

# Live Kantian or Die Nietzschean

*Written for Dr. Matthew Altman, who expertly guided my metaphysical wanderings this quarter in Kant and 19<sup>th</sup> Century Philosophy*

## **DER ANFANG**

### ***Introduction***

To live Kantian or die Nietzschean? That, my fellow lover of wisdom, is precisely the quandary undertaken in this inquiry. To phrase the topic of discussion in a manner more akin to the actual prompt I will be engaging with, I shall ask: which of the following epistemological positions are superior? The transcendental idealism offered by Immanuel Kant? Or the perspectivism argued by Friedrich Nietzsche? In order to facilitate such a dialogue between these philosophical giants, I must first delineate the comparative metric of measurement denoted by *superior*. There are an infinitude of possible angles by which one could judge the superiority of an epistemological framework, but for the sake of brevity, I will single out the two most valuable metrics as I see them: accuracy and practicality. In the succeeding pages, I will argue that Nietzsche's perspectivism is more accurate—what our knowledge is and how we obtain it—while Kant's transcendental idealism is more epistemologically practical: what we do with our knowledge. Although both views possess unique strengths, the practicality of Kant's epistemology ultimately marks it as the superior option. I shall also indulge in a Parmenidean comparison of these thinkers, as a brief aside to my section on accuracy.

## **PART I**

### ***Qualification of Accuracy***

As is the case with all good faith labors of language, the specific semantics of one's terms ought to be clearly spelled out at the outset of one's argument to ensure the annihilation of definitional confusion—especially when those terms are as philosophically loaded as *accurate* and *practical*. Consequently, my definition of accuracy as it pertains to this essay is as follows: A statement's accuracy is determined by its adherence to the criteria of adequacy, which are a collection of metrics within critical theory that measure a statement's testability, fruitfulness, scope, simplicity, and conservatism. Testability measures whether or not a theory is falsifiable; whether it adheres to empirical investigation. Fruitfulness measures the extent to which the development of a theory has paved the way for the explanative developments of distinct phenomena, such as how the theory of evolution gave rise to several Copernican turns within psychology. Scope refers to the sheer quantity of phenomena a theory explains. Simplicity is measured by the amount of unobservable entities a theory posits in its explanation.<sup>1</sup> The adequacy of a theory dwindles in accordance with its metaphysical complexity, literally meaning that the simpler theory wins out in this criterion. Lastly, conservatism is accounted for in a theory's correspondence to previously established knowledge. The criteria of adequacy determine<sup>2</sup> a theory's likelihood as opposed to its absolute truth, thus, the accuracy of an epistemological position is determined by how likely its explanation of what knowledge is and how we come to possess it, is to be the case. So how do the views of Kant and

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<sup>1</sup> This criterion is directly based on William Ockham and his razor.

<sup>2</sup> This may look like a typo, but transcend the mere appearances champ!

Nietzsche map onto this explication of accuracy? Since Nietzsche's protean perspectivism requires a fair amount of qualification, I will begin with the more straightforward vision of Kant's transcendental idealism.

### ***Explication of Transcendental Idealism***

To sum up a significant corporeal swath of one of the greatest minds of our present Kalpa,<sup>3</sup> Kant posited an ontological distinction between phenomena and noumena, or appearances and the thing-in-itself. Sharing the position of Moses within this epistemological partition,<sup>4</sup> Kant holds that the rational being<sup>5</sup> has their sight necessarily fixed on the wave of appearances, and can never turn to perceive the opposing wave at their rear.<sup>6</sup> This example is not directly analogous, but it serves its purpose in delineating Kant's view on the confines of human perception. Essentially, Kant thought that there were two categorical manifestations of truth: the *necessarily contingent* truth of appearances and the absolute truth of the thing-in-itself. For Kant, we only obtain knowledge of the world as it appears to us, and the way in which it appears to us is construed by necessarily existent structures of perception and thought. Thus, the truth of appearances, which is contingent upon the necessarily structured conceptual framework universal to all rational beings, is obtained by a proper application of these omnipresent conceptual rules. These necessary patterns of thought that exist prior to sense experience consist of the pure forms

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<sup>3</sup> *Kalpa* is a term within Buddhist and Hindu cosmology that is relatively synonymous with *Aeon*.

<sup>4</sup> For Kant of course, the divine orchestrator of this partition is only *possibly* the thing-in-itself.

<sup>5</sup> Humans, aliens, possibly God.

