

veracity and pragmatism in nietzsche's *on truth and lies*

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1. BIOLOGY AND THE DISCIPLINE OF VERACITY

Truth and lies are not on a par. They belong to different categories. Truth is one of two or more truth-values, lying is a speech act, hence not to be equated with mere falsehood, the latter being the logical reverse of truth. Thus, lying, being intentionally uttered, is stronger than falsehood. By the same token, what one may call “veracity” or “truthfulness” is stronger than truth. Besides, their accomplishment as communicative practices is in both cases a function not only of intention but also of information—one may be sincere while saying false things, and tell the truth while purporting to lie. Any treatment of the lie, since Augustine at least, makes this very point: “Not everyone who speaks falsely is lying, if he believes or supposes that what he says is true.”¹ Most traditional accounts, then, settle the issue by distinguishing the proposition’s truth-value from the speaker’s state of mind (consisting of intention plus belief). You are truthful if and only if you mean what you say, and you believe what you say is true. If you are truthful, and what you say happens to be true, then you contribute some amount of knowledge or information.

This, approximately, is the truth-epistemology Nietzsche attacked in his (posthumously published) 1872-73 essay *On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense* (WL). In a nutshell, Nietzsche’s thesis is that we can tell the truth only because

we have learnt to speak falsely; or, more exactly, that veracity, far from being a native will to truth, is formed through a long schooling, both individual and social, during which one learns *not* to look for what is strictly speaking true. Training in the use of metaphor—the main device of linguistic production in Nietzsche’s view—is the key instrument in such a schooling. Yet metaphor is itself a process of selective inattentiveness and distortion. Besides, the dividing line between metaphor and literalness is far from sharp, and is itself subject to social control and changes, based on historical epoch and cultural constraints.² Thus, what is constructed through language—what we call the “true” world—is at most one rendering, not the faithful depiction, of reality. Nietzsche dramatized this social process to the point of turning it into a calculated repression of veracity. What governs ordinary true discourse is a pedagogy, a *discipline* of veracity: we are drilled to call “true” what is really a linguistic manipulation of things as well as of ourselves. Nietzsche’s description, often fiercely expressed,³ is unmistakably meant as a radical criticism of human society.

In this essay I will argue that, without betraying Nietzsche’s spirit, one might construe the discipline of veracity, in an anthropological vein, as one out of a number of cultural ways by which humans have tackled certain basic life problems. A full understanding of this life framework will only be reached by Nietzsche, as Barbara Stiegler has shown, when he will read the biological works of Wilhelm Roux, a few years later; but Roux’s key notion of *assimilation* is already there in 1873 (WL, 86).⁴ Assimilation is literally *ad-similare*, *Gleich-setzen*, i.e. to reduce diversity to identity;⁵ yet, it is the fundamental function of living organisms. I will try to show that essentially the same pattern is at work in the discipline of veracity. Truth is “anthropomorphic,” Nietzsche says, as long as man “strives to understand the world as something analogous to man, and at best he achieves by his struggles the feeling of assimilation” (WL, 85-86). Eventually, however, just as biological assimilation will not simply stop without life ending as well, so linguistic assimilation will go on, and the course it will take is not determined.

On the reading I am proposing, the discipline of veracity is part of what one might call a political anthropology of truth. More precisely, it is the peculiarly Western form of the cultural manipulation which goes with *any* enculturation process. This process is based on the redundancy which characterizes language games. So, just as we learn to disregard much of what is going on during a game of chess, or the performing of a ritual,⁶ provided some rules are respected, we also learn how to discard particular, idiosyncratic traits of the object, thus making it such as to be known and talked about, i.e. “objective.” The key critical issue raised by

Nietzsche's work is: which rules? Since a reduction of redundancy (an assimilation) is inevitable, is it going to be based on a life-affirming or an ultimately life-denying discipline? Here, what is at stake is the same as what Nietzsche, in his *Fragments* from that period, was calling a *eudaemonistic principle*.⁷ From the start, Nietzsche's fundamental concern was with "the question of what was necessary for an *affirmable* or *sustainable* life," coupled with "his claim that traditional philosophy, religion and the moral point of view had turned out to be inadequate answers to such a question."⁸ From a Nietzschean standpoint, Christian views of the sacred value of life, as well as related views of human beings as God-appointed stewards of creation, were cultural misrepresentations, rules that came to be superimposed on basic human life-functioning. But this is because, in Nietzsche's eyes, such rules are ultimately doomed and will lead to the destruction of life—not because biological, embodied life does not lie at the core of Nietzsche's concern.

A crucial aspect of such a superimposition is certainly the "peace treaty" the individual is willing to make with "the herd" (WL, 81). Thus, in accounting for the origin of veracity, Nietzsche goes so far as to evoke the central tradition of modern political thought, i.e. the social contract theory of politics. His phrasing, however, cast as it is in a Hobbesian language, might be misleading, for it suggests some sort of *event*, moral or spiritual if not historical in nature, which would mark the beginning of such politics. Rather, the non-moral level is precisely the one Nietzsche will later refer to as biological. This, in turn, might invite a reading of Nietzsche as proposing some kind of "selfish gene" scenario as the factual hardware, the determining ground of our truth-discourse. But a purely biological explanation does not seem to be something Nietzsche could be satisfied with either, since this would leave entirely unanswered the crucial question of *which* discipline could better serve the eudaemonistic principle. The herd morals, whether contractarian or biologically determined, had failed, turning themselves against their very grounds. Besides unmasking life-denying morals, then, a non-moral or extra-moral response was called for.

2. WHAT TRUTH IS ALL ABOUT

Seen in this light, veracity is the product of a multifaceted process including the inheritance of a form of life, the shaping of a public mind, the negotiation of a civility pattern, and the enforcement of a behaviour model. Such enforcement, or peace treaty, at its basic level, is essentially ordinary linguistic training itself, much as Wittgenstein's analysis of language-games was later to make clear.⁹ We learn how to use *belief* expressions, speech constraints that mark our allegiance to

a community through utterances we cannot surreptitiously take back. We learn, e.g., that “if there were a verb meaning to believe falsely it would not have a first person indicative.”¹⁰ While this basic training is quite ordinary, its renegotiation is possible only at the cost of a personal effort. Nietzsche himself, in *On Truth and Lies*, insists on art and creativity as paradigms of this kind of effort. Alternatively, or perhaps subsidiarily, one might point to the practice of *parrhesia* in antiquity as an example of renegotiating the social practice of truthfulness. The Greek word, usually rendered as “free speech,” may be better described as candid-blunt outspokenness. The idea can be applied to some well-known traits of ancient cynicism—unsociability, impudence, the overturning of values, etc. It is a *politics* or rather counter-politics of truth, in that it quite consciously breaks with received social wisdom, hence always entails a certain amount of effort and jeopardy for the speaker, as Foucault has indicated. Curiously enough, Foucault himself fails to include Nietzsche in his revitalization of *parrhesia*.¹¹ I think, however, that the character of Zarathustra provides an excellent personification of the alternative truth-teller or *parrhesiastes*. There is of course a pedagogy behind *parrhesia* as well, but it contributes precisely toward reconsidering the discipline of veracity.

