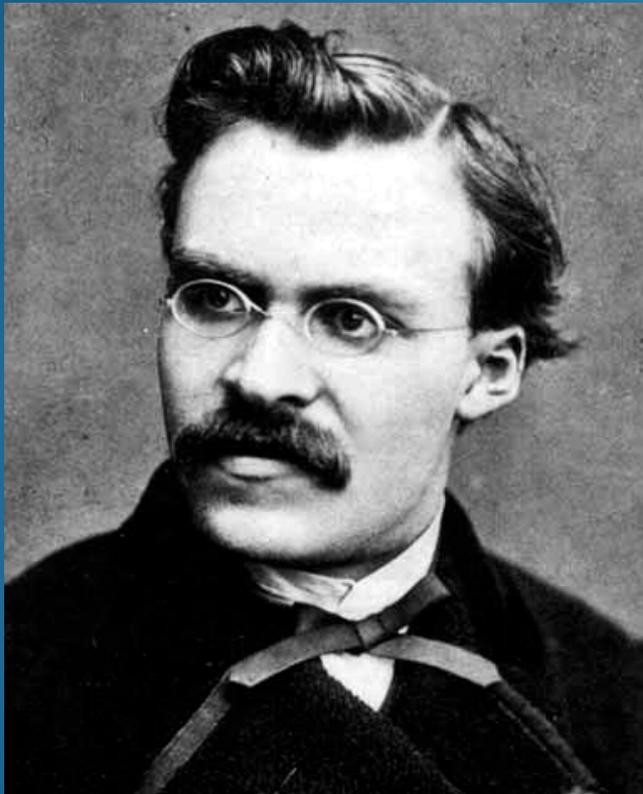


Friedrich W. Nietzsche

(1844-1900)



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Objectives

- Define nihilism
- Compare Nietzsche epistemology to that of Kant and Descartes
 - Recall the Four Great Errors
- Discusses Nietzsche's theory of the slave and master moralities and how the 'will to power, will lead to the creation of a 'superman'
 - Contrast how this theory is at odds with Mill's Unitarianism and Marx's Socialism

Friedrich W. Nietzsche (1844-1900)

- Son of a Lutheran minister
- Classicist and student of philology
- 1869 offered a professorship of philology at Basel
- Retired in 1869 due to health issues and lived in Switzerland and Italy
- 1889 he became insane

Works

- *The Birth of Tragedy*
- *Beyond Good and Evil*
- *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*
- *On the Genealogy of Morals*

Religion

- No Interest in the metaphysical truth about Christianity or any other religion
- Judges all religions entirely by their social effects
- Famous for his pronouncement that “God is Dead”
- Believed the loss of faith – leading to nihilism

- Nihilism is an extreme form of skepticism that denies all existence

Dionysus & Apollo

- Dionysus – represented the dynamic, irrational, uncontrolled surge of life
- Apollo – represented disciplined order and restraint
- People achieved their true individuality – irrational dynamic powers of life were restrained and controlled to create the form and beauty of art in controlled personal character

Nietzsche's View of Philosophy

- A Philosophical theory is =
 - “confession of its originator”
 - “An involuntary and unconscious auto-biography”
 - “The moral (or immoral) purpose has constituted the vital germ out of which the entire plant has grown”

Beyond Good and Evil

For it may be doubted, firstly, whether antitheses exist at all; and secondly, whether the popular valuations and antitheses of value upon which metaphysicians have set their seal, are not perhaps merely superficial estimates, merely provisional perspectives, besides being probably made from some corner, perhaps from below—"frog perspectives," as it were, to borrow an expression current among painters" (*Beyond Good and Evil 2*)

“Why Not Rather unthruth”

“TO RECOGNISE UNTRUTH AS A CONDITION OF LIFE;
that is certainly to impugn the traditional ideas of value in
a dangerous manner, and a philosophy which ventures to
do so, has thereby alone placed itself beyond good and
evil.” (*Beyond Good and Evil* 4)

Immanuel Kant - Knowledge

- A priori knowledge – universal knowledge we have independent of experience (ex. Mathematics)
- Analytic and Synthetic Judgments
- A priori Forms of Human Sensibility
 - Any event experienced by the senses is located automatically in a framework of spatial and temporal relations
- Categories of Understanding – Causality, substance, quantity, and relations

Rene Descartes

- “Methodological” or “hyperbolic” doubt
 - Purpose is to clear the mind of preconceived opinions that might obscure the truth
- Goal is to find something that cannot be doubted
 - The fact that I am thinking, implies that there must be something engaged in that activity, namely “I”
 - “I exist” is an indubitable and therefore absolutely certain belief that serves as an axiom from which other absolutely certain truths can be deduced

Nietzsche *Beyond Good and Evil*

- Questions the necessity of such judgments – synthetic judgments a priori should not be possible
 - Believes that could be false judgments
- Asks - Where did I get the notion of thinking?
 - “A thought comes when ‘it’ wishes and not when ‘I’ wish”
- Professes to be praising what is evil and decrying what is good

