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PERSPECTIVES ON PERSPECTIVISM: NIETZSCHE AND HIS COMMENTATORS

by

JENNIFER HUDGENS

Under the Direction of Jessica Berry

ABSTRACT

There is little consensus among scholars as to what Nietzsche's "perspectivism" is or what it entails. I will focus on a limited number of Nietzsche's commentators, describing and commenting upon the writings of Brian Leiter, R. Lanier Anderson, Maudemarie Clark, Christoph Cox, and John Wilcox. Each commentator provides insight into the problems generated by the interpretations previous commentators have given, while simultaneously generating different problems within these newer interpretations. I hope to draw together the salvageable elements of each of these five interpretations in order to alleviate some general interpretive problems. My own interpretation is as follows: perspectivism entails the two positions 'knowledge coherentism' and 'truth constructivism.' 'Knowledge coherentism' is the need for coherence within a system of knowledge. This position saves perspectivism from relativism. 'Truth constructivism' is the claim that we humans intersubjectively create truth; this entails a rejection of the dichotomy of the real and the apparent.

INDEX WORDS: Nietzsche, perspectivism, coherence, constructivism, epistemology, Kant, Leiter, Clark, Anderson, Cox, Wilcox

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by

JENNIFER HUDGENS

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Perspectives on Perspectivism: Nietzsche and His Commentators

Jennifer Hudgens
MA Thesis

Introduction

I want to defend the claim that Nietzsche should not be characterized as a misogynist, much in the same way he should not be characterized as an anti-Semite or a German nationalist. Such a claim seems to contradict many direct quotes from Nietzsche's writings, such as: "When a woman has scholarly inclinations there is usually something wrong with her sexually," (BGE[1] 144) and, "Woman has much reason for shame; so much pedantry, superficiality, schoolmarmishness, petty presumption, petty licentiousness and immodesty lies concealed in woman […]Woe when 'the eternally boring in woman' – she is rich in that! – is permitted to venture forth!" (BGE 232). I propose that this tension can be resolved if we have a clear understanding of what *truth* Nietzsche is discussing when he describes his sayings on woman as "only – *my* truths" (BGE 231). A clear and accurate understanding of *perspectivism* should properly inform a query into Nietzsche's misogyny, if only by telling us what he means by qualifying truths as 'his.' That is to say, what motivates my inquiry into perspectivism is specifically what perspectivism means for the status of any of Nietzsche's claims about women.

Understanding perspectivism is a difficult task, as there is very little consensus among scholars as to what Nietzsche's "perspectivism" is or what it entails. I will focus on the works of a limited number of Nietzsche's commentators, describing and commenting upon the writings of Brian Leiter, R. Lanier Anderson, Maudemarie Clark, Christoph Cox, and John Wilcox. Each

[1] BGE is riddled with apparently misogynistic sayings, particularly in the section following 231. Addtionally, hereafter, citations will appear in the text, abbreviated as follows: BT = *The Birth of Tragedy*, GS= *Gay Science*, TSZ= *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, BGE=*Beyond Good and Evil*, GM=*On the Genealogy of Morals*, EH=*Ecce Homo*, TI=*Twilight of the Idols*, and A=*Antichrist*.

commentator provides insight into the problems generated by the multitude of interpretations previous commentators have given, while simultaneously generating different problems within these newer interpretations. I hope to draw together the salvageable elements of each of these five interpretations in order to alleviate some general interpretive problems. I have not included other authors because I have a limited amount of space; the reasons I have chosen these five authors are that they are all prominent interpreters of Nietzsche writing in English and engaged in a critical dialogue with each other.

I believe the interpretations offered by these authors can be described briefly in the following ways: Brian Leiter characterizes perspectivism as a claim that [L1] knowledge is necessarily from a perspective (perspectivism claim), and that it is [L2] distorted by a number of factors (purity claim) and [L3] plural in that more perspectives equal better knowledge (plurality claim), but that [L4] the number of perspectives is inexhaustible (infinity claim).[2] R. Lanier Anderson offers the interpretation that perspectivism is [A1] a rejection of realism that avoids relativism, and that it is [A2] internally coherent in that [A3] perspectives are judged relative to each other according to values that do not necessitate reliance on realist correspondence claims, particularly the coherence of thought upheld even by metaphysical realists.[3] Primary to my purposes is Anderson's claim that perspectivism requires internal coherence for truth.

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[2] See Leiter, p. 345-6: "Necessarily, we know an object from a particular perspective: that is, from the standpoint of particular interests and needs (perspectivism claim). The more perspectives we enjoy – for example, the more interests we employ in knowing the object – the better our conception of what the object is like will be (plurality claim). We will never exhaust all possible perspectives on the object of knowledge (there are an infinity of interpretive interests that could be brought to bear) (infinity claim). There exists a catalogue of identifiable factors that would distort our knowledge of the object: that is, certain interpretive interests and needs will distort the nature of objects (purity claim)."

[3] See Anderson, p. 2: "Nietzsche's perspectivism, like internal realism, attempts to carve out a middle way between strong realism and wholesale relativism," p. 10: "Perspectivism offers such a reason [why perspectivism is a better interpretation of our cognitive practices than realism or Kantian transcendental idealism] by arguing that a concept crucial to both alternative views, the concept of a thing in itself, is incoherent," and p. 13 "perspectivism is supposed to be better because the conceptual resources it brings to bear on the problem of interpreting our cognitive practices are coherent, while the alternatives are not […] This argument counts as an internal reason against [Kantians and realists]."

Maudmarie Clark defends the view that perspectivism is [M1] common sense "minimal correspondence" realism which [M2] denies that the falsification thesis (the claim that all beliefs are false) applies to perspectivism.[4] Christoph Cox describes perspectivism as [C] a naturalist, holist, antifoundationalist theory of knowledge.[5] John Wilcox limits perspectivism to [W] a rejection of the Kantian thing-in-itself.[6]

Through these authors' views I hope to cover several of the varieties of interpretation usually given of perspectivism. Leiter gives us a perspectivism of knowledge that responds to the problems generated by the perspectivism of knowledge offered by Danto and Nehamas, thus allowing for a more charitable interpretation of Nietzsche than was previously possible. Anderson gives us a perspectivism of truth which also prevents the slide into relativism usually associated with the perspectivism of Danto's and Nehamas's interpretations. Between Leiter and Anderson we are able to see two methods for saving perspectivism from being a relativistic thesis. Clark gives us a perspectivism of truth that raises problems for Nietzsche's rejection of Kant's thing-in-itself, in that Clark's perspectivism still appears to retain the real/apparent dichotomy inherent in the concept of the thing-in-itself while attempting to avoid it. Cox introduces important elements into perspectivism which seem unmentioned by other authors: naturalism and antifoundationalism are more and more associated with Nietzsche's thinking

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[4] See Clark, p. 135: "Although perspectivism denies metaphysical truth, it is perfectly compatible with the minimal correspondence account of truth and therefore with granting that many human beliefs are true. It even seems to require acceptance of this minimal theory since the later is simply what remains of truth once we reject what perspectivism rejects, namely, the thing-in-itself. Perspectivism therefore amounts to a metaphorical expression of what I have called Nietzsche's neo-Kantian position on truth […] This interpretation would not even *seem* to make perspectivism entail the falsification thesis."

[5] See Cox, p. 3 where he is concerned with "how an antifoundationalist philosophy can avoid vicious relativism," p. 4, where Nietzsche's "rejection of the traditional epistemological ideal of a 'God's eye view' leads him to a thoroughly naturalistic conception of knowing and being," and p. 94, where Cox describes a quote from BGE 20 as a place where "Nietzsche explicitly puts forward [a] holistic view."

[6] See Wilcox, p. 114 where he claims that Nietzsche's "thought moves from the Kantian position that there is a thing-in-itself whose character we cannot know, through a period of doubt about whether there is any thing-in-itself, toward the conclusion that the very concept of the thing-in-itself is contradictory or fundamentally confused."

generally. Leiter, who usually advocates a naturalist interpretation, leaves this element largely unmentioned in his treatment of perspectivism, and Clark's interpretation does not do justice to the antifoundationalist interpretation. Finally, with Wilcox we get a much more dated interpretation that focuses on an issue once again largely untouched by Leiter: the thing-in-itself. Despite the fact that Wilcox's interpretation comes from an interpretive background which has largely been defeated, one aspect of his interpretation remains valuable. Wilcox's explicit and lengthy treatment of the position of the thing-in-itself in Nietzsche's writings is accurate and extraordinarily useful for keeping the rejection of the thing-in-itself as at least one focus of perspectivism. Clark and Wilcox contrast neatly with each other in terms of how they handle the thing-in-itself as a problem that concerned Nietzsche, specifically in terms of how the position of the thing-in-itself relates to Nietzsche's few comments about perspective and perspectivism. Wilcox's interpretation suffices to show us why Clark is wrong to assume minimal correspondence realism; namely, because Clark effectively reinstitutes the thing-in-itself as necessary for epistemology.

I will side with Leiter and Clark in rejecting what Leiter names the Received View.[7] Very briefly, the Received View is the orthodox reading of Nietzsche's perspectivism, associated with Danto, Nehamas and others, which attributes to him four claims:

> i) the world is indeterminate,
> ii) our concepts do not correspond to the world because of its indeterminacy,
> iii) our concepts are mere perspective, and
> iv) no perspective is privileged above any other, the final claim being the one which effectively reduces perspectivism to relativism (Leiter, p. 334).

I will accept in part the claims of Anderson, Cox, Wilcox and Leiter, while by and large rejecting the theories proffered by Clark. However, I would like to go beyond what Leiter claims. I want

[7] Cox, Anderson and Wilcox do not deal directly with the Received View.

to claim that because of the epistemological theses articulated in perspectivism, a correctly interpreted Nietzschean perspectivism entails various broadly metaphysical claims as well, and I would like to explore these metaphysical claims. I believe that the most important metaphysical implication perspectivism has is that it implies that there should be no real/apparent dichotomy in our metaphysics. I will use Anderson's, Cox's and Wilcox's treatments of perspectivism to support my rejection of Clark's "minimal correspondence" realism, on the grounds that any kind of truth correspondence would commit Nietzsche to the kind of epistemological dogmatism he attempts to correct. Wilcox's interpretation provides the example of Nietzsche's attack on the Kantian thing-in-itself as the rejection of realist theories that I think is central to perspectivism without making perspectivism beholden to realism the way Clark does. Cox and Anderson both provide means of ranking perspectives such that perspectivism need not be relativistic.

Finally, I would like to offer my own interpretation: that perspectivism entails two positions I will refer to as 'knowledge coherentism' and 'truth constructivism.' I will define 'knowledge coherentism' as the need for coherence within a system of knowledge or propositions that are accepted as "true." This position saves perspectivism from relativism. 'Truth constructivism' is the claim that we humans intersubjectively[8] create truth; while this is not a rejection of realism,[9] it does reject the dichotomy of the real and the apparent. Because coherence is generally desirable in an epistemological system, and because Nietzsche appeals to coherence in his critique of the thing-in-itself, I think we have sufficient reason to use coherence as a primary means of ranking perspectives, as recommended by Anderson. Also, my claim about truth creation should not be taken to be an ontological claim. This is primarily a semantic

[8] What I want to get at in using the term 'intersubjective' is simply that truth cannot exist on the level of the individual alone or some God's eye perspective removed from the individual; rather, truth must exist on the level of multiple individuals comparing notes about their perceptions.

