

“Vom Chaos zur Wirklichkeit”: A Nietzschean Account

*Pietro Gori**
pgori@fcsh.unl.pt

ABSTRACT

This paper explores Nietzsche’s conception of the epistemological path from “chaos” to “reality” and the extent to which it aligns with seminal ideas in Carnap’s constitutional system. More precisely, I argue that key themes from the 1917 edition of “*The Will to Power*” that Carnap consulted and cited in the *Der logische Aufbau der Welt* may have informed aspects of his project. This suggests the possibility of a direct, if surprising, Nietzschean influence on Carnap’s conceptual framework.

As “the germ of the constitution theory of the ‘Logical Construction’”, Rudolf Carnap’s manuscript titled “Vom Chaos zur Wirklichkeit” offers a fertile point of reference for shedding light on his classic 1928 text *Der logische Aufbau der Welt*. In recent decades, scholarship on Carnap has yielded relevant insights into this earlier manuscript, identifying features that allow us to situate his systematic project within a broader philosophical framework that includes neo-Kantianism, *Lebensphilosophie*, and Gestalt psychology as some of the most salient perspectives (see e.g. Richardson 1998, Carus 2007, Mormann 2006 and 2016, Leinonen 2016, and Pincock 2024). Among the names that appear in these interpretations, perhaps the most unexpected – given the apparent inconsistency between his views and Carnap’s – is Nietzsche’s. Yet the relationship between a chaotic, disordered fundamental dimension of experience and a structured reality that is “known” by us is one that Nietzsche probes extensively, particularly in his unpublished writings. This relationship, central to his late reflections, is also treated in terms that resonate with epistemological considerations associated with certain developments of the Kantian tradition that may have influenced Carnap in important respects, at least indirectly.

*Universidade NOVA de Lisboa, Portugal.

This paper explores Nietzsche's conception of the path from "chaos" to "reality" (*Wirklichkeit* or *Realität*) and the extent to which it aligns with seminal ideas in Carnap's constitutional system. More precisely, I argue that key themes from *The Will to Power* – the 1917 edition that Carnap likely consulted and cited in the *Aufbau* – are interestingly consistent with aspects of his project, in a way that may allow us to argue that Carnap's conceptual framework exhibits ideas that can, in fact, be encountered in Nietzsche, and that, in all likelihood, Carnap only grasped indirectly.

The paper is divided into two main parts. The first examines key issues explored in Carnap's manuscript that have led some interpreters to argue that the *Aufbau* is driven by a pseudo-Nietzschean conception of how reality is (or should be) structured. The second part engages directly with Nietzsche's writings, with particular attention to posthumous fragments published in the 1917 edition of *The Will to Power*, where Nietzsche develops interesting reflections on how the concept of reality emerges from experience through a process of cognitive or logical constitution. As a conclusion, I aim to show that while Nietzsche's and Carnap's epistemological perspectives diverge in important respects, they also exhibit a surprising degree of congruence on certain core issues.

1. The road to Nietzsche

1.1 Pseudo-Nietzscheanism(s)

The opening paragraphs of the 1922 manuscript "Vom Chaos zur Wirklichkeit" are particularly revealing, as they shed light on key background sources and inspirations for Carnap's philosophical project. In tracing the emergence of the idea of a constitutional system of reality, some scholars have argued that certain foundational notions may be traced – albeit indirectly – back to Nietzsche (see. Vrahimis 2020: 22, and Leinonen 2016: 215–216). These accounts focus mainly on the first section of the manuscript's opening page, which reads:

"Reality" is not given to us as something fixed but is subject to constant correction. The epistemologist says: it has been constructed for a specific purpose out of an original chaos, according to initially instinctive ordering principles that are determined by this purpose. However, this notion of chaos is a fiction. We, who are now considering this matter, know nothing of an original chaos and cannot recall having developed a construction of reality [*Aufbau der Wirklichkeit*] from such a state. What we experience [*erleben*] is only an already ordered reality, whose order and structure are, of course, continually subject to

change. These changes, these corrections, are usually triggered by small inconsistencies. However, there are also major inconsistencies that extend across the entire realm of reality, in response to which we feel the will to bring about a new order to overcome them. This will for a new ordering [*Wille zur Neuordnung*], for eliminating major inconsistencies, gives rise to epistemological superimpositions and the fictions within them – fictions of chaos as an initial state and of the ordering principles according to which the construction [*der Bau*] has taken place, takes place, and must take place. (Carnap 1922: 1)

Scholars who have identified quasi- or pseudo-Nietzschean elements in Carnap’s proto-*Aufbau* writings – including Thomas Mormann (2006 and 2016), A.W. Carus (2007), and Mikko Leinonen (2016) – have drawn particular attention to two concepts introduced in this opening passage: Carnap’s invocation of “Chaos” and his notion of a “will for a new ordering”. These concepts form the backbone of the broader framework outlined in the 1922 manuscript, in which reality is conceived as a “construction” emerging from an experiential basis that initially lacks order. They also appear in the works of two authors whom Carnap references directly: Hans Vaihinger and Heinrich Rickert.¹ Both Vaihinger’s *Philosophie des Als Ob* (originally published in 1911) and Rickert’s *System der Philosophie* (1921) engage with the notion that objective knowledge is based on an originally unstructured dimension – what Vaihinger calls the “chaos of sensations” (*Chaos der Empfindungen*, Vaihinger 1922: 286, 298) and what Rickert refers to as the “chaos of experiences” (*Chaos der Erlebnisse*, Rickert 1921: 10). Moreover, both Vaihinger and Rickert incorporate and rework the Nietzschean theme of the *will to power*, suggesting that Carnap may also have encountered this typically Nietzschean motif in their writings.