<sup>6</sup> In Kant's divide, the thing-in-itself underlies the *mere appearances* more akin to the obscure ocean floor beneath its glistening waves, but I wanted to use a shaky mythological example. Is this not the entire game of *Western* philosophy?

of sensibility and intuition, which Kant lays out on page 120 of his magnum opus, the *Critique of Pure Reason*, where he says “These are the conceptions of space and time as forms of sensibility, and the categories as pure conceptions of the understanding.” A fair example of Kant’s idea is the apparent truth of the following statement: *the sky is generally blue*. Since we have no idea what the sky is actually like according to Kant’s epistemological division, he would not hold this statement to be absolutely true. It is, however, contingently true as a consequence of the universality of humanity’s cognitive frameworks and the linguistic system used to extradiate this properly conceived statement from one rational mind to another. The sky does not generally appear blue to a great many of the sub-rational<sup>7</sup> creatures who accompany the Homo Sapien on this giant green orb, but this is due to their distinct conceptual frameworks and sensory equipment.<sup>8</sup> Because the sense experience of the Homo Sapien is construed according to space and time, and the indefinite laundry list of physical<sup>9</sup> factors responsible for the sky’s apparent *blueness* are arranged by those self-same forms of sensibility, the sky as it appears to us is necessarily blue according to our structured forms of perception and cognition. While we can know that it appears to be blue, we can say nothing about what it actually is as a thing-in-itself. The most crucial notion of transcendental idealism is thus as follows: There exists an absolute truth/reality that we are never capable of knowing. Knowledge then, is constituted by conceptually consistent assessments of how the unknowable world

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<sup>7</sup> Kant’s depiction of non-human organisms, not necessarily mine.

<sup>8</sup> While non-typical physiology in human beings is a fascinating road to travel, I have neither the *space* nor *time* for it in the present inquiry.

<sup>9</sup> For clarity’s sake, Kant held that physicality was an appearance, not a property of absolute reality.

appears to us through sense experience. Thus, we can call Kant's formulation of truth *necessarily contingent*, as it is relative to how the world appears to us, but the world appears to us in a uniform way that we can rationally parse out. Nietzsche's formulation could then be called *circumstantially contingent truth*, as he posits a reality with no inherent structure that even *could* be hidden from us—and a human mind with no inherent structure by which the world would necessarily appear.

### ***Perspectivism Within the Received View***

Far from the language of *absolutism* and *transcendence*, Nietzsche's perspectivism is characterized by a denial of all universalized notions, especially that of the *capital-T Truth*. As I mentioned before, any discussion of perspectivism requires severe qualification due to the many disparate interpretations of Nietzsche's work among contemporary scholarship. For the purposes of this essay, I will be polemically engaging with the interpretation referred to as the *Received View* by Brian Leiter in his article titled *Perspectivism in Nietzsche's Genealogy of Morals*.<sup>10</sup> In contrast to the reading of Nietzsche that attributes to him the creation of new absolutes,<sup>11</sup> the received view posits that Nietzsche's entire project was to renounce absolutism in any form through which it reared its *sickly* head, and acknowledge the fabricated and subjective quality of all truths. Following the received view of Nietzsche's perspectivism, there is not only no thing-in-itself that we are barred perceptual access to, but there is not even a universally existent

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<sup>10</sup> Leiter actually argues against this interpretation, but his article provides a succinct characterization of the received view, and as it is the position on Nietzsche's perspectivism that I am most familiar with, it is the one I shall engage with.

<sup>11</sup> Values, ideals, or metrics by which one could judge a claim to be *more true*.

order to the way in which the natural world appears to us. For Nietzsche, the notion of absolute, mind-independent truth is a product of natural selection that served a purpose in the infancy of human evolution, but has ultimately depressed our potential as creators of value. In section 110 of *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche says the following in regard to such a *useful error*: “it was only very late that [absolute] truth made its appearance as the most impotent form of knowledge . . . The *strength* of conceptions does not, therefore, depend on their degree of [absolute] truth, but on their antiquity, their embodiment, their character as conditions of life.” This passage succinctly displays Nietzsche's characterization of truth as the most useful fabrications, or the generalizations most likely to ensure one's survival. In the midst of the lion's den, those who traded in universal notions were at an immense advantage when compared to the meticulous skeptic who refused to generalize from what is in actuality, a subjective correlation between lions and physical danger. Nietzsche's *received* epistemology can be encapsulated as such: There is no absolute truth or determinate nature of reality. The apparent world is fabricated by individual psyches in accordance with their subjective conditions for optimal health. Thus, truth is relative to the *living perspectives* that employ it as a useful error and does not track onto any universal structure—physical or psychical. It's crucial to note that just because truth is a relative contrivance, does not mean that it is less valuable as a tool for human flourishing. This notion that life is meaningless without a locus of absolute meaning, be it God, truth, or otherwise, is exactly what Nietzsche characterizes as life-denying nihilism.

