CHAPTER II
NIETZSCHE'S DECONSTRUCTION OF TRUTH

As we have seen in introduction, Nietzsche's main concern behind his philosophical enterprise is the question of meaning. The kind of meaning we treat as universally valid are those we see in philosophies, sciences and various discourses used to manage modern institutions. Nietzsche is concerned with the examination of accepted models of meaning, its truthfulness and the purpose of its formulation. It was also his purpose to examine the feasibility of this type of truth in understanding the non-discursive reality of life. After all it is his ardent interest in 'life' which was the main motivating factor behind his philosophising. In the major philosophical systems the non-discursive reality of life could not find enough space to get its expression. In them either it was neglected or reduced to a kind of abstract intellectual discussion.

And this depreciation of life is called by Nietzsche nihilism. In section twelve of The Will to Power Nietzsche says that nihilism is the result of man's 'positing of a totality, a systematisation'\(^1\); in short the imposing of various categories of causes, truths etcetera which we see in philosophies. So, overcoming of nihilism

naturally implies surpassing of the thinking based on these generalisations. All philosophers start their enquiry from these foundations, accepting them as true 'apriori'\(^2\). Not much enquiry has been done to examine what these concepts do actually mean; that is to say, their truthfulness, their conditions of origin and the psychological function they serve in human history.

A philosopher who takes change and becoming seriously cannot accept any stable concepts or entities of this sort at face value. That was the case with David Hume when he said the ideas of 'substance' and 'self' were derived from our habits. When such a philosopher of 'change' becomes a genealogist too, he does not content by merely denying these concepts and expressing his scepticism. A genealogist like Nietzsche, besides stating that these concepts are false would be interested in explaining the origin of these concepts and values. This includes finding the reasons and justifications given by the proponents of various concepts for asserting their hegemony.

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2. Generally, metaphysical philosophy considers the categories and forms such as causality, substance, essense, subject, good etc. to be the basic forms of world and knowledge which are existing prior to human experience. Being given an eternal existence to them these categories eludes criticism even in the fiercest critiques initiated by the philosophers about the nature of reality and knowledge.
Nietzsche's this line of enquiry stems from his recognition that the traditional concept of philosophy as the pursuit of metaphysical and epistemological foundations upon which to erect a philosophical system is untenable. Since nihilism is resulted by positing such higher truths above life, overcoming of nihilism requires deconstruction of such foundations and truths. By genealogically exposing the origin of these truths Nietzsche's deconstruction intends to show that the rational foundations of Western civilization is a myth; that means the so called 'true world' is a mere fabrication invented solely from psychological needs of security and comfort.

In another context Nietzsche explains the advent of nihilism as the losing of binding force of our great values and beliefs, due to the experience of the 'death of God'.

For Nietzsche the most immediate problem confronting our time is to overcome nihilism. Nihilism means the uppermost values devalue themselves. This means that whatever realities and laws set the standard in Christianity, in morality since the time of Greeks and in philosophy since Socrates lose their binding force. For

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3. Nietzsche's declaration, 'God is dead' appears first time in Sec.125 of *The Gay Science*. It actually means the end of any postulations that stands above life which include essences and forms fabricated by metaphysics.
Nietzsche it is not merely a development of his own time. Nihilism begins in the pre-christian era and it does not cease with 20th century. For Nietzsche nihilism is not a theory. It is at work even there it is not advocated as doctrine or demand. Nihilism is not a mere collapse, valuelessness and destruction. Corruption, and physiological degeneration are not causes of nihilism but effects. 'Nihil' does not signify non being but primarily a value of nil. Nietzsche's proclamation of 'death of God' is synonymous with modern man's total recognition of the fictitious nature of the so far accepted metaphysical truths, values and other worldly essences. The advent of positivistic modern sciences strengthened the pace of this loss of faith. Nihilism is no longer remains an intellectual issue; it is a concrete problem which touches the lives of all individuals in contemporary society.

Nietzsche characterizes nihilism as a psychological state which results primarily from human beings' failure to find any meaning in this world of becoming. 4. Because of this, man seeks comfort from elsewhere, a world of being, a set of values, God, or the true world. Unable to accept the chaos and flux of the world of becoming, man creates a simplistic picture of the world by imposing various categories of causes, subjects, truths etc. So that he is

able to live in it. Nihilism as a psychological state is reached when we sought a meaning in all the events that is not there; when we posit a totality a schematisation, indeed any organization in all the events that will serve as a unity which is superior to man. The whole of life then becomes unreal and represented as appearance. The idea of another world, of the supersensible in all its forms (God, essence, Good) and values superior to life are manifestations of nihilism.

Nietzsche believed that the modern world of his time was either already at this stage or at its threshold. His claim that western culture in all its aspects, is coming to an end is to be seen in this light. With the emergence of more urban based culture, materialism, the acute manifestations of nihilism such as alienation, loss of purpose in one's existence, loneliness, fragmentation of life etc. are more and more becoming the facts of every day life.