[9] By 'realism' here and in what follows, I shall mean the claims that everyday objects and their properties exist and their existence is not dependent on linguistic practices, conceptual schemes, etc. (Miller, *SEP*).

thesis about how we ought to understand the terms "true" and "false," but it also has the implications of a deflationary metaphysical thesis that we do not know if we have access to such a real world and thus cannot make metaphysical claims. I believe that between these two claims, we can make sense of both Nietzsche's visual analogy[10] and the times when Nietzsche asserts that something is a falsehood, such as Christian doctrine. In short, true beliefs will be those beliefs which are justifiable through perception, coherent with other beliefs the individual possesses, including one's desires, interests, goals, and perhaps pragmatic considerations; false beliefs will be those beliefs which are either not justifiable through perception or coherent with other beliefs the individuals possesses. Truth and falsity are measured by means of the intersubjective comparison of perspectives.

I will derive support for my treatment of the commentators and my own interpretation largely from Nietzsche's later works, namely *Beyond Good and Evil*, *The Genealogy of Morals*, *Twilight of the Idols*, and *The Antichrist*, although I will also reference *The Gay Science* in part. I will use the *Nachlass* in a limited capacity; that is, I will reference Nietzsche's unpublished works only where they support the claims he makes in the texts he did intend for publication because of their controversial status. Also, because Nietzsche does not explicitly present a perspectivist thesis, much of what I claim will not be explicit in Nietzsche's writings. Instead, I will demonstrate how I arrive at my interpretation as a direct result of what he says about knowledge, perspective, the thing-in-itself, and truth.

In the discussion that follows, I treat Anderson, Cox and Wilcox together because each provides what I consider a definitive response to many of the problems for perspectivism raised by the older interpretation without introducing any unsolvable new problems. Then, I discuss

[10] See GM III:12. I will discuss the visual analogy at length in what follows.

Clark and Leiter together because Clark makes a misstep in her interpretation that draws attention to a similar error in Leiter's interpretation. Additionally, Leiter does not draw out the important metaphysical implications left in the wake of these two interpretations of perspectivism. In order to motivate properly the question of whether perspectivism is either salvageable or interesting, I will treat Clark and Leiter together before discussing my interpretation.

Before delving into the commentators, I would like to discuss briefly the visual metaphor that will be used throughout this paper. In GM III:12, Nietzsche attacks the metaphysically realist dogmas of the ascetic ideal and Kantian philosophy as being "errors, nothing but errors!," "a violation and cruelty against *reason*," "lascivious ascetic discord," and "*utterly incomprehensible*." These declarations are followed by a warning to "be on guard against the dangerous old conceptual fiction that posited a 'pure, will-less, painless, timeless knowing subject'," and end with the following metaphor: "There is *only* a perspective seeing, *only* a perspective 'knowing'; and the *more* affects we allow to speak about one thing, the *more* eyes, different eyes, we can use to observe one thing, the more complete will our 'concept' of this thing, our 'objectivity' be." Finally, Nietzsche reaches his reason for rejecting metaphysical realism: "to eliminate the will altogether, to suspend each and every affect, supposing we were capable of this – what would that mean but to *castrate* the intellect?" The rationale, then, for rejecting metaphysical realism is that the elimination of the point of view of the individual from our concept of knowledge (as required by metaphysical realism) effectively destroys the conceivability and possibility of knowledge for at least the perspectival knower, and thus for all of humanity. We want to preserve knowledge for humanity and thus must preserve the point of view of the individual for our concept of knowledge. Realism entails that beliefs are distinct

from the actual facts about the world and so removes the point of view of the individual from the concept of knowledge. Therefore, we must reject metaphysical realism.

Many of Nietzsche's commentators hold the visual metaphor explicitly discussed in GM III:12 to be definitive of what perspectivism entails. Leiter and Clark particularly explore this statement as definitive. By contrast, Anderson and Cox reject it. Anderson calls it a failure because while all visual perspectives are ruled by the laws of optics, cognitive perspectives are not ruled by any such laws. Cox uses the phrase "optical analogy" to discuss the interpretation of the visual metaphor as definitive as too narrow.

Lastly, Clark introduces some useful terms for discussing objectivity as Nietzsche describes it: "omniperspectival" and "nonperspectival." I take omniperspectival knowledge to be what Nietzsche considers the only logically possible way we could even approach an inconceivable position: the nonperspectival position.[11] The nonperspectival position, or the view of everything from nowhere, is what Nietzsche describes as inconceivable, thus indicating that he finds it to be an oxymoron or logically impossible. The omniperspectival position, or the view of everything from everywhere, is surely physically impossible to reach, but Nietzsche nowhere describes it as logically impossible. So the omniperspective is the only way to logically conceive of or approximate "true" objectivity (the nonperspective). That is to say, the only way humans could achieve something approximating a perspective turned in no particular direction would be to attempt to possess all perspectives, which Nietzsche might admit as a doomed project for those who try.

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[11] I want to emphasize here that Nietzsche claims only that the *non*perspectival position is unachievable and inconceivable, and not that the *omni*perspectival position is either unachievable and inconceivable, for Nietzsche says that ideas such as "knowledge in itself" "always demand that we should think of an eye that is completely unthinkable, an eye turned in no particular direction" (GM III:12). Nietzsche does not say that an eye turned in all directions is unthinkable, and I think the eye turned in all directions would be a better description of the omniperspective.

The omniperspective, as the name implies, would include the information available from all perspectives, whereas the nonperspective is equivalent to the God's eye view,[12] described by Nietzsche as "an eye that is completely unthinkable, an eye turned in no particular direction, in which the active and interpreting forces, through which alone seeing becomes seeing *something*, are supposed to be lacking; these always demand of the eye an absurdity and a nonsense" (GM III:12). By contrast to this neutral, disinterested perspective, the omniperspective is effectively the "all" perspective, or inclusive of all perspectives, rather than a Godly perspective. While traditionally we ascribe "omni-" predicates to God, note that Nietzsche is not doing so. I intend to retain Nietzsche's description of the "God's eye" perspective as an "eye turned in no particular direction" rather than the traditional description of God's perspective as an eye turned in all directions. The nonperspective represents the "objectivity" of God's transcendence in religion, of the work of science, and of the systems of philosophers like Plato and Kant, specifically Plato's Forms and the Kantian thing-in-itself. The omniperspective might serve as a standard of perspectivist "objectivity"; in order for the perspectivist to claim any degree of "objectivity" in this sense she must use "*more* eyes, different eyes" to interpret and perceive the object she wishes to discuss. However, the omniperspective need not be her standard by a strict interpretation of Nietzsche, who does not appear to offer a prescription for what our value in epistemology should be; it is merely plausible that the omniperspective can serve as such, for

[12] See Clark, p. 130, for her definition of the nonperspective: "To consider knowledge nonperspectival would be to insist that it must be grounded in a set of foundational beliefs, beliefs all rational beings must accept no matter what else they believe, beliefs that could therefore constitute a neutral corner from which the justifiability of other beliefs might be assessed […] Nietzsche suggests the impossibility of such self-justifying foundations for knowledge" and for contrast with Bernd Magnus's omniperspective, see p. 145: "In his analysis, [the God's eye view] would amount to having simultaneous pictures of the object from all of the orbital points traversed by the camera." Because of Nietzsche's description of "the God's eye view" as "an eye turned in no particular direction" rather than an eye turned in all directions, I think Magnus is wrong to assume that the omniperspective properly captures Nietzsche's meaning.

while the nonperspective is logically impossible for Nietzsche, the omniperspective is merely physically impossible.

Part I: Intersubjectivity and Nondichotomy

A. Anderson: Perspectivism as Pluralist Internal Coherentism

Anderson portrays Nietzsche's perspectivism as a middle way between metaphysical realism and relativism that is much like Hilary Putnam's internal realism. According to Anderson's portrayal, metaphysical realism is the claim that, "the world is made up of a fixed totality of determinate, theory-independent objects, and there is a single true description of that world, whether we can discover it or not," while wholesale relativism, claims: "Given 'conceptual relativity' there cannot be a single true description of a completely independent reality…because the world does not determine answers to basic ontological questions independently of our variable conceptual assumptions" (Anderson, p. 1). Perspectivism, for Anderson, is similar to but differs from Putnam's internal realism on key points. Both perspectivism and internal realism reject the notion of metaphysical realism as incoherent, and both avoid degenerating into utter relativism by advocating a means for ranking perspectives. The main difference between Nietzsche's and Putnam's respective positions in Anderson's interpretation is that Nietzsche embraces pluralism, while Putnam rejects it (Anderson, p. 22). By pluralism, Anderson means that "we are left with the prospect of alternative and incompatible truths, relative to different and incommensurable perspectives" and that this prospect of alternative truths arises from "the absence of the unique truth as a standard against which we can measure our beliefs" (Anderson, p. 16).

Anderson uses Nietzsche's visual metaphor as a means to explain how our knowledge claims are limited by perspective: "Just as my visual perspective makes the world appear to me in a particular way, so cognitive perspectives are a 'human *contribution*' ([GS] § 57) to reality,

which give the world a certain 'look' for us" (Anderson, p. 2).[13] Anderson notes that Nietzsche's definition of perspective is loose, and thus one problem for perspectivism arises: Nietzsche does not provide any conditions for determining when a disagreement is a difference of perspective, and when it is instead a difference of theories from within a shared perspective (Anderson, p. 2). The reason, Anderson suggests, is that "this is an interpretive question that must be answered on a case by case basis, by appeal to the details of the particular disagreement" (Anderson, p. 2). However, Nietzsche does provide a working idea of what perspective is and how it functions (Anderson, p. 3). Anderson's Nietzsche claims that we adopt methods for organizing our knowledge from need, interest, and other values (Anderson, p. 3). In addition to this, our value schemes can skew or otherwise influence how we perceive (Anderson, p. 3). Anderson characterizes the difference between perspectives as a difference in basic organizing concepts; that is, those concepts we use to organize the perceptions we acquire are what make our perspectives different from one another (Anderson, p. 4).

The one place where Anderson feels the visual metaphor fails is in the sense that while all visual perspectives are compatible because of the laws of optics, we have no such system of laws by which to correlate cognitive perspectives, and thus for Anderson's Nietzsche not all cognitive perspectives are compatible (Anderson, p. 4). The failure of the visual metaphor is grounded in a necessary presupposition of the laws of optics: the idea that objects exist independent of perspective (Anderson, p. 4). We can take this optical object as analogous to the Kantian thing-in-itself. The visual metaphor fails because there is nothing in the realm of cognition that is analogous to the optical object. In optics there are rules which give us information about objects that allow us to correct our vision: "There are of course various points of view on any visible object, and the object appears differently from each of them, but these appearances differ in just

[13] Leiter and Clark also utilize this metaphor.

the ways the perspective rules would lead us to expect, enabling us to translate from one perspective to another" (Anderson, p. 4). However, there are no such rules available for cognitive perspective. Anderson's Nietzsche argues that we have no justification for positing the existence of things-in-themselves because our perceptions are our only evidence for our beliefs. Anderson's Nietzsche further denies that there is any system of rules that can be used to judge the compatibility of cognitive perspectives because such a positing and such a system would require impossible knowledge – knowledge unlimited by perspective (Anderson, p. 5).