### ***Comparison in Terms of Accuracy***

Now that I have elucidated the general structures of both Kant and Nietzsche's epistemic accounts, I will discover that Nietzsche's perspectivism is veritably superior according to the criteria of adequacy. In terms of testability, Kant's postulation of an unknowable reality does not even approach the possibility of empirical analysis, so Nietzsche's adherence to the immediate world of senses secures his victory in this sector.<sup>12</sup> It is not as easy to say whose theory is more fruitful, since both figures changed the face of philosophy in dramatic and unprecedented ways. Regardless, Kant's distinction between absolute and *necessarily contingent* truth<sup>13</sup> had to run so that Nietzsche's focus on *circumstantially contingent* truth could, in a word, fly, so I'll say that transcendental idealism is the more fruitful theory. The two theories have near-equivocal scope, as they both attempt to explain the totality of epistemology,<sup>14</sup> so I will announce this criterion to be a draw. As far as simplicity is concerned, Nietzsche steamrolls Kant with his denial of the largest postulation of an unknowable entity possible in philosophy: absolute reality itself. Finally, I must determine which theory is more conservative. Conformity to previously established knowledge is a criterion of ironical proportions when applied to either figure, since they both aimed to deconstruct and or refine all prior knowledge with their respective theories. As I have demonstrated thus far, they operate within disparate definitions of knowledge, and both posit distinct routes to the establishment of such a thing. Kant claims that rational application of one's structured cognition will procure knowledge of the

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<sup>12</sup> Remember, Kant similarly denotes that there exists a contingent truth applicable only to the phenomenal world, yet he posits an absolute reality that transcends the phenomenal world of the senses, which is definitionally beyond the possibility of empirical investigation.

<sup>13</sup> Again, contingent on necessarily structured modes of perception and conception.

<sup>14</sup> In their broader corpora they both account for essentially all phenomena, discussing ontology, morality, physics, mathematics, and virtually everything else.

apparent world, while Nietzsche pictures the establishment of knowledge as a sorting of useful errors in order to procure the language-dependent impositions of structure most apt not only to maintain one's survival, but to affirm one's humanity (*BGE*, pp. 8-9). Because Nietzsche abandons Kant's notion of a veiled ultimate reality, and instead focuses on the immediate reality fabricated by the senses, his perspectivism is ultimately more conservative. Kant urges that absolute reality is something we'll never know, but we can have a rationally correct understanding of the phenomenal world due to the universally inherent structure of cognition. Nietzsche contrarily insists that we've always known what is real, because the individual psyche is solely responsible for the creation of their subjectively construed reality, which is necessarily formulated through a relative and circumstantially contingent perspective. Therefore, they agree that all prior knowledge is an illusion, but ram their antlers together on both the existence of an imperceivable absolute and a congruent rational structure to the human psyche and phenomenal world. I have now shown that, although Kant's transcendental idealism is more fruitful, and shares an equal scope with Nietzsche's perspectivism, the latter theory is more testable, simple, and conservative, and is therefore more accurate.

### ***Parmenides' Vision as a Specific Framework for Comparative Accuracy***

To further drive home my point that Nietzsche's epistemology enjoys a higher shade of accuracy than that of Kant, I'll briefly analyze these conflicting positions in accordance with the first question I ask when encountering a new philosopher: How does their view map onto Parmenides' division between OPINION and BEING? Through my hash-stained spectacles, this ancient cleavage is more foundational to the whole of *Western* philosophy