In another occasion Nietzsche calls the enterprise of denying life and depreciating our worldly existence nihilism. In order to affirm life Nietzsche presents the aim of philosophy as the freeing of thought from nihilism and

its various forms. His project of 'revaluation of all values' is a countermovement to nihilism. Since the present valuations are based on supersensible or generalised truths, deconstruction of these truths acquires a special importance in his philosophy. According to Nietzsche the very first principle of morality of the christian religion and the philosophy of 'platonic tradition' \(^8\) upto modern times propogate the same teaching: This world is worth nothing; there must be a better world than this one, a beyond, a supersensuous world, the world of senses is but a world of appearance. In such a way this world and this life at bottom is negated. This view depreciated life and had put control on the free play of life. It is in this context Nietzsche says: 'man is not allowed to laugh and play'\(^9\).

Always there appeared for humanity a teacher of the purpose of existence, always they concerned with a single task. That is to do what is good for the preservation of the human race.

Various truths were formulated in order to preserve the species from destruction. Beyond providing preservation and

\(^8\) Platonic tradition is that trend in thinking which base their arguments on the founding concepts of philosophy provided by platonism. In this sense western metaphysical philosophy generally upto modern times inherit platonism. See the essay "Violence and Metaphysics" by Jacques Derrida in *Writing and Difference* pp. 80-83.

conditions of comfort these truths were not sufficient to strengthen the functions of man as a species. Nietzsche thinks, instead it blocked the wells of life. In his book *On the Genealogy of Morals* Nietzsche locates the causes for positing highest values above life in the psychology of 'resentment', 'bad conscience' and ascetic ideal.

Nietzsche's analysis of nihilism does not stop with locating its origin in the postulation of highest values in metaphysics, morality and religion. Various modern institutions including modern science, in his view are manifestations of nihilism. He writes: "Modern science is also conquered by ascetic ideal". consequently becomes the latest manifestation of nihilism. According to Nietzsche the idea that modern science has survived up till now without God and metaphysical consolation is not correct. Because, in his view, science today is a hiding place for every kind of discontent, disbelief and bad conscience. By providing a metaphysical consolation and meaning for existence science replaces the old God and occupies his place. In Nietzsche's opinion 'strictly speaking there is

10.Logically centered thinking of man by permitting rationalistic aspect alone in its domain, forgets to think about those characteristics which actually gives the species the hue and support to its life. See the Heideggerian notion 'forgetting of being' by western metaphysics.

no such thing as science 'without any presuppositions, a philosophy, a faith'. Thus Nietzsche states: "The truthful man, in the audacious and ultimate sense that is presupposed by the faith in science, thereby affirms another world than that of life, nature and history; and in so far as they affirm this other world does this not mean that he has to deny its counterpart this world, our world?... It is still a metaphysical faith upon which our faith in science rests".12 Nietzsche's deconstruction of truths of logic and metaphysics in effect includes deconstruction of modern science as well because science rests on the various categories provided by logic.

Through his philosophizing Nietzsche tries to complete this nihilism. Giving a fourth meaning to nihilism Nietzsche argues that active nihilism is a sign of increased power and strength.13 It acts as a violent force destructing14 the existing forms of decadance. This form of nihilism does not imply the weakness of spirit and taking refuge in the truths that are above life. Instead it wants to help to destroy such edifices of truth (The will to power,24) For acquiring a new meaning for existence Nietzsche had to deconstruct the existing valuation of life. A man who wants to raise a new sanctuary an existing

sanctuary must be destroyed 15. To make the ruth as
daylight, as 'noon the time of shortest shadow' ( Nietzsche,
Thrus Spoke Zarathustra) he has to unveil all the camouflages
that still conceal God's death from man. For this purpose
he goes to initiate a deconstructive critique of all
accepted truths, values and beliefs.

Counter to the christian, metaphysical and rational
positivist denial of life and earth Nietzsche wants to
affirm life as it is, with its pain, sensuousness, joy and
tragic conditions; in its multiplicity Nietzsche wants to
say 'yes and Amen' to existence16. In his major works such
as "On the Genealogy of morals" and 'Beyond Good and Evil'
Nietzsche explains how the history of human civilization so
far was guided by revengeful psychology, ascetic ideal and
negative will to power; for this, this researcher devoted a
separate chapter in this thesis. At the moment let us see
the context of Nietzsche's deconstructive critique and its
value to the history of philosophy.

Nietzsche holds, his philosophy of value to be a
critique. One of the main motifs of Nietzsche's work is that
Kant had not carried out a true critique because he was not

15. Albert Camus, "The Absolute Affirmation" in The Rebel,

16. Nietzsche, "The Song of Yes and Amen" in Thus Spoke
Zarathustra, trans. R.J.Hollingdale, (New York, Penguin,
1984), P.244.
able to pose the problem of critique in terms of values. In Nietzsche's opinion critique has done nothing in so far it has not been brought on to truth itself. Kant is the fist philosopher who understood critique as having to be total and positive critique. But what were the results of Kantian project? In *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant could not succeed over the dogmatic concepts of theology (God, freedom and immorality) and damage that ideal. Kant distinguished three ideals. What can I Know? What should I do? and what can I hope for? Limits are drawn for each ideal. But the uncritical character of each ideal remains as it is in Kantian Philosophy. True knowledge, and true morality remain a fact for him. The only object of Kantian critique is justification, it begins by believing in the values it criticises.

