are no ‘matters of fact’ for Nietzsche, and there is no ‘text’ in the sense of some ‘real’ static state of affairs out of which our interpretations are created. The cognitive access to the text (i.e., the ‘relation between the gravitational force on a falling body and its mass’) is an interpretation. For Nietzsche, physics does not ‘discover’ (as Clark says) regularities in nature; it imputes or imposes them by way of an interpretive framework. The ‘regularity of gravity’ is every bit as much an interpretation and perspectival falsification as is the ‘law of gravity’. The difference is that the ‘law of gravity’ of a physicist is an interpretation of a previous interpretation, namely, of the sense-phenomena.

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Clark does not offer any reason to understand 'interpretation' in this passage as not including any cognition whatsoever. Cognition is always interpretation because cognition is only cognition on the basis of perspectival falsifications, i.e., words, images, and concepts. My point is that Clark does not describe some 'matter of fact' independent of an interpretation in her example of the 'relation between the gravitational force on a falling body and its mass' because the example itself consists only of perspectival falsifications. Moreover, the context of Section 22 suggests that 'interpretation' would include 'cognition', contrary to what Clark must think. Just prior to that section, Nietzsche says that one "should not wrongly reify 'cause' and 'effect,' as the natural scientists do...one should use 'cause' and 'effect' only as pure concepts, that is to say, as conventional fictions for the purpose of designation and communication—not for explanation" (BGE 21). Clark offers no reason to think the same could not be said for 'gravitational,' 'body,' and 'mass'. Why would these not also be conventional fictions and not 'text'.

The discussion so far is relevant to how to understand the experiment of Beyond Good and Evil 36. It is a misguided question to ask what it would mean to offer a conclusive proof of the experiment. For Nietzsche, all perspectives are generated from within the world, i.e., 'viewed from the inside'; this is our only vantage point. Precisely because Nietzsche is not a metaphysician in the traditional sense, he is not attempting to show that the world really is will-to-power; he is offering his own interpretation, one that will replace previous ones (e.g., the mechanistic). In attempting to understand the

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74 Furthermore, Nietzsche writes, "It is we alone who have devised cause, sequence, for-each-other, relativity, constraint, number, law, freedom, motive, and purpose; and when we project and mix this symbol world into things as if it existed 'in-itself,' we act once more as we have always acted—mythologically" (BGE 21).
significance of BGE 36, we must be careful to separate the question of Nietzsche’s position, what he thought, what he offered as an alternative theory, from what he has proved in a traditional sense. This should be a simple point. Christoph Cox makes this point to those who would see in Nietzsche a refutation of metaphysics or God that would entail claims to unconditional certainty. Cox writes,

Therefore, all one can and need do to challenge an interpretation is to provide another interpretation that gives a plausible, but always conjectural, account of as much as possible of human experience from the contingent position of the philosopher as a natural being.\(^{75}\)

Thus the question about whether the proof is conclusive (which is in fact a question about whether or not it is ‘true’) is replaced by the question about whether or not the re-interpretation is ‘more plausible’.

The question about ‘plausibility’ is in fact a question about values. In BGE 22, as Cox points out, Nietzsche seems to suggest that the physicist’s notion of natural law is a bad mode of interpretation precisely because of the values behind it, namely, modern democratic values. Cox writes, “To challenge an existing view, one cannot simply present ‘the plain facts,’ but can only offer a counter-interpretation”.\(^{76}\) This is suggested when Nietzsche writes, “We can destroy only as creators. But let us not forget this either: it is enough to create new names and estimations and probabilities in order to create in the long run new ‘things’” (GS 58).


“In the end not only is it permitted to make this experiment; the conscience of method demands it. Not to assume several kinds of causality until the experiment of making do with a single one has been pushed to its utmost limit (to the point of nonsense, if I may say so)—that is a moral of method which one may not shirk today—it follows ‘from its definition,’ as a mathematician would say” (BGE 36).

Nietzsche’s method:

Nietzsche’s method is an economy of principles; he declares this in the context of disregarding self-preservation as the cardinal instinct of an organic being in favor of will-to-power (BGE 13). According to Linda Williams, Nietzsche rejects mechanistic explanations “because they cannot explain why an action occurs in the first place; that can only explain how an action could occur”. Williams explains that, according to Nietzsche, mechanistic explanations lack a teleological aspect. Because will-to-power can cover teleological and mechanistic behavior, it is a better explanation. This would be an example of the economy of principles at work. In the context of Beyond Good and Evil 36, the question will be whether causality of the will can be hypothetically the only kind. To reduce several kinds of causality down to a single form, Nietzsche calls a ‘moral of method’. Arthur Danto has called this is a ‘methodological monism’, because we try to explain everything in terms of will-to-power. Linda Williams wonders whether there is anything intrinsically immoral about abandoning some form of Ockham’s Razor. Maudemarie Clark wonders why—even if Nietzsche accepts causality of the will—we should posit will-causality as the only kind. Clark writes, “Why not try positing mechanical causality as the only one instead, thus seeing if we can do without the causality of the will? (The latter, after all, is what Nietzsche himself seems to have

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78 Ibid, 42.
Clark is referring to *The Antichrist* 14, where allegedly Nietzsche does away with causality of the will. The causality of the will is dealt with in a later section. The answer is given by the first premise and the experiment: what is being supposed is an ontology that underlies the mechanistic/material world.

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Nietzsche’s project and fundamental ontology:

By asking us to suppose a new ‘given’, we are being asked to suppose a new ontological foundation, one that, on the basis of which, is sufficient for understanding the material world. The experiment of Beyond Good and Evil 36 results in a power-ontology. However, when Nietzsche writes that ‘the world is will-to-power and nothing else,’ this should not be taken as traditional substance ontology. I argue that the ontology Nietzsche is doing in Beyond Good and Evil 36 is similar to the “fundamental ontology” of Heidegger in Being and Time. The supposed ‘given’ is the world of our desires and passions, which will eventually be seen to be a world of forces best described by a will-to-power—as Nietzsche’s proposition has it. I argue that the supposed ‘given’ stands to the material world in roughly the same way that the ready-to-hand equipment stands to the present-at-hand ‘Things’. That is to say, the material world interpretation emerges out of an ontologically prior world of our will-to-power. In this section, I outline Heidegger’s project as far as it is relevant and compare it to Nietzsche’s.

1. Heidegger, ready-to-hand and present-at-hand

According to Heidegger, traditional substance ontology operates entrenched in the subject-object dichotomy. To inquire about what underlies things of nature is to be doing traditional substance ontology. Heidegger’s project in understanding the world by doing fundamental ontology is radically different from traditional ontology. Heidegger writes, “Ontologically, ‘world’ is not a way of characterizing those entities which Dasein essentially is not; it is rather a characteristic of Dasein itself” (Heidegger, BT, 92).

Heidegger distinguishes between two ontological categories: ‘ready-to-hand’ and

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81 For our purposes, it will suffice to understand Dasein as human existence, or existence in general, because part of Nietzsche’s project is eliminating that distinction as essential.
'present-at-hand'. Only after an entity is taken as 'present-at-hand' is it possible to theorize a subject-object dichotomy, and thus do traditional substance ontology. As I will show through an explication of Heidegger’s two ontological categories, the radicality of Heidegger’s position is in proposing that the 'ready-to-hand' is ontologically more primordial than 'present-at-hand'. The present-at-hand understanding of entities emerges from a breakdown of an ontologically prior way of dealing with entities, namely, as ready-to-hand. At the heart of Heidegger's break in ontology from the traditional is in considering entities to be not known theoretically primarily, but foremost; as Heidegger writes, "they are simply what gets used, what gets produced, and so forth" (Heidegger, BT, 92). Dasein first and foremost stands in a relationship of involvement prior to theoretical cognizing.

By 'ready-to-hand,' Heidegger means those entities which we encounter in our concern, i.e., 'equipment,' which Heidegger characterizes as essentially something 'in-order-to' (Heidegger BT, 97). As Heidegger explains, "The kind of Being which equipment possesses – in which it manifests itself in its own right – we call 'readiness-to-hand'" (Heidegger BT 98). The idea is that equipment is 'ready-to-hand' when it is suitable 'in-order-to' do a task. What shows up for Dasein first and foremost is the ready-to-handedness of an entity. For example, what shows up in our relation to the pen is how it writes 'in order to' have notes 'for' finishing an essay, which is 'for the sake of' understanding philosophy. Using the pen in this way is a dealing with the entities in the world; the dealing that is closest to us is this manipulation which puts entities to use. More importantly, equipment which is ready-to-hand has a certain significance or value
in virtue of being ready-to-hand; that is to say, equipment is useful for some practical human endeavor.

An entity which is ‘present-at-hand’ is taken as a person-independent, causal and external ‘thing’. This is what natural science takes as its subject. According to Heidegger, we discover present-at-hand only through a breakdown of readiness-to-hand. When there is a disruption of our involvement with the ready-to-hand, only then does what is present-at-hand become disclosed. There are a number of ways this can happen, but for our purposes it will suffice to say that the result of each is that what was previously ready-to-hand is now un-ready-to-hand. According to Heidegger, we do not understand ‘nature’ as that which is merely present-at-hand. As Heidegger explains, “The wood is a forest of timber, the mountain a quarry of rock; the river is water-power, the wind is wind ‘in the sails’” (Heidegger BT, 100) For Dasein, the cognition of an entity as ready-to-hand comes prior to the theoretical observation of it as merely present-at-hand. The important and radical idea is that ready-to-hand equipment is ontologically prior (or more fundamental) than present-at-hand objects.

According to Heidegger, calling an entity a ‘thing’ anticipates a certain ontological character. Heidegger claims that it is one of substantiality, materiality, and extendedness (Heidegger BT, 96) This category of Being, present-at-hand, is devoid of any implied human significance or value. As Robert Brandom explains, “Properties, by contrast, are what characterize the present-at-hand independently of human practical ends”. 82 For example, the pen is present-at-hand when it is not working and is a lump of valueless matter extracted from the contexture of relations it was as ‘ready-to-hand’.