Our only means, then, for choosing among cognitive perspectives is our values – whatever purpose or interest or goal we might have will guide us practically to what perspective we should assume (Anderson, p. 6). We may not be able to measure perspectives objectively, but we can still measure perspectives relative to one another, as well as the objects perceived through them and the perceived qualities of those objects, by means of coherence (Anderson, p. 6) Perspective is limiting in the sense that our perceptions can be distorted by cognitive as well as visual and other sensory factors only because we do not have a background of nonperspectival knowledge (Anderson, p. 6). Without such a background to check perspectives, the perspectivist may be in error about the totality of his beliefs, including his beliefs about perspectivism. The visual metaphor serves to emphasize this subjectivity as a way perspectivism improves on previous epistemology by not presupposing "that interpretation and subjectivity are not essential" (WP 560, quoted by Anderson, p. 7).

The major problem for perspectivism as an epistemology is that claims about perspectivism and its validity must also be limited by perspective – and thus perspectivism is internally unstable (Anderson, p. 7). Further, it apparently blocks its adherents from offering up the only kind of defense that its opponents would accept: the perspectivist cannot make claims

about objective truth (Anderson, p. 8), where 'objective truth' is defined as unique, bivalent, independent of theory, and corresponding to the actual state of the world (Anderson, p. 14), because the perspectivist does not assume that we have access to the actual state of the world.[14] Because of the lack of such an assumption, perspectives may be completely incompatible as well as incommensurable by any common standard (Anderson, p. 8).[15]

However, there is an internal logic within perspectivism akin to the coherence theory of truth that saves perspectivism from its realist opponents: in at least some cases, we find that there are values common to multiple perspectives (Anderson, p. 9). The coherence theory Anderson ascribes to Nietzsche is that the truth of beliefs increases according to the degree which those beliefs "demand acceptance across a broader class of perspectives by satisfying shared epistemic standards" (Anderson, p. 21). This kind of shared standard gives us the means by which to rank perspectives, as well as the means to argue against the thing-in-itself as an incoherent concept (Anderson, p. 10). Because our cognitive capacities are so limited by perspective, we cannot hope to acquire the knowledge which would justify claims of knowledge about the existence of the thing-in-itself (Anderson, p. 11).

Further, Anderson argues, the justified application of the category of causes is limited to the realm of experience, and since we cannot experience things-in-themselves, we cannot justifiably claim them as causes for our knowledge (Anderson, p. 12). This argument is consistent with Nietzsche's description of how mankind confuses cause and effect and sets up false causality (see "The Four Great Errors", TI 6). In addition to this, Nietzsche rejects the

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[14] Please note that this is different from other interpretations which state that perspectivists assume we do *not* have access, rather than not assuming that we have access; Anderson's interpretation is significant in that it does not commit Nietzsche to dogmatic claims about the ontology of reality. Anderson only commits Nietzsche to a suspension of belief about our access to metaphysical claims. This suspension of belief is coherent with Anderson's Nietzsche's naturalism and the claim made in BGE 134 about the primacy of sensory evidence.

[15] "Incompatibility" is simply when two perspectives generate different claims about some thing, whereas "incommensurability" is when different perspectives "cannot be measured by any common standard, and no non-questionbegging reasons are available to decide between them," (Anderson, p. 8).

Kantian account of our cognitive faculties as providing the form for all possible experience (the "matter" of which would have to be things-in-themselves), thus blocking the necessity of the thing-in-itself for knowledge altogether (Anderson, p. 12). The basic idea is that the thing-in-itself is inherently incoherent because we are only justified in applying the concept of causes to the realm of experience and the thing-in-itself is defined as being outside of experience (Anderson, p. 12). Because Kantians and metaphysical realists both accept internal coherence as necessary to any epistemology, this argument is successful against these two major opponents even within perspectivism itself (Anderson, p. 13). Additionally, in this argument, Anderson demonstrates how Nietzsche rejects the idea of truth as corresponding to some "real" world.

Anderson goes on to explore Kantian internalism, the view that what counts as true is in part a function of how our cognitive activity structures appearances, as contrasted with Nietzschean internalism, which I explain in what follows (Anderson, p. 14-21). Nietzsche rejects the major standards of truth (e.g., correspondence to reality) in favor of internal standards like simplicity, plausibility, and rigor in method (Anderson, p. 14). Nietzsche rejects the independence of truth from theory and he rejects the uniqueness of truth (Anderson, p. 15-16); Anderson takes this rejection of theory-independence and uniqueness as Nietzsche's acceptance of pluralism as well as Nietzsche trivializing "the sense in which truth is correspondence" (Anderson, p. 16). Nietzsche also rejects the bivalence of truth in favor of a scalar interpretation of truth values; Anderson bases this claim on Nietzsche's "peculiar but persistent usage of the predicates 'true' and 'false' in the comparative and superlative degrees" (Anderson, p. 16). Anderson treats "apparentness" and objective truth as opposite sides of one scale: where truth goes up, apparentness (and hence correspondence to perspective) goes down, and vice versa (Anderson, p. 17). These epistemic standards function internally as criteria of objectivity and

thus give us a working notion of truth (Anderson, p. 17). What is of most value in seeking objectivity, then, is the exploration of all possible perspectives (Anderson, p. 18). Nietzsche denies that this goal is guaranteed to be reached, and admits only of its possibility (Anderson, p. 19). The remaining relativity of truth to perspective is not complete relativism, but a kind of relativism structured and scaled according to sets of values and standards (Anderson, p. 21).

One way in which Anderson's interpretation seems to fail is that his pluralist internal coherentism requires pragmatism for judging between perspectives. Anderson claims that Nietzsche "insists that we can choose among cognitive perspectives only on the basis of our values and purposes," but that these pragmatic criteria are not "sufficiently strong to *require* the adoption of some one point of view over all others" (Anderson, p. 6). Anderson's phrasing indicates that although pragmatic criteria are not strong enough to require adopting a given point of view, perhaps some criteria are strong enough at least to motivate adopting a given perspective because such a point of view is more suited to a given purpose or value system. However, Nietzsche himself never prescribes pragmatism as the recommended means for ranking perspectives, so there is no reason on the purely Nietzschean program to limit ourselves to pragmatism.[16] Nietzsche's arguments seem to imply that coherence by itself is enough to choose between at least some perspectives of necessity.

Another problem is that Anderson characterizes the difference between perspectives as a difference in basic organizing concepts; that is, those concepts which we use to organize the perceptions we acquire are what make our perspectives different from one another (Anderson, p. 4). Such a fundamental difference in perspectives could degrade perspectivism to a kind of relativism, in that these basic organizing concepts could easily be incommensurable, thus leaving

[16] Other authors, like Ken Gemes, Richard Schacht, and John Wilcox argue that pragmatism is Nietzsche's prescribed means for ranking perspectives; indeed, it is these pragmatic grounds that Wilcox sees as motivating Nietzsche's rejection of the thing-in-itself.

us with no way to communicate coherently with one another. But is the difference in perspectives necessarily so fundamental, or can it be more superficial? Anderson's support for the claim that the difference is so fundamental is Nietzsche's rejection of the "God's eye point of view" as a conceptual possibility. However, Anderson appears once more to be referencing the visual metaphor from GM III:12:

> let us guard against the snares of such contradictory concepts as 'pure reason,' 'absolute spirituality,' knowledge in itself': these always demand that we should think of an eye that is completely unthinkable, an eye turned in no particular direction, in which the active and interpreting forces, through which alone seeing becomes seeing *something*, are supposed to be lacking; these always demand of the eye an absurdity and a nonsense.

I believe that while Nietzsche conceives of this God's eye perspective as conceptually impossible, this is not what makes perspectives different from one another; it is just what makes perspectivism different from other epistemologies. Nietzsche is not so clear about his motives that this problem can be solved simply by reference to the text, but this problem may be solved by interpretation.

I also would like to question whether or not Anderson is right about whether the visual metaphor fails to describe perspectivism accurately. The one place where Anderson feels the visual metaphor fails is in the sense that while all visual perspectives are compatible because of the laws of optics, we have no such system by which to correlate cognitive perspectives; for Anderson's Nietzsche, not all cognitive perspectives are compatible (Anderson, p. 4). I find this claim problematic if one assumes that perspectivism has always characterized how humans acquire knowledge, for the laws of optics were discovered by perspectivally limited humans, and thus are not "objectively true" laws by which all visual perspectives can be shown to be necessarily compatible. Therefore it is not necessarily the case that the laws of optics do prove all visual perspectives to be compatible, and this shows further that the visual metaphor may not

necessarily fail. Further, Anderson does not indicate what passage in Nietzsche provides support for the belief that Nietzsche did assume the inherent incompatibility of any two cognitive perspectives.

Despite all this, Anderson does succeed in providing us with a reason to believe that perspectivism does not necessarily degenerate into wholesale relativism; it need not be the case that all perspectives are equally valuable. Instead, Anderson gives us coherence as a criterion for selecting perspectivism over other epistemological theories. That is to say, all else being equal, any epistemology that is more internally coherent than others is better. Perspectivism is more coherent because it does not assert or require the existence of objects which are in principle unperceivable in order for a belief about the object to count as true, yet perspectivism does not deny all means of ranking beliefs and so does not degenerate into relativism. Perspectivism therefore fulfills the requirement of internal coherence in the contest against realism, thus also giving us an alternative to many realist epistemologies, in that perspectivism does not posit any entities that are in principle unseeable, such as the thing-in-itself.

B. Cox: Perspectivism as a Naturalist, Holist, Antifoundationalist Theory of Knowledge

Cox identifies a major problem in Nietzsche's philosophy as the problem of many postmodern positions: that antifoundationalist philosophies struggle to avoid relativism and to legitimate claims that they have some platform for their own critiques (Cox, p. 3). Cox argues that Nietzsche's perspectivism is supported by his naturalism, and thus avoids the problem of apparent relativism (Cox, p. 3). Nietzsche's naturalism allows him to reject both the "God's eye view" and pure relativism (Cox, p. 4). Further, Cox states that "the language of 'perspective'" in Nietzsche's writings ought to be brought under the "broader language of 'interpretation'" that

Nietzsche uses more frequently" (Cox, p. 4). Cox defines epistemology broadly, as a theory of knowledge; he says Nietzsche's epistemology has the characteristics of an antifoundationalist, holistic, and naturalistic conception (Cox, p. 7). Cox also claims that Nietzsche is not as developmental a writer as some (Leiter and Clark, for example) have suggested, and so he opts to use earlier works as well as Nietzsche's unpublished writings to support his argument (Cox, p. 8).

Because "there are no 'facts' – no transparent, doctrinal statements against which to measure interpretations" of Nietzsche's perspectivism, Cox asserts that Nietzsche's remarks on perspective ought to be interpreted in accordance with Nietzsche's remarks on interpretation generally, inasmuch as his language of interpretation coincides with and supports his commentary on perspective (Cox, p. 110). In GM III: 12, we see that, "Nietzsche entwines the notion of 'perspective' with the notion of 'affective interpretation'" (Cox, p. 112). From this, Cox gives us a definition of "perspective": it is an evaluation made possible and caused by the operation of a particular affective interpretation (Cox, p. 112).[17] Cox's Nietzsche makes the act of interpretation a necessary condition of both meaning and value (Cox, p. 115). Cox justifies his own inclusion of Nietzsche's language of interpretation in perspectivism on the basis of the history of the usage of "interpretation" already present in philosophy (both Continental and Analytic), especially in antifoundationalist theories of knowledge, such as those of Derrida, Rorty, Heidegger, Goodman, and Hoy (Cox, p. 115, see footnote 12). Interpretation, for Cox's Nietzsche, includes "whatever exists"; in other words, in order to be an object or event, a thing must be interpreted – interpretation is what constitutes a thing as an object or event (Cox, p. 116).