Contrary to this Nietzsche's deconstruction of truth and value is the true realization of critique and the only way in which a total critique may be realised, the only way to 'philosophise with a hammer' 17. Nietzsche's project of critique is of great importance for the history of philosophy since it runs counter not only to Kantianism but to the entire Kantian tradition.

17. How to Philosophize with a Hammer is the subtitle of Nietzsche's book *Twilight of the Idols*. Nietzsche reveals his intention of transforming his writings to be the hammer strokes destructing the existing foundations of truths set as Idols.
Every time that Nietzsche denounces truth he is not denouncing erroneous truths, but the truth itself. This is why Nietzsche in this domain, as in others, thinks that he has found the only possible way of a total critique in what he calls his 'perspectivism'. According to which there are no illusions of knowledge but knowledge itself is an illusion; knowledge is an error, or worse, a falsification; there are no moral facts or moral phenomena but only a moral interpretation of phenomena'.

Nietzsche's text *Beyond Good and Evil* starts with certain questions which carries his enquiry to the central issue of truth. He asks: "What in us really wants "truth"?... That famous truthfulness of which all philosophers so far have spoken with respect" 18. And continues, why not we want rather untruth and uncertainty ? 19 "How could anything originate out of its opposite? for example truth out of error? or will to truth out of the will to deception? 20.

In answer to these questions Nietzsche endeavours to explain the perspectival nature of knowledge. According to

19. Ibid.
20. Ibid, (Sec.2), pp.9-10.
which truth is derived not from 'representation'\textsuperscript{21} of phenomena but from human interpretation. Nietzsche announces that "there are no facts; only interpretations" \textsuperscript{22}. Since the second half of this century philosophers of Western world have with increasing frequency, come to characterise their investigation as 'hermeneutical' or interpretive\textsuperscript{23}. This hermeneutical shift initiated by thinkers like Friedrich Schleirmacher and Wilhelm Dilthey indicates a rejection of the traditional concept of philosophy as the pursuit of epistemological, metaphysical foundations upon which to build a philosophical system. Nietzsche's perspectival explanation of meaning makes him a forerunner of contemporary hermeneutic tradition\textsuperscript{24}.

\textsuperscript{21} Representationism believes that human knowledge represents reality. In this sense human thought gets a correspondence to the 'facts' or phenomena outside. Philosophical language supposed to be representing the meaning correctly. However, the shift in the realm of thinking with the advent Nietzsche alters this notion. From then on thinkers began to consider that truth is nothing but human interpretation of phenomena.

\textsuperscript{22} Nietzsche, \textit{The Will to Power}, p. 267.

\textsuperscript{23} Hermenetics provide the theory and methods of interpreting meaning in culture and various institutions. According to it meaning is stored in the 'sign' which the interpreter has to decipher.

\textsuperscript{24} Interpretive strategies of contemporary hermeneutics surpasses the traditional hermeneutic view of signification. Post structuralist tradition generally holds that a 'sign' can signify multiple meanings in accordance with the historical situations it had undergone. Derrida says: The absence of the transcendental signified extends the domain and the play of signification infinitely (Derrida, \textit{Writing and Difference}, p. 280)
Perspectivism is the Nietzschean doctrine that asserts there are no uninterpreted 'facts' or truths. The need of 'interpretation arises in some historical situation to safeguard life or for easy communication. Nietzsche distinguishes three basic types of perspectives. Physiological, instinctual and socio-historical. The physiological perspectives are those determined by our sensory apparatus. Since human beings are situated bodily at a particular point in space, time and history their capacity for knowledge is inevitably limited. Being situated so, human beings are not capable of the objective disinterested observation of reality demanded by the traditional account of knowledge. What we call reality then, is physiologically determined by our sensory apparatus directed by the perspectives of our need.

To Nietzsche instinctual perspectives are comprised of our drives and desires. He says: "Nothing else were given as real except our world of desires and passions and that we can rise or sink to no other reality than the reality of our drives-for thinking is only the relationship of these drives to one another"25. Nietzsche argues, man's greater part of conscious thinking must still be included among instinctive activities. 'Being conscious' is not in any decisive sense

25.Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, p.47.
the opposite of what is instinctive. For instance, he says, even most of the conscious thinking of a philosopher (rationalist) is secretly guided and forced into certain channels by his instincts. Behind all logic and its seeming sovereignty of movement, too, there stands valuations or more clearly physiological demands for preservation of certain type²⁶.

Socio-historical perspectives of man are those ideas about human being and by human being which we see in various human sciences such as anthropology history, sociology and natural sciences. The limitations of historical perspective would be revealed when we realize that our knowledge about man and world is based on a very limited period of time. The recorded history does not show light beyond the last four thousand years. Philosophers think man as something that remain constant²⁷ in the midst of all change as a measure of everything. However, they do not think that man is becoming, that the faculty of cognition is becoming.

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²⁶.Ibid, p.11.

²⁷.The Platonic view that knowledge is innate to the human soul which is immortal and the experience function as parting of a screen to expose what is behind it, rejects the temporality of human knowledge. Plato posits 'man as the spectator of all time and existence'. In 'essentialistic' philosophy, man being the possessor of logos, stands as the 'measure' of everything.
Nietzsche Writes: "The whole teleology is constructed by speaking of the man of the last four millenia as of an eternal man towards him all things in the world have had a natural relationship from the time he began"\textsuperscript{28}.