Vaihinger includes Nietzsche among the historical confirmations of his (neo-)Kantian fictionalism, focusing in particular on Nietzsche’s notion of the “will to illusion” (*Wille zur Schein*) as the principle of elaboration of a knowable

¹ For a discussion of whether Vaihinger or Rickert was the actual inspiration behind Carnap’s 1922 manuscript, see the exchange between Mormann and Carus. I concur with Leinonen (2016: 215–219), who argues that both thinkers played an important role in shaping Carnap’s conception. However, as was pointed out to me by one of the anonymous reviewers (whom I would like to thank sincerely for their comments on the paper), Rickert’s *System der Philosophie* does not appear in the reading list published in Carnap’s diaries covering the period 1908–1935 (see Carnap 2021 and 2022).

reality (Vaihinger 1922: 771 ff.).² For Vaihinger, we inhabit a world of fictions – epistemic values, aesthetic values, and other value-laden constructs – that are meaningful *for us* but not in themselves. To navigate the original chaos of experience, we impose epistemic structures that allow us to find our way in the world and are thus practically useful. Yet there is no guarantee that the “reality” we know and describe meaningfully corresponds to the external world as it is in itself. On Vaihinger’s account, the features we ascribe to “reality” are in fact *fiction*s – representations of how the external world *appears to us*. This position is thoroughly developed in *Die Philosophie des Als Ob*, whose final section includes extensive quotations from Nietzsche’s unpublished writings. There, Vaihinger argues that Nietzsche had already “emphasized the significance of imaginary or false conceptions for life and science” (see Vaihinger 1922: 771–772). Importantly, he maintains that Nietzsche’s reflections on key epistemological issues bear strong affinities with neo-Kantianism (Vaihinger 1922: 772), thus placing Nietzsche in a tradition that developed transcendental idealism and that would go on to shape Carnap’s early thought (see e.g. Friedman 2007).³

Carnap’s notion that an epistemically ordered world (*Wirklichkeit*) can be systematically constituted from the chaos of experiences may also have been shaped by reflections in which Rickert elaborates on Nietzschean ideas.⁴ The opening pages of *System der Philosophie* contain a number of considerations that resonate with themes later taken up in Carnap’s 1922 manuscript. Rickert, for instance, observes that “from birth on we encroach in a stable organization of the world” and thus fail to realize that “the world, thought as totally unsystematic, is a heterogeneous continuum to which we stand theoretically helpless, that is to say, a *chaos*” (Rickert 1921: 6). On his account, the basis of our meaning-

² In addition to Nietzsche, Vaihinger identifies three key historical antecedents to his fictionalist system: Immanuel Kant, Friedrich Forberg, and Friedrich Albert Lange. In addition to being a key figure in the development of the neo-Kantian movement, Lange was also an extremely important source for Nietzsche (see Stack 1983, Emden 2014, and Gori forth.). The original German “Wille zur Schein” is translated as “Will to Illusion” in the 1924 English translation of Vaihinger’s book, approved by him. For this reason, I have retained that translation, although I believe that “appearance” here might be a better choice to capture the Nietzschean account.

³ For further discussion of Vaihinger and his relationship with Nietzsche, see Neuber 2014, Gentili 2013, and Gori 2019b.

⁴ As Leinonen (2016: 222) observes, “Rickert’s *System* is a unique type of cross-fertilization of Kantian and Nietzschean epistemological elements”.

ful, objective world-description is completely unstructured, and therefore disordered: “It can be easily shown that, after subtracting all forms of conception, what we immediately ‘experience’ [*erleben*] ... is a ruleless ‘turmoil’ of impressions that constantly change” (Rickert 1921: 6). Given this starting point, the goal of philosophy should be to systematically organize this neutral, undetermined basis, thus allowing for objective communication. That is, “philosophy must think the world in such a way that from the chaos of experiences [*Chaos der Erlebnisse*], a cosmos ordered and structured according to principles arises” (Rickert 1921: 50). While I will not elaborate here on the semantic parallels between Rickert and Carnap (see Mormann 2016; Leinonen 2016), I wish to underscore that Rickert’s position is explicitly cast in Nietzschean terms. As expressed in the following passage:

philosophy, which wants to be a universal view of the world, must, from the outset, proceed strictly systematically. ... Otherwise, it will never arrive at any theoretical or “true” world, nor at any “world” that deserves this name in the scientific sense. ... Without any conception, we cannot grasp the overwhelming world at all. ... Precisely because immediate “experience” [*erleben*] free of conceptions indeed offers an inexhaustible, confusing richness that, as it is given, does not enter into any science, philosophy must strive for a system that scientifically masters this richness. ... Thus, the “will to system”, which Nietzsche sought to downgrade ethically, and which others surprisingly fought theoretically, is necessarily linked with the will for a philosophical consideration of the world. (Rickert 1921: 10)

At the core of Rickert’s conception of philosophy as the systematic organization of experience – which aligns closely with Carnap’s idea of world-constitution – we can indeed discern a pseudo-Nietzschean conception (see Mormann 2016: 117). Rickert’s view is informed not only by the notion of a “will to power” but by other Nietzschean themes, such as the distinction between the “true” world of human knowledge and the “apparent” world of experience – a contrast Nietzsche famously develops in sections such as “‘Reason’ in Philosophy” and “How the ‘True World’ Finally Became a Fable” in *Twilight of the Idols*. Rickert interprets these motifs through the lens of his own philosophical system (arguably *mis*interpreting them in the process), treating them as if they articulated a theoretical stance toward a given but conceptually unstructured domain of “immediate experience” – a domain that lacks inherent significance until it is organized by thought.

While I cannot pursue this issue more extensively here, the foregoing analysis suggests that Carnap's 1922 manuscript indeed incorporates "pseudo-Nietzschean" elements – mediated through Vaihinger, Rickert, or both. Among these are the conception of an original chaos of experiences, the notion of a "will to system", and the concept of "fictions". These motifs are echoed in the passage immediately following the lines quoted above:

This will to overcome the inconsistencies of reality by reconstructing reality [*Umbau der Wirklichkeit*] is also the irrational starting point of our theories. And we, too, believe that in the face of the present, very serious fractures, a few corrections will not suffice; rather, a complete reconstruction must be undertaken from the ground up – though, of course, in many respects, it will align with the previously established structure. In this sense, we also adopt the epistemological fiction of construction from chaos [*Fiktion des Aufbaus vom Chaos*]. The precise formulation of this fiction can be given as follows: we experience a reality [*wir erleben eine Wirklichkeit*] and reconfigurations within it; we extrapolate these actual reconfigurations backward in time, thus conceiving of reality as if it had arisen through an ordering construction [*ordnenden Aufbau*] from a state of disorder. We reconstruct this fictitious original state and, starting from it, undertake a methodical reconstruction in order to arrive at a unified system of reality [*System der Wirklichkeit*]. (Carnap 1922: 1)