[17] I decline to use Cox's discussion of Heidegger's horizons, as Heidegger's horizons are beyond the scope of this paper.

Cox identifies two accounts of Nietzsche's perspectivism: the skeptical neo-Kantian account, and the realist neo-Kantian account (Cox, p. 118 and p. 120). The skeptical account claims that the subject of perspective is the biological species (Cox, p. 119), and the realist account claims the subject is the human individual and that the doctrine of perspectivism is limited to human knowledge; Cox attributes this latter view to Clark and Leiter (Cox, p. 120). The skeptical account treats perspectivism as accepting the truth of the existence of a "real" world, while denying our access to it (Cox, p. 119), and the realist account treats perspectivism as analogous to visual perspective, claiming that there is a "real" world, and there are better and worse perspectives from which to view it (Cox, p. 120-121). Cox sees the realist account as closer to the better interpretation (his own), but claims that it fails correctly to treat the subject/object distinction that Nietzsche rejects along with the apparent/real distinction (Cox, p. 121).

For Cox, the subject of perspective is not an unchanging soul-atom (Cox, p. 123), but a fluctuating ego-substance of struggling wills, desires, or affects united together (Cox, p. 129), and the best of subjects is one in which there is the most internal contradiction and conflict (Cox, p. 135). The interpretations are the subject, or, conversely, the subject just is her interpretations; the subject "is nothing over and above the various physical/spiritual affective perspectives" (Cox, p. 137). Furthermore, the subject does not exist apart from interpretation, according to Cox's treatment of Nietzsche's naturalism. Because we have only sensory (and no *a priori*) knowledge of ourselves as subjects (interpretations) (Cox, p. 123), we must treat the self, the I, as "a grammatical habit" (Cox, p. 124): "The subject is itself an effect of interpretation" (Cox, p. 139). This last claim about the subject seems to coincide with another passage from GM: "[a quantum of drive, will, effect] is nothing other than precisely this very driving, willing, effecting,

and only owing to the seduction of language…which conceives and misconceives all effects as conditioned by something that causes effects, by a 'subject,' can it appear otherwise…there is no such substratum; there is no 'being' behind doing, effecting, becoming; 'the doer' is merely a fiction added to the deed – the deed is everything" (GM I:13).

For Cox, what is primary in perspective is not the subject but the object, a kind of reversal of perspective often seen in Nietzsche's works (Cox, p. 126).[18] Rather than assuming that what is "real" is given to the subject for interpretation as the skeptic account would have it (Cox, p. 141), or assuming that what is given is just our everyday understanding of "things" as the realist account would have it (p 147), Cox suggests that we treat the object of interpretation as an assemblage of appearances: a "'thing' is the sum of its effects" on perspectives (Cox, p. 153, from WP 552). Given this claim that a thing is the sum of its effects, to call a claim about the thing "objective" then means "the cultivation of a variety of perspectives and the ability to skillfully shift among them" (Cox, p. 158), and the objects properly belonging to this "objectivity" are falsehoods, appearances from observation which bear no relation to the supposed "real" world that Nietzsche denies as being self-negating; the idea of a real world is an empty idea, so these appearances relate to nothing at all (Cox, p. 144, 153).[19] Further, Cox's Nietzsche rejects idealism because of Nietzsche's account of the subject. Cox believes that idealism requires a subject which is a timeless, atomistic knower; Nietzsche's account of the subject does not fit such a description, and therefore Nietzsche must not be an idealist.

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[18] I do not mean to imply that Nietzsche reversed subject and object as part of his perspectivism; I only wish to draw the allusion to "The Four Great Errors" from TI: once again the interpreter uses Nietzsche's method of switching cause and effect. We also see Nietzsche discuss the reversal of perspective in BGE 32: "Instead of the consequences, the origin: indeed a reversal of perspective!" See also EH I:1: "Now I know how, have the know-how, to *reverse perspectives*: the first reason why a 'revaluation of values' is perhaps possible for me alone."

[19] Appearances that aren't appearances of anything at all sounds like a crazy idea – but I think this is precisely Nietzsche's, and Cox's, point about realists' commitment to empty ideas, or "nothing," as objects of perception.

I have yet to treat Cox's holism. For Cox, holism is the claim that concepts belong to a system of intertwined perceptions (Cox, p. 94). For this, we will have to reference BGE 20, in which Nietzsche discusses the individual philosophical concepts as "not anything capricious or autonomously evolving, but [as growing] up in connection and relationship with each other…however suddenly and arbitrarily they seem to appear in the history of thought, they nevertheless belong just as much to a system as all the members of the fauna of a continent" (BGE 20). Nietzsche further discusses the "strange family resemblance of all Indian, Greek, and German philosophizing." This resemblance is caused by the "common philosophy of grammar – I mean, owing to the unconscious domination and guidance by similar grammatical functions – that everything is prepared at the outset for a similar development and sequence of philosophical systems; just as the way seems barred against certain other possibilities of world-interpretation" (BGE 20). Cox takes this passage and the preceding description of individual philosophical concepts as Nietzsche's "explicitly" putting forth a holistic view (Cox, p. 94). Further, in GS 57, Cox finds the following theses: "(1) that there is no such thing as naked perception and (2) that what perception perceives is not a pre-given world. Rather, perception functions as part of the total human organism, and what it perceives is a world that is a palimpsest of previous interpretive construals. Perception and interpretation are inextricably intertwined" (Cox, p. 95). I believe that Cox's holism is supposed to save interpretation from both relativism and the kind of deconstructivist view that a given text does not limit one's reading of that text.

Both Cox's holism and Anderson's pluralism are claims for the value of intersubjective knowledge; that is to say, both holism and pluralism advocate that our "objectivity" be equivalent to what I have above called the omniperspective. The omniperspective would include the holistic naturalist interpretation Cox advances as well as the internalistic pluralist

interpretation of Anderson. To demonstrate this, first I would like to note that for Cox, the act of perception is "inextricably intertwined" with the act of interpretation. Cox's Nietzsche believes that performing one act is necessarily performing the other. Further, this act of interpretive perception is tied to all other acts of interpretative perception in that each interpretation is caused by the "unconscious domination and guidance by similar grammatical functions" (BGE 20). This is to say that Cox's Nietzsche believes that the system that encompasses all human perceptions is guided by a single set of rules, and even further that perception is part of an already-there world, in an "on-going network of interpretations" (Cox, p. 98).

Secondly, Anderson makes explicit his belief in the value of multiple perspectives for Nietzsche:

> "Our ultimate cognitive goal, which may or may not be reached in given cases, is an overarching philosophical interpretation that brings as much unity as possible to this '*variety*'. What objectivity demands, however, is that this quest for unity be always constrained by 'that sublime inclination of the seeker after knowledge who insists on . . . *multiplicity*' ([BGE] § 230, my emphasis). The idea that more perspectives will generate a better apprehension of the world is thus motivated by the classical ideal of perfection, made dominant in German philosophy by Leibniz, of maximal variety, unified by the greatest compossible order."
> (Anderson, p. 18)

However, Anderson foresees the possibility that some perspectives, while containing *intra*perspectivally internally coherent beliefs, may not be coherent *inter*perspectivally. By this I mean that several perspectives may be consistent with each other, but that outside of a given group of perspectives the consistency breaks down; that is to say, when more perspectives are added to the original set, consistency will not necessarily hold. Anderson implies that this might be the case for more than one set of beliefs: "perspectivism commits Nietzsche to a thoroughgoing pluralism, raising the possibility of alternative truths proper to incompatible perspectives." (Anderson, p. 22). Treating intersubjectivity as valuable for the defense against

relativism rests upon not only the seminal III:12 passage from *Genealogy of Morals*, but also on the similar interpretations provided by Cox and Anderson.

C. Wilcox: Perspectivism as Rejection of the Thing-In-Itself

Wilcox sets out to show that Nietzsche's cognitivism is dominant in his epistemological claims, and that we can make a consistent interpretation of his apparently noncognitivist claims (Wilcox, p. 98). He opens with a description of Kant's and Schopenhauer's philosophies: Wilcox takes Kant's view to be a kind of agnosticism about the existence of the thing-in-itself (Wilcox, p. 99), which entails the claim that we cannot have metaphysical or transcendent knowledge (Wilcox, p. 100). Wilcox takes Schopenhauer's view to be that the will is one thing-in-itself that we can know because we know it through our own experience as wills (Wilcox, p. 101).

Wilcox sees *The Birth of Tragedy* as a tension between Kantian agnosticism and Schopenhauerian will-as-truth theory (Wilcox, p. 102, 105). Wilcox says that part of the work is devoted to the Kantian agnosticism and its connection to the spirit of Socrates; Wilcox takes Nietzsche to be Kantian in that he is "optimistic" ("faithful") that knowledge is possible and also the best guide to life (Wilcox, p. 102). As I understand it, the tension that Wilcox sees between the two philosophies in Nietzsche's work appears in Nietzsche's apparent ability to speak about the noumenal realm, as if he could see the will as thing-in-itself (Wilcox, p. 105). Even though he claims that we do not have knowledge, Nietzsche regularly makes transempirical claims in BT (Wilcox, p. 106). Wilcox says that Nietzsche believes this kind of knowledge (about the will) arises out of the Dionysian intoxicative state (Wilcox, p. 106), a "musical" interpretation which is more direct than the verbal or visual perception and is more artistic than scientific or conceptual (Wilcox, p. 107). There are problematic passages (BT 18) where Wilcox takes Nietzsche to be asserting that the Dionysian is also an illusion, like the Apollonian

(visual/scientific), but that this could be an anticipation of Nietzsche's later rejection of metaphysics (Wilcox, p. 109). Wilcox says that Nietzsche held Schopenhauerian beliefs early in his work, but that in his actual early stages he was more Kantian (Wilcox, p. 110). We would "be wrong on almost every point" if we "developed a theory of Nietzsche's mature epistemological views" based on BT (Wilcox, p. 110).

Wilcox takes Nietzsche to reject metaphysical knowledge by his middle period (Wilcox, p. 111), and to connect his yes-saying (life-affirming) theme with this rejection at this point (Wilcox, p. 112). Over the course of his writings, Wilcox believes Nietzsche moved from a belief in an unknowable thing-in-itself, through doubt about it, on to the conclusion that the concept is contradictory (Wilcox, p. 114). Wilcox asserts that for Nietzsche, the notion of the "true" world degrades the world we live in – the "apparent" world (Wilcox, p. 118). Wilcox's Nietzsche also rejects the thing-in-itself on pragmatic grounds, because it is not legitimately connected with or useful to experience (Wilcox, p. 118). Further, Wilcox's Nietzsche claims that Kant undermines his own basis for distinguishing between the thing-in-itself and appearances (Wilcox, p. 119-120). Wilcox's Nietzsche finds the "unrelated, nonrelational" being impossible, as well as the "unrelated, nonrelational" perspective (Wilcox, p. 120). Further, Wilcox's Nietzsche posits the subject as the creator of the very notion of "thingness" (WP 569, quoted by Wilcox, p. 121). Wilcox also asserts that Nietzsche is not making metaphysical claims when he talks about the will to power and its role in interpretation – because such claims are not intended to be transcendent, only apparent (Wilcox, p. 122-3).