We cannot here dwell further on *parrhesia*. However, the very existence of a (counter-)politics of truth is enough to make the lie worth studying, at least in an anthropological mind set: for, as a matter of fact, people do lie, *despite* their training. The practice of *parrhesia* precisely unmasks this “despite” as really being a “because of,” while advocating a different, transvalued training. Thus, the traditional psychological assumption that a person telling a lie and one telling the truth are in different states of mind needs to be qualified. Philosophical anthropology posits no moral, evaluative hierarchy between truth and lie: if there is an anthropology of lying, there must be one of truth-telling. In other words, if truth is to be a major concern in philosophical anthropology, there must be a study of the social production of both truth *and* lie simultaneously. Or, to put it in Nietzsche’s words, “according to the eudaemonistic principle, truth *and* lie should find application [*angewendet werden*]¹¹—as is the case.”¹¹

There is a metaphor haunting every account of language: the one which conceptualizes discourse as a box, i.e. as consisting of form and content. Discourse is then split into two parts: a package, the rhetorical apparatus which does the persuasive job, creating the look of truth; and a logical core, bearing the properly epistemic weight of the discourse. Clearly this metaphor, as soon as it is enunciated, reinstates the key problem of the lie, since there seems to be no necessary—i.e. veracity-preserving—connection between both aspects of

language, wrapping and core.

The point is that, while there is of course a semantic difference, there seems to be no essential pragmatic difference between truth and lie. A long series of thinkers, including the Sophists and Wittgenstein, has defended some form of communicative pragmatism to the effect that any utterance has in view the obtaining of some effect on hearer(s).¹² Nietzsche's *On Truth and Lies* is certainly one major link in this philosophical chain. Within communication, a truthful and a mendacious sentence are used in exactly the same *kind* of way: they make, as Derrida would say, a "promise of truth" to obtain an "effect of belief."¹³ This need not be a moral abomination, since a lie may be told for morally sound reasons, at least on a consequentialist view of ethics. Besides, there were time-honoured traditions of theorizing lying and dissimulation as compatible with or even required for prudential wisdom.¹⁴ Some of them were probably not the kind of thinking Nietzsche could approve of (say, the Roman Catholic theory of mental reservation), some other were part of his own background (the rhetorical tradition, of course, or the French moralists' disenchanting attitude toward social order and rules). At any rate, despite WL's rare references, there *was* a heritage of "extra-moral" philosophical discourse on lying which Nietzsche's essay was falling in line with (extra-moral, that is, if self-interested, eudaemonistic prudence is considered to be outside the realm of ethics, as Kant thought).

Within such a pragmatist view of communication, then, what distinguishes truthfulness from lying is not the kind of semantic content nor the moral status, but the kind of behaviour a sentence is meant to elicit in either case: fact-adequate or fact-syntonic, as one might say, in the first case, fact-dystonic in the second. And in both cases it is irrelevant whether the goal is attained; again, lying is in the intention, not in the efficacy. Thus, it is right that "the existence of an act of lying does not depend upon the production of a particular response or state in the addressee," as James Mahon puts it, although it can be misleading to say that "an act of lying is not a perlocutionary act."¹⁵ Simply, not every lie reaches its goal—nor does every truthful speech act. But they both try to do things with words, just as any communicative act proper.

Indeed, the mainstream of post-Sophistic discourse epistemology consists of attempts to cope with such communicative pragmatism—or to sweep it under the carpet. In *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche had gathered such attempts under the heading of *Socratism*, which may be described as the assumption of the intimacy of knowledge and veracity. Socratism assumes, on the one hand, that "no one

can know the truth without feeling the need to tell it,”¹⁵ and, on the other, that truth has a natural tendency to force itself on linguistic exchange. Truth tends to produce persuasion—and real knowledge makes the wrapping transparent for truth to appear.

In 1873, Nietzsche had already declared his war on Socratism, and in *WL* he apparently challenges his opponent on both points. First, he insists that persuasion does not depend on the actual truth-content of the discourse. The latter can convey truth or lie, and its persuasive force is not in its truth; rather, it is a formal property pertaining to the communicative structure of the relevant speech. Briefly, a speech act will be successful or not irrespective of either its truth or falsehood—we will come back to this in connection with Nietzsche’s own “pragmatism.” Second, in *On Truth and Lies* Nietzsche comes to terms with a ubiquitous, if mostly tacit, anthropology of language, according to which human beings carry a fundamental impulse toward truth, in which the very need to communicate is grounded.

What differentiates, then, the social practice of truth-telling from that of lying? *On Truth and Lies* suggested a contractual-conventional origin of veracity, achieved through systematic neglect of certain traits of reality and the emphasizing of others. This does not mean, I will argue, any sheer, simplistic denial of the correspondence account of truth-value. Rather, Nietzsche is trying to show that correspondence to facts is not the main reason, if it is one at all, why we declare the truthfulness of a statement. However, one should not expect to find, either in this text or elsewhere, anything like a Nietzschean *definition*, let alone a theory, of truth.¹⁶ Plainly, *On Truth and Lies* is about what Nietzsche elsewhere calls the “pathos of truth.”¹⁷ The social worship of truth is a literal hypocrisy, since truth is assembled and merchandised by society itself through language. Within such a framework, Nietzsche does engage in an analysis of the *concept* of truth, or more precisely of the use of such a concept, but he undertakes no *theory* of truth as a property of what is said, i.e. he does not try to establish the conditions under which an assertion is true.¹⁸ Indeed, his disclosing the artificiality of language presupposes some kind of distinction between true and false along the lines of traditional correspondence theory.¹⁹

3. WHO’S IN CHARGE OF LYING

Nietzsche’s text opens with a tiny cosmological *conte moral*, in the style of his beloved 17th/18th-century French moralists:²⁰

Once upon a time, in some out of the way corner of that universe which is dispersed into numberless twinkling solar systems, there was a star upon which clever beasts invented knowing. That was the most arrogant and mendacious minute of 'world history,' but nevertheless, it was only a minute. (WL, 79)

Yet Nietzsche immediately oversteps the epistemological boundaries of that literary genre:

There were eternities during which [human intellect] did not exist. And when it is all over with the human intellect, nothing will have happened. For this intellect has no additional mission which would lead it beyond human life. (WL, 79)

There is no use for intelligence outside life. This is not merely a bitter, pessimistic remark about how small is the reach of human mind. It is a resolution to place knowledge within the framework of life practices and natural functioning. In accordance with—sometimes in advance of—some of his era's psychological theories, particularly functionalism and evolutionism, Nietzsche rejects any view of intelligence as either a faculty of the mind or an impulse toward truth which is divested of any practical meaning:

there is almost nothing which is less comprehensible than how an honest and pure drive for truth could have arisen among [men]. (WL, 80)

I tend to think Nietzsche had no particular philosophical adversary in mind, yet neither was he just referring to a general *idolon theatri*, say, social hypocrisy about truth and science (this was at most a partial target). Rather, Nietzsche's *Posthumous Fragments* of this period show he was keen on the "particular pleasure" of telling the truth, and that he did not mean this in any simply hedonistic sense. We take pleasure in telling the truth, but this is no hypocrisy designed to conceal our crooked (whilst egoistically useful) real purposes. Otherwise, Nietzsche would not insist that such a pleasure may bring destruction with it.²¹ Pleasurable veracity,²² hence, has to be regarded as potentially counter-adaptive. It follows that this pleasure is by no means to be seen as a healthy, life-preserving drive to truth. It is rather an error of evolution, so to speak: by looking at it, we can witness how a behaviour which was to serve certain biological purposes is hypostatized and used outside its original communicative context. (If this is so, one might see here a further reason why Nietzsche later came to reject his era's optimistic, Spencerian

evolutionism, which certainly loathed any idea of errors in evolution.²³)

We are thus in a position to establish two points as regards Nietzsche's views. First, there is no truthfulness for truthfulness' sake. Contrary to appearances, even supposedly disinterested acts of truth-telling are driven by a motive, i.e. pleasure, however pathological this may turn out to be (and the same holds, it is plausible to add, for unreasonable lies, when they are potentially dangerous to the speaker). Second, Nietzsche, perhaps following suggestions from Schopenhauer, appears to be focussing on what we would call the adaptive meaning of intellectual activity. Intelligence is a "means for the preserving of the individual" (WL, 80). The political anthropology which encompasses both the practice of veracity and of lying is functionally subordinate to such preserving. Once set against the background of the "battle for existence" (WL, 80), the two practices are no longer distinguishable except for their more or less advantageous consequences. Besides, while the lie is not more "natural" than veracity, it is likely to be more frequently observed than the latter in human beings. In these "clever animals" (*kluge Thiere*), the "art of dissimulation reaches its peak": thus, "wearing a mask" and "playing a role" (WL, 80) are not parasitic on any original veracity. On the contrary they are but different ways to satisfy the same need of preservation.