“The people on their part may think that cognition is knowing all about things, but the philosopher must say to himself: "When I analyze the process that is expressed in the sentence, 'I think,' I find a whole series of daring assertions, the argumentative proof of which would be difficult, perhaps impossible: for instance, that it is I who think, that there must necessarily be something that thinks, that thinking is an activity and operation on the part of a being who is thought of as a cause, that there is an 'ego,' and finally, that it is already determined what is to be designated by thinking—that I KNOW what thinking is. For if I had not already decided within myself what it is, by what standard could I determine whether that which is just happening is not perhaps 'willing' or 'feeling'? In short, the assertion 'I think,' assumes that I COMPARE my state at the present moment with other states of myself which I know, in order to determine what it is; on account of this retrospective connection with further 'knowledge,' it has, at any rate, no immediate certainty for me.” (*Beyond Good and Evil* 16)

Twilight of the Idols

- The value of life cannot be estimated and any judgment concerning it only reveals the person's life-denying or life affirming tendencies
- Philosophers were decadents
- Denies many of Plato's ideas
 - Senses should not be refuted
 - Believing in an unchanging, non-sensory world as superior – adopting a hate of the sensory world
 - Belief in the Christian God is a similar decadence and hate of life

Twilight of the Idols

How the “True World” Finally Became a Fiction

- “ 1. The true world, attainable for those who are wise, devout, virtuous-they live in it, *they are it*.
2. The true world, unattainable for now, but promised to those who are wise, devout, virtuous
3. The true world, unattainable, unprovable, unpromisable, but a consolation, an obligation, an imperative, merely by virtue of being, thought.
4. The true world – unattainable? In any case, unattained. And if it is unattained, it is also *unknown*. Hence it is also not consoling, redeeming, obligating; to what could something unknown obligate us?”

Twilight of the Idols

How the “True World” Finally Became a Fiction

“ 5. The true world, - an idea that was useful for nothing anymore, no longer even obligating – an idea become useless, superfluous, hence a refuted idea; let us do away with it!

6. We have done away with the true world; what world is left over? The apparent one, maybe?...But no! Along with the true world we have also done away with the apparent!””

Twilight of the Idols

Four Great Errors

- **Confusing cause and effect**
- **False causality** – humans project human concepts “will, mind & “I” to object beyond themselves
- **Imaginary causes** – The representations generated by a certain state of affairs were misunderstood as the cause of this state of affairs
- **Free will** – Created as a control and a right to inflict punishment

Will to Power

- Believes the will has ethical as well as metaphysical primacy
- Must be a “will to power”
 - Every living thing seeks to discharge its force, to give full scope to its ability
 - Knowledge is the instrument of power
 - No absolute truth – only fictions
 - Pleasure is the consciousness of the exercise of power

John Steward Mill and Karl Marx

- Mill's Utilitarianism
 - The interest of mankind collectively must be in the mind of the agent when conscientiously deciding on the morality of the act
 - Primacy of the Golden Rule – Do unto others
- Marx –
 - Socialism as the next historical step for society
 - Means of Production in the hands of the proletariat

Nietzsche on Mill

- 'I abhor the man's vulgarity when he says "What is right for one man is right for another"; "Do not to others that which you would not that they should do unto you." Such principles would fain establish the whole of human traffic upon mutual services, so that every action would appear to be a cash payment for something done to us. The hypothesis here is ignoble to the last degree: it is taken for granted that there is some sort of equivalence in value between my actions and thine.' (*Beyond Good and Evil*)

Two Types of Morality

- Slave morality – (exemplified in Christianity) people are regarded as base and low in self esteem – promoting as “good” those qualities in others which would make their own debased state tolerable – forgiveness, love, mercy, kindness, patience, sympathy, and humility
- Master morality – when the ruling group determines what is good
 - The morality of the aristocrat of the - noble birth, riches, bravery, truthfulness, and blondness

Morality

- Nietzsche wanted to destroy the slave morality – at least for superior people
 - Believed the way forward is to transcend the bounds of good and evil, and introduce a second *transvaluation* of values
 - The Superman would arise as a synthesis to the thesis and antithesis of master and slave

Aristocratic Class

- Gives the meaning and the justification of a society
- Determines what is good
- Characteristics of a good and healthy aristocracy
 - That it experiences itself *not* as a function (monarchy or commonwealth) but as their *meaning* and highest justification
 - It accepts with good conscience the sacrifice of untold human beings who, *for its sake*, must be reduced and lowered to incomplete human beings, to slaves, to instruments
 - Their fundamental faith that society is the foundation and scaffolding on which a “choice” of being is able to raise itself to its higher task and to a higher state of being

Common Good vs Exploitation

- As soon as it is accepted as the '*fundamental principle of society*' it proves to be – a principle of disintegration and decay
- Life is essentially appropriation, injury, overpowering of what is alien and weaker; suppression, hardness, imposition of one's own forms, incorporation and exploitation

The Superman

- The synthesis to the thesis and antithesis of master and slave
- Super man
 - Highest form of life
 - Free to express our will to life – the will to power
- Humanity is merely a stage on the way to Superman
- Superman will be achieved by an exercise of will – not evolution
- Not the end of history – perfection of the world