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The difference between theoretical and practical behavior is not as simple as the distinction between observation and action. As Heidegger explains, "'Practical' behaviour is not 'atheoretical' in the sense of 'sightlessness'" (Heidegger, BT, 99). The kind of sight or savvy by which we understand equipment to be suitable for a task is called 'circumspection'. In the case of circumspection, our concern is not with the properties of the tool itself but the work to be done with it. Readiness-to-hand cannot be discovered by the bare perceptual cognition which is what is put to use in purely theoretical investigations. This is the sort of cognition that concerns itself just by looking idly toward outward appearances – and what it finds, for Heidegger, is the category of Being which is 'present-at-hand'.

The distinction between ready-to-hand and present-at-hand is rooted in ontology. Heidegger's anti-traditional move was to assert the ontological priority of readiness-to-hand. Previous ontology, substance ontology, considered present-at-hand as a prior and necessary condition for what was ready-to-hand. This traditional ontology was taken up with cataloguing the underlying substances of the universe, which it was thought were prior to Dasein's making use of them. As Charles B. Guignon explains,

In Heidegger's vocabulary, the world of average everydayness is not an aggregate of present-at-hand' objects, things that just occur, but is a holistic contexture of relations, the 'ready-to-hand,' where that something is – its 'ontological definition' – is determined by its role within the projects under way within the workshop.83

To say that readiness-to-hand is ontologically prior to present-at-hand is to say that the world of human significances is more primordial than that of extended things, which are characterized by substantiality.

Heidegger has created these ontological categories (ready-to-hand and present-at-hand) which apply to the world according to Dasein in its average everydayness. The idea is that through the method of studying average everydayness, we come to see the world of significances and functional relations, and that this is most basic. ‘Things’ only show up in our concern with projects and the disturbances of practical affairs. It is an illusion to think that there are first present-at-hand things in space which get concatenated into equipmental relations.

That Heidegger might be an idealist would be a misguided understanding because the notion of the subjective arises only after entities have shown themselves as present-at-hand, and when this is then taken as ontologically primary. Only then does the theoretical observation begin which distinguishes between subject and object. Instead, for Heidegger, the breakdown of the ready-to-hand discloses the functional relations which make up what Heidegger calls the ‘worldhood’ of the world. Guignon writes,

If follows, then, that what is ‘given’ in average everyday dealings with the world is a holistic ‘equipmental totality,’ a web of functional relationships in which things are encountered in their interdependent functions and in terms of their relevance to what we are doing (Guignon 10).

II. Relevance to Nietzsche

There are a number of ways in which I think this is relevant to the kind of ontology Nietzsche is proposing in Beyond Good and Evil 36. Firstly, by asking us to suppose that the world of desires and passions is also sufficient for understanding the material/mechanistic world, Nietzsche is proposing that a world of significances or values is ontologically more primordial than a substantial, extended, material world. That is to say that given Nietzsche’s perspectivism, the ontological question becomes not ‘what is

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84 A similar case should be made for Nietzsche. Nietzsche is not an idealist because the subject, the ego, or ‘idea’ is a fiction—and the fiction ‘of a subject’ only as a fiction.
that?’, but a more fundamental ‘what is that, to me?’—an interpretation that is driven by valuation. Secondly, for Nietzsche, the subject-object dichotomy arises only out of the framework of interpretation of ‘things’. Thirdly, I believe Nietzsche understands and uses the word “world” in the conclusion of Beyond Good and Evil 36 to signify a contexture of relations. This is similar to how Heidegger understands the word “world”.

We tend to think that there is some brute material structure to the world which we put into the service of our desires and passions, our will. That is to say, there is some substructure that remains apart from all the relations that involve it—a “reality”. In the appearance-reality distinction, this substructure apart from all relations is the ‘reality’. That our world of desires and passions (our world of will) is ontologically the most fundamental is suggested when Nietzsche writes,

That mountain there! That cloud there! What is ‘real’ in that? Subtract the phantasm and every human contribution from it, my sober friends! If you can! If you can forget your descent, your past, your training—all of your humanity and animality. There is no ‘reality’ for us—not for you either, my sober friends (GS 57).

The importance of this passage lies in the idea that there is no objective reality that remains over after every ‘human contribution’ has been removed, at least not for a human. By ‘descent, past, and training,’ Nietzsche means the continual inheriting of the ‘errors’ that have been useful for the preservation of the species. The errors to which Nietzsche often refers are primarily that there are things, substances, and bodies (GS 110). That there are substances, and identical ‘things,’ emerges out of the useful errors of the intellect, and then come to count as ‘reality’. In other words, what we count as ‘real’ is what has made its presence felt to us—impacted upon us—by not being completely

85 In The Will-to-Power, Nietzsche writes, “‘Essence,’ the ‘essential nature,’ is something perspective and already presupposes a multiplicity. At the bottom of it there always lies ‘what is that for me?’ (for us, for all that lives, etc)” (WP 556).
malleable to our whim and will; whatever is ‘real’ is considered so because it resists us. In Heideggerian terminology, this is the breakdown of the ready-to-hand.

Nietzsche offers an account of our ‘useful errors’ (or ‘appearances’) becoming solidified into reality. Nietzsche refers to this as ‘appearance becoming essence’. As Nietzsche explains,

The reputation, name, and appearance, the usual measure and weight of a thing, what it counts for—originally almost always wrong and arbitrary, thrown over things like a dress and altogether foreign to their nature and even to their skin—all this grows from generation unto generation, merely because people believe in it, until it gradually grows to be part of the thing and turns into its very body. What at first was appearance becomes in the end, almost invariably, the essence and is effective as such (GS 58, emphasis added).

Nietzsche continues to declare that to point out this origin of ‘things’ is to destroy the world that counts for real, “so-called ‘reality’” (GS 58). That is to say, to point out the origin of our interpreting according to the framework of ‘things’ – as substantial, material, extended – is to destroy the ontological primacy of the material world (the ‘present-at-hand’ world). In this passage, the first mention of ‘thing’ must be taken in the most non-committal sense, because it is a ‘thing’ without the ‘body’ that grows from generation to generation.

Our experience of the world as substantial, material, extended is shaped by our descent, our human and animal past. Nietzsche beautifully writes,

I have discovered for myself that the human and animal past, indeed the whole primal age and past of all sentient being continues in me to invent, to love, to hate, and to infer. I suddenly woke up in the midst of this dream, but only to the consciousness that I am dreaming and that I must go on dreaming lest I perish—as a somnambulist must go on dreaming lest he fall (GS 54).

Walter Kaufmann, in a footnote to this passage, explains that, for Nietzsche, the world of our experience lacks objectivity and independent reality. It could be said that we
experience 'appearance'—but there is no 'essence' behind the appearance—'we must go on dreaming'. As Walter Kaufman explains, "'Appearance' is not a mask that we might hope to remove from the face of an unknown x. There is no objective reality, no thing-in-itself; there is only appearance in one or another perspective" (footnote to GS 54). The importance of this passage is in considering perspective and interpretation to be essential. As Nietzsche exclaims in Twilight of the Idols, "The 'apparent' world is the only one: the 'real' world has only been *lyingly added...*' (TI 'Reason in Philosophy', 2).

This point is expanded in the unpublished writings. As Nietzsche there explains, "The origin of 'things' is wholly the work of that which imagines, thinks, wills, feels." (WP 556, 2(152)) For Nietzsche, a thing is nothing more than its qualities, which are everything which matters to us. Nietzsche writes, "In brief: the 'object' is the sum of the *obstacles* encountered that we have become conscious of. A quality thus always expresses something of 'usefulness' or 'harm' to us" (Bittner 2(77)). This is precisely Heidegger's point in explaining the 'present-at-hand' understanding of entities emerges out of the breakdown of a 'ready-to-hand' understanding.  

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86 'Thingness' was first created by us (WP 569).
The ‘world’ and value imposition:

The sort of ontology which Nietzsche is doing is fundamentally different from traditional substance ontology. The sort of ontology which Nietzsche is doing is not metaphysical in the traditional sense. Although, it can be depicted as if it were a traditional substance ontology, where ‘substance’ is made up of immaterial forces—this is misleading. Given Nietzsche’s perspectivism, the ontological question becomes not ‘what is that?’, but most fundamentally ‘what is that, to me?’—and interpretation is driven by valuation. Nietzsche writes, “The world which matters to us is only illusory, is unreal.—But the concept of ‘really, truly there’ is one we drew out of ‘mattering-to-us’: the more our interests are touched on, the more we believe in the ‘reality’ of a thing or being.”

Because perspective and interpretation are essential, the question of ontology is now, ‘What is that, for me?’

In Heidegger’s philosophy, Dasein is a notion that is a re-conception of human existence as not standing apart, or distinguished from, something Dasein essentially is not; in the tradition, this is often ‘the world’ conceived of as a collection or container of objects. When human existence is characterized as somehow different from the world conceived as in the natural sciences, that is, as something existing outside of human existence itself, an epistemological problem arises of how the human represents that external existence. The subject-object dichotomy, for Heidegger, is the product of a disengaged theoretical perspective—an objective perspective, which is not as basic (or ‘primordial’) as Dasein’s engaged mode of involvement with the world. For Heidegger, the world is not a collection of objects best described with the terminology used to

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87 Rudiger Bittner, ed., Writings from the Late Notebooks (Cambridge University Press, 2003), 109 or 5(19)
describe present-at-hand objects (i.e., substantial 'things'), but instead the context of relationships of Dasein. According to Heidegger, Dasein and world are inseparable, and the world cannot be talked about apart from Dasein. In *Origin of the Work of Art*, Heidegger discusses how the artwork reveals a world. Heidegger uses the example of Van Gogh's painting of a peasant woman's shoes. In the example, what is revealed by the shoes is the interlocking practices and purposes which constitute the significances of the peasant woman—the shoes are her 'equipment'. Significances are made up of the practical purposes and intentions for which Dasein used equipment. As Heidegger explains, "Significance is that on the basis of which the world is disclosed as such" (Heidegger, BT, 182).