What follows from this argument is that 'meaning' appears as an anthropomorphic contribution, an artificial limit imposed upon the world so as to make it manageable. Traditional metaphysics posited the idea of a true 'world independent of human mind and man at its centre as a spectator who is able to understand and explain it through various devices and faculties of knowledge. Philosophers one after another from Plato to the modern times tried to explain the nature of the world. Although they took different positions regarding the nature of reality such as appearance or essence is real, or the universe as the manifestation of some absolute (Hegel), none of them doubted the existence of some 'real as such' perhaps with the only exception of David Hume who doubted the existence of an enduring 'substance'. Yet in Hume scepticism acts as an explanation of the world; his aim is scepticism and he ends up in the metaphysics of scepticism. Almost all of the philosophers agrees that man must grasp the truth of the existence and make it useful in various life situations.

Their differences were only about the means by which truth is attained.

Nietzsche's perspectival account of knowledge is used to deconstruct the traditional concept of truth, the privileged object of epistemology. Nietzsche's perspectival account does not provide a theory at all; it is a rhetorical strategy\(^{29}\) that offers an alternative to the traditional epistemological conception of knowledge as the possession of some stable, eternal entities; whether these be considered 'truths', facts, meanings, propositions or whatever.

Three basic characteristics of perspectives are that perspectives are inevitable, indispensable and at the same time false. According to Nietzsche, however, "The falsest of a judgment is for us not necessarily an objection to a judgement"\(^{30}\) The question is to what extent it is life promoting, life preserving, perhaps even species cultivating. Sometimes the false judgements (which include the synthetic apriori judgements) are in Nietzsche's opinion the most indispensable for us; because without accepting the

\[^{29}\text{This is the view of language as providing no information of things as they really are. The nature of language being metaphoric, human being's creative and aesthetic powers are present at the origin of language and in every expression we form in language is essentially rhetorical. See The Will to Power, P.452: "metaphysics, religion, morality, science - all of them only products of his will to art, to lie, to flight from 'truth'... this artistic ability of man parexcellence".}\]

\[^{30}\text{Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, p.11}\]
fictions of logic and without measuring reality against the purely invented world of the unconditional and self identical, man could not live.\textsuperscript{31} Nietzsche has the position that perspectives make the world manageable. Because of our physiological, instinctual and historical limitations we cannot avoid adopting a particular and to a certain extent 'idiosyncratic perspective' on the world. Yet its indispensability will not serve as a criterion for the truth of that perspective.

With Nietzsche's perspectival notion of knowledge the hermeneutic view of interpretation takes a new turn. In traditional hermeneutics interpretive activity aims to approximate the original, \textit{intended authorial meaning of the sign}.\textsuperscript{32} To this tradition a sign represents only a single

\textsuperscript{31}Ibid.12

\textsuperscript{32}When we posit a cause for every event or Phenomena we accept an author or someone who intended the activity/phenomena for its coming into being. Often God is considered to be the originator of activity and meaning. The meaning of an object or 'sign' cannot vary from that of the meaning intended by its author/creator. In traditional metaphysics God is substituted by other transcendental concepts of presence such as 'substance', 'idea', 'logos' etc. In them also meaning of any sign is fixed to the single one determined by the transcendental principle. The function of the interpreter is to disclose that already present meaning. However death of God invalidates the existence of a transcendental author for the text of the world. From then on interpretation becomes a creative task of 'pluralisation' of meaning by the 'reader', the man himself.
fixed meaning which the interpreter has to disclose. However, deconstructive approach in hermeneutics draws on the insights of both phenomenological hermeneutics and structural linguistic hermeneutics tries to move beyond the traditional hermeneutic circle to a view of 'interpretation as infinite play'. According to this view interpretation is a transformational activity and each sign can be given a multiplicity of meaning and interpretations.

In the works of Nietzsche interpretation is directly related to the 'death of God'. With death of God the absolute foundation of truth collapses; so that are left with the unwarranted signs of truth, and things no longer have any value/truth in themselves but are what we make of them by our interpretation. God's absence indicates the absence of a 'code' which connects various truths. With

33. Deconstructive approach in Hermeneutics believes that any sign can contain infinite meanings. Its signification is brought about by the perspective adopted by the interpreter.

34. See "Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences" in Jacques Derrida's *Writing and Difference*, He writes, 'the absence of the transcendental signified extends the domain of the play of signification infinitely', p. 280.

35. In the structured discourses of 'human sciences' and metaphysics the presence of a transcendental principle (God Substance, logos, reason, etc.) acts as a connecting code running between various parts of the structure; so that it functions as a coherent whole and provides a uniform purpose for the system. Absence of such a connecting 'code' invalidates any 'teleology' and makes 'free play' of multiple elements inevitable.
the death of God the interpretation of sign is born 36.