Carnap's reflections combine a fictionalist approach with Rickert's view that philosophy's goal is to reconstruct the world systematically in order to render it objectively comprehensible. In line with the opening remarks of his unpublished manuscript, Carnap develops the idea that reality becomes intelligible only when interpreted *as if* it were the product of a constitutive process – one that imposes order upon a fundamentally disordered (i.e., chaotic) flux of experiences.⁵ While it is widely acknowledged that Carnap was inspired by both Vaihinger and Rickert in this respect, some of the ideas he tentatively explores seem to be more consistent with views that we may actually find in Nietzsche than with elaborations of Nietzschean conceptions developed by other thinkers. Foremost among these is the broad and compelling issue of the relationship between the chaotic

⁵ This interpretation, if developed systematically, is in fact what grants objectivity to our experience. See Richardson 1998: 32 and 2016: 4 ff., who argues that the central epistemological aim of the *Aufbau* is to demonstrate that the constructional system allows us "to advance to an inter-subjective, objective world, which can be conceptually comprehended and which is identical for all observers" (*Aufbau*, § 2).

dimension of experience and its conceptualization as a “reality” (*Wirklichkeit* or *Realität*) – a question that Nietzsche explored not only in his published works but more extensively in a considerable number of unpublished notes. The view that he defends in these texts emerges (mainly) from an elaboration of Kantian themes and is to some extent consistent with Carnap’s approach. A closer look at Nietzsche’s reflections on the structuring of experience into cognitively meaningful “objects” may thus reveal striking affinities with the final section of the first page of Carnap’s 1922 manuscript:

To carry out the *regression to the starting point* of the construction of reality [*Wirklichkeitsaufbau*], we must eliminate from reality everything that already implies a completed order and individual determinability: the distinction between the psychic and the physical, the arrangement of the latter in space, the integration of both domains into the temporal sequence, the differentiation of various sensory qualities, the conceptual determinacy of individual sensory qualities based on the system of qualitative relations. ... *Chaos* contains no identical elements [*Elemente*], that is, no elements that can be grasped as individuals and retained as the same. (Carnap 1922: 1–2)

In the following sections, I will show that many of the key notions introduced in this passage – particularly the idea that what we know as “reality” results from the constitution of “identical elements” that do not belong to experience in-itself, independently of our cognitive activity – can also be found in Nietzsche’s writings. Furthermore, I will argue that, before writing the *Aufbau* (but only after 1924), Carnap may have been acquainted with some of the texts in which Nietzsche addresses these issues, especially those that explore how reality is constituted out of an original experiential chaos. This may thereby enrich our understanding of Carnap’s philosophical framework and offer an original – if unexpected – contribution to Carnap scholarship.

1.2 A direct link

Before turning to Nietzsche’s own writings, it is worth considering which of his works Carnap was likely familiar with and may have read. From his diaries, we know that he was acquainted with Nietzsche in the years 1910–11, when he read *Human, all too Human* (vol. I and II), *Twilight of the Idols*, and *The Antichrist*, in addition to some literature on him (Carnap 2021: 436–439). After that period, there is no mention of any text written by Nietzsche or directly about him,

until *Der logische Aufbau der Welt*, where Nietzsche is explicitly mentioned.⁶ In the important §§ 65, 67, and 163 of the *Aufbau*, Carnap cites and quotes from a few passages to support his critique of the notion of subjectivity (*Subjekt* or *Ich*). For Carnap, subjectivity does not pertain to “the given”; rather, it is the product “of a synthesis which is carried out in analogy to the spatial ordering in the synthesis of visual impressions” (Carnap 1928/2003: 105/§ 65). He further asserts that “*the existence of the I is not an originally given fact* [*Die Existenz des Ich ist kein Ur-Sachverhalt des Gegebenen*]. ... The I does not belong to the expression of the basic experience at all [*Das Ich gehört gar nicht zum Ausdruck des Grunderlebnisses*], but is constructed only later, essentially for the purpose of delineation against the ‘others’” (Carnap 1928/2003: 261/§ 163, modified translation). As this suggests, Carnap addresses the question of subjectivity within his broader analysis of the objects that pertain to our knowledge – that is, the elements that constitute the world as we describe and understand it. As much as any other component of that realm, the subject or I arises from a synthesis of basic experiences into epistemic structures and therefore holds only theoretical significance. It is precisely this synthetic organization of elementary experiences that also lies at the foundation of the distinction between the psychic and the physical – a dichotomy introduced in the 1922 manuscript and further explored in § 65 of the *Aufbau*. As such, the issue of subjectivity is emblematic of how the chaos of experiences is structured into a cognizable reality.

Carnap’s claim that “the I is not implicit in the original data of cognition” (Carnap 1928/2003: 105/§ 65) draws on a range of post-Kantian thinkers, including Mach (whose *Analysis of Sensations* is centrally concerned with the relationship between the psychic and the physical), Avenarius, Lichtenberg, Schlick, Ziehen, Schuppe, and others. Among these figures, Nietzsche also features prominently.⁷ In a series of published remarks, Nietzsche criticizes the

⁶ We should consider, however, that the parts of the reading list that cover the period when Carnap wrote the *Aufbau* (1924–25) are unfortunately lost. Therefore, we cannot know whether Carnap acquired any of Nietzsche’s works at that time. (I would like to thank one of the anonymous reviewers for this observation).