For Nietzsche, philosophy has this same world-creating function. A philosopher, according to Nietzsche, projects his significances onto the world as his philosophy, and one can read out of that world the philosopher's significances, that is, valuations, his morality. In *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche claims that when philosophy begins to believe in itself, it creates the world in its own image (BGE 9). That is to say, that it imposes its morality onto nature. As Nietzsche explains, "Philosophy is this tyrannical drive itself, the most spiritual will to power, to the 'creation of the world,' to the *causa prima*" (BGE 9). If the world is a contexture of relations from which significance issues, the creation of a world will be bound up inseparably from valuation; indeed, interpretation would be created via valuations.

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88 Heidegger describes the contexture of purposes, goals, significances of the peasant woman when he writes, "This equipment is pervaded by uncomplaining anxiety as to the certainty of bread, the wordless joy of having once more withstood want, and trembling before the impending childbirth and shivering at the surrounding menace of death" (Heidegger, PLT, 33).

89 Nietzsche writes, "In the philosopher, conversely, there is nothing whatever that is impersonal; and above all, his morality bears decided and decisive witness to who he is—that is, in what order of rank the innermost drives of his nature stand in relation to each other" (BGE 6).
The theme of creating a world is taken up in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. Zarathustra speaks to the wisest of men about the world-creating will. Nietzsche writes,

That is your entire will, you wisest men; it is a will to power; and that is so even when you talk of good and evil and of the assessment of values. You want to create the world before which you can kneel: that is your ultimate hope and intoxication (TSZ, Part II, Of Self-Overcoming).

Later in the book, Zarathustra declares that our supposing should be bound by conceivability, at which point, Nietzsche writes, “Could you *create* a god? – So be silent about all gods! But you could surely create the Superman” (TSZ, Part II, On the Blissful Islands). According to Nietzsche, we can transform ourselves into the forefathers and ancestors of the Superman, and this would be our ‘finest creating’. Nietzsche then writes, “And you yourselves should create what you have hitherto called the World: the World should be formed in your image, by your reason, your will, and your love” (TSZ, Part II, On the Blissful Islands)! According to Nietzsche, this creating by ‘images and parables’ should be a eulogy and justification of all transitoriness; that is to say, it should be the creation of meaning, a human meaning.

The idea here is that the world as a significant whole is inseparable from human valuation, and vice versa. Gregory Schufreider takes up this idea when he writes, “Primarily, ‘world’ signifies the whole of being. At the same time, however, it signifies that within which human beings exist; and it is crucial to see that these two senses are inseparable”. The process of constituting a whole, out of which significance issues, is called “interpretation”. As Schufreider explains, “Strictly speaking, interpretation is world-interpretation: the construing of things according to a certain rank and order which

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assigns to each a meaningful place within the whole.” In a notebook entry, Nietzsche refers to interpretation as the introduction of meaning, usually replacing old meanings that have become incomprehensible (WP 604). Interpretation is inextricably linked to valuation, which requires a ‘view of the whole’.

Ruediger Grimm argues that Nietzsche constructs a radically new cognitive paradigm, free from the short-comings of the tradition—one that amounts to the constitution of a new world, not merely a new way of looking at the old one. There is no presupposition of a reality that is objective and determines and conditions our perceptions. Grimm writes,

We must view the characterization of the world as will to power as itself a creative interpretation which serves to unify and direct the rest of our interpretations, analogous to a working hypothesis in the natural sciences. Furthermore, Grimm writes, “For Nietzsche, there is no world apart from interpretations of it: the world itself is an interpretive process”. The traditional cognitive paradigm maintains distinctions between subject and object, appearance and reality. In Nietzsche’s model, subject and object are equated according to their activity: will-to-power. Appearance and reality are equated. There is no ‘external’ world that acts upon us, such an interpretation is our activity upon other power-centers. For Nietzsche, will-to-power is a characterization of this process of interpretation.

Every center of force develops its own perspective, its own world. The world is the sum of beings that fabricate worlds, the sum of forces. This is a point referred to

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93 Ibid, 69.
94 2(148) – will to power interprets
extensively in The Will to Power. Thus Nietzsche writes poetically, "Every soul is a world of its own; for every soul every other soul is an afterworld.... For me – how could there be an outside-of-me? There is no outside" (TSZ The Convalescent)! The "power of this praising and blaming is a monster" (TSZ, Of the Thousand and One Goals), and it is a "monster of force" (WP 1067).

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95 The world is a totality of actions (WP 567) It is a world of relationships (WP 568) There is only another kind of phenomenal world (WP 569) The 'real' world is an apparent world once again (WP 566).
Making a metaphysic:

According to Linda Williams, if we consider only the conclusion of Beyond Good and Evil 36 then "we could conclude that will to power was Nietzsche's metaphysics—the entire world is will to power" (Williams 1996 454). Nietzsche does, in some places, use metaphysical language with reference to will-to-power. However, will-to-power is not a traditional metaphysical principle for Nietzsche, at least not in the sense that it goes above or beyond the world. The theory tells you that the world is will-to-power as an embodiment of will-to-power—as will-to-power itself. It is suffering and impotence that creates all afterworlds (TSZ Pt.I Of the Afterworldsmen). Does Nietzsche do untraditional metaphysics?

According to George Stack, will-to-power is not a metaphysics because Nietzsche believes we know only what has been filtered through the senses, as well as language and concepts. As Stack explains, "We know phenomena or 'effects' as constituted, in numerous aspects, by ourselves. However, the realm of phenomenal appearances is not our creation (as in idealism)." Surely Stack does not think that we 'ourselves' constitute the phenomena for ourselves, the act of a conscious subject, which is what we call our 'self'. Presumably, he thinks it is a bodily, or psycho-physiological constitution. The way we constitute, appropriate, and transmute what becomes knowledge is our anthropomorphizing it – interpreting it according to our needs.

There is this idea that since Nietzsche is not concerned with the ultimate nature of reality, or concerned to represent the facts, he is not a metaphysician. According to

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96 For example, Nietzsche refers to will-to-power as an 'essence' (BGE 186) and (GM II, 12).
98 Ibid, 191.
Gregory Schufreider, Nietzsche clarifies the hidden essence of metaphysics, and then proceeds to do metaphysics. Nietzsche is a self-reflective metaphysician. Metaphysics need not have anything to do with the conception of truth that would have truth be an ascertaining of facts, i.e., a correspondence theory of truth, but rather, a creative positing. Schufreider calls Nietzsche an artistic metaphysician. According to Schufreider, metaphysics can mean the attempt to infuse the world with meaning, to bestow things with significance, not to determine some truth. According to Schufreider, Nietzsche is an anti-metaphysical metaphysician. This position makes sense if there are two different conceptions of metaphysics here, where 'anti-metaphysical' refers to traditional metaphysics. Schufreider writes,

Nietzsche is an anti-metaphysical metaphysician. One of the things this signifies is that while, on the one hand, he is willing to venture a view of the whole, on the other, he holds that metaphysics as traditionally understood is impossible. No view of the whole can be 'true' when truth entails correspondence to facts.

It seems here that the primary distinction between the two conceptions of metaphysics revolves around the correspondence theory of truth. The two conceptions of metaphysics are distinguished by what they offer; one offers us 'truth' and the other offers us 'significance'.

The second conception of metaphysics, which offers 'significance', Schufreider calls 'artistic metaphysics'; it involves the creation of a view of the whole. The view of the whole must be created, invented. The metaphysician here is not attempting to explain,

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101 Ibid, 267.
102 Ibid, 271.
but to interpret—"to assemble beings into the rank and order of a world". It may be the case that Nietzsche thinks there are no facts before a world-interpretation is in place. If that were the case, the traditional conception of metaphysics would depend on the artistic one. An indication that this is the case is offered when Nietzsche writes, "On a yet higher level is to posit a goal and mold facts according to it; that is, active interpretation and not merely conceptual translation." (WP 605) Given this second conception of metaphysics, it is inconsequential whether Nietzsche thinks this proof is, in fact, "conclusive".

Wolfgang Müller-Lauter argues that Nietzsche is doing metaphysics but that this should not be taken to mean a narrow view of metaphysics in the sense of a two-worlds theory. As Müller-Lauter explains, "He names the ground of being and defines being as a whole in terms of it; his thinking is metaphysics in the sense we are familiar with from the long history of Western philosophy". Müller-Lauter argues that Nietzsche re-erects metaphysics and then collapses it; in his own words, "the destruction of metaphysics by its own resources". Müller-Lauter cites Jaspers. For Jaspers’ Nietzsche, world reality is a process of being interpreted. Interpretation – this process – comes to a kind of perfection in the self-comprehension of this interpreting: an interpretation of interpretations. This is what Nietzsche’s interpretation is: an interpretation of interpretations.

According to Ruediger Grimm, Nietzsche is a metaphysician that overcomes the circularity of traditional metaphysics. He does this by embracing the problem of

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105 Ibid, 122.
circularity and thinking it through to its inevitable conclusion. That conclusion is that metaphysical thinking, which seeks to explain reality as a whole, is unjustifiable. Since Nietzsche only attempts to explain reality as a whole as a perspectival fiction, he does not suffer the circularity problem. But is Nietzsche still a metaphysician? How is his 'metaphysic' justified? Nietzsche's position is justified by a meta-theoretical epistemology, namely, that 'all knowing is interpretive'.\(^\text{107}\) However what saves Nietzsche at this point is that its metatheoretical status 'evaporates' when it is successfully implemented – and by 'successful' presumably Grimm means it enhances power. We see here that the scholar who concludes that we cannot account for reality in an absolute sense is most likely the type to point out that Nietzsche is not offering an 'explanation', but merely another 'fiction' – a 'description'.