A drive for truth (i.e. an impulse to elicit fact-syntonic effects on hearers) cannot be straightforwardly posited as a constitutive part of human nature, nor of linguistic behaviour. But a non-moral establishment of something we may conventionally agree to call truth, and of ways to make its attribution reasonably regular, *does* represent a way of solving vital ("eudaemonistic") problems. In other words, if veracity is not a natural drive, it can very well be explained as a behavioural code, required by society "in order to exist: to be truthful means to employ the usual metaphors" (WL, 84). Establishing one particular use of language as the "true" language is, according to Nietzsche, instrumental to the peace treaty which allegedly put an end to the *bellum omnium contra omnes* (WL, 81). Does he mean that the adequacy of discourse to matters of fact depends on some convention between speakers? One has to be careful not to understand such a dependence, if at all, as a logical one. Language and reality may match up or not by virtue of formal characteristics, that have nothing to do with our motivations for choosing to say what we believe to correspond to reality. Nietzsche will later have some criticisms to make about those formal characteristics as well, but at this stage he is only insisting that pursuing truth in communication is functional to a political necessity.

Drawing his inspiration from Hobbes' political anthropology, Nietzsche envisages, so to speak, a pre-Apollonian human condition, i.e. a phase in which power relationships have not yet crystallized into any form of government or any normative proportionality. If there has been a time, abstractly speaking, in which there were neither norms nor morals, then neither was there veracity. In such a condition, language was simply and impenitently used to elicit effects on hearers: which is precisely what I earlier referred to as communicative pragmatism. However, this communicative situation does not vanish into thin air when power relationships come to historically manifest themselves through normative systems. It simply becomes the standard way of communication (non-standard, e.g. artistic, ways of expression are but more advanced forms of this basic use). Practices of veracity have been constructed *via* the displacement of lie by truth, precisely in the sense that "truth" has absorbed the practical function of *both* truth and lie. Here, of course, is where Nietzsche's account departs from standard, Tarskian ways of defining truth, and comes much closer to pragmatist views. The Tarskian disquotational formula is simply no longer expedient. To the Tarskian convention, that "*P*" is true if and only if *P*, one would have to reply that "*P*" is true if and only if either *P* or not-*P*, provided *P* guides us toward better solutions of vital problems—which is at the very least an awkward way to put things.

However, classical Hobbesian political anthropology appears here to be transvalued, as one might say, anticipating Nietzsche's central stance in later works. Whereas, from a Hobbesian point of view, the *bellum* condition is so intolerable as to require the establishment of the Leviathan's power, Nietzsche is here paving the way for a critique of society's power on, and through, language. The power of *using* language at all coincides, in the light of what we have said, with the power of lying, which the individuals will surrender to "the herd" as a whole by refraining from wearing a mask of their own and turning to the "usual metaphors." Society will thus become the only subject entitled to lie. This monopoly, yet, as ensured by the linguistic social contract, will only be exerted within a scaffolding of rules capable of transforming lie into truth. This does not mean that society can make the false come true, lest we attribute some sort of magical power to society. But neither is it just some futile hoax that society sets up against the individual. The herd has a point.

What men avoid by excluding the liar is not so much being defrauded as it is being harmed by means of fraud. Thus, even at this stage, what they hate is basically not deception itself, but rather the unpleasant, hated consequences of certain sorts of deception. (WL, 81)

Literally taken, this implies that the liar *does* harm society, not by saying words which do not correspond to facts (remember that falsehood does not imply lie), but insofar as he or she refuses to cooperate by using the usual metaphors. Nietzsche's view is thus complex: it certainly includes the idea that language functions through abstraction, devices and metaphorical displacements, but there is more to it than the mere exposure of social manipulation and selection of reality. There is the idea that full correspondence to experiential facts would baffle, and in the long run destroy, society's functioning (if not humankind itself, as Nietzsche relentlessly underscores). By no means is Nietzsche saying we can as light-heartedly make true as false statements. Quite the opposite; he is signalling how the deceptive use of propositions is apt to be socially sanctioned. Language lacks the *right* kind of correspondence to reality not insofar as it does not depict it (an *Unding*, a preposterous task anyway; WL, 86), but inasmuch as it blurs the traces of its inability to depict it, by hiding them behind the "usual metaphors."

4. A WEB OF ARGUMENTS

Let us review the key assumptions we have so far highlighted in Nietzsche's early thoughts on language: the political ("eudaemonistic," "biological") origin of veracity; the linguistic construction, or at least reinforcement, of social stability; the metaphorical character of language; and, finally, the mendacious quality of language use, to be attributed not to any particularly vicious nature of human beings, but rather to the intrinsic impossibility of metaphor capturing the fullness of reality. Metaphors can be either larger than life or dried up, but never just-so stories, hence never adequate epistemic instruments, "adequate expressions of all realities" (WL, 81). It should by now be clearer why Nietzsche is justified in calling his interpretation "extra-moral". Non-Apollonian communication is neither motivated by pure intellectual contemplative knowledge, nor drive to truth, nor moral impulse. Truth is constructed by rhetorical means and morals arise from the peace treaty which rhetoric allows us to sign.

We cannot examine in any detail the arguments Nietzsche mobilizes to support his complex view, but let us try at least to arrange them under some broad headings. Some of them have been more or less deeply delved into by Nietzschean literature, some have been hinted at in the previous sections, some, finally, I will only be able to evoke and briefly sketch. I will couch these headings in today's vocabulary, not Nietzsche's.

4.1. “*Pragmatism.*” In the social employment of language, what remains constant, i.e. the intended purpose, is not truth in itself nor “pure knowledge which has no consequences,” but the efficacy and the “pleasant, life-preserving consequences of truth” (WL, 81). Interestingly enough, Nietzsche points to dreaming as a paradigmatic instance: in dreams people allow themselves to be “deceived” (WL, 80). We may thus complete Nietzsche’s argument: if people fear nightmares it is not because they are deceptive, but because of their unpleasant character. It is just the same with lies in wakefulness, and, by parity of reasoning, with truth. (This, of course, is an insistent motif throughout Nietzsche’s writings; e.g. FW, sect. 344, etc.)