⁷ Carnap’s diaries (2022: 735, 738) show that, between 1920 and 1921, Carnap consulted Ernst Mach’s *Die Analyse der Empfindungen und Erkenntnis und Irrtum*. Interestingly, in 2021 he also consulted Hans Kleinpeter’s *Die Phänomenalismus* (see Carnap 2022: 739), a book in which Kleinpeter engages extensively with Nietzsche, trying to show that Nietzsche anticipated key issues in the world-conception that follows from Mach’s epistemology, particularly regarding his

modern prejudice that there must be something that performs the cognitive activity of which we are aware (see e.g. *Beyond Good and Evil*, §§ 16, 17, and 34). For Nietzsche, this misconception stems from grammatical habits and the subject-predicate form that language imposes on us. Carnap endorses this interpretation in *Aufbau* § 65, where he explicitly rejects the idea that the subject exists independently of the thinking activity.⁸ His endorsement of this Nietzschean position, however, is based not on Nietzsche’s published works but rather on passages from *The Will to Power*, a volume of particular relevance to the present inquiry. Its importance lies, first, in the fact that it allows us to draw a direct connection between Carnap and Nietzsche on the question of subjectivity and, second, in the broader epistemological reflections it contains – many of which concern the processes by which we “know” the world and the extent to which reality, as we describe it, is the outcome of a structuring activity that enables communication. A closer examination of this volume thus promises to shed light on whether certain seminal ideas developed in the *Aufbau* demonstrate a notable degree of consistency with Nietzsche’s reflections on related issues.⁹

view of the origin and value of knowledge (see in particular Kleinpeter 1913: 202–209, although Kleinpeter discusses Nietzsche at length throughout the book. On this, see Gori 2011a and 2011b). It may be of interest for the purposes of the present paper to note that in the 1913 book Nietzsche is fully integrated within an intellectual framework that interested and inspired Carnap, showing – most importantly – the consistency of some of his ideas with issues that are considered in the *Aufbau*.

⁸ It is illuminating to compare Carnap’s denial of “the presence of any kind of duality in the basic experience” and his claim that whoever affirms such a duality is the “victim of a prejudice, the main reason for which is the subject-predicate form of the sentences of our language” (Carnap 1928/2003: 105/§ 65), with Nietzsche’s own provocative challenge to traditional grammar and metaphysics: “Aren’t we allowed to be a bit ironic with the subject, as we are with the predicate and object? Shouldn’t philosophers rise above the belief in grammar?” (BGE § 34. See also the final part of GS § 354 for further remarks on the subject-object dichotomy).

⁹ As mentioned, we cannot be sure whether Carnap actually read Nietzsche’s *Will to Power* while writing the *Aufbau*. I agree with one of the reviewers that it is very unlikely that Carnap read that book before 1924/25, because he does not mention it in the diaries, whose reading list is quite comprehensive for the period in question. The reviewer further observes that, also based on the diaries, we know that when Carnap wrote the *Aufbau* in 1925 under extreme time pressure, he began at some stage to visit the University library in Freiburg on a daily basis to find further references for his book. Thus, there are a great many references that were included by Carnap only after he had already completed the main layout of the work, and Nietzsche’s references may be among them. I am grateful for these comments, which are extremely helpful for the discussion and allow me to moderate the idea that Carnap may have been directly influenced by Nietzsche on the

Before proceeding, however, a few remarks are in order concerning the specific edition of *The Will to Power* consulted by Carnap. In the bibliography of the *Aufbau*, the reference appears as: “Der Wille zur Macht, *Leipzig 1887*” (my emphasis). Clearly, this is an error; while Nietzsche had considered writing a book titled *The Will to Power*, no work bearing this name was published during his lifetime (see Montinari 1982, chap. 8, and Brobjer 2024). A volume titled *The Will to Power* did circulate after Nietzsche’s death, however, comprising selected excerpts from Nietzsche’s notebooks – primarily from the late period. One edition was published in 1917 in Leipzig, edited by Max Brahn and based on an index prepared by Nietzsche in Nice on 17 March 1887 (Posthumous Fragment 7[64], 1886–1887; I will refer to this edition as WM-1917 and to the posthumous fragments as PF).¹⁰ Given that the content of the passages quoted by Carnap is consistent with the corresponding sections of this edition, we can reasonably conclude that this was the edition he consulted – not the more widely known version produced by Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche and Peter Gast. It is also worth noting that the sections Carnap cites fall between § 276 and § 370, which are included in the Third Book of WM-1917, specifically chapters I, II.1, and II.2. The titles of these chapters alone suggest why they would have captured Carnap’s attention:

Third Book – Principle of a New Determination of Values

I. The New Interpretation of the World

II. The Spirit – A Will to Power:

Perception

Knowledge

a. General Considerations

b. Logic and Science

c. Cause and Effect

issues mentioned in this section. Still, we may note that Carnap decided not only to mention but also to quote Nietzsche in his book, among authors who were not traditionally associated with him and on a significant topic. Albeit mainly due to personal communication (e.g., with Herman Nohl, Wilhelm Flitner, and Broder Christiansen; see on this Carus 2007, and Friedman 2000), Carnap may have recognized the consistencies between his and Nietzsche’s views that I examine in this paper.

¹⁰ In 1921, Kröner Verlag included Brahn’s version of *The Will to Power* in their nine-volume *Klassiker-Ausgabe* of Nietzsche’s works. Nietzsche’s posthumous fragments can be found, e.g., in the paperback Critical Edition (Nietzsche 1967–1977) but are also available online at the URL: <http://www.nietzschesource.org/#eKGWB>.

d. Self and External World

These chapters contain a wealth of concepts that, at least semantically, are consistent with Carnap's views as articulated in both 1922 and 1928. Among the most pertinent are *Chaos* (WM-1917, §§ 301, 347); *Wirklichkeit* (§§ 329, 339, 342, 367, 400);¹¹ *Realität* (§§ 271, 328, 329, 338, 339, 366, 367, 370, 371, 381, 383, 384, 385); *Fiktion* (§§ 275, 309, 361, 366, 367, 383, 401, 411); *Einheit* (§§ 310, 311, 329, 367, 402); and *Identität* or *Identisch* (§§ 329, 330, 339, 341, 343, 359, 383).¹² These terms frequently appear within broader conceptual clusters that include other relevant concepts such as *Logik*, *Substanzbegriff*, *Subjekt*, *scheinbare Welt*, *Wahrheit*, *Erkenntnis*, *Phänomenalismus*, *Erfahrung*, *Erleben*, etc. Each of these can be linked to central themes in Carnap's writings. As such, a careful examination of how Nietzsche conceived of them is essential to determining the extent to which a meaningful comparison of the thinkers' respective projects can be sustained.