Grimm has argued that circularity is an inevitable feature of any metaphysic. What he means is that any theory about reality 'as a whole' verifies itself by way of referring back to itself, its own criteria. As Grimm explains, "When reason seeks to understand the world as a whole, it must at some point seek to understand itself as a part of that world".\(^\text{108}\) Furthermore, Grimm writes,

That is to say, in its attempt to explain all of reality, a metaphysical proposition inevitably comes upon itself as a feature of that reality which it attempts to explain...and yet, the metaphysical proposition in question possesses no other standard for such explanation than itself, and is consequently circular or self-referentially inconsistent.\(^\text{109}\)

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\(^{107}\) Grimm's position is that Nietzsche's epistemic position is itself a sort of meta-position or meta-theoretical proposition. As Grimm explains, "it is meta-theoretical because, as stated, it says nothing about the world as such, i.e. it is not a world theory. It addresses itself only to those theories or statements which themselves say something about the world, and what it says about them is that they are all interpretations" (Grimm 301). The result for Grimm is that all metaphysical and epistemological positions are relativized.


\(^{109}\) Ibid, 291.
This circularity is a problem faced by the metaphysician. Any statement about reality as a whole must refer back to grounds internal to the theory from which it came for justification. But is any statement about reality ‘as a whole’ a metaphysical statement? That is exactly how Grimm defines it. A metaphysical statement covers all cases. Grimm believes Nietzsche is a metaphysician, and argues that he offers a ‘powerful and elegant solution’.

One solution to the circularity problem is nihilism: to relinquish any hope of ultimate justification. Grimm depicts this position when he writes,

This would be the awareness on the part of reason that it is simply incapable of grounding, justifying, or explaining itself in any ultimate fashion. But this is not an attempt to resolve the problem by any means.110

For Grimm, this means turning your back to metaphysics. We will see that this is exactly what Nietzsche does. But given what Grimm thinks Nietzsche’s answer to the circularity problem is, it is difficult to see how this ‘nihilistic’ conclusion is not contained within it. In other words, it is obvious that Nietzsche turns his back on any kind of ‘ultimate’ explanatory reference – there is no referring outside of a perspective. Grimm writes, “Nietzsche’s solution is to embrace the problem of circularity and think it through to its inevitable conclusion”.111 If all knowing is interpretation, including knowing that statement is true, where truth is what increases power, then the statement itself is an interpretation. Nietzsche’s solution appears to turn the problem around on anyone who would seek an objective, non-interpretive question about how Nietzsche’s metaphysic is justified.

111 Ibid, 294.
However, in light of Nietzsche’s not claiming objective, non-interpretive truth, how does Grimm still think Nietzsche is offering a metaphysic? It seems to me that the objection that Nietzsche’s epistemology (all knowing is interpretation) is precisely the reason that Nietzsche does not have a metaphysic is legitimately raised. We can see at the end of Grimm’s text that he maintains Nietzsche is a metaphysician by changing how the term is usually understood. In response to Heidegger’s position that Nietzsche is the last metaphysician, Grimm writes,

I do not agree that metaphysics is impossible after Nietzsche, as Heidegger implies. If we accept Nietzsche’s epistemic position, metaphysics is not only still possible but probably more viable than ever. Of course, we should have to abandon the traditional notion that metaphysics somehow reveals to us eternal verities about reality as such.\footnote{Ruediger Grimm, \textit{Nietzsche’s Theory of Knowledge}. (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1977), 304.}

The case can be made for Nietzsche being a metaphysician if that word is emptied of its ancient superstitious lineage and rendered reusable—an undertaking that is required for causality in order to understand \textit{Beyond Good and Evil} \textit{36}. Traditional metaphysics is concerned with the ultimate nature of reality; for Nietzsche, there is no ultimate nature of reality apart from us. There is no truth-as-such, but only yours, mine, ours.
"The question is in the end whether we really recognize the will as efficient, whether we believe in the causality of the will: if we do—and at bottom our faith in this is nothing less than our faith in causality itself—then we have to make the experiment of positing the causality of the will hypothetically as the only one. ‘Will,’ of course, can affect only ‘will’—and not ‘matter’ (not ‘nerves,’ for example). In short, one has to risk the hypothesis whether will does not affect will wherever ‘effects’ are recognized—and whether all mechanical occurrences are not, insofar as a force is active in them, will force, effects of will" (BGE 36).

The problem of will-causality and equivocation:

Nietzsche’s method involves the idea of causality. If we believe in causality of the will, and if we believe in causality itself, then we must see if will-causality could be the only one. That ‘will’ could only affect ‘will’ is a reiteration of the first premise where we supposed that the material world was really the world of our desires and passions, i.e., will, and thereby will-to-power or force.

George Stack argues that virtually all of the claims made in Beyond Good and Evil 36 are repudiated elsewhere. For Stack, this indicates that will-to-power is an exercise in constructing a philosophical myth, an “aesthetic, mythopoetic, invention, a philosophical myth that seeks to synthesize art and science”. Stack claims that the thought experiment which reduces modes of causation to the causality of will is the most revealing supposition of them all. As Stack explains, “That there is a distinct ‘will’ which ‘causes’ specific ‘effects’ is often characterized as an absolutely fallacious assumption”. The claim is that Nietzsche simply rejects the causality of will as an error. By calling will-to-power a ‘mythopoetic creation,’ the suggestion is that will-to-power is not extra-perspectivally true. This is a point that Nietzsche makes extremely clear. There is no such extra-perspectival way things are; when we emphasize this in

113 George Stack, Nietzsche: Man, Knowledge, and Will to Power (Durango: Hollowbrook, 1994), 272.
114 Ibid, 274.
relation to will-to-power, we must be careful not to forget that it applies to physical, biological, and material interpretations—because it applies to all interpretations. And there are only interpretations. The question of why Stack calls the will-to-power interpretation a myth is dealt with in a later section.

In *Twilight of the Idols*, Nietzsche explains that we have believed ourselves to be causal agents in the act of willing. According to Nietzsche, we derived our knowledge of a cause from the realm of ‘inner facts’; the ‘inner facts’ that had guaranteed causality for us are that of the ego/subject as causal (TI ‘Errors’ 3). However, Nietzsche explains that this guarantee or proof of causality from the celebrated realm of ‘inner facts’ is no longer the case. As Nietzsche explains,

> Of these three ‘inner facts’ through which causality seemed to be guaranteed the first and most convincing was that of *will as cause*...Today, we do not believe a word of it. The ‘inner world’ is full of phantoms and false lights: the will is one of them. The will no longer moves anything, consequently no longer explains anything – it merely accompanies events, it can also be absent (TI ‘Errors’ 3).

Similarly, Nietzsche writes, “At the beginning stands the great fateful error that the will is something which *produces an effect* – that the will is a *faculty*...Today we know it is merely a word” (TI ‘Reason’ 5). That the will causes an effect is an error. What are we to make of this claim?

Arthur Danto makes an interesting suggestion and one that is applicable to causality of the will; he writes,

> The fact that our beliefs are false relative to that theory of truth (the Correspondence Theory) in accordance with which we demanded that they be true is perfectly irrelevant as to whether we should hold these beliefs.\

The point Danto is making applied to causality of the will is that to say causality of the will is false or erroneous is not to recommend its abandonment. Nor does Nietzsche

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suggest doing so; in the first quoted passage above, Nietzsche is not questioning the origin of our knowledge of what a cause is; he is questioning the origin of our belief we possessed this knowledge.\textsuperscript{116} As Danto has pointed out, it is only the beliefs about our beliefs that Nietzsche attacks.\textsuperscript{117} For Nietzsche, according to Danto, our truths are arbitrary structurings of chaos. It is not a criticism of them to say they are false; in other words, that they do not correspond to anything real. The problem, here as elsewhere, is not one of truth but one of value.\textsuperscript{118} Thus, to say that causality is false is not to recommend its abandonment.

This point is demonstrated in Twilight of the Idols where Nietzsche claims that there is no more dangerous error than mistaking the consequence (or effect) for the cause. Nietzsche claims that every proposition of religion and morality contains it (TI 'Errors' 1). Nietzsche discusses the example of Cornaro who recommended his diet for a long and happy life. Cornaro saw in his diet the cause of a long life—and for anyone. Nietzsche explains that Cornaro followed his diet, because he had to follow it—he became sick otherwise. Cornaro mistook the consequence of his physiology – a meager diet – for the cause of his long life. Here, as in the case of causality, Nietzsche examines the ground of our belief in particular designations of ‘cause’ and ‘effect’, and not necessarily the concepts themselves.

In the preface to Beyond Good and Evil, Nietzsche calls the dogmatist’s error the most dangerous of all errors. Nietzsche refers to Plato’s invention of the ‘good as such’. What makes this error dangerous is not different from the Cornaro example. What makes

\textsuperscript{116} Nietzsche writes, “We have always believed we know what a cause is: but whence did we derive our knowledge, more precisely our belief we possessed this knowledge” (TI ‘Errors’ 3)?


\textsuperscript{118} Danto writes, “To attach a value to life is derivatively to attach a value to whatever makes life possible”. Arthur Danto, Nietzsche as Philosopher (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1965), 72.
this error dangerous is its denying perspective; as Nietzsche writes about Plato’s error, “To be sure, it meant standing truth on her head and denying perspective, the basic condition of all life, when one spoke of the spirit and the good as Plato did” (BGE Preface). The danger of the error of causality is in supposing that any particular ‘cause’ and ‘effect’ apply the same way across any possible perspective; in other words, they hold true independent of any perspective.

Rex Welshon writes, “first, he claims that causes and effects are not things; secondly, he argues that causes and effects are not mechanistic things; thirdly, he thinks that causality is not a nomological relationship; fourthly, he usually claims also that causality is not a necessary relationship”.119 About the first, Nietzsche rejects the idea that a cause is a material thing that reaches beyond a perspective. As Nietzsche explains,

One should not wrongly reify ‘cause’ and ‘effect,’ as the natural scientists do (and whoever, like them, now ‘naturalizes’ in his thinking), according to the prevailing mechanical doltishness which makes the cause press and push until it ‘effects’ its end; one should use ‘cause’ and ‘effect’ only as pure concepts, that is to say, as conventional fictions for the purpose of designation and communication—not for explanation (BGE 21).