4.2. “*Critique of concepts-formation.*” The issue of *Begriffsbildung* is a standard problem in post-Kantian epistemology—Nietzsche was probably inheriting it from Schopenhauer²⁴ and Friedrich Albert Lange.²⁵ In his still valuable work on this topic, Ernst Cassirer emphasized that the formation of a concept is a selective-reductive process, and “through this sort of reduction what is merely a part has taken the place of the original sensuous *whole*. This part, however, claims to characterize and explain the whole.”²⁶ Nietzsche, however, might have something to add to such considerations, precisely in the “pragmatist” vein we have repeatedly evoked. Psychologically speaking, concepts are the outcomes of what one might aptly call “inattentive selection”: i.e. they are adjustments intended to damp “unpleasant consequences” and to foster favourable ones. If this is so, the phrase “*arbitrarily* discard individual differences” (my italics), as employed by Nietzsche, is not completely consistent with his own premises. Concept-formation may be arbitrary if seen from a standard epistemology, centred on the adequateness of representation. In that case its limitations are plain to see. “Every word instantly becomes a concept,” yet “[e]very concept arises from the equation of unequal things. [...] the concept ... is formed by arbitrarily discarding ... individual differences and by forgetting the distinguishing aspects” (WL, 83). There is, in other words, a certain tautological character to concepts, since they cannot restore the “whole” of real experience (see point 4.6 below). But then again, such an impossible mission is not the purpose of conceptual knowledge. Rather, its purpose is to make communicative life possible. Its selective action, then, is far from arbitrary. Concepts are lies, but there is method in their madness. After what Nietzsche taught us about the role lie plays in communication, we cannot be talked back into old representational epistemology.

4.3. “*Grammaticalism.*” By this I mean the tendency to advertise as knowledge what are in fact “thoroughly anthropomorphic truth[s]” (WL, 85), i.e. derive

from the construction of the concept system alone. “If I make up the definition of a mammal, and then, after inspecting a camel, declare ‘look, a mammal,’ I have indeed brought a truth to light in this way, but it is a truth of limited value” (WL, 85). Had Nietzsche been familiar with Wittgensteinian vocabulary, he might have said that such a truth is a merely grammatical one.

4.4. “*Nominalism.*” While being connected to 4.3, this is distinct from that kind of critique, and takes a further step. The former was addressed to pseudo-discoveries, so to speak, i.e. the discovery that an item belonging to a class (camels) defined so as to be included in another one (mammals), belongs to the latter too. “Nominalism” is, rather, the critique of a Platonic way to deal with concepts. Obtaining a concept via selection and abstraction, as we have just seen, is not misguided *per se*. Yet, making a substance out of an abstraction can lead to pseudo-explanations, i.e. beliefs that make no difference to life. “We know nothing whatsoever about an essential quality called ‘honesty’; but we do know of countless individualized and consequently unequal actions which we equate” (WL, 83). The example chosen by Nietzsche is particularly telling as it anticipates later epistemological criticisms to trait-psychology: “We call a person ‘honest’, and then we ask ‘why has he behaved so honestly today?’ Our usual answer is, ‘on account of his honesty’” (WL, 83). A critique of such *vis-dormitiva*-types of explanation is part of the long-standing lessons of, for instance, behavioural psychology.²⁷ Briefly stated, the point is that, as far as a personal quality is *observed* in behaviour, it cannot be used to explain observation itself. Or, to put it differently, hypostatized qualities are not part of experience and cannot then advance practical knowledge.

4.5. “*Language pluralism.*” “The various languages placed side by side show that with words it is never a question of truth, never a question of adequate expression; otherwise, there would not be so many languages” (WL, 82). That the signifier bears an external relation to the signified is of course a classical linguistic doctrine. Nietzsche’s literature has emphasized his inevitably being aware of the issue *via* Plato’s *Cratylus*.²⁸ He may also have been familiar with some of the formulations to be found in modern thought, such as Locke’s views (*Essay on Human Understanding*, III.2.i), and particularly Johann Heinrich Lambert’s distinction of *natürliche* and *willkürliche Zeichen*.²⁹ I find it reductive, however, to couch it all in terms of Nietzsche’s intuition of the *arbitraire du signe*, in Saussure’s words. The plurality of expressions for the same things only proves the commonplace that there is no Fido–“Fido” relation between object and name (no Millian theory turned backward, that is to say). Yet this would hardly have to do with (propositional) truth, which is obviously not a naming relation. Nietzsche’s text seems to refer

to languages as *wholes*, stating they are incapable of standing as duplicates of reality, or, better, that such is not their job. In view of the metaphorical nature of language Nietzsche is going to describe in the subsequent paragraphs, what he seems to have had an inkling of is rather something like Humboldt's notion of *innere Sprachform* ("every people has a [...] mathematically divided conceptual heaven above themselves," WL, 85). Each language has its own way of gesturing toward reality. There is a fairly wide range of creativity in this gesturing (i.e. in the choice of the characteristic metaphors), but the key implication is that languages express how people come to terms with their vital tasks, i.e. describe "relations of things to men" (WL, 82), not of words to things.

4.6. "*Conventional character of general terms.*" "We separate things according to gender, designating the tree as masculine and the plant as feminine. What arbitrary assignments!" (WL, 82) Likewise arbitrary is the genus/species distinction, as long as "nature is acquainted with no forms and no concepts, and likewise with no species" (WL, 83). Broadly speaking, this is a consequence of the arbitrariness of concept-formation, but this time it is focussed on the alleged structure of nature itself. Nietzsche is critic of the Aristotelian ontology of "natural kinds," chiefly because of its undisclosed "anthropomorphism." It should be clear by now that the point of attack is precisely the non-disclosure, not the fact of using a human metric as the "measure of all things" (WL, 84). Nietzsche is not pleading for a different ontology (which "would be just as indemonstrable as its opposite," WL, 84), but for the recognition of ontology as a tool (a language-conditioned tool, as it appears from point 4.5 above).

4.7. "*Phenomenalism and system-building.*" This is one of the most emphasized aspects in critical literature. "The 'thing in itself' [...] is likewise something quite incomprehensible to the creator of language and something not in the least worth striving for" (WL, 82). Nietzsche's epistemology at this stage (and, on some interpreters' view, even later),³⁰ is a Kantian one, phenomenally interpreted; again, Lange's influence has been pointed to.³¹ Deep reality being "inaccessible" (WL, 83), it would seem that human knowledge is confined to surface. Thus, the language of truth is really a language of systematic ignorance (or lie). Yet, such a way of reading Nietzsche does not seem to take sufficient account precisely of this *systematic* character. To build a life-sustainable politics of truth requires being able to steer our course of action clear of both the impossible depiction of reality itself and the risk of believing in our own self-produced categorizing. This is unmistakably Nietzsche's orientation, once we realize that the quite telling bee-and-spider simile comes from the later so much despised Bacon (see WL, 85-

87).³² Spiders produce their web from themselves, much as the “‘rational’ being [...] places his behaviour under the control of abstractions” (WL, 84). Bees, on the contrary, build their artefacts by putting together what they “gather from nature” without further processing. Behaving like spiders, and believing in its own abstractions, humankind can “live with [...] repose, security, and consistency” (WL, 86): which, it seems, would be barred were we to follow the bees’ example.³³ Yet Nietzsche’s (and Bacon’s) suggestion is not to stop behaving like spiders, i.e. stop producing rational categories and building systems, but rather to stop self-deceiving, i.e. stop believing in the objectivity of such categories and recognize them as our original product.