Michel Foucault locates in the thoughts of Nietzsche, Freud and Marx a 'profound change in the nature of sign and the way signs in general are interpreted. He says: "The nineteenth century, and quite singularly Marx, Nietzsche and Freud placed us once again in the presence of a new possibility of interpretation. They founded a new the possibility of a heremeneutic"37. According to Foucault the first book of 'The Capital' and texts like The Birth of Tragedy and Interpretation of Dreams place us in the presence of these interpretive techniques. After citing Marx's view of reality as 'heiroglyphs' he talks about three great narcissistic wounds in Western culture. They are, the wound imposed by Copernicus, that made by Darwin when he discovered that man was descended from ape, and third wound made by Freud when he discovered that consciousness was based on the unconscious.38 All this testifies the interpretive and historical nature of sign; at the same time it rejects those ideas which take the world and man to be changeless.


37. Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Freud, Marx" in Transforming the Hermeneutic Context, P.61

38. Ibid.
Nietzsche writes "That the value of our world lies in our interpretation, that previous interpretations have been perspective valuations by virtue of which we can survive in life... that every evaluation of man brings with it the overcoming of narrower interpretations; that every strengthening and increase of power opens up new perspectives and means of believing in new horizons" 39

This means that the world with which we are concerned is false. That is, it is not a fact but a fable and approximation on the basis of a meagre sum of observations. It is in flux, as something in a state of becoming, as a falsehood always changing but never getting near the truth: for there is no truth.

For Nietzsche truth is a sort of error. In section 265 of *The Gay science* he asks, "what are man's truths ultimately? Merely his irrefutable errors". Nietzsche traces the history of the development of these errors, which is named by Heidegger as 'History of Platonism' 40. In his work *Twilight of the Idols* in a section titled 'History of an Error' Nietzsche makes six statements, and each one depicting the formulation of truth/error in the history of Philosophy from Plato to the modern times. By identifying it

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as six perspectives of reality, it was also Nietzsche's intention to reveal the perspectival nature of philosophical postulations.

First is the Platonic conception of the reality of the world and man: Nietzsche states:

(i) "The real world, attainable to the wise, the pious, the virtuous man—he wells in it, he is it". 41

This is the oldest form of idea in the history of metaphysics about the world. Plato posited a transcendental world of 'Ideas' and the apparent world according to him is an unreal copy, an imitation. Among different gradations of knowledge he placed wisdom at the highest stage by which the individual can have direct apprehension of the 'Ideas'. A noble man who cultivates cardinal virtues with pious nature, a philosopher king, a Plato, only can realize such a stage of truth.

(ii) "The real world, attainable for the moment, but promised to the wise, the pious, the virtuous man (to the sinner who represents)." 42

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42. Ibid.
The second statement talks about the transformation of 'Platonic Idea' into the Christian concept of reality. Here again, the reality is beyond and accessible only to the wise and virtuous. However the means of accessibility now modified. It is accessible in a mode of revelation by those sinners who repent their sin. Nietzsche opines that it is our needs which seek to adopt a particular perspective of reality. In christianity it is the voice (will to power) of the downtrodden which place the accessibility of truth to the repenters.

(iii) "The real world, unattainable, undemonstrable cannot be promised but even when merely thought of a consolation, a duty, an imperative" 43.

Nietzsche's reference is to Kant. Even when Kant says that the reality is unattainable and undemonstrable, in his categorical imperative he insists the need of 'duty' towards it.

In the fourth statement Nietzsche describes the emergence of positivist rationality. At this stage the human perception rejects not only the attainability of metaphysical truth but the existence of the beyond altogether. However, their logicality provides another interpretation and perspective for the world.

43. Ibid.
(iv) "The real world-unattainable? Unattained, at any rate. And if unattained also unknown. Consequently also no consolation, no redemption, no duty: how could we have a duty towards something unknown?" 44

(v) "The true world an idea which is of use for nothing, which is no longer even obligatory - an idea become useless, superfluous, consequently a refuted idea: let us abolish it". 45

Although the falsity of the idea of the beyond acknowledged, some 'ideas' about 'the reality' are still being used for practical purposes of managing life. However the man of modern times who face the void (nihilism) created by 'death of god' finds any idea of reality as yet another 'idol'.

Nietzsche does not stop with just abolishing the reality of beyond. Seeing the reality of the apparent world of the logician also to be a logical construct he wants to do away with it for the transfiguration of episteme to yet another level. That way in a sixth statement he attempts to complete the overturning of Platonic tradition.

(vi) "We have abolished the real world: what world is left? the apparent world perhaps? But no! with the real world we have also abolished the apparent. (mid day, moment of the shortest shadow; end of the longest error; zenith of mankind; zarathustra begins)" 46

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44. Ibid.
45. Ibid.
46. Ibid p.51.

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Nietzsche considers his philosophy to be a genealogical revaluation of the error/truth hitherto posited in history of philosophy. The culmination of platonic tradition he sees in the modern institutions and contemporary degeneration. His deconstruction of truth attempts to bring about a break in the history of civilization by disproving the long chain of postulations stretching from Plato to his time. Logocentrism is the term used by post-structuralists to denote this metaphysical tradition of the last two thousand years.