Here, Nietzsche accuses natural scientists, or anyone who ‘naturalizes’ their thinking, of making the abstractions of ‘cause’ and ‘effect’ into material notions. Nietzsche does not accept a causality that assumes separate entities, one cause and one effect; not in a relational world where there are no separate ‘things’. To use ‘cause’ and ‘effect’ as conventional fictions would mean to recognize these concepts as perspectival falsifications. This is evident when Nietzsche writes, “We operate only with things that do not exist: lines, planes, atoms, divisible time spans, divisible spaces. How should explanations be at all possible when we first turn everything into an image, our image”

Explanation is not possible with conventional fictions because Nietzsche aligns ‘explanation’ with an accurate depiction of a perspectival independent reality. However, as Welshon correctly notes, the rejection of causality as perspective-independent noumenal occurrence, or as a material phenomenon, or as a physical law-like necessitated phenomenon, does not entail that there can be no causal relations. Welshon writes, “Disowning particular theories of causality on the grounds that they neglect its perspectivity leaves Nietzsche the option of advocating a perspective on causality that does not neglect its perspectivity”. Any view of causality that did not neglect its perspectivity would hold it to be a conditional relation between things (using ‘thing’ in the most noncommittal sense).

According to Nietzsche, we draw out of continuous flux of forces the relationships of cause and effect. Doing this requires we impose artificial distinctions (GS 112). Along these lines, Linda Williams writes,

For Nietzsche, the world is a continuous flux of events from which no physical laws can be inferred but only on which they can be imposed, like a musical score on a movie. To label some event as a ‘cause’ is to make discrete some portion of the flux—to make some bit of the flux have a ‘beginning’ and an ‘end’ because the ‘cause’ must stop before the ‘effects’ from amid this continuous stream of events.

The imposition of a causal sequence is a falsification of the continual flux of becoming. A mistaken view of causality holds that we have discovered something extra-perspectival when we impose ‘cause’ and ‘effect’ onto the flux. According to Nietzsche, an intellect that could see a continuous flux without arbitrary divisions would repudiate ‘cause’ and ‘effect’ (GS 112)—but, of course, cause and effect are just these divisions.

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In *Human All-Too-Human*, Nietzsche accuses philosophers of corrupting the maxims of moralists by attempting to prove them beyond the limits of how they were intended, namely, as a rough guide or truth suited for ‘fellow-countrymen for a single decade’ (HATH Maxims and Opinions 5). This, according to Nietzsche, was the case with Schopenhauer’s will. In this passage, Nietzsche indicates that ‘poetic metaphor’ has something to do with ‘generalization’ when he describes the fate of Schopenhauer’s will; Nietzsche writes, “For (Schopenhauer’s) will was made into a poetic metaphor, when it was held that all things in nature possess will” (HATH Maxims and Opinions 5). The generalization in this case is from the human realm to ‘all things in nature’. Later in the same work, Nietzsche explains that Schopenhauer holds the same prejudice as the moral man in that the ultimate explanation of the entirety of things is connected with “that about the ethical significance of human actions” (HATH Maxims and Opinions 33). These two passages indicate that ‘poetic metaphor’ is designated when the application of some maxim is over extended in some sense.

According to Rex Welshon, *Beyond Good and Evil* 21 appears to recommend a “blanket elimination of causality”. However, this is not the case. According to *Beyond Good and Evil* 21, ‘cause’ and ‘effect’ should be used only as conventional fictions for designation and communication. Again here, the point is that causal connections are not a noumenal relationship.

Nietzsche explains that cause and effect became the basic faith that man applies wherever anything happens, and this is what we still do instinctively (GS 127). Nietzsche

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claims that “every thoughtless person supposes the will alone is effective; that willing is something simple, a brute datum, underivable, intelligible by itself” (GS 127). What Nietzsche must mean by ‘thoughtless’ here is that the will is accepted unquestioned. In other words, the feeling of will alone is sufficient for the faith that we understand causality. Nietzsche writes, “The will is for him a magically effective force; the faith in the will as the cause of effects is the faith in magically effective forces” (GS 127).

According to Maudemarie Clark, Nietzsche denies causality of the will; yet in the passage, it plays a major role. Clark admits there are ways of interpreting ‘will’ such that Nietzsche could accept the causality of the will; “e.g., if the will is constituted simply by drives or impulses”. However, Clark then suggests it would be impossible to understand how our faith in this claim could constitute our faith in causality itself. Clark writes, “Only if ‘will’ is understood in the traditional sense—the sense in which, according to Nietzsche, it is not causal—can we understand his claim that we must affirm the causality of the will if we are to affirm causality itself”. This would make Nietzsche bound to reject the passage in question. Clark goes on to explain that, for Nietzsche, our faith in causality (i.e., that the cause makes the effect occur) is based on our belief that our ‘will’ makes behavior occur. What is the ‘traditional sense’ of will that Clark is referring to? Nietzsche does not think of ‘will’ in a traditional way. This is evident from Beyond Good and Evil 19; and I see no reason why we should not understand ‘will’ the same way in Beyond Good and Evil 36.

123 In the immediately following paragraph, Clark then states that reinterpreting the premise such that Nietzsche could accept it is a seemingly impossible task. Clark writes, “But even if we could somehow reinterpret the premise that asserts the causality of the will so that Nietzsche could accept it—a seemingly impossible task, as I have been arguing...”.
124 Ibid, 121.
Nietzsche claims ‘willing’ is a unity only as a word (BGE 19). Willing consists in a duality of sensations, ‘towards-which’ and ‘away-from-which’ and we disregard this duality by means of the ego or concept “I”. As Linda Williams explains, “There is no such thing as a self-evident, efficient capacity that we set in motion – ‘will’ – for Nietzsche. That ‘will’ does not exist except as a simplifying term in our language”.

The idea of ‘will’ is something that Nietzsche will not take for granted. Will, for Nietzsche, is internally dualistic. Williams interprets will-to-power as pluralistic and associates the two drives with master and slave morality. Williams associates ‘towards-which’ and ‘away-from-which’ with master and slave moralities respectively. Williams writes,

Active will to power seeks its own independent goals and uses direct and overt means to achieve those goals. Reactive will to power adopts its immediate goals based on reactions to other’s goals and uses indirect, covert methods born from resentment to attain its goals.

Nietzsche does associate ‘towards-which’ and ‘away-from-which’ with ‘commanding’ and ‘obeying’ (BGE 19). Willing is to be included within the sphere of morals—“morals being understood as the doctrine of the relations of supremacy under which the phenomenon of ‘life’ comes to be” (BGE 19).

II. Equivocation:

Nietzsche reuses concepts that he, in places, appears to reject. Ordinary meanings are modified and transformed. Part of Nietzsche’s style is to attack traditional concepts and drain them, or at least make them conscious of their own superstitious, metaphysical lineage, and then salvage them and use them anew. If this is the case, then an alternative

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126 Ibid, 30.
127 Ibid, 38.
perspective on causality is possible. Robert Welshon recognizes this and calls it Nietzsche’s ‘method of double movement’. Welshon outlines this method when he writes,

Nietzsche utilizes what I think is a favorite method of double movement, first debunking the tradition’s use of concepts and categories, and then, once decontaminated of error, decadence and ressentiment, re-employing some of them for his own peculiar purposes.  

This method is outlined in Beyond Good and Evil 12, where Nietzsche rejects the soul as something indestructible, eternal, and indivisible but claims this allows for invention and perhaps discovery, thus it is not necessary to get rid of ‘the soul’ hypothesis at the same time. It means that subtlety of interpretation is required and attention to context when reading Nietzsche because we must judge whether Nietzsche is using a traditional conception versus when he uses his own. Nietzsche uses ‘philosophy’ in a different sense than its traditional conception; Nietzsche refers to it as a creative positing (WP 605), not an ascertaining of truth and untruth (as in the preface to Beyond Good and Evil).

The style of re-using words is demonstrated in Thus Spoke Zarathustra. Zarathustra creates a list of what ‘virtue’ has meant to different people, each of whom feel themselves an expert on ‘good’ and ‘evil’. Nietzsche writes,

But Zarathustra has not come to say to all these liars and fools: ‘What do you know of virtue? What could you know of virtue? No, he has come that you, my friends, might grow weary of the old words that you have learned from the fools and liars (TSZ Pt.2 ‘Of the Virtuous’).

Zarathustra preaches dissatisfaction with the words (i.e., reward, punishment) that are used to characterize virtue, but does not cease to talk about virtue. However, there is a sense in which Nietzsche ceases to talk in the same way. As Richard Schacht explains, "From the standpoint of established usage it will appear that this involves doing a certain

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violence to the language, or at least employing various terms and expressions
metaphorically rather than literally".129 Traditionally conceived, ‘metaphor’ is something
like a lie if it is taken literally; in other words, it is not literally true. For Nietzsche, even
this will change; it is even hinted at when he writes, “Truly, too often did I follow close
by the feet of truth: then it kicked me in the face. Sometimes I intended to lie, and
behold! only then did I hit – the truth” (TSZ Pt.4 ‘The Shadow’). As Schacht points out,
there is no other way to devise interpretations expanding or enhancing traditional ones
without altering the meanings of the words with which they are built.

For Nietzsche, language cannot tell us anything about the way things are.
Language, for Nietzsche, is full of naïve prejudices, metaphysical assumptions, which he
challenges, with language. As Stack explains, “Metaphors, for Nietzsche, are said to be
operative in perception (perceiving similarities or analogical characteristics in different
phenomena), in ordinary language and, in disguise, in conceptual terms, in all
knowing”130. Words are metaphors for images. Arthur Danto argues that Nietzsche
expands and contracts the meaning of his words, recognizing that language is flexible.
Certainly, Nietzsche alters the meanings of truth, willing, soul, as examples (BGE 12,
WP 490). The terminology Nietzsche uses (i.e., ‘commanding,’ ‘obeying,’) to describe
relations of drives are not appropriate for describing the inorganic world. This all raises
the question of how we are to understand causality of the will, or even the conclusion of
Beyond Good and Evil 36, as a metaphor.