4.8. “*Surface thinking and deep intuitions.*” Some interpreters maintain that Nietzsche, in WL, still believes there is a deep reality and that what he criticizes is the delusion of there being a privileged window on that reality.³⁴ On this view, the “forgetfulness” which is a necessary condition for man coming to “fanc[y] himself to possess a ‘truth’” (WL, 81) by way of conceptual thought would strictly speaking be amnesia of some original experience. This experience is promptly identified with art (musical poetry, tragedy), so that Dionysian reality would be the real one. At this stage, then, Nietzsche would still believe in a deep yet accessible reality, which conceptual language fails to reach on account of its shallowness. However natural it may look, I do not think this reading stands a closer examination. On such a view, it would be inexplicable why humankind has broken with the original Dionysian acquaintance with reality. Human beings have traded the “powerful present intuition” (WL, 90) for—exactly what? The delusion of possessing noumenal knowledge is not useful *per se*, as we have seen. In the long run, it can be useful only if recognized for what it is, i.e. delusion. That is to say, in the long run the Socratic project is bound to fail, precisely because of its anthropological unsoundness: because there is no “drive to truth” to support it.

Robert Pippin, on the contrary, denies “that Nietzsche is essentializing Dionysian reality.”³⁵ In *The Birth of Tragedy*, Pippin argues, there is no “invocation of an ‘original’, chaotic ‘real life’.”³⁶ And, while Nietzsche does talk of the thing-in-itself being “incomprehensible” (WL, 82), his target is really “the sort of truths which ‘the man of truth, the scientist, the philosopher’ want to establish.”³⁷ So (if am getting Pippin’s interpretation right) *On Truth and Lies* does not stand out from the rest of Nietzsche’s production in this period. On Pippin’s view, Nietzsche is debunking the attempt at comprehending reality by linguistic means, but there is no affirmation of the existence of any essential reality to comprehend in the first place. What Nietzsche is after, in his entire early period, is something which

would fulfil the same role as Socrates' self-styled truths, i.e. "make life worth living."³⁸ This is "tragic knowledge," i.e. a knowledge which is "honest," rather than Socratically truthful, in recognizing precisely that it "has proven impossible to build a culture upon knowledge."³⁹

Fascinating as it is, I think Pippin's version leaves the tragic philosopher in a motionless, inactive position. It is unclear, in other words, what the philosopher's next move would be, after realizing knowledge won't save us. Simply giving him/herself to art does not seem to be the answer, since, it should be noted, Pippin himself conceives of this realization as *knowledge*, albeit tragic. Tragic philosophy is still philosophy, not art straightaway. Thus, if Pippin is right, Nietzsche's project, taken as a *philosophical* one, would ultimately be self-paralyzing—not self-destroying like Socrates', agreed, but the outcome wouldn't anyway meet with Nietzsche's approval.

I do not possess a solution which would save both Nietzsche's vitalism and his tragic sense of life, but I would plead for a further elaboration of some threads that are evoked and not pursued in *On Truth and Lies*: first and foremost, what I have been calling the adaptive character of metaphor-construction, or of lie, the power it can make available to humans, its activating (vs contemplative) quality. One brief passage toward the end of *On Truth and Lies* makes that clearer than ever, as Nietzsche emphasizes "mastery over life" as the proper role of art itself (WL, 90). This preserves the gist of Pippin's intuition (the key is not Dionysian life, but our mastery over it), while bringing to the fore what we can *make* with life. Whether or not life is a Dionysian frenzy of sorts, Nietzsche is not suggesting that we simply yield to it, that we come back home to the pre-Apollonian state. Moreover, I think this is fitting with Nietzsche's later anthropology, which famously defined human being as *das noch nicht festgestellte Tier* (the unachieved, the "still undetermined animal").⁴⁰ The pre-Apollonian state is energetically unstable, so to speak: it needs to be complemented by intentional purposes, and cultural attitudes. If there is a life-enhancing role for metaphoric "lying," then this has to be found in whatever strength it may allow us to have over the world and over ourselves.

If I am right in assuming that, in Nietzsche's eyes, metaphorical manipulation of language serves *purposes*, both social and individual, then his alleged "pragmatism" is worth a closer look. Before this, however, we need to briefly examine what kind of tools Nietzsche puts to work in this effort, i.e. his theory of metaphor itself. This not only in order to complete the picture of *On Truth and Lies*'s main themes, but also to see why Pippin was far from unjustified in stressing the tragic import

of the early Nietzschean view of philosophy's tasks. My conclusion, in short, will be that Nietzsche's tools did not befit his purpose, or at least that, as regards their creative power, they were by far inferior to their *pars destruens*.

5. THE ROLE OF METAPHORS

"[W]e believe that we know something about the things themselves when we speak of trees, colors, snow, and flowers; and yet we possess nothing but metaphors for things—metaphors which correspond in no way to the original entities" (WL, 83). As hinted above, I side with Pippin in not taking this as assuming there *are* original entities, not, at least, in any essentialist sense (Nietzsche's own word here, *Wesenheiten*, does not settle the case). Now, precisely because metaphors are not there *faute de mieux*, one would want to know what they are up to, how they function, precisely in what way they replace their literal meaning. It is all too clear, then, why Nietzsche's metaphorology is probably the aspect which drew most attention from *On Truth and Lies's* interpreters. However, Nietzsche's treatment of the topic is far from clear: in fact, it is arguably the essay's weak spot.

For one thing, it is not strictly speaking a theory of metaphor. Nietzsche equivocally calls "metaphors" a sequence of passages which obtain, in his opinion, in every linguistic manifestation of experience, or more precisely, in every conceptual one. This class of manifestations will exclude, understandably enough, interjections, screams, outbursts of admiration and whatever is immediately *caused* by the quality of our experiences. But it will include, for not entirely clear reasons, mediated manifestations which, while using symbolic means, are of a more expressive than conceptual nature. These are, first and foremost, artistic expression and poetry, and even the production of metaphors itself, which is "the fundamental human drive" (WL, 88). Thus, metaphorical activity apparently comprises, on Nietzsche's view, both his main polemic target, the Socratic construction of conceptual *logoi*, and what he himself regards as the main way out of the Socratic tautology, i.e. the creative production of fresh language expression.

Furthermore, these passages are not all of the same kind, and particularly they are not all linguistic phenomena. Not all of Nietzsche's "metaphors," then, are cases of what one would plausibly call a metaphor, i.e. cases of saying something in order to say something else. What links them, apparently, is the mere fact of being "passages." Here Nietzsche probably plays on the fact that the words *Metapher* and *Übertragung* (transference) are semantically built up after the same pattern, as it has often been remarked.⁴¹ But the transfer vehicle seems to mysteriously

change its load during the journey, and the final shift obtains between things that are different in kind.

To begin with, a nerve stimulus is transferred into an image: first metaphor. The image, in turn, is imitated [*nachgeformt*] in a sound: second metaphor. (WL, 82) The third passage is the formation of a concept, as discussed above. Incidentally, we may note that Nietzsche fails to add a further part of the process, a zero level, as it were: the passage from “the mysterious X of the thing in itself” to the nerve stimulus (WL, 83).⁴² On the whole, it appears Nietzsche is making some of the mistakes for which he takes Socratism to task: he calls different things by the same name. The passage from *Bild* (image as perceived) to sound seems to be a symbolic, i.e. a conventional, not a metaphoric, relation. It certainly is not an imitation, unless by accident and within specific contexts.⁴³ As regards the stimulus/image passage, a few pages later Nietzsche is explicit in denying that it may be a causal relation (WL, 87), since what will result from this passage is not uniquely determined but, it seems, dependent on the particular human receptive structure.⁴⁴ If this is what Nietzsche means, it is confused, since such a dependence does not rule out the fact that the relation may be causal. Anyway, the only actual example Nietzsche offers here is that of the so-called Chladni figures, which *is* a case of causal relation.