2. Nietzschean “constitutivism”

2.1 Epistemological concerns

In this section, I show that several elements of Carnap's *Aufbau* project – particularly those outlined in the 1922 manuscript – closely parallel issues addressed in Nietzsche's writings. More specifically, these themes are explored in key sections of the 1917 edition of *The Will to Power*, which Carnap may have consulted during the composition of the *Aufbau*. Although Nietzsche's conception of philosophy differs markedly from Carnap's – in terms of both method and overarching aims – it is nonetheless possible to identify a shared concern with how meaning, order, and value emerge from experience (*Erleben*). For Nietzsche, these features are not intrinsic to the world but are imposed on it through our engagement; they are, in other words, human constructions (at least to some extent). Furthermore, Nietzsche also reflects extensively on the epistemic status of the concepts and fictional *symbols* through which we engage discursively with the world – symbols generated at various levels of discourse, including common

¹¹ The underscored sections are those that are quoted in the *Aufbau*.

¹² This selection was guided by the semantic context in which the relevant concepts appear. For example, while the term “chaos” appears several times in WM-1917, it is often used in reference to music – a usage that falls outside the scope of the present analysis.

sense, religion, art, and science. Among these, *logic* plays a central role. Nietzsche often turns to logic when explaining how it is that the world *we relate to* is constituted by entities that, strictly speaking, do not “exist” (that is, do not exist independently of our cognitive experience). The world we inhabit – the world we engage with practically, the world that is valuable to us and meaningful for us – is our own *creation*: a product of linguistic activity, shaped for practical ends.

Allow me to elaborate on the preceding remarks. Nietzsche’s epistemological concerns must be contextualized within his broader interest in the development of humankind. His reflections on knowledge and truth aim to explore the human experience as a whole, focusing on our epistemic relationship with the external world as a relevant feature of our engagement with states of affairs. Knowledge, for Nietzsche, provides us with the basic elements of our practical activity, framing the shared world in which we act and thus enabling meaningful (i.e., objective) communication. This was a central preoccupation from the very beginning of Nietzsche’s philosophical activity. In the unpublished writing *On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense* (1873), for example, Nietzsche reflected on the origin of language, ascribing its instrumental value as a mere means of communication. Drawing mostly on Schopenhauer and Lange, he describes language as the final stage of a sensorial and intellectual process that transforms the raw data of experience into communicable representations: “The stimulation of a nerve is first translated into an image ... then the image is imitated by a sound” (Nietzsche 1999: 144), and the chain continues until we arrive at a phonetic representation of concepts – concepts which are themselves constructed through processes of selection and systematization applied to elements that in themselves do not have the features we claim to “know”. Nietzsche’s oft-quoted assertion that truth is “a mobile army of metaphors, ... a sum of human relations which have been subjected to poetic and rhetorical intensification, translation, and decoration” (Nietzsche 1999: 146), underscores this point: what we designate as “true” – that is, objective and undisputable – is only indirectly related to states of affairs insofar as it is the final step of a complex process of determination through which we arrive at cognitively meaningful objects.

Furthermore, Nietzsche argues that we ascribe epistemic value to linguistic conventions that have been fruitful for the preservation of social groups. Sentences and attributes are not “true” in virtue of representing the intrinsic qualities of the things they describe; rather, they are true because we *agree upon* names for observable features that recur across similar cases (see Nietzsche

1999: 145). Words are thus “tokens of designation” whose meaning depends on how we use them, not their actual correspondence to objective reality.¹³ Nietzsche thus rejects the idea that language provides “the full and adequate expression of all realities” (Nietzsche 1999: 143), arguing that the world we “know” is a made-up world of fictions and illusions. This idea is consistently reiterated almost fourteen years later, in § 354 of *The Gay Science*, where Nietzsche outlines what he considers to be “true phenomenalism and perspectivism”: the view that “the world of which we can become conscious is merely a surface- and sign-world” (Nietzsche 2001: 213). Here he links the development of consciousness with the preservation of the species.¹⁴ Consciousness, he writes, “developed only under the pressure of the need to communicate” and is “really just a net connecting one person with another” (Nietzsche 2001: 212). Since communication was essential to making this connection possible, language arose as “a bridge between persons”. Contrary to being the adequate representation of the states of affairs, for Nietzsche, words are mere “communication symbols” in which conscious thought finds its *fruitful* expression (Nietzsche 2001: 213). That is, we do not *grasp* the world through language; we *know nothing* about it. What we “know”, what we call “true” and “objective”, are simply shared, agreed-upon meanings within a symbolic system.

In the same passage (GS § 354), Nietzsche presents a view that is consistent with Carnap’s account of subjectivity in the *Aufbau* (§ 65): namely, that “the opposition between subject and object pertains to those epistemologists who have got tangled up in the snares of grammar (of folk metaphysics)”, which is therefore to be blamed for making us believe in the existence of entities that belong only to the *apparent* world. He develops this further a few years later, in *Twilight of the Idols*, where he argues that language implicitly commits us to a series of (highly problematic) metaphysical assumptions, presenting the world as conforming to a structure marked by “unity, identity, permanence, substance, cause, objectification, being”, and other elements tied to what Nietzsche calls the “prejudice of Reason” (Nietzsche 2005: 169). While these ideas may be useful as communicative symbols, they lack metaphysical consistency; that is, we cannot legitimately believe that they exist independently of human cognition. In other words, they are features of reality that only relate to how human reason structures the world of experience.

¹³ On this, one can appreciate similarities between Nietzsche and the late Wittgenstein. See Gori 2024.

¹⁴ For a thorough study on Nietzsche’s view of consciousness, see Riccardi 2021.