If all the words and concepts we use are ‘metaphorical’ in the sense that they
derive from simplified, filtered phenomena, then what sense remains of the word

‘metaphorical’? If we cannot contrast ‘metaphorical’ to something ‘literal’, then does ‘metaphorical’ still make sense? In the next section, I discuss how Nietzsche’s position that if we do away with the ‘real’ world, we thereby do away with the ‘apparent’ world can help make sense of his use of ‘metaphor’.
Ruediger Grimm writes, "An image is a metaphor for a sense impression. A word is likewise simply a metaphor for the image i.e., a metaphor for a metaphor, and therefore twice removed from the original datum. Finally, concepts or general ideas are once more regarded as metaphors, but metaphors which have nothing more in common with our experiences, metaphors which have been scrupulously purged of the uniqueness and immediacy of an actual experience, and which therefore designate—nothing." (Grimm 1977 94)

How to understand 'metaphor':

If every sentence is metaphorical, how do you make sense of 'metaphor'? One problem is that we cannot understand what a 'metaphor' is by contrasting it with what is 'literal', as we ordinarily do. In ordinary language, words are understood by distinction. The problem of understanding something via its distinction is exacerbated by the fact that Nietzsche is everywhere attempting to tear down distinctions (e.g., inner and outer, material and immaterial, real and apparent). Nietzsche's stance on these distinctions is that if one pole is eliminated, the other must be as well. For example, if there is no real world, then there is no apparent world either (BGE 34). One must accept both poles or neither. Thus, if there is nothing 'literal,' there is also nothing 'metaphorical'. Something arises out of its opposite by convention – by our taking it as such. It is not merely that we have no idea what literal truth is, or that the notion of a 'literal truth' is a contradiction insofar as language is a falsifying mechanism; but that even supposing we could get past the falsifying nature of language there is no realm from which to draw a 'truth'. From this a paradox arises, similar to the liar's paradox: the thesis that every sentence is a metaphor entails its own literal falsity (since no metaphor is literally true). Perhaps we understand 'metaphor' in the wide sense (all language is metaphor) only by its narrow sense (of being contrasted with the literal). The difference between the two is relative to a conceptual framework.
We saw earlier that for Nietzsche a poetic metaphor has to do with generalization beyond the human; it is in that sense tied to anthropomorphism. Language is inherently metaphorical in this sense because words point beyond themselves. As Alistair Moles explains,

What Nietzsche and Cassirer call a metaphor is actually part of the foundation of language, not a fanciful new expression of it. Also, the idea expressed by this type of metaphor is neither clear nor novel, but hidden through its constant use.\textsuperscript{131} Moles specifies two levels of metaphor prompted by the notion that Nietzsche does not use 'metaphor' in the usual sense. According to Moles, the usual level is called 'surface' metaphor; presumably by this he means a 'fanciful new expression', such as the example, 'he runs like the wind blows'. The foundation level is called 'deep' metaphor; this needs clarification. Moles writes, "What is counted as 'truth' is using the deep metaphors of language in the accepted manner; 'falsity' arises from using them otherwise".\textsuperscript{132} The only way I can understand what Moles means by 'deep' metaphor is what we usually mean by the literal use of language. The words here are called 'falsifications' by Nietzsche because they are perspectival creations for the purpose of communication and do not refer extra-perspectivally as we have had to think they do.

Moles writes, "His justification, at (the meta-level), for regarding these deep metaphors as false or erroneous, is that they represent an arbitrary imposition of meaning on pre-linguistic experience, in order to make it communicable".\textsuperscript{133} Moles investigates whether there is an arbitrary imposition of meaning on pre-linguistic experience, but this is beyond the scope of this paper. What is interesting, besides Nietzsche’s altered use of

\textsuperscript{132} Ibid, 50.
\textsuperscript{133} Ibid, 51.
‘metaphor,’ is the suggestion that some of what are thought to be Nietzsche’s paradoxes or contradictions can be resolved by understanding the manner in which Nietzsche is writing; how his words refer. An example of this is given by how Alfred Tarski solves the liar’s paradox. Tarski distinguishes between two levels of statements: object-level and meta-level. The liar’s paradox arises from treating the statement, ‘everything I say is a lie’, as an object-level statement, when it is a meta-level statement. Moles’ point is that when speaking at the meta-level, Nietzsche is no longer using object-level words in the same sense.

The paradox runs something like this: if language is metaphorical, and everything is an interpretation, then are not Nietzsche’s own statements equally interpretation, and metaphorical? Since metaphors are not literally ‘true’, they are all literally ‘false’, and so Nietzsche’s statements are all false as well. Ruediger Grimm makes an important point when he writes,

Nietzsche’s views are indeed interpretations and metaphors, but not ‘mere’ interpretations or ‘only’ metaphors. The words ‘mere’ or ‘only’ are entirely unjustified if, as Nietzsche claims, interpretations are all that we can possibly have.\textsuperscript{134}

To see this as a problem is to presuppose the appearance-reality distinction. The problem is the inability of an appearance to meet with reality. By ‘regulative fiction’ what is meant is a metaphor that governs other metaphors. It is a picture of a reality where all statements are interpretations. Grimm writes,

The will to power is itself a metaphor, which governs the use of other metaphors. Its advantage over traditional models is not its correctness, but its utility and flexibility. The will to power does not purport to correspond to reality because it claims that there is no reality to correspond to.\textsuperscript{135}


\textsuperscript{135} Ibid, 114.
We understand ‘interpretation’ by distinguishing it from other interpretations.

Without an appearance-reality distinction, ‘metaphor’ must be understood in the same way. Grimm’s solution for the paradox is to view truth as a pragmatic function, rather than a logical property.

However, Grimm also claims Nietzsche deliberately uses contradiction and paradox as a matter of style. Grimm writes,

By entertaining both of two logically exclusive propositions, Nietzsche’s intent is to reveal the basic inadequacies (or uselessness) of those criteria according to which the propositions in question necessarily exclude one another... The theoretical physicist who realizes that the notion of efficient causality is at best a crude and inaccurate metaphor will nevertheless step out of the way of a speeding automobile knowing that failure to do so would ‘cause’ him to have a most unpleasant afternoon.\(^\text{136}\)

Grimm’s example suggests to me that contradiction arises from applying a word in two different senses, in this case ‘causality’. One sense is ‘truth-as-traditional-correspondence’, which relies on the subject-object dichotomy and appearance-reality distinctions, and the other is ‘truth-as-useful’ or ‘truth-as-what-works’. The contradiction exists only if taken to be understood exclusively in either of the two senses. This is not exactly Grimm’s position. Contradiction, as Grimm explains, exists only at the logical-semantic level of discourse. According to Grimm, contradiction as a matter of writing style exposes connections, levels of meaning, previously inaccessible.\(^\text{137}\)

Arthur Danto offers a way to conceive of the difference between ‘literal’ and ‘metaphorical’ as a matter of degree. Arthur Danto argues that both art and cognition


\(^{137}\) The quotation that suggests this is given by Grimm when he writes, “Nietzsche’s real purpose in playing off contradictory positions against one another is to indicate relationships, connections, levels of meaning which remain inaccessible as long as one insists upon regarding logically incompatible propositions disjunctively”. Ibid, 119.
consist in illusions; science makes life manageable, and art makes life bearable (Danto 37). Danto writes,

The radical character of Nietzsche's thought, even in its first significant expression, may be seen in the fact that he is indeed prepared to allow that art has no less a claim than sense or science to objective truth. But this is because neither sense nor science can make any stronger claim to truth than art.\textsuperscript{138}

The difference in the illusions of truth is that they have become stale, solidified; these illusions have had time to sink so deeply that we take them as expressing rock-bottom facts. Arthur Danto refers to the difference between fact and fiction as being "virtually quantitative", because 'fact' is taken as such by virtue of having been repeated some greater number of times. Or, perhaps in the same vein, we could say that it has stood a greater test of time. This idea is agreeable to Nietzsche when he writes, "What then is truth? A mobile army of metaphors, metonymies, anthropomorphisms...truths are illusions which we have forgotten are illusions" (On Truth and Lies in an Extra Moral Sense I). What Danto says about rationality and intuition applies to truth and illusion; Danto writes, "Rationality is the destiny of any intuition that survives, and intuition is the source of any rationality that prevails".\textsuperscript{139} This thought is transferable to the metaphor-literal distinction; 'literal' is the destiny of any metaphorical truth that survives.

The result of all this sounds like the radical idea that the individual perceiver might literally constitute his reality, although Nietzsche is speaking about centers of force, not subject. The literal restructuring, as in a new interpretation, is not the interpretation of a subject—the subject itself is an interpretation. This is a notion that Ruediger Grimm deals with when he writes,

\textsuperscript{139} Ibid, 42.
If we agree with Nietzsche that reality is always identical with our interpretation of reality, and if the mode of interpretation changes, we must agree that reality is also substantially altered in such an event.  

The suggestion here is that such reinterpretations of the world as (for example) Kant, Einstein, Heisenberg constitute ‘literal’ restructurings of the world. This is the case because they constitute restructurings of the deepest metaphors used to describe the world, and these deepest metaphors are what are taken as literal. According to Nietzsche, “every center of force—and not only man—construes all the rest of the world from its own viewpoint, i.e., measures, feels, forms, according to its own force—” (WP 636). The world, according to Nietzsche, is just this interaction of centers of force, interpreting the rest, and since there is nothing outside of an interpretation, according to Nietzsche, we must consider even ‘centers of force’ as interpretation.

Somewhat more radically than Grimm, Wolfgang Müller-Lauter claims that Nietzsche underscored contradictions not merely as a matter of writing style, but as constitutive of the world. Müller-Lauter writes, “For Nietzsche, the whole of reality is determined from the outset by the ‘struggle’ of opposites”. He is presumably referring to the ‘towards-which’ and ‘away-from-which’ which are the duality of forces comprising will-to-power. Furthermore, Müller-Lauter claims that Nietzsche’s statements about the existence of contradictions are contradictory. The opposing forces of the will-to-power form the immanent contradictoriness of world reality and yet Nietzsche denies the existence of opposites (WP 552) and argues that the things of the highest value

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142 Ibid, 7.
are tied to seemingly opposite things in essence (BGE 2). Nietzsche often speaks about matters of degree.

