

“myth”; from which it finally follows that “false” and “true” are “relative” concepts. All this Nietzsche could already have found in Lange. This Kantian or, if you will, neo-Kantian origin of Nietzsche’s doctrine has hitherto been completely ignored, because Nietzsche, as was to be expected from his temperament, has repeatedly and ferociously attacked Kant whom he quite misunderstood. As if he had not also attacked Schopenhauer and Darwin, to whom he was just as much indebted! As a matter of fact there *is* a great deal of Kant in Nietzsche; not, it is true, of Kant in the form in which he is found in the textbooks (and in which he will probably remain for all eternity), but of the spirit of Kant, of the real Kant who understood the nature of appearance through and through, but who, in spite of having seen through it, also consciously saw and recognized its usefulness and necessity.

The writings of his youth — which are printed in Vol. I of his works and to which the posthumous pieces of Vols. IX and X also belong — contain a large number of important notes in a rough form. All these early attempts came to a head in the remarkable fragment dating from the year 1873, *Über Wahrheit und Lüge im aussermoralischen Sinne* (X, 189-215). “Lying, in the extra-moral sense,” is what Nietzsche (with his well-known fondness for forced expressions) calls the conscious deviation from reality to be found in myth, art, metaphor, etc. The intentional adherence to illusion, in spite of the realization of its nature, is a kind of “lie in an extra-moral sense”; and “lying” is simply the conscious, intentional encouragement of illusion.

This is very clearly the case in art, the subject from which Nietzsche started in his first work, *Geburt der Tragödie*, etc., reprinted in Vol. I. Art is the conscious creation of an aesthetic illusion; in this sense art rests upon the “primitive longing for illusion” [35]; “drama as a primitive phenomenon” consists “in beholding ourselves transformed before ourselves and then as if we had actually passed into another body and into another character” [60, 168]. Drama, in general, operates with “fictional” entities [54]. Of the “apollinian illusion” (33, 63) he four times on p. 150f. (as also 147 and X, 120) uses the *As-if* formula in this sense. This “aesthetic play” [157, 168], these “countless illusions of beautiful appearance, are what make existence in general worth while” [171, 522]. This is “the wisdom of the illusion” [23]. For that reason “he who destroys illusion within himself and in others is punished by that most severe of tyrants, nature” [340], for “it is part of the essence of action to be veiled in illusion” [56].⁴ The myth is considered from this point of view and commended [147, 160, 411, 511, 560], especially as a mythical fiction [299]. The myth, which the Greeks consciously cultivated, we have lost “in the abstract character of our mythless existence” [170]; with us it has become a “fairy-tale,” but it must “be brought back to virility” 551; even science cannot exist without myth [102, 106. Cf. Vol. IX, 179, 184, 234, 288, 433; also Vol. X, 82, 128, 139, 203]. Appearance, illusion, is a necessary presupposition of art as well as of life. This summarizes Nietzsche’s youthful writings. In them we see the idea

already developing that this illusion is and must be, for the superior man, a conscious one.

In the posthumous works of his youthful period (Vols. IX and X) this latter point is more clearly made. At first, indeed, Nietzsche speaks merely of “delusional conceptions as necessary and salutary provisions of the instinct” [Vol. IX, 69], of a “law of the mechanism of delusions” [100, 124 ff]. Religion also comes under this heading [130],⁵ but particularly “the actual delusional pictures of artistic culture” [148]. Of these “delusional constructs” he also speaks [on pp. 158, 165, 179, 184]. On page 186 he says: “The realm of delusional pictures is also part of nature and worthy of equal study.” Thus there arises a whole “network of illusions” [186f.]. These delusional concepts are created by the will [192, 200], and created by means of “deceptive mechanisms” [106, 210]. “Even the recognition of their real nature does not destroy their efficacy” [101]. This recognition Nietzsche at first feels as “torture” [101, 126], but the perception of the necessity of these illusions and phantasms for life [76, 108, 185, 189] leads to the conscious, pleasurable affirmation of illusion; in this sense, he says: “My philosophy is an inverted Platonism: the further it is from actual reality, the purer, more beautiful and better it becomes. Living in illusion as the ideal” [190]. This is also the meaning of the utterance

the highest indication of will is the belief in the illusion [“although we see through it”]; and theoretical pessimism [i.e., the pain we feel because we are thrown back upon delusional concepts] is biting its own tail.”[Ibid.]

Entirely in the same sense is Vol. X, I 19: “The last of the philosophers ... proves the necessity of illusion.” The consummation of the history of philosophy is therefore, according to Nietzsche, the philosophy of illusion: the realization of its indispensability and justification: “Our greatness lies in the supreme illusion,” for it is there that we are creators [146]. Now, however, it is no longer the artistic illusion (the “artistic veil” [110]), whose necessity for life is recognized: now the circle of illusions recognized as necessary and consciously grasped is continually widened: “the anthropomorphic element in all knowledge” [121] now makes its appearance [cf. 195ff]. It is not only “life that needs illusions, i.e. untruths regarded as truths” [125 ff.], nor does our culture alone rest upon “isolated illusions” [127]; our knowledge also needs them. Thus the “surface-nature of our intellect” [126 ff.], leads to the employment of general concepts, already in Vol. I, p. 526 disparaged in the extravagant expression “insanity.” In the same line of thought he says “we emphasize the main characters and forget the accessory ones.” [130] Concepts we obtain only through “the identification of dissimilars” and “we then act as if the concept of man, for instance, actually were something real, whereas it has been formed only by the dropping away of all individual characters” [172, 195]. Our intellect operates with conscious symbols, pictures and rhetorical figures [130, 134, 167], with “coarse and inadequate abstractions” [169], with metaphors