Wilcox's interpretation of the centrality of rejecting the thing-in-itself to perspectivism supports Cox's perspectivism as antifoundationalist. Much of Nietzsche's hostility to the thing-in-itself, Wilcox says "is based upon this understanding of the source of the idea," (Wilcox, p.

118) this source being “a wily and shrewd skepticism” which made the concept of a real world “if not provable, at least no longer *refutable*. Reason, the *right* of reason, does not extend that far” (A 10). This aphorism from *The Antichrist* indicates that certainly by Nietzsche’s mature period he had rejected realism and the real/apparent dichotomy it requires. Wilcox demonstrates that this rejection occurs both on pragmatic grounds, wherein Nietzsche rejects the notion of an inaccessible world as degrading this world, and on intellectual grounds, wherein Nietzsche rejects the notion of the thing-in-itself as intellectually untenable.

Thus Nietzsche also rejects both the metaphysical and the epistemological grounds for the notion of an objective reality to which our perceptions correspond. The metaphysical ground is that there is an inaccessible world that causes the perceived world, and thus degrades the perceived world, while the epistemological ground is that there must be some justification for our beliefs, some foundation, that assumes a theory of the external world or some kind of framework of truth that results in perceptions. This corresponds to Cox’s claim that Nietzsche predated Quine, Sellars, Goodman, Davidson, Rorty, and Kuhn in a move towards “antirealism in ontology, antifoundationalism in epistemology, and antidualism in the philosophy of mind” (Cox, p. 2).

In the next section, I will use Anderson’s, Cox’s and Wilcox’s treatments of perspectivism to support my rejection of Clark’s “minimal correspondence” realism, on the grounds that it would commit Nietzsche to the kind of epistemological dogmatism he attempts to correct. Wilcox’s interpretation provides the example of the rejection of the Kantian thing-in-itself as the rejection of realist theories I think is central to perspectivism; Cox and Anderson both provide means of ranking perspectives such that perspectivism need not be relativistic. Further, I will use Anderson’s, Cox’s and Wilcox’s treatments of perspectivism to go beyond

Leiter's claims: Leiter refrains from making any metaphysical claims and while Nietzsche does not make metaphysical claims, as Wilcox reminds us, there are implications about metaphysics due to what perspectivism does for epistemology, and I would like to explore these. I believe that the most important metaphysical implication perspectivism has is that there should be no real/apparent dichotomy in our metaphysics.

Part II: Noncorrespondent Epistemology

A. Leiter: Perspectivism as the Distorted, Inexhaustible and Plural Source of Knowledge

Leiter introduces the "Received View" (hereafter abbreviated RV) as the orthodox reading of Nietzsche's perspectivism, which attributes to him four claims:

> i) the world is indeterminate,
> ii) our concepts do not correspond to the world because of its indeterminacy,
> iii) our concepts are mere perspective, and finally,
> iv) no perspective is privileged above any other (Leiter, p. 334).

Leiter proceeds to argue that such a view is not correctly attributable to Nietzsche (Leiter, p. 335). Leiter agrees with Maudmarie Clark that the correct place from which to interpret Nietzsche's philosophy is his later, mature works, from *Genealogy of Morals* on (Leiter, p. 335).

The problems with the RV include: (1) Nietzsche criticizes certain claims on their epistemic merits, which implies that his own view enjoys some epistemic privilege (Leiter, p. 336). These criticisms are leveled against empiricism, verificationism, positivism, and Christianity (Leiter, p. 336-7). Nietzsche also appears to accept naturalistic views of causality (Leiter, p. 337) and the claim that the primary causal or explanatory facts in all domains (social, moral, physical, etc.) are natural facts (Leiter, p. 338), which seems to contradict the fourth claim of the RV. The RV also generates a paradox with the second claim, in that by assuming perspectives cannot be ranked with reference to a "real" world it assumes that there must be a distinction between real and apparent worlds. Such an assumption contradicts Nietzsche's rejection of the idea that there is a "real" world beyond the world of our experience (Leiter, p. 338). (2) Further, some RV-type commentators such as Nehamas recognize that some perspectives are more valuable to Nietzsche for their utility to himself or certain other persons (Leiter, p. 338). Leiter describes attempts to reconcile the RV with the epistemic privilege Nietzsche appears to confer on some perspectives as follows: some RV commentators outright

deny that Nietzsche does this; others claim that when he appears to do so, he's just using it as a rhetorical device; and others simply have to concede the point (Leiter, p. 339).

Leiter moves on to show how passages in Nietzsche's work offer more support for a different reading than the received view (Leiter, p. 340), one that includes the following theses: (A) Nietzsche's attacks on the thing-in-itself show a rejection of transcendental reality in favor of apparent reality. (B) Nietzsche's attacks on particular beliefs about the world do not necessitate the rejection of all beliefs. (C) Nietzsche's socioempirical observations indicate a belief in the merit of some perspectives and the flaws in others (Leiter, p. 340). (D) His accounts of the pragmatics of belief acquisition and retention require both truth and falsehood to make any sense. The way Leiter handles Nietzsche's account of pragmatic influences implies that Leiter's Nietzsche does not claim that pragmatic interest is equivalent to truth, as "Nietzsche insisted on distinguishing beliefs that are *true* from those that were merely useful (compare, e.g., GS 110, 121; BGE 210; WP 172, 455, 487)" (Leiter, p. 341). (E) His attacks on overestimating the value of truth require only that we accept some falsehoods for survival, not that we reject the idea of truth (Leiter, p. 341). (F) He claims that the necessity of interpretation for knowledge does not undermine philology (Leiter, p. 341-2). (G) Nietzsche's attacks on positivism demonstrate only that unmediated access to the world is impossible, not that access is impossible altogether (Leiter, p. 342).

Leiter provides an interpretation of GM III: 12, which attacks the idea of truth as unknowable, specifically as the thing-in-itself (Leiter, p. 343). Leiter offers us two doctrines with which to make this interpretation: (i) Doctrine of Epistemic Affectivity (DEA) (knowledge is interested/affected) and (ii) Doctrine of Perspectives (DP) (knowledge is analogous to visual perspective) (Leiter, p. 343). Leiter briefly explores the optical analogy through the DP, and

makes the following claims about knowledge: [L1] knowledge necessarily comes from perspective (perspectivism claim); [L2] we can tell at least sometimes when our perspective is distorted (purity claim); [L3] more perspectives mean better knowledge (plurality claim); and [L4] we cannot exhaust all perspectives (infinity claim) (Leiter, p. 344-6). These claims do not fall in line with the RV in any way, and they give us further support for the idea that perspectives can be ranked hierarchically (Leiter, p. 345). Leiter admits to the pluralism of perspectivism, but denies that it entails relativism (Leiter, p. 346). Furthermore, if Nietzsche's means for ranking perspectives are wrong, this does no harm to his overall theory of epistemology, in that perspectivism allows for other (perhaps better) methods of ranking (Leiter, p. 346-7).

An additional problem for RV perspectivism is that while Nietzsche claims that all knowledge is interested/affected, he also claims that all evidence of truth must come from the senses (an empiricist demand) (Leiter, p. 348). Leiter identifies within this problem the independence requirement, that objectivity requires independence from the beliefs or evidence of the perceiver (Leiter, p. 349). However, Leiter claims that this is solvable if we take the empiricist demand as an only trivially necessary condition of our knowledge claims; that is to say, yes, our knowledge must come through our senses, but this is because we only know things (as humans) because of our senses (Leiter, p. 349). This all boils down to the claim that there are of necessity no facts, only interpretations because naked facts or things-in-themselves are simply unintelligible, as we are interpreting knowers (Leiter, p. 350).

To summarize, Leiter characterizes perspectivism as a claim that knowledge is necessarily limited by what the senses can perceive, that it may be distorted by the limitations on the capacities of those senses, and that it is plural in that more perspectives result in better knowledge. This plurality, however, is not relativism because perspectives can be ranked. This

pluralism is similar to Anderson's pluralism and Cox's holism. I made the claim earlier that both Cox's holism and Anderson's pluralism are claims for the value of intersubjective knowledge; that is to say, both holism and pluralism advocate that our "objectivity" be equivalent to what I called the omniperspective. What I mean by saying that the omniperspective includes the holistic naturalist interpretation, the internalistic pluralist interpretation, and the plurality claim is that all three maintain that omniperspectival knowledge should serve as a goal in the enterprise of gaining knowledge about the universe. This does not mean that Nietzsche asserts that the omniperspective is achievable (although he does not assert that it is *not* achievable), but that we should strive to come as close to it as is perspectivally possible. The omniperspective would include the holistic naturalist interpretation Cox advances, the internalistic pluralist interpretation of Anderson, and now, I want to suggest, Leiter's plurality claim. This is simply because the omniperspective includes a plurality of perspectives, and Leiter claims that a plurality of perspectives makes our conception of the universe better (Leiter, p. 345). So for Leiter, the omniperspective, while unachievable, is still available as a kind of "objectivity."

Again, the definition I offered for omniperspectival knowledge was as follows: striving for 'omniperspectival knowledge' is what Nietzsche considers to be the only logically possible way we could even approach the inconceivable nonperspectival position. The omniperspective, as the name implies, would include the information available from all perspectives; thus it can serve as a goal for those who seek objectivity, in that it is the closest thing to the God's eye view (the nonperspective) that we are actually capable of conceiving. For comparison, let me quote Leiter's plurality claim: "The more perspectives we enjoy – for example, the more interests we employ in knowing the object – the better our conception of what the object is like will be" (Leiter, p. 345). I believe Leiter may go a step too far in asserting that our conception of this

object will be "better" to Nietzsche, for Nietzsche says only that our objectivity or conception of this object will be "more complete" (GM III:12). However, given that I claim only that trying to reach the omniperspective *can* serve as a goal, Leiter's plurality claim is subsumable under the omniperspectivity claim as part of the spectrum of truth: it is possible that the omniperspective is the best goal, and there are other possibilities also.

However there is a larger problem with Leiter's approach to perspectivism, in that he ignores and avoids the metaphysical problems raised by perspectivism. The heart of these metaphysical problems is that Leiter's analysis seems to commit Nietzsche to the claim that there is a reality out there (which may or may not be causally related to our perceptions), but we cannot know anything about it because we see things only from limited perspectives. I will demonstrate this below. Effectively, this would mean Nietzsche asserted the dichotomy of the real/apparent where we have seen he has not.[20] I believe that the most important metaphysical implication perspectivism has is that there is no empirical or rational justification for a real/apparent dichotomy in our metaphysics. This returns us to Leiter's independence requirement that, "for facts about the world to be objective…they must not depend on our beliefs about them or our evidence for them" (Leiter, p. 349). Leiter asks how we can possibly make sense of Nietzsche's empirical claim that, "all evidence of truth [must] come only from the senses" (BGE 134) if the independence requirement holds.