In all of this a question arises; Müller-Lauter asks,

How is it possible that perspective interpreting can understand itself as such interpreting? What right can Nietzsche validly claim for his contention that his interpretation is more than merely human perspective, more than even just the particular perspective of the philosopher Nietzsche?143

This is the central question of the following section on anthropomorphism. It remains to be seen whether or not Nietzsche would even claim his interpretation is not mere anthropomorphizing. Müller-Lauter believes that we can interpret interpretations only by the changing of interpretations, the shifting of perspective. His answer requires we understand Nietzsche’s interpretation as holding that man is only a particular line of the living organic world.144 As Müller-Lauter explains,

Nietzsche can interpret the multifarious reality, natural being, as multifarious interpreting, because man himself is an interpreting being and can be this only because what flows together in him as inorganic and organic being itself already interprets.145

That is to say, Müller-Lauter’s answer requires that Nietzsche’s interpretation not distinguish ‘man’ from something he essentially is not, such that man’s projecting and interpreting can be called merely an anthropomorphism. It requires that man be thought of as made up of interpreting power-centers, along with everything else.

144 (WP 678)
The charge of anthropomorphism:

George Stack argues that Nietzsche utilizes a self-conscious anthropomorphism in his metaphorical will-to-power theory. Since Nietzsche anthropomorphizes, he is not making a claim to metaphysical truth. Stack believes that the will-to-power is projected from humans to nonhuman organisms and inorganic entities. According to Stack, will-to-power is a mythical construction and not an assertion about the ultimate nature of reality (a metaphysics). Stack believes will-to-power is entirely metaphorical, a constructed exoteric myth. To extend our metaphoric anthropomorphisms to ‘actuality’ is “hypothetical, anthropomorphic, and experimental reasoning of the most extreme kind.” Furthermore, Stack writes,

The ‘tragic philosopher’ accepts the inevitability of anthropomorphism and uses it in order to create an exoteric myth that is a conglomeration of biology, psychology, and physical theory in a pseudo-metaphysical form that is so skillfully devised...that many able interpreters of Nietzsche have taken it to be a genuine metaphysics.

Stack claims that this anthropomorphizing is exactly what Nietzsche criticizes in scientific thinking and metaphysics. The only difference is that Nietzsche is conscious of his anthropomorphism. Stack sees Nietzsche’s project in part as an attempt to eliminate the false dichotomy of nature and man, and to reduce both to will-to-power. This, according to Stack, is hypothetical.

147 Ibid, 193.
149 Ibid, 193.
The second supposition\textsuperscript{150}, according to Stack, entails the belief that there is an analogy between man's subjective psychic experiences and the material world. This belief reveals what is problematic, as far as Stack is concerned; it reveals the anthropomorphic aspect of the interpretation that follows it. This makes the assumption that there is an analogy between the subjective world of affects and a primitive world of affects problematic, for Stack. For Nietzsche, the subjective world of affects is just a more complex development of the primitive one. Such a position is a conscious anthropomorphic projection: seeing in the world what we see in ourselves.

I will argue that to eliminate a false dichotomy between nature and man would render the term 'anthropomorphizing' senseless. If we cannot project our own interpretive constructs onto something which is essentially different from us, then the term 'to anthropomorphize' must be understood as an error of interpretation, a fiction.

All understanding involves projecting our interpretive framework 'onto nature'. We do not read out of nature the words and concepts with which we attempt to understand it as if they were 'already there'; they are a construction. Nor do these words and concepts correspond to anything other than what has been filtered and made phenomenal. Through the material/mechanistic interpretation, we project our understanding onto nature, as if it were 'really' the case. This is anthropomorphic projection. A central claim of Stack's book is that Nietzsche is undertaking a conscious anthropomorphic projection when he attempts to understand the world as will-to-power.

\textsuperscript{150} The second supposition according to Stack: "May we not experimentally grant that this basic 'given' is sufficient for an understanding of the 'mechanistic' or 'material' world?" George Stack, \textit{Nietzsche: Man, Knowledge, and Will to Power} (Durango: Hollowbrook, 1994), 271.
In his work, *Lange and Nietzsche*, Stack claims that powerful new ideals in the form of myths are deemed to be needed by Lange and Nietzsche for human life.\(^{151}\) These myths are an aesthetically conceived, imaginative, ‘truth’, and make no claim to absolute truth. This is the sense in which Stack understands ‘will-to-power’, and shows it is not a metaphysical principle. According to Stack, will-to-power is one of the myths that comprise Nietzsche’s ‘ideal standpoint’. The goal, for Nietzsche, is a new aesthetic interpretation of the whole. According to Stack, the acceptance of will-to-power as true is a matter of belief, the belief that something is true; it is not a matter of knowledge.\(^{152}\) I argue that to believe that Nietzsche’s will-to-power is true would render Stack’s claim that will-to-power is an anthropomorphic projection senseless. It turns out that one can only make sense at the expense of the other.

Stack repeatedly emphasizes that will-to-power is an anthropomorphic projection. It has occurred to me that the only way we can understand what he means by ‘anthropomorphic projection’ is on the basis of a distinction between ‘what we are’ and ‘what we are not’. This distinction is essentially between ‘how we see ourselves’ and ‘what we are not’ (or, how we see ‘what we are not’). To suppose that there is no distinction between ‘nature’ and ‘man’, as Nietzsche is doing, is effectively to remove the possibility of anthropomorphic projection at that level of interpretation.

‘Anthropomorphic’ projection is projection of what you see in yourself onto what you are not – it assumes a distinction which Nietzsche intends to remove, albeit ‘hypothetically’.


\(^{152}\) Stack writes, “Ultimately, as Nietzsche saw, the acceptance of such an imaginative or poetic ‘truth’ is a matter of belief, the belief that something is true, not that it is known to be true.” George Stack, *Lange and Nietzsche* (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1983), 319.
My point can be applied to ‘metaphor’ as well. If all the words and concepts we use are ‘metaphorical’ in the sense that they derive from simplified, filtered phenomena, then what sense remains of the word ‘metaphorical’? If we cannot contrast ‘metaphorical’ to something such as ‘literal’, then ‘metaphorical’ does not make sense. This is basically Nietzsche’s position when he makes the claim that if we do away with the ‘real’ world, we thereby do away with the ‘apparent’ world. I believe that if I were to ask Stack what is not a metaphor, he would not be able to respond, or, to respond by saying what is more ‘literal’ only in a matter of degrees to something else.

What legitimizes our understanding of ‘anthropomorphic projection’ is an anthropomorphic projection, namely, seeing nature as somehow different from ourselves. Müller-Lauter writes, “From man down to the protoplasm, the living thing, because of the multiplicity of perspectives operating in it, perceives what it encounters in multiple ways”. This perspective is an anthropomorphic projection insofar as it uses uniquely human images and concepts to generalize about the whole of reality. From Nietzsche’s perspective, there is no essential difference between man and any living entity. A contradiction arises: that to understand the world, man interprets according to his concepts, making his interpretation distinctly human. But, as Nietzsche’s interpretation has it, the human is not distinct, only more complex. Nietzsche’s interpretation is anthropomorphic and, at the same time, man is to be overcome. One way to escape the


\[^{154}\text{Man is not higher or of a different origin (BGE 230). Man is a particular line of the total living world (WP 678).}\]
'human' perspective is by making it a matter of perspective that there is nothing essentially unique about the human.\(^{155}\)

Nietzsche’s concept of will-to-power entails the position that no matter at what level of interpretation—i.e., at what level one halts the falsifications/simplifications, all are imbued with the same rank of reality as is man: will-to-power. Laurence Lampert explains this notion when he writes, “The organic is a more complex organization of the nonorganic, being different only in degree of complexity”.\(^{156}\) I would rather say that the inorganic is a less complex organization of the organic, because what Nietzsche has done is breathed what life is into everything that exists: will-to-power. As Nietzsche says, the inorganic realm is a ‘preform of life (the organic)’ (BGE 36).

II. Myth:

According to George Stack, will-to-power is a disguised myth, an anthropomorphic, metaphorical-poetic truth, a provisional, hypothetical construct, and a conceptual fiction. What makes will-to-power a myth? Is science, which hits on functional interpretations—not truths as such, mythical for Nietzsche? The answer to the latter question is yes. According to Nietzsche, to act mythologically is to project components of an interpretation (for example, numbers, matter, cause and effect) into things as if they existed ‘in-itself’. Nietzsche writes,

It is we alone who have devised cause, sequence, for-each-other, relativity, constraint, number, law, freedom, motive, and purpose; and when we project

\(^{155}\) I believe this is Wolfgang Müller-Lauter’s point when he writes, “Man’s origin lies in nature, and he is not ‘more’ in any qualitative sense, but surely in a quantitative one. The total organic world lives on in him. And insofar as every organic thing is a synthesis of inorganic forces, the inorganic also ‘lives’ in him”. Wolfgang Müller-Lauter, Nietzsche: His Philosophy of Contradictions and The Contradictions of His Philosophy translated by David J. Parent (1999) (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1971), 158.

\(^{156}\) Laurence Lampert, Nietzsche's Task: An Interpretation of Beyond Good and Evil (Yale University Press, 2001), 87.
and mix this symbol world into things as if it existed ‘in-itself,’ we act once more as we have always acted—*mythologically*. The ‘unfree will’ is mythology; in real life it is only a matter of *strong* and *weak* wills (BGE 21).

The science of Nietzsche’s day projected symbols, components of interpretation, as existing noumenally. This is evidently the case when Nietzsche tells us that only five or six minds are realizing that physics is an interpretation and exegesis of the world (BGE 14). In that sense, traditional science is mythological. Moreover, if will-to-power is a myth, it must be ‘myth’ in a different sense, because it is an interpretation that is aware of itself as interpretation and thus does not project its symbols into a noumenal reality.
"Suppose, finally, we succeeded in explaining our entire instinctive life as the development and ramification of one basic form of the will—namely, of the will to power, as my proposition has it; suppose all organic functions could be traced back to this will to power and one could also find in it the solution of the problem of procreation and nourishment—it is one problem—then one would have gained the right to determine all efficient force univocally as—will to power. The world viewed from the inside, the world defined and determined according to its 'intelligible character'—it would be 'will to power' and nothing else."