than even the works of Plato, seeing as almost everything Plato's Socrates developed was a formulated strategy aiming to transcend the realm of OPINION and peer into the blazing sun of BEING.<sup>15</sup> Philosophical history aside, Kant's distinction between phenomena and noumena fits exactly onto Parmenides' poetic frame, stating that the division between appearances and the thing-in-itself precedes human cognition, and the only interaction an OPINION-bound creature can have with absolute BEING is a postulation of its possible modes of existence.<sup>16</sup> Nietzsche on the other hand, who argued for a self-identification with godhood, violently seals the Red Sea atop Kant's gasping practical faith. As one of the most relentless existentialists of all eternity, Nietzsche holds that human cognition precedes all structure and uniformity. He says, consequently, that all existents<sup>17</sup> are matters of language, including the postulation of a known and unknown reality (*BGE*, pg. 8-9). According to Nietzsche, we don't simply stumble upon a natural division between human knowledge and absolute existence as does Parmenides in the dramatic opening of his proem *On Nature*; we create it. As I am personally inclined to the existentialist axiom of *existence preceding essence*, Nietzsche's identification with the Goddess of Parmenides' vision rings my bell of determined accuracy far louder than Kant's self-ascribed position as the cosmic observer<sup>18</sup> (at least so far as human deduction is a trustworthy methodology in the first place).

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<sup>15</sup> Socrates also mentions having met and engaged in dialectic with Parmenides as a young man. If this isn't evidence of the intensity of this connection than no knowledge can be established, not even the illusory kind.

<sup>16</sup> Kant's *practical faith*, which will be covered in **PART II**.

<sup>17</sup> JARGON DEFINITION: things that exist.

<sup>18</sup> By *cosmic observer*, I am referring to Kant's symbolic agreement with Parmenides as the beholder of a divided cosmos, as opposed to the creator of that self-same cosmos as Nietzsche determines himself in line with Parmenides' goddess.

## PART II

### ***Qualification of Practicality***

Just as I treated *accuracy* at the outset of **PART I**, I shall inaugurate the forthcoming battle for practicality with an explicit iteration of its presently occupied definition. Consequently, my employment of the term *practicality* in this essay is predicated on the natural normativist picture of human flourishing. In its essence, this formulation of flourishing relies on the Homo Sapien's status as an organism that biologically requires the sustained fulfillment of at least three *universal desires*: that of collaboration, safety, and happiness.<sup>19</sup> Within this image, something is practical or *useful* for a human being so long as it contributes to the regular fulfillment of these desires. I understand that this qualification relies on presuppositions inherently skewed towards Kant, but there must be some standard by which practicality is measured, and my current position falls in line with Kant's faith in the objective much more than Nietzsche's admittedly more accurate disavowal of objectivity (under the received view). So how do the views of Kant and Nietzsche map onto this picture of practicality? To uphold the sanctity of tradition, we will begin with Kant and his aptly named *practical faith*.<sup>20</sup>

### ***Kant's Postulation of the Unknown as a Means to Realize Flourishing***

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<sup>19</sup> For a more in-depth development of natural normativity, read my paper titled *Universal Desire Theory: An Account of Objective Subjectivity* which draws heavily from the esteemed thinkers Philippa Foot and Jenny Teichman.

<sup>20</sup> Kant does not provide us with this name himself, but it is the most succinct term to describe his position regarding practicality.

Since absolute metaphysical concepts such as God, personhood, free will, and moral order are apodeictically<sup>21</sup> unsensible, and cannot be conceived of without contradicting the laws of the phenomenal world,<sup>22</sup> Kant holds that the mere possibility of their existence as the noumenal things-in-themselves provides the sole basis for moral responsibility. In the following quote from page 96 of his *Prolegomena*, Kant states that this speculative postulation of the absolute aims to “free our concepts from the fetters of experience and from the limits of the mere contemplation of nature . . . in order that practical principles might . . . expand to the universality which reason un-avoidably requires from a moral point of view.” As a system-builder of the highest order, Kant wrote extensive qualifications of these practical principles *made possible through metaphysical speculation*, so I will only focus on his two most famous examples: the first and second formulations of the categorical imperative. The first formulation is hinted at on page 91 of his *Prolegomena*, where Kant says that “there is an analogy between the juridical relation of human actions [speculative free will] and the mechanical relation of moving forces [phenomenal causality]. I never can do anything to another man without giving him a right to do the same to me on the same conditions; just as no body can act with its moving force on another body without thereby causing the other to react equally against it.” This eternally profound precept, which is predicated on the possibility of absolute rationality and self-determination, can be adeptly summarized in the succeeding manner: An action

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<sup>21</sup> Apodeictic, when referring to the truth-value of a statement, implies the following semantic condition: An apodeictic statement is *true by definition*. Another way of phrasing this is that the subject of an apodeictic statement is contained in its predicate. One solid example of this is *the part is lesser than the whole*.