What seems to me of foremost importance is that Nietzsche appears to regard metaphorical transferences according to a sort of law of diminishing returns. In every passage something goes missing or becomes lesser than it was, and, still worse, this is apparently the way Nietzsche looks at the entire functionality of language, as we saw in all of the topics highlighted in the previous section. Every linguistic move seems to be a loss. Indeed, he never gives any example in which a metaphor features, if not as a heuristic tool, at least as capable of bringing along some unintended consequence. (While, of course, literature of all times is teeming with suitable examples. Take, for instance, *Iliad* Bk. 3, 8-11, where the Achaean army is compared to a mist on a hill, which is an enemy to the shepherd, but a friend to thieves. The connection of the Greeks with a host of thieves can of course ring a bell in the reader’s mind, and make her see things differently.)

This being so, it is all too easy to read Nietzsche as positing a full reality at the beginning, which becomes weaker and weaker throughout language—even if, as we saw when examining Pippin’s arguments, there are good reasons not to interpret Nietzsche that way. Moreover, it is hard to see how this mechanism might possibly engender those “artistic,” ground-breaking metaphors which, according

to Nietzsche, should “make life worth living.” Thus, Nietzsche gives us an acute sense of how metaphors can be used to silence socio-linguistic innovation, but he fails to show how they can serve the will to power. The only hint he gives is by pointing out how they fight and compete for settling down as the dominant linguistic usage.⁴⁵ To obtain some enduring lesson from this, one has to couple it with the programme of anti-historicism Nietzsche will later avow in the second of the *Untimely Meditations*. One should beware of the “idolatry of the fact,” Nietzsche will then say. Applied to metaphorology, this entails that it is illusory to *deduce* from historical premises which metaphors will be the winners. This would only be meaningful if metaphors were a product of Hegelian objective *Geist*. But they are, on the contrary, quite contingent upon the actual will to communicative action. A metaphorology is thus not a phenomenology of how experience comes to linguistic expression, but of how language is politically used.

6. A PRAGMATIST NIETZSCHE?

After so many intimations that Nietzsche views language as a tool for action, it is time to examine the scope of his alleged pragmatism. The modern controversy about this is marked, however, by a few misconceptions. The first one is due to understanding Nietzsche’s analysis as a theory of truth. Arthur Danto, for instance, simply wrote: “Nietzsche [...] advanced a pragmatic criterion of truth: *p* is true and *q* is false if *p* works and *q* does not.”⁴⁶ Richard Rorty apparently agrees with Danto, even if his use of Nietzsche is largely a free re-invention for his own philosophical purposes. More recently, the Danto-Rorty version of Nietzsche’s pragmatism with respect to truth has been challenged by refusing to grant the pragmatist (more precisely, the Jamesian) origin of any thesis to the effect that “true is what works.”⁴⁷ Such a thesis is certainly an unacceptably simplified version of James’ view.⁴⁸ But, irrespective of how much it fits Rorty, it should be noted that it cannot be attributed to Nietzsche either.

Denying truth as a sufficient condition for a discourse to be persuasive does not imply that discourse is true because it persuades or satisfies the hearer, nor because it serves a purpose. It is, of course, correct to say that, to Nietzsche, true discourse is *by and large* functional to life preservation and daily vital needs. But this, as we have seen, holds of the lie as well, without the true ceasing to be true and the false to be false. Nietzsche’s choice of words, even in this period’s fragments, is quite cautious:

If all depends on the *value* of knowledge, but a beautiful delusion [*Wahn*], if it is believed, has exactly the same value as knowledge, then it is plain that life needs illusions [*Illusionen*], i.e. falsehoods considered as truths. Life needs faith in truth, but illusion is enough, which means that “truths” are proven by their effects, not by logical demonstrations.⁴⁹

The very talk of “falsehood considered as truth” shows that, in Nietzsche’s eyes, the true/false distinction is obvious and, borrowing Rorty’s phrase, can take care of itself. What Nietzsche is emphasizing is, rather, that the distinction is, on the one hand, irrelevant, and, on the other, insufficient. For a discourse to be useful it is neither required nor sufficient that it be true. It might be added that the simple equation of truth and utility is at odds with everything Nietzsche says about the necessity to get rid of self-deception.⁵⁰ Nietzsche will later more and more clearly recognize that the “errors” of language, insurmountable as they are, are precisely what leaves us free to use it for our vital purposes. To stop self-deceiving means to recognize our deception.

Morally speaking, the world is false. Yet, as long as morality is a part of this world, it is false. The will to truth is a *making* firm, *making* true-and-durable, clearing up that *false* character, and re-interpreting it into *being*.⁵¹

So, whatever is “pragmatist” in Nietzsche’s view is far from coming down to “an identification of the true and, say, the useful.”⁵² It is a matter of *making* truth useful, and this requires a sort of double negation: the departure from the negation of “being” which is implicit in conceptual abstraction. Nietzsche’s very determination to start from the (life-)value of truth, rather than from truth-value, bears witness to his ideal affinity with pragmatism.⁵³ On the other hand, even selective oblivion of reality can be part of the affirmation of reality as long as it is voluntary: our mastery over our own communicative practices knowingly prevails, then, over knowledge of the correspondence of words to facts. But this is because nothing is a value in itself: value implies evaluation, which in turn implies criteria. What might be called truth-accountability, or the capacity of bearing closer examination, is one of the (most useful) criteria employed for sifting statements in view of their usefulness.

However—and this is the second misconception in the debate about Nietzsche’s pragmatism—that discourse admits means for its validation has nothing to do with any plain correspondence of discourse to facts—if nothing else, because it is society and “biology” that determine both which aspects of reality will be

selected as true, and what methods will be employed for checking them against the background of experience. On a pragmatist view, true facts are experimental facts; which entails that they have already gone through a process of social negotiation, and will continue to undergo changes and adjustments as they are checked against their intended and unintended consequences.

Facts may be facts, and yet not be the facts *of* the inquiry in hand. In all scientific inquiry, however, to call them facts or data or truths of fact signifies that they are taken as the *relevant* facts of the inference to be made. *If* [...] they are then implicated however indirectly in a proposition about what is to be done, they are themselves theoretical in logical quality.⁵⁴

Knowledge is selection (in view of life-purposes), it is a creative process in which subjects are involved and interconnected. Not surprisingly, this view has elicited charges of subjectivism against pragmatist epistemological theories since their inception.⁵⁵ Here, rather than in any alleged rejection of the correspondence theory of truth, lies the mutual enrichment of pragmatism and the views proposed in WL. We have seen how Nietzsche's essay, for all its controversial sides, is capable of providing us with an array of tools for understanding the details of such a politics of truth.