In addition to what has been said thus far, this perspective reveals a broad consistency between the epistemological concerns expressed in Nietzsche's published writings and key features of Carnap's philosophical system. Of particular relevance for the purposes of this paper is the view that the communicable world – the world of actual “knowledge” – is the product of a structuring process that takes place at the cognitive level. Before turning to the relevant fragments from WM-1917, a few further remarks on this point are in order. Nietzsche repeatedly critiques the mistaken attribution of metaphysical significance to language – an idea he develops in various aphorisms in *Human, All Too Human I* and *The Gay Science*. Consistent with his early reflections, Nietzsche writes in 1878 that “the significance of language for the evolution of culture lies in this, that mankind set up in language a separate world besides the other world, a place it took to be so firmly set that” it ascribed to it the highest value (Nietzsche 1996: 16). He continues: “man has for long ages believed in the concepts and names of things as in *aeternae veritates*, ... really thinking that in language he possessed knowledge of the world. The sculptor of language was not so modest as to believe that he was only giving things designations, he conceived rather that with words he was expressing supreme knowledge of things” (Nietzsche 1996: 16). Here, Nietzsche presents language as a mere tool for mastering the world for practical purposes. Words function as communicative symbols through which we express states of affairs – symbols whose truth and objectivity rest not on metaphysical correspondence but on collective agreement.

Interestingly, Nietzsche introduces the issue of logic as a highly developed systematization of experience that deals with elements that are only made up cognitively: “*Logic*, too, depends on presuppositions with which nothing in the real world corresponds, for example on the presupposition that there are identical things, that the same thing is identical at different points of time: but this science came into existence through the opposite belief (that such conditions do obtain in the real world)” (Nietzsche 1996: 16).¹⁵ This critique continues in § 16 of the same volume, where Nietzsche focuses on the Kantian distinction between appearance and “thing in itself”. He argues that the world we know is akin to a painting we ourselves have coloured. None of its features, he claims, belong to the world independently of interpretative activity. On the contrary, “it

¹⁵ This view can be compared with the third excerpt from Carnap (1922: 1) quoted above. Further remarks on the origin of logic and the view that identical things do not exist can be found in GS §§ 110 and 111.

is the human intellect that has made appearance appear and transported its erroneous basic conceptions into things” (Nietzsche 1996: 19–20).

This view is further developed in *The Gay Science*, where Nietzsche introduces a key thematic element central to the present comparison. In § 110 of that book, he reiterates his evolutionary epistemology, claiming that “through immense periods of time, the intellect produced nothing but errors; some of them turned out to be useful and species-preserving. Such erroneous articles of faith are for example: that there are enduring things, that there are identical things; that there are things, kinds of material, bodies; that a thing is what it appears to be” (Nietzsche 2001: 110). From this perspective, human knowledge – and particularly what we call “truth” – has no metaphysical validity. It does possess value, but not as a means of grasping states of affairs. Truth, in Nietzsche’s sense, is defined by the pragmatic utility of the fictions that the human intellect has produced in its effort to navigate the world. What lies beyond these intellectual errors – what exists in the *unknown* (that is, *uncognized*) external world – cannot adequately be described, since we can only speak of it through language, that is, in symbolic form. Still, through negative reasoning, we may infer that this world must be an unstructured, unsystematic dimension. As Nietzsche puts it: “*the total character of the world ... is chaos ... in the sense of a lack of order, organization, form, beauty, wisdom, and whatever else our aesthetic anthropomorphisms are called*” (Nietzsche 2001: 109, my emphasis).

Consistent with Carnap’s concerns in 1922, Nietzsche posits a *neutral* and *chaotic* basis of knowledge. Independent of our cognition, which acts “aesthetically” on the received data – moulding, elaborating, and altering it – the content of our experience has no structure at all. Indeed, the very notion of a “structure” only pertains to the anthropological dimension, that is, to how we (human beings) organize experience.¹⁶

Borrowing a term from Carnap scholarship (see Friedman 2007: 139), I propose the label “Nietzschean *constitutivism*” to describe the view that experience – which is chaotic in itself – must be structured by human cognition in order to become communicable and meaningful. This framing allows me to distinguish my position from both defenders and critics of a *constructivist* reading

¹⁶ The issue of an “aesthetic anthropomorphism” should be read in light of Lange’s “poetic Reason” (*dichtende Vernunft*), which actually inspired Nietzsche’s view, articulated in *On Truth and Lying*, that man is “*an artistically creative subject*” (Nietzsche 1999: 148). This conception has little to do with forms of artistic expression; rather, it refers to an activity that modifies what it receives, processing it according to its own interpretative structures.

of Nietzsche's thought. Unlike constructivism, which often entails a metaphysical claim that objects *exist as bundles of forces unified by virtue of human practices*,¹⁷ constitutivism remains strictly epistemological and deals with the constitution of all objects of cognition. The issue of the independence of those objects from the cognizing consciousness – that is, of their actual existence as *real* objects – is thus deliberately bracketed, as it falls outside the scope of any consistent epistemological analysis. Of course, constitutivism may be viewed as a form of mild constructivism; my intention here is to avoid introducing problematic metaphysical assumptions that cannot be clearly supported by Nietzsche's texts. For the purposes of this paper, it is sufficient to focus on Nietzsche's epistemological concern with how the world becomes intelligible – namely through a process of intellectual systematization, or theoretical organization, which produces symbols whose meaning is limited to their utility as means of communication. These aspects of Nietzsche's thought can indeed be compared with Carnap's conception of how objects are constituted from the given through a "synthesis of ... the manifold of intuition" (Carnap 1928: 135/§ 83, translation modified).¹⁸ As noted, this constitutivist perspective is also reflected in a series of posthumous fragments published in WM-1917, some of which are also mentioned in the *Aufbau*. It is therefore essential to consider them in order to complete our comparison.

2.2 From chaos to reality

The 1917 edition of *The Will to Power*, edited by Max Brahn and cited by Carnap in the *Aufbau*, compiles selected excerpts from Nietzsche's notebooks, arranged according to a table of contents Nietzsche drafted in 1887 (see above, sec. 1.2). As one might expect, these excerpts are largely unsystematic and tentative, although some are more structured and better organized than others. It is important to recall that these were not intended for publication but were preliminary notes for a projected volume. Nevertheless, many of the ideas they contain are consistent with published material and shed light on passages that remain obscure without further elaboration. This is especially true of the topics explored in this paper. Several sections of WM-1917 offer valuable insights that

¹⁷ The main advocate of this view is Justin Remhof (2017 and 2018). A defence of Nietzsche's constructivism can also be found in Anderson (1998) and Cox (1999). For criticisms of this conception, see e.g. Doyle (2009), Nola (1999), and Leiter (1994).