According to Nietzsche the logocentric enquiry for knowledge is dependent upon the assumption that there is some impersonal truth, that is, the world possess some fixed features that are in, principle prior to (apriori) and independent of interpretation which the human being can grasp and theorize. "Truth was posited as being as God as the highest court of appeal... The will to truth requires a critique - let us thus define our task - the value of truth must for once be experimentally called into question 47

The transformation in the hermeneutic context with the advent of Nietzsche regarding the interpretation of 'sign' will be more clear if we examine Nietzsche's linguistic critique of truth. Several of Nietzsche's criticisms of the

traditional Problems of metaphysics and epistemology are a consequence of his insight into the nature of language and metaphor. The centre of the argument is that the logical axioms rests on words made by man which are metaphors. Along with other critiques one important pillar of his philosophy is this linguistic critique of truth Nietzsche expounded in his comparatively unknown and one of early essays named *On Truth and Falsehood in an Extra Moral Sense*. It contains detailed treatment how the so called logical categories and truths rest on the belief in language. At its centre is the claim that language instead of giving us a true account of things as they are in the world, is a 'referentially unreliable set of almost entirely arbitrary signs' (Nietzsche, 1873) made by man inorder to safeguard life and species.

The main idea of the essay can be summed up in few sentences. Words do not designate things which are always changing. Words are not titles or lables stuck on things, but are metaphors for real things. Man cannot grasp the real nature of world through his sense organs. Rather than truth the real value of language is a pragmatic one, that is to hide from us the hostile and changing nature of the universe. It is to preserve us from destruction. No knowledge of a world beyond our language is available to us. We have no positive contact with the real world. Between words and things there is no direct relationship. Words
are said to be the distant and distorted echoes of the real. Nietzsche says that these echoes or rudimentary elements are poeticized and given coherence according to rules entirely invented by man. Consequently the relationship that obtains between the words and the real world is a metaphorical or aesthetic one. Man as the metaphysical philosophers saw as unstable contingent perceiving 'subject' of an objective world is reinterpreted in Nietzsche's scheme to man as the creator of language.

Nietzsche maintains that it is our senses which create the original impression that things are in some sense identical, in order to meet the need i.e. for a stability and regularity in life. It sounds somewhat like the Kantian concept of transcendental unity of apperception. According to Nietzsche our cognitive apparatus is a falsifying mechanism. Language builds upon what the senses have furnished. Language thus acts as a constant advocate of man's fictions.

The major criticism Nietzsche raises against philosophical language, however, is that it is unable to articulate or express the flux and instability of life, because with words we always turns things into substances having immutable form. Linguistic means of expression are useless for expressing becoming. Nietzsche writes:
"Philosophy as I alone still admit as the universal form of history, as the attempt to somehow describe and abbreviate in signs Heraclitian becoming. It satisfies our inevitable need to preserve ourselves by positing a crude world of stability and things etc. According to Nietzsche World is a play of forces; eternally recurring the same forces in different configuration. Indeterminability is the nature of world. In the last section of The will to Power (1067) Nietzsche asks, if you want a name for this world, he shall explain in 'metaphorical expressions'.

"This world: a monster of energy without beginning, without end; a firm, iron magnitude of force that does not grow bigger or smaller, that does not expend itself but only transforms itself;... as a play of forces and waves of forces, ... a sea of forces flowing and rushing together, eternally changing, eternally flooding back with tremendous years of recurrence, ... this my Dionysian world of the eternally self creating,

48. From Alan D.Schrift, Nietzsche and the Question of Interpretation, P.135.

49. Eternal recurrence is the Nietzschean doctrine explaining the world as a circular movement that has already repeated itself infinitely and plays its game infinitely without any other, purpose. (The Will to Power, 1066) Some interpreters discount 'eternal recurrence' as Nietzsche's rare attempt as a cosmology. See Nietzsche Man and Philosophy by R.J. Hollingdale (PP. ) where he corrects it with the law of conservation of energy. Nietzsche, in fact, does not provide much arguments to establish its validity as a theory. Rather he uses it as a 'perspective' and metaphor in his exeperements with 'multiple styles' to recapture the playfullness and becoming of existence. However the existential significance of the thought 'eternal recurrence' is tremendous, because it stands as the highest formula of 'affirmation' of life which the 'overman' has to 'play'.

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the eternally self destroying, this mystery world of the two fold voluptuous delight, my "beyond good and evil", without goal unless the joy of the circle is itself a goal ... do you want a name for this world? A solution for its riddles? A light for you, too you best concealed, strongest, most intrepid, most midnightly men?— This world is a will to power and nothing besides! And you yourselves are also this will to power and nothing besides!\textsuperscript{50}.

Does Nietzsche's notion of world as a play of forces and its 'eternal recurrence' provide a metaphysics, and an epistemology which grasps it? It does not substitute another metaphysics because of three reasons. Firstly, in the strict sense metaphysics means the knowledge of the ideal forms, of the being, the hypothesis of the beyond which has come to dominate in thinking with platonist tradition and Christian morality. However eternal recurrence is a challenge to renounce such promised rewards in an eternal beyond in favour of our earthly pleasures and pains ie. eternal now. Nietzsche's doctrine thus asks: 'Are you living your life in such a way that you would opt to live everything again the same way for all eternity? Thus, instead of succumbing to nihilistic denial of the present form of existence, the eternal recurrence becomes the highest formula for affirming the present life. Secondly, Nietzsche's idea of eternal play of world is an acceptance of change and becoming. Yet again there are metaphysicians who accept change as the foundation of their

\textsuperscript{50} Nietzsche, \textit{The Will to Power}, p.550.
theory. For instance Hegel accepts change. However, in his scheme change has dialectical order and teleology heading towards an ideal 'presence'. Moreover, those who put forth a metaphysics of change, gives a supreme concern to the acquisition of the knowledge of this change. Whereas, Nietzsche being an affirmer of earth, gives less value to such knowledge. Thirdly his metaphorical expressions may not be taken as metaphysical explanations. For him, our knowledge about the world is our interpretations from different perspectives. While saying the world to be an eternal play of forces he is, in fact, adopting an aesthetic perspective on the world.