A politics of truth is the construction of a shared way to compare and deal with partial and arbitrary points of view. It is a matter of everyone playing the same game, a game in which the speaker tries to establish as "true" that move which (she believes) will produce the desired effect in the hearer. But this effect is never secured, never conclusive. This is why Nietzsche's political anthropology deserves to be called Hobbesian: because no power, not even the *Übermensch's*, is ever warranted. Conversely, even the weak can stand back from the received truth and affirm her own. To avert *bellum omnium*, then, it is necessary to find rules for the game, such as to satisfy, in principle, all stakeholders. Admittedly, enforcement of this "principle" depends on political balance. An aristocratic society will have rules which are far from symmetrical, which, by the way, might be just as well to Nietzsche. But the same general idea holds for those who share a different view of political justice. One might say, in a somewhat Deweyan mind set, that you must have democracy first, in order to be able to tell the (democratic) truth. Still, there being contractual rules of the truth-game is itself a condition for political growth toward democratic communication. It is up to us to prove that democracy is a more adaptive way to solve problems. Nietzsche, insensitive though he is to such political answers, has brought *politics* to bear on the issue of truth. His use

of evolutionary language and pragmatist attitudes in *On Truth and Lies* shows his central concern was with the growth and the very possibility of life. Politics was not the origin of the *lie*, as a hasty reading of *On Truth and Lies* could suggest, but rather a framework which encompassed both truth and lie in view of human adaptation. It is open to debate, of course, whether Nietzsche's choice of super-human aristocracy over democracy will be a surreptitious reinstatement of pre-political truth or rather an overcoming of both politics and truth as no longer needed for adaptation. Yet, even this eventual outcome shows how strongly adaptation and truth were connected in his view.

Thus, confining *On Truth and Lies* to Nietzsche's "juvenilia"⁵⁶ is oversimplified. On the contrary, the essay is important not only because it anticipates ideas on the metaphorical nature of language, which will become common sense in linguistics some decades later, e.g. in Michel Bréal's theories, but above all because, within the context of *On Truth and Lies*, it helps to make clear the essentially political nature of linguistic exchange, such as will be emphasized only much later by Gramsci.⁵⁷ Precisely because language contains metaphorical indeterminacy, it is subject to a continual process of adjustment and negotiation among speakers, by such means as requests for clarifications, rephrasing, exemplifications, and so on.⁵⁸ No transmission which cannot be unsuccessful is a linguistic communication, and no linguistic success is achieved except either through negotiation or by being rooted in some previous one. Nietzsche's main insight, in the end, consists of the distinction between a language use which draws on "usual metaphors," having negotiation behind its back, and one which explores new metaphorical possibilities, the language of art and poetry. His distinction, however, is too sharp: the two ways of using metaphors in language are more intertwined than he admits. First, negotiation is properly never behind our back, even in the usual language practice. Here, once again, communicative pragmatism has to be taken into account. By using old metaphors we nevertheless want to achieve pragmatic effects on hearers, and *these* effects may be politically renegotiated. The novelty is provided not by newness of metaphors *per se*, but by the interaction between such metaphors and the changing adaptive purposes for which speakers employ them—pouring old wine in new bottles may be a humbler activity, but it can be as effective as producing new wine altogether. Second, and connected to this, Nietzsche underestimates the negotiation which is inherent even in poetical language. *Poiesis* is not entirely separated from ordinary language in supposedly lacking any practical purpose at all. Nietzsche himself catches art's fundamental orientation to truth; however, he is still misled by a purely contemplative conception of truth itself, which he consequently tends to reject rather than

reinvent. *Poiesis*, however, as production of new metaphors, is a form of speech activity, hence it tries to bring about effects, to make differences, just like ordinary linguistic usage.

It is not within our scope to elaborate here on this issue. I will conclude by simply pointing out that what distinguishes art and science is not, as Nietzsche holds (WL, 88),⁵⁹ the newness of art's metaphors as opposed to the rigidity of scientific ones. Rather, the difference between the *practices* of art interpretation and scientific understanding is, in turn, a difference of language games. Both art and science can, in varying degrees, produce effects on individual users (hearers, readers, etc.) and the public mind as well. Both can be creative and *fröhlich*. Both can trigger debate in expert communities. Processes of clarification and mutual control within the scientific community are an essential part of scientific activity, and art can raise hectic dispute among commentators and connoisseurs, although the ways in which disputes are settled, if at all, are basically different in the two cases. Yet, art's peculiarity lies not only in the means it employs (its "new wine" in terms of linguistic production), but also in its creating a special relationship between consumers (whether professional or not) and the text. This kind of negotiation is usually of a reflective nature and goes on within the beholder's mind, or, in momentous cases, the beholder's life: it is what we usually refer to as interpretation.⁶⁰ Interpretation *is* a negotiation insofar as the user will normally have made some initial choice about what she wants to use the artwork for (say, pleasure, escape, abreaction, etc.). That is to say, she will have chosen which game to play with it, while being at the same time willing to be surprised by the text—yet she may ultimately face unexpected consequences, undergo unpredictable changes during her encounter with the artwork, and end up playing quite a different game from what she initially thought she would. In this sense, after all, art is a case of the useful lie.

NOTES

1. Augustine, *De mendacio*, III.3.
2. Paul Cantor, "F. Nietzsche: The Use and Abuse of Metaphor." *Metaphor: Problems and Perspectives*. Ed. D.S. Miall. Sussex-New Jersey: Harvester Press-Humanities Press, 1982.
3. As J. Hillis Miller ("Dismembering and Disremembering in Nietzsche's 'On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense'." *boundary 2* 9:3, 1981, 44) has noted, his text is itself teeming with "metaphors of violence and mutilation."
4. This and all references indicated as "WL" are taken from Friedrich Nietzsche, *On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense*, in *Philosophy and Truth. Selections from Nietzsche's Notebooks of the early 1870's*. Transl. Daniel Breazeale. Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1979 (orig. *Über Wahrheit und Lüge im aussermoralischen Sinn*. 1872-1873).
5. Barbara Stiegler, *Nietzsche et la biologie*. Paris: PUF, 2001, 30. On Nietzsche's biology see also Alfred Tauber, "A Typology of Nietzsche's Biology." (*Biology and Philosophy* 9, 1994, 24-44); for an extended discussion of the "biological" in *The Will to Power* see Rossella Fabbrichesi, "Nietzsche and James. A Pragmatist Hermeneutics." (*European Journal of Pragmatism and American Philosophy* 1:1, 2009).
6. For instance, Veena Das has pointed to "the kinds of mundane activities that may be carried on during a ritual but are nevertheless not seen as constitutive of the ritual and hence can be ignored in judgments about 'rightness' of a ritual act" ("Wittgenstein and Anthropology." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 27, 1998, 178).
7. *Nachgelassene Fragmente*, 1873, 29[8]. All posthumous fragments are quoted from the Colli-Montinari edition reproduced as Digital Critical Edition, at <http://www.nietzschesource.org/#eKGWB>. Translations are mine.
8. Robert Pippin, "Truth and Lies in Early Nietzsche." (*Journal of Nietzsche Studies* 11, 1996/1998), repr. in *Nietzsche: Critical Assessments*. Ed. Daniel N. Conway. Vol. II, 286-303. London-New York: Routledge, 1998, 288. My italics.
9. M.J. Bowles, "The Practice of Meaning in Nietzsche and Wittgenstein." (*Journal of Nietzsche Studies* 26, 2003, 19).
10. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*. Transl. G. E. M. Anscombe. Oxford: Blackwell, 1953/1986, II, 190.
11. *Nachgelassene Fragmente*, 1873, 29[8].
12. Things that are done with words are more than this, of course, but pragmatics in Charles Morris's sense is focussed on the speaker/hearer relationship.
13. Jacques Derrida, *Histoire du mensonge. Prolégomènes*. Paris: Éditions de l'Herne, 2005, 29. He seems to be referring to lie alone, but I take it he would have wanted to include truthfulness as well.
14. See, among recent literature, Dallas G. Denery II, *The Devil Wins. A History of Lying from the Garden of Eden to the Enlightenment*. Princeton : Princeton University Press, 2015.
15. Vladimir Jankélévitch, *Du mensonge*. Paris: Flammarion, 1998, 13.
16. Cp. Ken Gemes, "Nietzsche's Critique of Truth." *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 52: 1 (March 1992, 47-65).
17. "On the Pathos of Truth." *Five Prefaces to Five Unwritten Books* (1872). Transl. Daniel Breazeale in *Philosophy and Truth*; cp. *Nachgelassene Fragmente*, 1872-1874, 19 [218, 219, 221].
18. For the definition of a *theory* of truth see Giorgio Volpe, *Teorie della verità*. Milano: Guerini, 2005, 47. Maudemarie Clark (*Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990) does not sufficiently distinguish these two things, so that her relocating Nietzsche's view among theories of truth is somehow unhelpful. Steven Crowell ("Nietzsche's View of Truth." *International Studies in Philosophy* 19:2, 1987, 3-18) sees Nietzsche as trying to replace traditional views of truth with some new, more authentic one, whose nature he regards as "existential". Yet