Leiter then distinguishes between two construals of objectivity: strong objectivity, which "requires that global error be an intelligible possibility," and modest objectivity, which claims that "distinctly human beliefs, sensibilities, practices, and dispositions are a condition of the very possibility of anything being true or knowable – but this does not mean that what is the case or what beliefs are justified depends directly on what *any particular* person or community believes,

[20] See "Perspectivism as Rejection of the Thing-In-Itself" above.

is sensitive to, has evidence for, or is disposed to talk about" (Leiter, p. 349). By introducing modest objectivity, Leiter makes possible Nietzsche's ability to discuss interpretations having epistemic merits as opposed to merely pragmatic merits, and he makes sense of the above empiricist claim from *Beyond Good and Evil*.[21] In this new interpretation, all evidence of truth must come from the senses, but it may be better or worse evidence depending on how it corresponds to the set of "distinctly human beliefs, sensibilities, practices and dispositions" that are the conditions for the possibility of knowledge or truth. That is, while Leiter allows for the object's ontology to be independent of the knower, the truth of beliefs about that object also remain independent of the knower as well, for it is not true "that what is the case or what beliefs are justified depends directly on what *any particular* person or community believes" (Leiter, p. 349).

However, I would like to contest Leiter's interpretation of Nietzsche's position. For while Nietzsche certainly does not argue that all beliefs are justified according to the individual's overall set of beliefs, neither does he argue that all beliefs are justified on the basis of some global set of beliefs, practices, or dispositions; such a global set would fulfill the role of the "real" world and distinguish once again between the real and the apparent, thus excluding humanity from access to the truth. It does not make sense for someone to assert that "*there* is a realm of truth and being, but reason is *excluded* from it" (GM III:12) when he has rejected the notion that such a realm exists. And indeed, we find on a closer reading that Nietzsche is not asserting that there is a global set of beliefs to which our beliefs must correspond in order to be true; Nietzsche is in fact rejecting the independence requirement. Because we seek knowledge, Nietzsche says, we should not be "ungrateful" to the desire to see these things differently, even

[21] "All evidence of truth [must] come only from the senses" (BGE 134).

in terms of a dichotomous ontology, but we still should be on guard against anything which posits a will-less subject, pure reason or knowledge in itself (GM III:12).

I assert here that this unreachable realm is precisely what Leiter has posited as part of perspectivism. If our beliefs *must* correspond to those facts about human nature that condition knowledge, then we have again separated perception from reality because Leiter construes the object of all beliefs (about truth, the world, conditions of possibility, etc.) as still existing independently of perceptions (Leiter, p. 350). This is because such conditions (so-called "facts" about human nature) are a set of beliefs which are themselves (modestly) objectively true. Each individual will necessarily have a set of beliefs that may match some of the universal set of beliefs, but the set of beliefs belonging to the individual will also include beliefs that are skewed or outright false versions of the global set of beliefs. Further, presumably, at this point in time at least, no individual is capable of possessing the entire set of objective beliefs, and thus humanity remains incapable of accessing even the full extent of this modest objectivity. But what recourse does this leave us to make claims about falsehoods? In other words, how are we to handle incompatible and incommensurable perspectives? This is the problem that will motivate my interpretation of perspectivism as a constructivist theory of truth.

B. Clark: Perspectivism as Minimal Correspondence Realism

Clark says that we must reinterpret Nietzsche to deal with (at least) two apparent problems in his work – the problem of self-refutation (that perspectivism refutes itself), and the falsification thesis (that all our beliefs are or could be falsified) (Clark, p. 2-3). Clark describes a four-part logical schema into which she fits several commentators' views: Walter Kaufmann, John Wilcox, Martin Heidegger, Arthur Danto, Jacques Derrida, Paul de Man and Sarah

Kofman. Through this schema, Clark demonstrates how Nietzsche's sympathizers have tried to explain away the apparent contradictions in his philosophy; the first two interpretations are traditional interpretations that attribute to Nietzsche the view that truth is correspondence to reality, and the second two are nontraditional or radical interpretations that suggest that Nietzsche is a not a correspondence theorist about truth (Clark, p. 5 & 11). The first traditional method is Kaufmann's interpretation, which Clark describes as stating that the contradictions are merely apparent, that Nietzsche accepts empirical truth, and that Nietzsche does not put forward any metaphysical theories. According to this interpretation, Nietzsche neither commits himself to the falsification thesis nor is he susceptible to self-refutation, but this interpretation is at odds with Nietzsche's writings (Clark, p. 5-6). Clark says that Wilcox's view is consonant with Kaufmann's, except that Wilcox does not claim that he can explain away all of the contradictions (Clark, p. 6). The second method is Heidegger's interpretation, which Clark describes as stating that Nietzsche accepts the correspondence theory of truth, but she says that Heidegger fails to explain the contradictions, preferring to show how his own theory is superior to Nietzsche's; this method creates results similar to Kaufmann's (Clark, p. 7).

Clark claims that the nontraditional methods arise from an attempt to deal with the weaknesses of Kaufmann's interpretation and to present alternatives to Heidegger's interpretation (Clark, p. 11). The first radical method belongs to Danto[22] and similar interpreters, and Clark states that this interpretation eliminates the apparent contradictions by assigning the correspondence theory of truth to those theories that Nietzsche rejects, and assigns a different (pragmatic or coherence) theory of truth to those truths which Nietzsche accepts – namely his own assertions (Clark, p. 12). However, according to Clark, this interpretation is incapable of explaining the falsification thesis because Danto's Nietzsche still affirms the truth of the

[22] See Arthur C. Danto, *Nietzsche as Philosopher*. New York: Macmillan, 1965.

doctrines of eternal recurrence and the will to power in a metaphysical rather than a pragmatic sense (Clark, p. 13).

The second radical method belongs to the deconstructionists, particularly Derrida, but also de Man and Kofman. According to Clark, this interpretation does not recognize the contradictions as a problem, but as something useful and interesting about the nature of truth, metaphysics, and the language we must use to discuss them: we of necessity talk of truth even though we are incapable of possessing it (Clark, p. 13); our language is simply not suitable for portraying reality (Clark, p. 14). This interpretation solves the problem both of self-refutation and the falsification thesis but at the great cost of reducing perspectivism to relativism. Clark denies that this kind of interpretation is the best we can offer Nietzsche (Clark, p. 18). Clark describes the deconstructionist method as a playful alternative to Heidegger (Clark, p. 19), but says that it does not provide us with an explanation for why Nietzsche might assert his own perspective as better than others (Clark, p. 17).

Clark herself argues that Nietzsche accepts a version of the correspondence theory, but that he rejects metaphysics (Clark, p. 21); hence, for her, Nietzsche ultimately rejects the falsification thesis. Clark takes this rejection to eliminate the self-refutation involved in other interpretations of perspectivism. According to Clark, Danto's account of Nietzsche's denial of truth (the falsification thesis) commits Nietzsche to a denial of the correspondence theory (Clark, p. 32). Clark says such a position is untenable because it rejects the equivalence principle (that a statement "S" is true iff S). If Nietzsche does in fact reject the correspondence theory, she says, he cannot consistently make any claims at all, for to assert something is to do so on the basis that it is the case (Clark, p. 33). Clark says that in order to deal with this problem, Danto suggests that Nietzsche rejects only one version of truth – the correspondence theory – and replaces it with a

pragmatic theory (that what is true is what is useful or makes us happy) (Clark, p. 34). Clark suggests that another candidate could be the coherence theory, although coherence could be only a *criterion* of truth, while correspondence must be the *nature* of truth (Clark, p. 34-5). Further, according to Clark, in order to defend the coherence theory, one must accept subjective idealism (Clark, p. 39), and Nietzsche rejects it (Clark, p. 40). Given Clark's treatment of the falsification principle, she seems to define the equivalence principle in terms of correspondence.

Clark redefines correspondence so that true statements would correspond not to the world as it is regardless of human perceptions (i.e., the world as it is in itself), which is metaphysical correspondence, but to a common sense understanding of reality as separate from our representations of it, which is minimal correspondence (Clark, p. 40). Clark claims that minimal correspondence does not require the concept of the thing-in-itself, because the thing-in-itself is unnecessary for understanding truth as independent of our cognitive capacities, although it would be necessary for understanding truth as independent of our cognitive interests (our best standards of rational acceptability for humans, not necessarily for all possible knowers) (Clark, p. 50). In the remainder of Ch. 2, Clark commits Nietzsche to a Neo-Kantian version of the minimal correspondence theory (Clark, p. 51-61), which accommodates her previous claim that Nietzsche rejects the falsification thesis.

Clark defines perspectivism as the claim that all knowledge is perspectival, which entails the falsification thesis according to most interpretations (Clark, p. 127). Clark takes GM III:12 to be a metaphor designed to help us overcome the falsification thesis, and to indicate that Nietzsche rejected it himself (Clark, p. 128). In this central passage, with its visual metaphor, Clark takes Nietzsche not to reject minimal correspondence, but metaphysical correspondence, thus allowing for a falsification of metaphysically "true" statements, but not common sense

statements (Clark, p. 130). Clark claims that this antifoundationalism[23] concerns justification and certainty, but not truth or falsity, and therefore it need not entail accepting the falsification thesis (Clark, p. 131).

Clark distinguishes between nonperspectival knowledge and omniperspectival knowledge: nonperspectival knowledge would be knowledge of thing-in-itself (Clark, p. 132), and omniperspectival knowledge would be the knowledge acquired from the conjunction of all perspectives (Clark, p. 145). Clark claims that perspectivism frees us from our attachment to nonperspectival knowledge and what it entails about truth and correspondence (Clark, p. 134). To argue against her, she says, one must either say that she draws the wrong conclusions from her analysis of the visual metaphor, or else offer different analyses (Clark, p. 135).

Clark uses Hoy's[24] version of the metaphor as an example of the first method: she says that Hoy takes the metaphor to reinstate the thing-in-itself, but that this interpretation requires a conflation of "existence in itself" with "essence in itself." For something to be a thing-in-itself it must have essence in itself, where the 'essence' of a thing is defined as being "independent of what it can appear to be"; for something to be a thing that is independent of the perspectives on it requires only existence in itself, which simply means that the existence of the object "is not reducible to the existence of representations" (Clark, p. 136). It is the alternate model of existence in itself (as opposed to essence in itself) that allows Nietzsche to reject the falsification thesis because it gives him an object of knowledge that exists independently of us (Clark, p. 137).

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[23] The rejection of metaphysical correspondence involves the antifoundationalist claim that "there is no foundation outside of our beliefs that could justify them" (Clark, p. 35). See also Clark, p. 130: "To consider knowledge nonperspectival would be to insist that it must be grounded in a set of foundational beliefs, beliefs all rational beings must accept no matter what else they believe, beliefs that could therefore constitute a neutral corner from which the justifiability of other beliefs might be assessed. In calling nonperspectival knowledge 'an absurdity and a nonsense,' Nietzsche suggests the impossibility of such self-justifying foundations for knowledge."

[24] David Hoy, author of "Philosophy as Rigorous Philology? Nietzsche and Poststructuralism." *New York Literary Forum* 8-9 (1981): 171-85.

Clark also explores Danto's interpretation of perspectivism, saying it is consistent with her metaphor, but that his version fails to reject the falsification thesis and thus commits Nietzsche to accepting that all perspectives are of equal value, or at least incommensurable (Clark, p. 138). Clark claims that perspectivism does not rule out the possibility that one perspective is superior to others (Clark, p. 142), and hence does not entail Danto's view of incommensurability. Clark also explores Magnus's[25] interpretation, which involves a different version of the visual metaphor that allows for omniperspectivial knowledge and rejects only nonperspectival knowledge (Clark, p. 145). Clark claims the two are not equivalent (Clark, p. 147), and further, that perspectivism does not entail accepting omniperspectival knowledge as a kind of objectivity, even if we reject nonperspectival knowledge (Clark, p. 148). The remainder of Ch. 5 is devoted to discussing the different varieties of the falsification thesis attributed to perspectivism, one of which (Nehamas's)[26] involves a kind of simplification from truth to statements (Clark, p. 155), and one of which (Schacht's)[27] results in a failure of correspondence (Clark, p. 153).