¹⁸ For further remarks on the epistemic vs. metaphysical value of this construction, see e.g. §§ 52 and 178 of the *Aufbau*, as well as Friedman (2007).

extend and enrich the constitutionalist view outlined in the previous section, based on Nietzsche’s published works. As mentioned above, this view resonates with seminal aspects outlined in Carnap’s 1922 manuscript and informs significant aspects of the *Aufbau*. In this section, I will consider those passages and aspects that are most relevant to my inquiry, following a “semantic” criterion for selection. That is, I will focus on those sections of WM-1917 in which concepts that are central to Carnap’s project – most notably the relationship between “chaos” and “reality” – can be found.

Reflections on the idea that our world-description is based on an unorganized experiential basis can be found, for example, in § 301, where Nietzsche writes: “Originally a chaos of representations [*Chaos der Vorstellungen*]. The representations that were consistent with one another remained, the greater number perished – and are perishing” (WM-1917, § 301/PF 24[5] 1883).¹⁹ This remark aligns with observations in *The Gay Science*, particularly the view that the intellect, in the course of human history, developed fictional cognitive entities that were preserved due to their fruitfulness in the formation of a practical orientation. Here, Nietzsche uses an expression that may be compared with both Vaihinger’s “chaos of sensations” and Rickert’s “chaos of experiences”, although it is worth noting that each figure identifies a distinct aspect of this plane. Another mention of “chaos” in WM-1917 – arguably more significant than the previous – appears in § 347 (PF 14[152] 1888):

Not “to know” but to schematize – to impose upon chaos as much regularity and form as our practical needs require. In the formation of reason, logic, the categories, it was authoritative ... the need, not to “know,” but to subsume, to schematize, for the purpose of intelligibility and calculation ... The development of reason is adjustment, invention, with the aim of making similar, equal. No pre-existing “idea” was here at work, but the utilitarian fact that only when we see things coarsely and made equal do they become calculable and usable to us – ... The categories are “truths” only in the sense that they are conditions of life for us.

Though it was written a few years later, this fragment expresses the same epistemological concerns that Nietzsche had developed in the early and middle peri-

¹⁹ In all references to sections of WM-1917, I will also include the group, number and year of the corresponding posthumous fragment, to contextualize it clearly in Nietzsche’s writings. The translation is based on Nietzsche 1968, with due alterations.

ods – concerns that in this context take on more explicitly constitutivist contours. What we call “knowledge” is in fact only a process of systematizing experience, of imposing structure on what is initially formless and chaotic, and therefore not accessible to consistent cognition. Reason allows us to orient ourselves (practically) in this chaos by moulding experience into significant compounds. To better understand the composition of this framework – and to appreciate the nuances of Nietzsche’s unpublished reflections – we may turn to another fragment from the late period (which, unfortunately, is not included in WM-1917). Written in 1887, this passage outlines three important points:

1. ... For there to be communication something has to be firm, simplified ... (above all in the *identical* case). For it to be communicable, however, it must be experienced as adapted, as “recognizable”. The material of the senses adapted by the understanding, reduced to rough outlines, made similar, subsumed under related matters. Thus the fuzziness and chaos of sense impressions [*Chaos des Sinnenseindrucks*] are, as it were, *logicized*,
2. The world of “phenomena” is the adapted world which we *feel to be real* [*als real empfinden*]. The “reality” [*Realität*] lies in the continual recurrence of identical, familiar, related things, in their *logicized character*, in the belief that here we are able to reckon and calculate.
3. The antithesis of this phenomenal world is *not* “the true world,” but the formless and unformulable world of the chaos of sensations [*Sensationen-Chaos*] – *another kind* of phenomenal world, a kind “unknowable” for us. (PF 9[106], 1887)²⁰

These considerations are crucial for the argument advanced here, as they demonstrate how Nietzsche reflects on the constitution of a “reality” *that can be known by us* based on an experiential basis devoid of communicable features. It is only because we organize experience into cognitively significant structures that a “phenomenal” world emerges. Yet this world may not exist in itself; it is merely a made-up world, a world of forms created by reason that do not correspond to any “true” metaphysical dimension. Moreover, this fragment suggests

²⁰ Incidentally, the last paragraph of this excerpt is quoted in Kleinpeter’s book *Der Phänomenalismus* (1913: 204), which Carnap consulted in 1921 (Carnap 2022: 739). See above, footnote n. 7.

that, at least in his later period, Nietzsche conceived of *sensations* as the basis of a communicable world – or in other words, as *the given* of human knowledge.²¹

Returning to WM-1917, we find several additional sections where these ideas are further developed and linked to the concept of a “will to power”. This is a highly multifaceted notion to which Nietzsche assigned several (inter-related) meanings over the years – metaphysical, axiological, and epistemological. Among the numerous considerations that Nietzsche sketches in his notebooks, the most relevant dimension for present purposes may be the view of the will to power as an *interpretative* principle, a fundamental drive that imposes structure on what is unstructured, order on what is disordered, and intelligibility on what is in itself unintelligible. Consistent with the epistemological remarks considered above, Nietzsche connects the will to power with the human need to communicate through the creation of agreed-upon meanings – that is, “truths”. This “will to truth” is defined by Nietzsche as “a *making* firm, a *making* true and durable, an abolition of the *false* character of things, a reinterpretation of it into *beings*. ‘Truth’ is therefore ... something that must be created and that gives a name to a process. ... It is a word for the ‘will to power’” (WM-1917, § 361/9[91] 1887, first part).²² Importantly, this epistemological activity, for Nietzsche, pertains to life in its unconscious state; it is not an activity that we can perform *willingly*. Nietzsche uses the term “will to power” to describe *metaphorically* a fundamental principle that operates at all levels of existence – a drive that underpins everything that occurs. When, in the same fragment, Nietzsche refers to “logicizing, rationalizing, systematizing as expedients of life” and an expression of the will to power, he does not mean deliberate acts of logical analysis and systematization. Rather, he is asserting that a constitutive process is at work – one that *renders the world intelligible by endowing it with a logical structure*. It is through this process that the world, *perceived as if it contained* identical and enduring things or objects, *gains* truthfulness – “that is to say reality [*Wirklichkeit*]” (WM-1917, § 342/9[91] 1887, second part).