<sup>22</sup> Kant refers to these concepts as antinomies when they are paired with their phenomenal counterparts: cosmic singularity, self-lessness, fatalism, and moral nihilism. It is these antonymous concepts of the phenomenal world that Nietzsche so dramatically commits to.

has a positive moral value on the sole condition that one could will it to be a universal maxim, or carried out by all other rational beings in every similar circumstance. The second formulation of the categorical imperative states that all rational beings ought to be treated as ends within themselves, and never as mere means to a separate end. Because Kant speculatively posits the noumenal soul within the Homo Sapien for the purpose of practical moral benefit, all human life becomes inherently valuable on its own merits, even if this inherent value is only a possibility in actuality. There is much more to be unveiled about Kant's deontology,<sup>23</sup> but I do have a paper to complete, and deontology is not the topic. That being said, I shall now pass over to Nietzsche and his identification of the will to power. After that, I will clarify the relationship between practical faith, the will to power, and human flourishing as I defined it in the *Qualification of Practicality*.

### ***Radical Adherence to Self-Ascription as a Means to Realize Flourishing***

Seeing as Nietzsche excluded Kant from his conception of the *true* philosopher in section 3 of *The Untimely Ones*, primarily due to Immanuel's steadfast reliance on the determinably *bogus* thing-in-itself, it is about as easy to say that their methodologies for ascertaining human flourishing are diametrically opposed as it is to say that Friedrich's mustache is a timeless and representative staple of male aesthetic potential. Light-years away from hopefully speculating about his existence, Nietzsche announces the conceptual death of God as a metaphysically distinct debt-keeper and governor of the natural moral order in his parable of *The Madman*. In this parable, the supposed madman

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<sup>23</sup> The style of ethical theory wherein right and wrong are clearly delineated on the basis of secure principles, procuring a sense of duty in the theory's acolytes.

not only proselytizes the divine loss wrought by the several *Copernican turns* in rational thought,<sup>24</sup> one of which Kant was responsible for, but also hints at Nietzsche's demarcation of all absolute concepts as "his [God's] shadow" (*The Gay Science*, sections 108 and 125).

If there is not even an existential *possibility* for God or his shadows—personhood, free will, moral order—then what does the Nietzschean predicate their life upon? Remember that I am operating within the received view, so the OverMan and all its absolute ideals of health and empirical observation are just as barred from this dialectic as Socrates' wife and sons are in the *Phaedo*.<sup>25</sup> Instead of maintaining an absolute conception of any shadowy form or flavor, Nietzsche posits the subjective *will to power* as the sole instantiating force of human flourishing. The will to power, put plainly, is the primal instinct to exert upon, modify, and control, which Nietzsche spots in every inch of the organic phenomenal world. The subjectivity of this instinctual drive; its characteristic contingency on the individual who wields it, is explicated in the following quote from page 52 of *Beyond Good and Evil*: "The world seen from within, the world defined and designated according to its 'intelligible character'—it would simply be 'Will To Power,' and nothing else." This quote ties back to Nietzsche's overarching perspectivism in that it formulates the *intelligible* reality of the phenomenal according to the individual ego who experiences it, and expresses their will to power within it. Within the confines of this

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<sup>24</sup> The Copernican turns were, starting with Copernicus, massive revolutions in human understanding, that each diminished the perceived significance of the human being in relation to the rest of the natural world.

<sup>25</sup> If one needs textual evidence for the received view, look no further than section 1 of *Why I Write Such Good Books*, where Nietzsche says "The word 'overman' . . . has been understood almost everywhere with the utmost innocence . . . that is, as an 'idealistic' type of a higher kind of man, half 'saint,' half 'genius.'"

proudly demarcated *egoism*, Nietzsche holds that the individual perspective is pre-disposed to ascribe to itself inherent value based upon its own merits—a fabricated truth that is circumstantially contingent on the instinctual will to express power, to survive, to kill and to eat. According to the psycho-historical account provided in Nietzsche's *On the Genealogy of Morals*, the will to power began as unmitigated expression, and was transfigured into sublimated self-torture through the invention of guilt. Now through cosmically indifferent historical circumstance, the Homo Sapien arrives to the godless contemporary age with the potential to avoid the paradox of hedonism inevitably encountered by the ostentatious and free-balled primaeval despot, as well as the self-imposed psychological labor camp of the *sickly* ascetic. In place of these undesirable options embodied in the *material souls* of the past, the Nietzschean employs a radically egoistic adherence to their human instincts, mediated only by a heightened concern for their subjective state of ideal health conditions. As both the sole instantiator of values and locus of all legitimate concern, the Nietzschean Homo Sapien identifies with the ontological position of God “merely to seem worthy of” killing him (*The Gay Science*, section 125).