I will side with Leiter and Clark in rejecting what Leiter names the Received View. However, Leiter's "modest objectivity" and Clark's "minimal correspondence" both go too far in the other direction from relativism and end up placing Nietzsche among the realists. Here I will demonstrate how Clark makes this error while trying to avoid it. I will reject Clark's "minimal correspondence" realism, on the grounds that it would commit Nietzsche to the kind of epistemological dogmatism he attempts to correct. First of all, we must look to Clark's definition of correspondence. Clark splits correspondence into metaphysical correspondence, where true

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[25] Bernd Magnus, author of "The Deification of the Commonplace: Twilight of the Idols." In Solomon and Higgins, eds. *Reading Nietzsche*. Oxford: Oxford University Press (1988): 152-81.
[26] Alexander Nehamas, author of *Nietzsche: Life As Literature*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985.
[27] Richard Schacht, author of *Nietzsche*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983.

statements correspond to the world as it is regardless of human perceptions (i.e., the world as it is in itself), and minimal correspondence, where true statements correspond to a common sense understanding of reality as separate from our representations of it (Clark, p. 40). In GM III:12, with its visual metaphor, Clark takes Nietzsche to reject not minimal correspondence, but metaphysical correspondence (Clark, p. 135), thus entailing the falsification of metaphysically "true" statements, but not "common sense" statements. (Clark, p. 130).

On the contrary, I take Nietzsche to reject even those common sense statements, because I believe this common sense statement[28] falls into the category of "unquestionable beliefs all rational beings share" (Clark, p. 130), which Clark equates with metaphysical realism, but which I think also includes the equivalence principle at the core of the minimal correspondence theory. The equivalence principle is simply the principle that a statement "S" is true iff S. The equivalence principle is for Clark "our surest intuition regarding truth," and thus, I believe, must be what she considers an unquestionable belief that all rational beings share. Common sense beliefs and the equivalence principle both fall into the category of unquestionable beliefs that all rational beings must share, and I believe Nietzsche rejects such a category of beliefs altogether, including but not limited to this equivalence principle. This is quite simply because such claims commit Nietzsche to an ontology which he rejects: the division of the real from the apparent. Further, Clark is willing to grant that in perspectivism "all justification is contextual, dependent on other beliefs held unchallengeable for the moment" but she is not willing to go as far as I believe Nietzsche actually goes and assert that in perspectivism our very concept of truth is dependent on other beliefs. I will return to this claim in the next section.

[28] Specifically the definition of "common sense realism," that the world is ontologically distinct from our representations of it (Clark, p. 41).

Right here at the starting line, minimal correspondence seems to instantiate the metaphysical dichotomy of the apparent world and a real world that exists separately from our perceptions. Perhaps I am wrong in confusing "the world in itself" with "a world existing separately from our perceptions," and this is just what Clark tries to demonstrate. Clark claims that minimal correspondence does not require the concept of the thing-in-itself, because the thing-in-itself is unnecessary for understanding truth as independent of our cognitive capacities, although it would be necessary for understanding truth as independent of our cognitive interests (Clark, p. 50). However, I believe that minimal correspondence requires something akin to the concept of the thing-in-itself in that minimal correspondence makes the same error as transcendental idealism, the error of generating an ontological dichotomy, and thus would be unacceptable as a candidate for Nietzsche's truth theory. Understanding truth as independent of our cognitive capacities retains the idea that the world is ontologically distinct from our representations of it; this is precisely what common sense realism allows. Because minimal correspondence is based on common sense realism, which establishes the very ontological distinction Nietzsche rejects.

I believe Clark's response to my objection might follow along the same lines as her response to Hoy's interpretation of the visual metaphor: that minimal correspondence, like perspectivism, does not introduce the thing-in-itself, because for something to be a thing-in-itself it must have essence in itself, where 'essence' is defined as "an essence or nature that is independent of what it can appear to be" (Clark, p. 136). For something to be a thing that is independent of the perspectives on it only requires existence in itself, which simply means that the existence of the object "is not reducible to the existence of representations" (Clark, p. 136). However, I fail to see how having a nature independent of what a thing can appear to be is not

equivalent to having an existence which is irreducible to the existence of representations. If one's existence is not reducible to representations, then it follows that one's nature is in some way independent of how one can appear to be. Clark does not claim that essence need be unchanging or stable by any means, so her definitions of essence in itself and existence in itself appear to be identical. At the very least she needs to make the distinction between the "thing/appearance and the reality/appearance" (Clark, p. 136) dichotomies clearer.

Therefore I conclude that the realist concept of truth as correspondence, whether in metaphysical or so-called "minimal" form, is not suitable as a description of Nietzsche's perspectivism. This is not to say that we must abandon Nietzsche to the falsification thesis, however. Cox and Anderson both provide means of ranking perspectives such that perspectivism need not be relativistic. The point is that Nietzsche does not assert that the omniperspective is the best perspective, simply that it gives us the most *complete* picture of a given object. Nietzsche does not assert that a complete picture is possible or necessarily desirable, but that omniperspectival knowledge would be this complete picture, and that this is the only kind of "objective" knowledge we can conceive.

Part III: Coherence of Knowledge and Constructivism of Truth

A. Perspectivism as Coherence of Knowledge

Now I would like to offer my own interpretation: that perspectivism entails two positions I will refer to as 'knowledge coherentism' and 'truth constructivism.' I will define 'knowledge coherentism' as internal coherence within a system of knowledge or accepted "truths," where coherence is defined as logical consistency. Clark claims that subjective idealism, the view usually associated with Berkeley ("that to be is to be perceived (or a perceiver), that nothing exists except ideas or representations (and representors)"), must be the basis for defending a coherence theory of truth, because a rejection of idealism leads us to correspondence through the acceptance of common sense realism (Clark, p. 39). Because her minimal correspondence "seems to amount to no more than the equivalence principle" (Clark, p. 39), Clark believes that "Nietzsche would therefore have reason to reject an understanding of truth as correspondence in favor of the coherence theory *only if* he embraced subjective idealism" (Clark, p. 40, emphasis mine).

However, I believe Nietzsche's perspectivism does, as suggested by Anderson (Anderson, p. 2), provide a third way between relativism and realism in that it does not commit us to either. The implications of GM III:12 and BGE 134 are not that nothing but the perceived exists; rather, Nietzsche implies that we ought not make existence or truth claims about anything we cannot perceive because our perceptions are the only things which validate such claims. Therefore Clark's claim that, "the world has its own, extra-mental existence, and therefore does not need God or any other mind to be thinking of it in order to continue in existence," cannot be justifiable, as we can have no empirical proof that this is the case. I suggest that any such

separation of appearance and reality leads to this kind of unjustifiable claim, and that it was Nietzsche's intention to point this out.

Because internal coherence is generally desirable in any epistemological system, I think we have sufficient reason to use it as a means of ranking perspectives, as recommended by Anderson, although I do believe that we should reject Anderson's treatment of the visual metaphor in favor of a theory that integrates that metaphor more centrally. However, it should not be primary in our interpretive apparatus as Leiter and Clark suggest, because although Nietzsche references optics alongside many of his uses of "perspektive," he does not always incorporate the optical analogy into these aphorisms.[29]

In his mature works, Nietzsche uses "perspektive" in conjunction with optics or in terms of vision only in the following passages: BGE 2 & 12, GM II:8 and III:12. One could also argue that he does this in GM I:17 in Nietzsche's note, where Kaufmann has translated, "*Die Frage* […] *will unter die verschiedensten Perspektiven gestellt sein*," as, "The question…should be viewed from the most divers [sic] perspectives," while the more accurate (but certainly less graceful) translation is, "The question…wants to be posed under the variety of perspectives." In the other aphorisms which contain "perspektive" or a derivative word, Nietzsche speaks about moral perspectives (BGE 201, GM III:16, 17, 28), the errors necessary for the condition of life

[29] I searched digital copies of BT, BGE, TSZ, GM, TI, A, and EH for the chain "perspe-" to locate each case where Nietzsche uses "perspektive" or any of its derivative words to reach this conclusion, and found only those passages I list in the following paragraph. Others have made similar observations. Robin Small cautions: "It is easy to overestimate the occurrence of the word 'perspective' in Nietzsche's later writings if one is using the English versions of Walter Kaufmann, since the German word corresponding to his 'perspective' is often *Optik* rather than *Perspektive*. … Kaufmann also translates *Blick* as 'perspective' in *Ecce Homo*…" (p. 57, fn. 42). On the infrequency of Nietzsche's use of 'perspectivism', see also Cox, p. 109-11. Thanks to Jessica Berry for drawing my attention to these observations.

(BT 5, BGE 188), the fact that metaphysicians are against perspectives (BGE P, 10, 34), as well as a few other topics.[30]

B. Perspectivism as Constructivism of Truth

'Truth constructivism' is the claim that we humans create meaning or truth intersubjectively first by being perceivers and interpreters and secondly by comparing interpretations of perceptions through discourse. That is to say, the very possibility of truth for the perspectival knower (i.e., humans) is conditioned by perspective and not by correspondence to any world, ideal or real. I take this to be consistent with Nietzsche's rejection of the dichotomy of the real and the apparent. My claim about truth creation should not be taken as more than a deflationary metaphysical claim; it is a claim that truth or falsity rests not on the metaphysical state of any real world beyond human grasp, but instead on the perceptions or perceptual capacities of humanity. Rather, this claim should be taken as a semantic theory about how we ought to understand the terms "true" and "false." I do not assert that Nietzsche advocates truth constructivism; instead, the metaphysical implication of such a semantic theory is what I consider to be the Nietzschean claim, that we are not qualified to make assertions about metaphysical states at all precisely because "all evidence of truth come only from the senses" (BGE, 134). In this way I hope to avoid the dichotomies that arise as a result of Leiter and Clark's interpretations as well as the relativism inherent in the RV.[31]

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[30] BGE 32: reversal of perspective, 114: perspective for women, 129: the devil's perspective on God, and TI X:50: the public perspective on great human beings.

[31] I would like to turn briefly to social constructivism in general. An important distinction in social constructivism is the difference between weak social constructivism and strong social constructivism. While weak social constructivism only claims that human representations of reality are social constructs, strong social constructivism claims that the entities properly belonging to reality are themselves social constructs (Goldman, *SEP*). I believe that the kind of social constructivism appropriate for the Nietzschean claim is weak social constructivism. Nietzsche's rejection of the thing-in-itself entails a rejection of socially constructed real entities, because in supposing either *das Ding-an-sich* or a real construct we are assuming something to be true with no evidence. For this reason, we must

I asserted before that Leiter and Clark have in fact posited precisely what Nietzsche warns us against in his treatment of perspectivism: the will-less subject, pure reason or knowledge in itself. However, if we do not assert that there is something independent of perspective, then how can we make claims that people hold false beliefs? Even more important, how could Nietzsche make claims about false beliefs if he also does not assert the existence of something independent of perspective? This is the problem that will motivate my interpretation of perspectivism as a coherence theory of knowledge and a constructivist theory of truth.