Philip Hugly, in his reply (“Crowell on Nietzsche on Truth.” *International Studies in Philosophy* 19:2, 1987, 19-28), is essentially right in asking whether Nietzsche isn’t rather trying to get rid of the need for a substantive theory of truth.

19. Richard Schacht (*Nietzsche*. London-New York: Routledge, 1983/1992, ch. 2) convincingly argued that there is no reason to deny that Nietzsche conceives of “first level” truth according to the standard correspondence model.

20. See e.g. *Human, All Too Human: A Book for Free Spirits*. Trans. R. J. Hollingdale. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, § 35 (orig. 1879-80); *The Gay Science*. Trans. Josefine Nauckhoff, Adrian Del Caro, ed. Bernard Williams. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001, § 95 (orig. 1887).

21. *Nachgelassene Fragmente*, 1873, 29[1].

22. *Wahrhaftigkeit*: see *Nachgelassene Fragmente*, 1873, 29[8].

23. For Nietzsche’s judgment on evolutionary theory see e.g. *The Gay Science*, § 4, § 373.

24. Carlo Gentili, *Nietzsche*. Bologna: Il Mulino, 2001, 191-192.

25. Claudia Crawford, *The Beginnings of Nietzsche’s Theory of Language*. Berlin-New York: de Gruyter, 1988, 206-209. According to Crawford, practically all of the key points in *On Truth and Lies* were to be found in Lange (*The Beginnings*, 84). Both Crawford and Gentili also underscore the likely influence of Gustav Gerber’s work, *Die Sprache als Kunst* (1871).

26. Ernst Cassirer, “Substance and Function.” In *Substance and Function – Einstein’s Theory of Relativity*. Transl. William Swabey, Mary Swabey. Chicago: Open Court, 1923, 6 (orig. 1910).

27. E.g. B.F. Skinner, *Science and Human Behavior*. Glencoe: The Free Press, 1953 (paperback ed. 1965, 31).

28. See e.g. Breazeale’s footnote 13 in his translation of *On Truth and Lies*.

29. Johann Heinrich Lambert, *Neues Organon oder Gedanken über die Erforschung und Bezeichnung des Wahren und dessen Unterscheidung vom Irrthum und Schein*. Leipzig, 1764, Bd. 2. Facsimile ed. at http://www.kuttaka.org/~JHL/L1764a_II.pdf, § 3 ff.

30. See Stephen Houlgate, “Kant, Nietzsche and the ‘Thing in Itself’.” *Nietzsche-Studien* 22 (1993, 115-57).

31. Crawford, *The Beginnings*; Gentili, *Nietzsche*.

32. Bacon wrote “Rationales, aranearum more, tela ex se conficiunt” (*Novum Organum: Aphorismi de interpretatione naturae et regno hominis*, I, XCV). He probably took the simile from Stobaeus, who might have been Nietzsche’s source as well. That Nietzsche had a source, and an ancient one at that, is obvious if we think of what he says about bees: Nietzsche had a fairly good knowledge of science, and no 19th-century zoologist would have considered bees as mere assemblers of raw materials.

33. Admittedly, Nietzsche offers no reasons why we should not take the bees’ course. He just says man is “far above” them. We might speculatively take it he regards sheer empiricalness as an ineffectual way of handling changing situations.

34. See Bernard Williams, *Truth and Truthfulness. An Essay in Genealogy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002, 16-17.

35. Pippin, “Truth and Lies,” 295.

36. Pippin, “Truth and Lies”, 295.

37. Pippin, “Truth and Lies”, 297.

38. Pippin, “Truth and Lies”, 298.

39. Pippin (“Truth and Lies”, 299) quotes these words from Nietzsche’s 1872 “Reflections on the Struggle between Art and Knowledge,” as translated by Breazeale in *Philosophy and Truth* (11, 29).

40. *Beyond Good and Evil*. Transl. Judith Norman. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002, 56 (orig. 1886, III.62).

41. Among the authors I have mentioned, by Breazeale, Pippin, Miller, etc.

42. See Crawford, *The Beginnings*, 209.

43. It should be noted, however, that “imitate” is a stronger verb than the German *nachformen*, which doesn’t necessarily imply *nachahmen* in the meaning of “aping” or “trying to resemble.”
44. “...if we could only perceive things now as a bird, now as a worm, now as a plant [...] then no one would speak of such a regularity of nature” (WL, 87).
45. Cantor, “The Use and Abuse”, 76.
46. Arthur C. Danto, *Nietzsche as Philosopher*. New York: Macmillan, 1965, 72.
47. See Jason M. Boffetti, “Rorty’s Nietzschean Pragmatism: A Jamesian Response.” *The Review of Politics* 66:4 (2004, 605-631).
48. See Hilary Putnam, “James’ Theory of Truth.” *The Cambridge Companion to W. James*. Ed. Ruth A. Putnam. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997, 166-85.
49. *Nachgelassene Fragmente*, 1872, 19[43].
50. See R. Lanier Anderson, “Nietzsche on Truth, Illusion, and Redemption.” *European Journal of Philosophy* 13:2, (2005, 3, and fn. 9).
51. *Nachgelassene Fragmente*, 1887, 9[91].
52. Alexander Nehamas, “Nietzsche, Modernity, Aestheticism.” *The Cambridge Companion to Nietzsche*. Eds. Bernd Magnus, Kathleen Higgins. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006, 248.
53. See Robert C. Solomon, *Living With Nietzsche: What the Great “Immoralist” Has to Teach Us*. Oxford-New York: Oxford University Press, 2003, 41.
54. John Dewey, “The Logic of Judgments of Practice.” *The Middle Works, 1899-1924*, vol. 8. Ed. Jo Ann Boydston. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1979, 22-23 (orig. 1915).
55. See Dewey, “Does Reality Possess Practical Character?” *The Middle Works, 1899-1924*, vol. 4. Ed. Jo Ann Boydston. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1983, 125-126 (orig. 1908).
56. As Clark attempts to do, *Nietzsche on Truth*, 65.
57. For the references to Bréal and Gramsci, I am here largely drawing on Stefano Selenu, “Elaborando le tracce della storia. Linguaggio, metafora e alterità in Antonio Gramsci.” *Discipline Filosofiche* 18:1, 2008, 115-133.
58. Antonio Gramsci, *Quaderni del carcere*. Ed. Valentino Gerratana. Torino: Einaudi, 1975, Q 29, § 2, 2342.
59. See Miller, “Dismembering and Disremembering”, 45.
60. This is why, I take it, Fabbrichesi (“Nietzsche and James”) speaks of “pragmatist hermeneutics.”