Truth in the ontological sense of the true world is in such a way abolished. For Nietzsche there is no world corresponding to our logical and linguistic forms. Metaphysical thinking is a thinking which believes in the reality of ideal forms and categories that language creates or confirms. According to Nietzsche all are the consequences of grammatical habits. Belief in grammar is indeed characterised by Nietzsche as the metaphysics of the people.\textsuperscript{51} There is no world which corresponds to our logical and linguistic forms. There is only the one chaotic, dynamic world of temporal life. All language

\textsuperscript{51}Nietzsche, \textit{The Gay Science}, 354
operates with stable grammatical forms. Nietzsche's philosophy can be seen as a persistent attempt to undermine linguistic categories in such diverse spheres as morality, psychology, aesthetics and history. Nietzsche wants to show that the foundation of various humanistic sciences rests on our naive faith in language and to make us aware of how we are the artistic creators of our linguistic world.52

Nietzsche argues that our language and the judgements we form in language falsify life either by simplifying the complexity of living process or by distorting and overlooking the unique character of our experiences. He talks, for example of leaves as if all leaves share a common form of 'leafness' but it thereby neglects what makes each leaf unique and special.53

Nietzsche insists that all language falsifies life; all language imposes on living process a form and structure which renders them thinkable. In answer to the question what is truth, Nietzsche would say that truth is a board of metaphors, anthropomorphisms, relative perceptions of things, poetically and rhetorically intensified, that have come over time to be seen as canonical and binding. "Over immense periods of time the intellect produced nothing but

52.Nietzsche, The Will to Power, Sections 522, 625
53.Ibid, 704.
errors. A few of these proved to be useful and helped to preserve the species" 54. While discussing the relation between history and truth Michel Foucault mentions that our so called truths are produced by long human practices in history. "Truth is undoubtedly a sort of error that cannot be refuted because it was hardened into an unalterable form in the long baking process of history"55 Nietzsche's critique of truth should be analysed in the light of such an idea. Nietzsche's radical reflection upon language challenged the foundations of correspondence theory of truth and the referential theory of meaning. The view of language as a human creation which remains essentially separate from reality challenges the theory of knowledge. By its very nature as an anthropomorphic creation language cannot provide us with correct information that lies outside language. In other words there is an unbridgeable gap between words and things. He remembers us that we must understand our means of expression as mere semiotic. What then in the last resort are the truths of mankind? He answers that "They are the errefutable errors of mankind".56


Nietzsche consistently attempts to demystify the authority that has been bestowed on language through a strategic deconstruction of traditional rhetorical distinction between figurative and literal language. By showing that all language is by its very nature figurative, attempts to reveal the literal/figurative distinction as an illusion and directed towards shaking the security of the linguistic foundations upon which philosophy since its inception has been built. In this sense the construction of the philosophical systems of Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Kant etc. to be grounded on an unquestioned faith in the primacy of the literal. Nietzsche's philosophy should be viewed as an attempt to dismantle their epistemological constructions by tracing them back to their metaphorical or rhetorical roots.

We can only think according to the forms and limits of language. For Nietzsche what we grasp are things which exist not in themselves, but are linked to one another according to concepts isolated in them by language. Language is therefore the 'apriori' of all thought. It is a scheme that we cannot reject, almost as necessary and universal as the Kantian apriori. "Rational knowledge is interpretation according to a scheme that we cannot throw off".57

In fact Nietzsche's criticism is aimed at to expose the representational nature of 'sign' as fictitious; the traditional philosophical view of language to be a mirroring of reality with the aid of concepts (words) as representation of that reality. Nietzsche's basic purpose of the deconstruction of representational thinking is to show that there is no disinterested search for knowledge. It is our needs that interpret the world. Man's primary need was always preservation of himself in a world which seemed to be hostile. To tide over natural calamities man had to join together in group and for their communication numbers and linguistic signs were needed. This is an instance of will to knowledge emerging out of the instinct of preservation. "We have arranged for ourselves a world in which we can live by positing bodies, lines, planes, cause and effect, motion and rest, form and content; without these articles of faith nobody now could endure life. But that does not prove them".58. We would regard as true, good, valuable that which serves the preservation of the species.

Even logical axioms are standards and means for us to create the concept reality (The Will to Power 516). In so far as the character of the world is a state of becoming, it is incapable of formulation. A fictitious world of subject, substance, reason, truth is needed. Logic arose as an aid

to communication; for communication something has to be firm and simplified. Logic does not spring from the will to truth. Instead logic is an attempt to comprehend the actual world by means of a scheme of 'being' posited by ourselves; to make it formulatable and calculatable for us. According to Nietzsche it is this falsified world of conceptual 'mummies' that occupies the philosophers' world.