Some final comments:

Nietzsche does, in fact, think that all organic functions are will-to-power. For example, Nietzsche writes, "A living thing seeks above all to discharge its strength—life itself is will to power" (BGE 13). In a world that is will-to-power and nothing else, then what applies to man will also apply to every living thing, and every 'inorganic' entity. This is indicated when Nietzsche writes, "what man wants, what every smallest part of a living organism wants, is an increase of power" (WP 702). Another example is given when Nietzsche writes, "The will to power can manifest itself only against resistances; therefore it seeks that which resists it—this is the primeval tendency of the protoplasm when it extends pseudopodia and feels about." (WP 656) According to Nietzsche, we do have the right to determine all efficient force as will-to-power. All efficient force is will-to-power, all organic functions are will-to-power, so all that we are is will-to-power only if part of what we are is not dead metaphysical matter. At any level of interpretation, all symbol components are imbued with the same rank of reality as for the same procedure of falsifications for a man, or consciousness—will-to-power.

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157 According to Nietzsche all physical and psychological force is will-to-power (14[121]).
Alistair Moles calls the philosophical activity by which Nietzsche develops the will-to-power a "philosophy of nature".158 This point should be responded to because Nietzsche does not draw essential distinctions between humans and animals or plants, nor does he do that for humans and inorganic matter. Thus to generalize from humans to the inorganic world would not be a fault of the theory. The human form of life is the most complex, but not essentially different.159 I believe this is Moles' point when he writes, "What we call 'matter' is continually being appropriated and transformed into 'living' creatures, and living creatures in turn are continually decomposing into more basic, 'material' forms".160 Whatever differences there are, are due to varying degrees of complexity of the constellation of forces that Nietzsche unites with the designation 'will-to-power'.

Will-'to'-power means will-'for'-power. As Bittner explains, "a will to power is a will such that the thing willed is power".161 Bittner holds that Nietzsche understood the meaning of 'meaning' to be aligned with 'purpose', or 'end'.162 This alignment is evidenced by Nietzsche's claiming in Thus Spoke Zarathustra that the Overman was the meaning of the earth.

159 According to Rudiger Bittner, Nietzsche holds the difference between organic and inorganic to be superficial because it "does not touch on the inner sources of things happening" (Bittner xxi). Bittner thinks Nietzsche follows Schopenhauer for whom the will 'manifests itself both in the forces of the inorganic and the forms of organic nature' Rudiger Bittner, introduction to Writings from the Late Notebooks. (Cambridge University Press, 2003), xxi.
161 Rudiger Bittner, introduction to Writings from the Late Notebooks. (Cambridge University Press, 2003), xviii.
162 (GM III 28)
Conclusion:

According to Maudemarie Clark, *Beyond Good and Evil* 36 is presented in a hypothetical form because the style Nietzsche employs there is to advance a position he rejects, in order to demonstrate the simplicity, or trickery, involved in that position. The hypothetical form of the passage is a sign that Nietzsche does not accept its content. Along the same lines, I focus on the hypothetical form of the passage as a matter of Nietzsche’s style, but with an opposing conclusion. Put in the context of the passages that precede it, the hypothetical form of *Beyond Good and Evil* 36 can be seen to be a reflection of a free-spirit struggling with a set of overwhelming or oppressive ideas, which is its content. Moreover, there is evidence in previous writings to suggest that the hypothetical form displayed here is a sign of an idea that Nietzsche was deeply concerned with. This conclusion would warrant an in depth examination of the content of the passage.

Clark’s understanding of the style of the passage is compatible with, and likely determined by, her understanding of its content. She interprets the first premise to be a variation of a Schopenhaurian claim for the metaphysics of the will, which, she rightly points out, Nietzsche does not accept. Both Clark and Stack are led to interpret this way by their understanding of ‘given’ in the first premise. They interpret that as ‘immediate knowledge’ in the sense of Schopenhauer’s will, which we somehow have a privileged access to. However, what would make the first premise ‘Schopenhaurian’ is not the suggestion that we can know something immediately, but that we insist on a conception of that knowledge as extending beyond our perspective. In other words, what would make the first premise ‘Schopenhaurian’ would be if Nietzsche were to insist on the
absolute or noumenal truth of it. The alternative, as I see it, is to understand 'given' as a perspectival falsification, but not one among others, it is rather the basis of other perspectival falsifications. That is to say, will-to-power stands in a relationship of ontological priority to other perspectival falsifications, or world-interpretations, such as the material one.

By supposing a new 'given', what is being prefigured is the ground of a new interpretation, something which goes unquestioned in the operation of that perspective. A 'given' is something that goes unquestioned, it is not something the absolute truth of which needs to be insisted upon. In other words, the only understanding 'given' could be given, for Nietzsche, is as a perspectival falsification. In the final two sections of the first chapter, I work toward an understanding of this claim. For Nietzsche, the perspectival nature of philosophy is precisely what allows for a perspective to be affirmed as true. 'Truth' is a relation born out of competing perspectives - it is a designation that arises out of the inequality of competing 'errors', and always from a perspective. Nietzsche reframes the question of truth to a question of value between competing errors. This understanding is compatible with, but not determined by, my understanding of the hypothetical style of the passage.

Beyond Good and Evil 36 is an experiment, namely, whether the 'outer' world is actually like our 'inner' one, i.e., composed of drives and desires, rather than matter. Nietzsche understands 'drive', 'will', 'affect' in terms of each other, and composed of forces. Will-to-power is not a physical interpretation, but instead, an interpretation of such. Being an interpretation, it is not meta-physical in the traditional sense. Nietzsche's experiment is not one for which a traditional proof could be offered. As mentioned,
Nietzsche has replaced the question of truth with the question of values. The question about whether or not the experiment could be proved (which is a question about whether or not it could be true) is replaced by the question about whether or not it could be more plausible.

In the second chapter, I used a discussion of Heidegger's two ontological categories from *Being and Time* (readiness-to-hand and present-at-hand) to expand on the sort of ontology that I argue Nietzsche was doing. Nietzsche’s will-to-power stands to the material world in roughly the same way that ready-to-hand equipment stands to present-at-hand things, for Heidegger. This is distinguishable from a traditional substance ontology, which operates entrenched in the subject-object dichotomy. For Nietzsche, as is somewhat similar to Heidegger, what is ontologically primary are valuations. That is the position being presented when we are asked to consider the world of desires and passions as sufficient for understanding also the material/mechanistic world.

Wolfgang Müller-Lauter argues Nietzsche is doing metaphysics in the traditional sense, namely because, he has a view of being as a whole. Gregory Schufreider argues for the claim that Nietzsche is an ‘artistic metaphysician’. Nietzsche does seem to embrace the problem of circularity inherent in traditional metaphysics. That is, any theory of reality verifies itself by referring back to itself, its own criteria. Moreover, Nietzsche does seem to make a claim about the whole of being - a statement that covers all cases. However, I show that Nietzsche is not a metaphysician in the traditional sense, at least not the sense which would have his interpretation reach extra-perspectivally, as in a two-world’s theory. Utilizing Heidegger, I show that Nietzsche avoids a distorted metaphysical way in which the problem of the ‘world’ is posited. The sort of ontology
Nietzsche is doing, is fundamentally different from a traditional substance ontology, and the concepts it employs. Ultimately, I leave the question open as to whether ‘metaphysics’ can be understood in such a way that Nietzsche could be said to be a metaphysician.

In a number of places, Nietzsche attacks the concept of causality for what he takes to be its ancient, metaphysical lineage. In Beyond Good and Evil 36, Nietzsche uses an alternative perspective of causality - a perspectival notion of causality. This is what Nietzsche’s style of attacking the metaphysical lineage of traditional concepts, and then reusing them anew, does. Rex Welshon calls this Nietzsche’s ‘method of double movement’, first debunking a concept, then re-employing it. I examine this style as outlined in Beyond Good and Evil 12, and as demonstrated in previous works.

Nietzsche claims that if we do away with the real world, we thereby do away with appearances. The notion that eliminating one pole of a distinction eliminates the distinction itself can be applied to the metaphor-literal distinction, to answer a version of the liar’s paradox (that every sentence is a metaphor entails its own literal falsity, since a metaphor is not literally true). The paradox arises from understanding Nietzsche’s claim that all language is metaphorical using a narrow sense of ‘metaphor’, where it is understood by being contrasted with ‘literal’. According to Alistair Moles, ‘metaphor’ in the wide sense is usually what we mean by literal language, but a metaphor for Nietzsche, because they do not refer extra-perspectivally. This is similar to Alfred Tarski’s solution to the paradox, wherein he distinguishes two levels of statements, object-level and meta-level. At the meta-level, Nietzsche no longer uses words in the same sense.
The problem the paradox poses for Nietzsche seems to be that Nietzsche’s interpretation might just be another interpretation, or another metaphor among others. The problem is the inability of Nietzsche’s interpretation to meet with reality, to be true, or to be more than ‘merely’ another metaphor. Nietzsche uses paradox and contradiction as a matter of style. Paradoxically, what Nietzsche is offering is a literal restructuring of the world, by restructuring our deepest, most ontological, metaphors.

I have argued that to eliminate a false dichotomy between nature and man renders the term ‘anthropomorphizing’ senseless. If we cannot project our own interpretive constructs onto something which is essentially different from us, then the term ‘to anthropomorphize’ must be understood as an error of interpretation, a fiction. We understand what might count as anthropomorphic projection only on the basis of a distinction between what we are and what we are not, a distinction Nietzsche rejects. I show that what legitimizes our understanding of anthropomorphic projection is an anthropomorphic projection, which is distinguishing between nature and ourselves.

Beyond Good and Evil [36] receives a lot of attention in the secondary literature; it involves the concept of the will-to-power, which is a central concept for Nietzsche. The aim of my thesis has been to work toward an understanding of that central concept in order to enhance my understanding of everywhere it is used. I believe that an understanding of will-to-power as a power-ontology does justice to the manner in which it is used throughout Nietzsche’s writings.
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