### ***Comparison in Terms of Practicality***

The contemporary sojourner has now arrived at a forlorn crossroads: a winding fork whose paths offer equally exciting dialectical adventures. To their left looms a sign reading *The Practical Faith of Transcendental Idealism*, and aggressively bending away from the Kantian sign with a ferocity somehow emblematic of spite, the right-most post reads *The Will To Power of Perspectivism*. Since I am ultimately trotting down the road of

transcendental idealism towards the obelisk of epistemological superiority, I will begin this final section of **PART II** with a polemic unraveling of Nietzsche's dissatisfactory attempt to ensure human flourishing, and finish with the pronouncement of Kant's comparative success. Firstly, the unashamed egoism inherent to one's full-tilt adherence to their will to power is liable to diminish the general satisfaction of *universal desires* at a far higher rate than the speculative postulation of absolute values. As I explained in the *Qualification of Practicality*, the three desires universally spread throughout the totality of the organic world are that of collaboration, safety, and happiness. Nietzsche's formulation of the will to power could be cashed out with this kind of language, but only on the specific condition that the individual organism ascertains the ends of their desires first and foremost. This egoistic framing of biology may fit nicely onto solitary predators whose survival is solely dependent on the fulfillment of their own needs, but I would argue that aside from being merely the most "interesting animal[s]" as Nietzsche describes us on page 33 of his *Genealogy*, human beings are the *most social* creatures, that consequently depend on some form of *social structure* to flourish in an ecosystem. Whether manifested as a family, tribe, duo, or nation, Darwinian biology has confirmed what mankind has mythologized about since the first great ape ate a psilocybin mushroom: *human beings need each other*.

Intraspecific connection is not only required in the vague sense mentioned above, but more specifically, it is facilitated in line with our need to experience collaboration, safety, and happiness. Withstanding its most charitable interpretation as a *cold formulation of virtue ethics* which I do not have room to develop further, the inherently egoistic will to power *can* promote collaboration on a broad scale, but is equally apt to

culminate in isolation and discordance due to its *my way or the highway* mantra. As a self-ascribed god, the Nietzschean can bless their neighbors with the love of Christ and castrate them with the hatred of Apollo with equivocal legitimacy, as they are eternally self-reliant on their own *divine command*, or subjective principles.<sup>26</sup> This radical self-determination, while ultimately accurate as an epistemological theory, secures neither our general nor individual needs for collaboration to a sufficient extent, as even Zarathustra could have used a hug and more directed extension of care if he was psycho-analyzed to a sufficient degree.

Considering the metric of safety, adherence to the will to power fails for the same reasons. A neighborhood full of a morally diverse cast of gods proves far more dangerous than a block that Mr. Rogers watches over. A present-day mythological example that illustrates this quite well is the Amazon Original series *The Boys*. It would be insidiously uncharitable to assume that the received view Nietzschean will immediately take up the persona of Homelander and start blowing up heads, but if we *act* as if there is no standard by which we can employ normative judgments aside from one's circumstantial fabrication—even if there is none in actuality—then the Homelanders of the world are far more likely to remain systemically unchallenged.<sup>27</sup> There will undoubtedly be other gods

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<sup>26</sup> This is a consequence only of the received view, as many Nietzschean scholars believe that he did in fact prop up a new system of ideals.

<sup>27</sup> The cold formulation of Nietzsche's received view may appear to save it from this consequence, but it would ultimately collapse in contradictions and would no longer be the received view.



who challenge the hierarchy, but this kind of *might makes right* style of government has disastrous consequences on both the individual and general sustainment of safety.<sup>28</sup>

Finally, we have landed at the metric of happiness. For the purposes of this paper, I will define happiness as a biological epiphenomenon that arises in accordance with the attainment of collaboration and safety, which can be mythologically abstracted from this neurological feedback in conjunction with the complexity of the organism experiencing it. The Nietzschean can find profound meaning and happiness in their epistemologically accurate world, but as I've argued thus far, their long-term survival is a more dubious prospect than the Kantian's, and so it is with their sustained happiness. While there is an infinitude of angles to explore regarding the contrasts and congruences between happiness and the will to power, for the time being, I shall leave this work to my future collection of contiguous atoms.