Although truth is falsification we require it so long as human being is in need of preservation and to meet day to day necessities of life. However, in this advanced technological era the conception of truth surpasses all such boundaries and assumes an alarming proportion by putting its axioms upon man, life and nature and arranging everything into measurable quantifiers. Consequently excluding all the 'other' which stands outside its boundary line as false and non-sensical. This takes the civilization to nihilism. It is in such a historical juncture Nietzsche's deconstruction of truth comes as the voice of the 'other' from the margins of representational thinking.


60.Ibid, p.277

61.The 'other' indicates the other sides of experience which was not represented by the rational metaphysical tradition. Generally speaking, those voices and desires which was excluded as irrational, false and erroneous by the logocentric thinking forms its domain. See *The Question of the other*, ed. Arleen B. Dallery and Charles E.Scott, State University of New York Press, 1989).
Gilles Deleuze in his interpretation of Nietzsche states that being, the true, and the real are avatars of nihilism, ways of mutilating life, of denying it, of making it reactive by submitting it to the negative.\textsuperscript{62} To him these are the manifestations of a will to power, a will to depreciate life. Being, truth and reality are up to now served only the power of the negative. In Heidegger's opinion truth is used to manage and control the world and human beings. "It is the continued authority of the metaphysical-scientific way of looking at the world, a way almost definitional of the West, that has brought on, that has, in fact made unavoidable the alienated, unhoused, recurrently barbaric state of modern technological and mass consumption man". \textsuperscript{63} If Western thought and society are to be freed from their 'anthropomorphism' and arrogant humanism, Heidegger thinks that a new kind of language must be found. Already Heidegger is moving towards the idea that it is not man who speaks meaningfully but language itself speaking through man. He says: "It is language that tells us about the essence of thing" \textsuperscript{64}. The true in the

\textsuperscript{62}Gilles Deleuze, \textit{Nietzsche and Philosophy}, trans, Hugh Tomlinson (London, 1983)


traditional metaphysical sense is fixation of an apparition; it clings to a perspective that is essential to life, at the same time that is ultimately destructive to life.

To Nietzsche the world is neither true nor real. There is no truth of the world as it is thought, no reality of the sensible world, all are illusions. Nietzsche is opposed to the task of knowledge to judge and measure life because it expresses a life which contradicts life, a reactive life which finds in knowledge a means of preserving and glorifying its type. Knowledge gives life laws that separate it from what it can do, that keep it from acting, that forbid it to act, maintaining it in the narrow framework of scientifically observable reaction almost like an animal in a zoo. But this knowledge that measures, limits and moulds life is itself entirely modelled on reactive life. Nietzsche takes knowledge to the task not for seeing itself as an end, but for making thought a simple means of serving life.

Removing the privileged status of the given truth clears the way for the creative play of interpretation. Whereas truth stood as a limit which discouraged individuals from moving beyond its borders. The absence of truth's limitation, Nietzsche thinks, invites us to explore new domains of creative possibilities. When 'sign' is freed from the governing epistemic positivity interpretation
becomes an infinite task. "Interpretation can never be brought to an end simply because there is nothing to interpret. There is nothing absolutely primary to interpret because at bottom everything is already interpretation. Each sign is in itself not the thing that presents itself to interpretation, but an interpretation of other signs".  

Then truth perhaps takes on a new sense. Truth is appearance. Truth means bringing of power into effect and raising to the highest power. This new image of thought reverses the truth as abstract universals (Deleuze, 1983 New Image of thought). In posing the question of language, the question of art is arised because art is the only sphere where language as an 'enigmatic multiplicity' is practiced. Then our highest thoughts often take falsehood into account; moreover they never stop turning falsehood into a higher power, an affirmative and artistic power that is brought into effect; verified and becomes true in the work of art. In Nietzsche "we the artists" = we the seekers after knowledge or truth = we the inventors of new possibilities of life." To Nietzsche art is the countermovement to Nihilism because it is only in art 'the other of experience' which has been exiled and silenced by logocentric tradition  

65. Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Freud, Marx," in *Transforming the Hermeneutic Context*, P. 64.  
66. Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, P. 103
of Western metaphysics since Plato to the present time, get affirmed. It is only in the language of art the illusions of love, joy, pain, horrors, human follies etc. get affirmed.

Will to truth is a symptom of degeneration, whereas the will to semblance, to illusion and deception are seen more deeper and natural to man. This is why Nietzsche writes that "Only as an esthetic phenomenon that existence and the world are eternally justified"67 Because it is the absolute affirmation and divination of life counter to every denial of life by religion, metaphysics and sciences. At this point Albert Camus' observation of Nietzsche may provide a meaningful conclusion to this discussion. Camus Writes: "It is impossible to give a clear account of the world, but art can teach us to reproduce it - just as the world reproduces itself in the course of its eternal return ... To say yes to the world, to reproduce it, is simultaneously to create the world and oneself" 68. Nietzsche's deconstruction of truth is seen as an opening up of the way towards such an end.

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