I believe we can solve this problem at least in part by the kind of pluralistic coherentism Anderson suggests for our theory of knowledge. Anderson says that the major problem for perspectivism as an epistemology is that claims about perspectivism and its validity must also be limited to perspective – and thus perspectivism must be internally unstable (Anderson, p. 7). One cannot argue that perspectivism is better than other epistemologies if one claims to have no access to anything but perspectives which are admittedly distorted; the distortion of perspective could easily be bad enough to mislead the enterprising epistemologist to choose perspectivism over a potentially better theory. Further, it apparently limits its adherents from offering up the only kind of defense that its opponents would accept: the perspectivist cannot make claims about objective truth (Anderson, p. 8) because the perspectivist does not assume access to the actual state of the world, or objective reality. Beyond this, perspectives may be completely incompatible with each other as well as incommensurable by any common standard of judging perspectives (Anderson, p. 8).

However, the internal logic of perspectivism is akin to the coherence theory of truth that saves perspectivism from its realist opponents: in at least some cases, we find that there are

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also remove the phrase “of reality” from the definition of weak social constructivism to eliminate the incoherency. The definition of Nietzschean social constructivism thus becomes: human representations are social constructs.

values common to multiple perspectives (Anderson, p. 9). This standard gives us the means to rank perspectives, as well as the means to argue against the thing-in-itself as an incoherent concept (Anderson, p. 10), because coherence is valued across many respected epistemologies including those which counter perspectivism. Claims about the thing-in-itself are incoherent by this cross-epistemological standard because such claims require objective knowledge about how humans perceive. Because our cognitive and perceptual capacities are so limited by perspective, we cannot acquire the knowledge that would justify claims about the thing-in-itself (Anderson, p. 11). Nietzsche's objection to the thing-in-itself therefore implies that by his standards of ranking perspectives, truth increases where coherence does. This common standard also allows us to make claims that some beliefs are false, for if a given belief does not meet the criteria for true beliefs according to such a standard, then the belief still intuitively counts as false.[32]

Further, Anderson argues, the justified application of causes is limited to experience, and since we cannot experience things-in-themselves, we cannot claim them as causes for our knowledge (Anderson, p. 12). This argument coincides with Nietzsche's description of how mankind confuses cause and effect and sets up false causality: "we want to have a reason for feeling this way or that [….] We are never satisfied merely to state the fact that we feel this way or that: we admit this fact only – become conscious of it only – when we have furnished some kind of motivation" (TI VI:4). I want to suggest that alongside this passage we could construct a similar account along the lines of "we want to have a reason for perceiving this or that. We are never satisfied merely to state the fact that we perceive this thing or that: we become conscious of it only when we have furnished some kind of cause." After all, Nietzsche says, "First

[32] The classic Gettier problems demonstrate how accidental justified true beliefs do not count as true knowledge claims (see Steup, *SEP*); an internal standard like coherence allows us to say such beliefs are not knowledge because our justification for such beliefs is not coherent to our other beliefs. Beliefs about reality may well be justified true beliefs under the correspondence theory of truth, but such beliefs would be accidental in that the justification for beliefs about reality is not coherent with our belief that evidence comes from the senses.

principle: any explanation is better than none. Since at bottom it is merely a matter of wishing to be rid of oppressive representations, one is not too particular about the means of getting rid of them: the first representation that explains the unknown as familiar feels so good that one 'considers it true.'" (TI VI:5) Nietzsche calls this criterion of truth the "proof of pleasure" (TI VI:5). I would like to suggest that because of Clark's use of "common sense" to refer to minimal correspondence realism, she must be under the sway of this "proof of pleasure" when she asserts that Nietzsche would assent to minimal correspondence realism.

Additionally, Nietzsche rejects the Kantian account of our cognitive faculties as providing the form for all possible experience, thus blocking the necessity of the thing-in-itself for knowledge altogether (Anderson, p. 12). Because Kantians and other realists both accept internal coherence as necessary to any set of beliefs, this argument is successful against these two major opponents even within perspectivism itself (Anderson, p. 13). The basic idea is that the thing-in-itself is inherently incoherent and thus not a sensible concept even for the realist (Anderson, p. 13), and we find much evidence of this view in Nietzsche's writings.[33] From these kinds of claims I find evidence for Nietzsche's own belief in the value of coherency within an epistemology, and a reason to rank perspectivism above other epistemologies: perspectivism is simply more coherent than correspondence. Nietzsche claims that the perceived world is the only conceivable world, perhaps because we can conceive only out of what we have perceived: "All credibility, all good conscience, all evidence of truth come only from the senses" (BGE 134). If we accept this assumption, the perceived world is reality in the only understandable sense "reality" can have, as the perceived world is the only coherent source for any knowledge claims about reality: "The reasons for which 'this' world has been characterized as 'apparent' are the

[33] Nietzsche refers to the thing-in-itself as a "changeling" (GM I:13), "stupid to all eternity" (GM III:7), "a pure folly, mere 'idealism'" (EH III:4), as involving a "*contradiction in adjecto*" (BGE 16), and "the *horrendum pudendum* of the metaphysicians" (TI VI:3).

very reasons which indicate its reality; any other kind of reality is absolutely indemonstrable" (TI III:6).

Nietzsche goes on: "the 'true world' has been constructed out of contradiction to the actual world;" "To invent fables about a world 'other' than this one has no meaning at all;" and, "Any distinction between a 'true' and an 'apparent' world – whether in the Christian manner or in the manner of Kant (in the end, an underhanded Christian) – is only a suggestion of decadence, a symptom of the *decline of life*" (TI III:6). Even further, the true world is "at any rate, unattained. And being unattained, also *unknown*," and being unknown, it is no longer our epistemological duty to refer or correspond to this so-called true world (TI IV:1). Finally, having abolished this true world, Nietzsche asks what world remains: "The apparent one perhaps? But no! *With the true world we have also abolished the apparent one*" (TI IV:1).

This is my justification for the claim that Nietzsche does not want to replace the real world with a world of perspectives, but rather that Nietzsche claims that the real world *is* the world of perspectives, and thus the only conditions we can have for knowledge must be conditions of perspective. Now, Clark is willing to grant that in perspectivism, "all justification is contextual, dependent on other beliefs held unchallengeable for the moment," but she is not willing to go as far as I believe Nietzsche actually goes and assert that in perspectivism our very concept of truth is dependent on other beliefs. For, after all, our knowledge claims about truth are subject to the same conditions we hold for other knowledge claims. Whatever concept of truth we develop as a condition for knowledge is necessarily dependent on our other beliefs, whether these be beliefs about equivalence principles or independence requirements. If our concept of truth relies on an extra-perceptual realm then truth becomes incoherent because we can conceive only out of what we can perceive (concepts are a subset of perceptions), and we are by definition

incapable of perceiving this extra-perceptual realm. Therefore, by our very act of perceiving, we must in some sense be creating the truth that is a condition of knowledge. This is to say, our limitation to perspective is what gives us the idea of truth that counts as a condition of knowledge in any sense of justified true belief we use. Once again, if our concept of truth relies on the extra-perceptual, then our concept of truth is incoherent. However, since we must conceive out of what we perceive, then the concept of truth must come out of what we perceive. In this sense, of conception arising from perception, we are creating the truth concept by the act of perceiving.

The basic structure of my argument should therefore be stated as follows:

H1) We can only conceive (have beliefs and thus knowledge) out of what we perceive. (From BGE 134: "All credibility, all good conscience, all evidence of truth come only from the senses.")

H2) The only truth conditions we can use to rank beliefs must be conceivable.

H3) We cannot perceive the thing-in-itself, objective reality, the Platonic Forms, etc. Therefore,

H4) We cannot conceive (have beliefs and thus knowledge) of objective reality, etc. Further, since H2) Truth conditions must be conceivable,

H5) Objective reality cannot serve as a truth condition.

H6) Seeing everything from everywhere (the omniperspective) is the nearest thing humans could possess which compares to seeing everything from nowhere (the nonperspective or the traditional conception of "objectivity").

H7) As a new standard of objectivity, the omniperspective measures truth internally, through the intersubjective comparison of perspectives. (One standard Nietzsche accepts for this measurement is coherence.) Therefore,

H8) The intersubjective comparison of perspectives (which is itself a perceivable process at least in part) thus generates our reference for the concept "truth" by supplying the means for ranking beliefs as true or false.

This is not to say that we as human beings are generating reality in some Berkeleyan idealist sense, nor yet that just because we cannot perceive it the "true" world cannot exist. Rather, because we are incapable of perceiving the "true" world we are not justified in claiming it as a cause of our beliefs, and because we cannot perceive ourselves generating the "true" world (because we cannot watch the "true" world being spun into whole cloth) we are not entitled to make claims about whether or not we generate reality in the idealist sense. We "create" truth in that out of the (perspectivally limited) "facts" of the human condition we generate what it means to be true or knowable. Falsehoods, then, are those claims which do not fulfill the requirements established by the facts of the human condition, the status of such facts itself being subject to the process of intersubjective comparison of perspectives.

C. Conclusion

Thus my interpretation of Nietzsche's perspectivism is the following thesis: Nietzsche rejects both realist correspondence theories of truth as well as idealist theories of truth in favor of a coherentist, constructivist theory of truth, wherein we human beings generate the very possibility of truth by perceiving, and that we are still able to avoid relativism in this process by appealing to coherence. Nietzsche himself advocates coherence as a means for judging between epistemologies in his critique of the thing-in-itself; we can also use this intuition to judge between perspectives.

But what does this mean for my motivating problem, the status of women in Nietzsche's works? I propose that Nietzsche's perspectivism makes it very difficult to claim that Nietzsche's philosophy is misogynistic. Nietzsche denies the validity of any "objective" rank of values, for

instance one that might be generated by a correspondence theory.[34] In addition to this, Nietzsche identifies objective truth with Woman.[35] Both the ideas of objective truth and *das Weib an sich* are constructions which appeal to the realm of truth and being from which reason is excluded, not accurate descriptions of our perceptions of "reality" or of "real" women. *Das Weib an sich* can no more describe our concepts of women than objective truth can describe our concepts of truth. The accuracy of *das Weib* as a representation of women is dependent on the coherence of our beliefs about women and the practical aspects of adopting such beliefs. Nietzsche leads one to believe that neither objective truth nor *das Weib* exist, nor is their pursuit valuable.

It is important to understand when reading Nietzsche's texts that we cannot take the statements he makes about women to be what he believes to be universal truths, considering his perspectivism. Nietzsche discusses types of women in the same way he discusses types of men and types of humans. In short, Nietzsche identifies truth with Woman, because for him both are false representations of experience. The idea of objective truth is inherently contradictory, because truth is dependent on one's perception; similarly, the idea of Woman is inherently contradictory because there is no inherently or essentially female nature operating in women. Both the idea of objective truth, or *das Ding an sich*, and the concept of the Eternal Feminine, or *das Weib an sich*, are errors.

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[34] Correspondence theory is not a theory about values, but it generates a so-called objective ranking of beliefs according to a bivalent value system of true or false. Truth is, of course, the "good" value for correspondence, and false the "bad" value.

[35] I intend to distinguish actual people who are female (women) from the concept of femininity or feminine essence (Woman). I believe most of Nietzsche's derogatory comments about women are actually comments about Woman.

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