Having cornered off the impracticality of Nietzsche's will to power as a means to realizing flourishing, my present quest is to justify my claim that Kant's practical faith provides the world with a more reliable path towards sustaining collaboration, safety, and happiness. We now return to his first two formulations of the categorical imperative, which are founded upon respect as much as they are in the speculative postulation of absolute rationality. It is not exceptionally difficult to see how the philosophically supped-up golden rule and a faith in the inextricable value of all people promote intraspecific collaboration. Crawling back to my exemplary dichotomy between a neighborhood rambunctiously

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<sup>28</sup> My song titled *The Carpenter's Dentist* discusses this exact topic to the tune of some psychedelic guitar.

occupied by the cast of *The Boys* and one benevolently maintained by Mr. Rogers, I would certainly prefer not only to live in a neighborhood with Mr. Rogers' values, but to possess those values myself—even if their absolute ontological security is only predicated on a transcendental possibility. It is in fact feasible for the received view Nietzschean to embody the Kantian framework of Mr. Rogers granted that they perceive these values to be individually life-affirming and not absolute, but a personal manifestation of Homelander is equally manageable, and since Kant's practical faith in the absolute excludes this potentially disastrous consequence of perspectivism, his system ensures the proliferation of collaboration, safety, and happiness at a rate that far exceeds Nietzsche's. Kant wins in the criterion of safety for the same reasons that he rules in collaboration: a species that views its fellow members as *rational equals* will survive its ecosystem at a far higher rate than one whose individual members relentlessly climb over each other in an attempt to surpass their *natural inferiors*.

Just as it was with the will to power, whether both the general and individual manifestations of happiness are promoted by practical faith follows from the results of the previous two criteria; as I have defined happiness as their epiphenomenon. Since Kant's transcendental system generally ensures moral treatment for all Homo Sapiens,<sup>29</sup> the species as a whole as well as its individual constituents are disposed to consistently collaborate and maintain safe conditions through the implementation of such a practical faith. Consequently, this hypothetical Kantian species is much happier per capita than the

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<sup>29</sup> This would only be totally ensured in a perfect following of the letter. This is, of course, only possible for the mythological sage.

Nietzschean, and flourishes on a more consistent basis. My argument on practicality as I've presented it thus far can be read out in the following structure:

***Formal Presentation of My Argument on Practicality***

P1: Practicality is human flourishing.

P2: Humans flourish when their desires for collaboration, safety, and happiness are perennially fulfilled.

P3: Nietzsche's formulation of the will to power, which is a product of his epistemological perspectivism, focuses on securing collaboration, safety, and happiness for the individual.

P4: Kant's formulation of practical faith, which is a product of his epistemological transcendental idealism, focuses on securing collaboration, safety, and happiness for the general species.

P5: Humans are the most social creatures.

P6: The assurance of general flourishing within the most social creature's general species is a necessary condition of the most social creature's individual flourishing.

C1: Thus broad unegoistic fulfillment of desire, a product of Kant's epistemological position, will always be more practical than individual egoistic fulfillment, which is a product of the epistemological position held by Nietzsche.

IR (Informal Reasoning): Seeing as the most social creature's general species must flourish in order for the individual to flourish (P6), and Kant's formulation of practical faith

prioritizes exactly that (P2-P4), then we know that Kant's epistemological formulation is more practical than Nietzsche's (C1), since humans are the most social creatures (P5) and practicality is human flourishing (P1).

## **ES IST FAST FERTIG**

### ***Conclusion: Live Kantian or Die Nietzschean?***

As I hope this visually captured dialectic has sufficiently proven, I hold an intense appreciation and love for these thinkers and their indescribable contributions to the progression of thought. Resting in a grass field with the words of either author is a truly ineffable experience, yet I pray that I was philosophically capable of transmitting their ideas to this panoply of digital pages. Although Kant's transcendental idealism was proven the superior epistemological position by virtue of its practical victory in **PART II**, the formidable accuracy of Nietzsche's perspectivism is nothing to be smoked out of and tossed away. Well, if you're going to toss it anyways—at least let me take a drag before you do.

With Peace,

-Blessed and Happy

## **ES IST FERTIG**

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