²¹ This is no minor detail if one considers Nietzsche’s engagement with Kantian and, especially, post- or neo-Kantian views that influenced phenomenalist conceptions which are echoed in Vaihinger’s fictionalism. See e.g. Emden 2014 and Gori 2019a: chapter 2. The literature on this in the last few decades is extensive, focusing on various sources of Nietzsche’s thought such as Afrikan Spir, Gustav Teichmüller, Hermann von Helmholtz, and of course Friedrich Lange.

²² In another section of WM-1917 (§ 340/PF 2[90] 1885–1886), Nietzsche writes that “the will to equality [*Wille zur Gleichheit*] is the will to power”.

The most important section of WM-1917 for understanding Nietzsche's view is perhaps § 367 (PF 10[19] 1887), also quoted by Carnap in the *Aufbau*. Given its significance and manageable length, it is worth quoting here in full:

The *concept of substance* is a consequence of the concept of the *subject*: not the reverse! If we relinquish the soul, "the subject," the precondition for "substance" in general disappears. One acquires *degrees of being*, one loses that which has being. Critique of "*reality*" [*Wirklichkeit*]: where does the "*more or less real*," the gradation of being in which we believe, lead to? – The degree to which we feel *life* and *power* (logic and the connection of what is experienced [*Zusammenhang des Erlebten*]) gives us our measure of "being," "reality" [*Realität*], not-appearance.

The *subject*: this is the term for our belief in a unity underlying all the different impulses of the highest feeling of reality [*Realitätsgefühls*]: we understand this belief as the *effect* of one cause – we believe so firmly in our belief that for its sake we imagine "truth," "reality," [*Wirklichkeit*] "substantiality" in general. – "The subject" is the fiction that many *similar* states in us are the effect of one substratum: but it is we who first *created* the "similarity" of these states; their adjustment and their having being made similar is the fact, not their similarity (– which ought rather to be denied –).

As noted above, in the *Aufbau* Carnap mentions Nietzsche's critique of subjectivity – a critique based on Nietzsche's epistemological concerns and his view that the reality we "know" is populated by fictional entities devoid of metaphysical consistency. For Nietzsche, like all other elements of the communicable world, the subject is *imaginative*. It arises from a constitutive process that organizes what is experienced (*das Erlebten*) into compounds that can be expressed meaningfully and thus "known". Although Carnap's interest is the issue of subjectivity, he may well have found in this passage further elements that are consistent with his view – at least semantically. Chief among them is the idea that reality (*Wirklichkeit* or *Realität*) arises from a neutral, i.e. unstructured, basis that underlies our world-description.

Before turning to my concluding remarks, I wish to highlight further aspects of Nietzsche's thought that are especially relevant to this analysis. Some of these appear in WM-1917, § 329 (PF 9[144], 1887), significantly titled "On 'logical semblance'" (*Zur "logischen Scheinbarkeit"*). Here, Nietzsche further explores how we structure the world through fictional constructions whose reality is merely illusory. Our need to find firm and stable orienting principles compels us to believe in the existence of what *we ourselves have created*. Forms,

for instance, have “merely been invented by us”, yet we persist in “the same error of giving a false reality [*Realität*] to a fiction” (WM-1917, § 329/PF 9[144], 1887). Crucially, Nietzsche argues, “one should not understand this *compulsion* to construct [*Nötigung zu bilden*] concepts, species, forms, purposes, laws (*‘a world of identical cases’*) as if they enabled us to fix the *true world*; but as a compulsion to arrange a world for ourselves in which our *existence* is made possible: – we thereby create a world which is calculable, simplified, comprehensible, etc., for us”.²³ As outlined in section 2.1, Nietzsche’s approach to epistemology is rooted in an inquiry into human understanding as a practical experience. How we perceive and describe the world, and the metaphysical commitments embedded in that description, are, for Nietzsche, best understood in terms of the practical needs of humankind – that is, on what is needed for the preservation of human life.

This naturalistic, evolutionary orientation leads Nietzsche to argue that the world we know is merely one possible way of organizing and categorizing experience among many. The elements it comprises are merely *human interpretations* of the raw material of sense data. The process through which we configure the world for practical purposes involves “simplify[ing], coarsening, emphasizing, and elaborating” this raw material, thereby rendering it intelligible and communicable. Insofar as “the same apparent world always reappears”, Nietzsche concludes, it “acquires the semblance of reality [*den Anschein der Wirklichkeit*]” (WM-1917, § 329/PF 9[144], 1887).²⁴ Thus, we do not *grasp* reality; rather, we *know* reality insofar as we *constitute* a consistent image (i.e. the apparent world) that serves our epistemic purposes.

²³ On this, it is also worth considering WM-1917 § 383 (PF 14[93] 1888): “Appearance is an arranged and simplified world, at which our practical instincts have been at work; it is perfectly true for us; that is to say, we live, we are able to live in it: proof of its truth for us. ... We have produced a conception [*Konzeption*] in order to be able to live in a world, in order to perceive just enough to endure it.” §§ 272, 328, and 345 (respectively, PF 9[38] 1887, 26[61] 1884, and 14[153] 1888) may also be relevant to this issue.

²⁴ For a comparison with Carnap, it may be interesting to read the final part of this fragment as well. Here, Nietzsche argues that we ascribe greater value to logic because the world *has been structured in logical forms by us*: “Our subjective compulsion to believe in logic only reveals that, long before logic itself entered our consciousness, we did nothing but introduce its postulates into events: now we discover them in events ... and imagine that this compulsion guarantees something connected with the ‘truth’. It is we who created the ‘thing’, the ‘identical thing,’ subject, attribute, activity, object, substance, form, after we had long pursued the process of making identical, coarse and simple. The world *seems* logical to us because *we* have made it logical” (WM-1917, § 329/PF 9[144], 1887).

To conclude this analysis of Nietzsche's views on the logical constitution of reality, we may turn to WM-1917, § 339 (PF 9[97], 1887), where Nietzsche explicitly argues that "logic ... applies only to fictitious entities that we have created" and that we attempt to "comprehend the actual world by means of a scheme of being posited by ourselves". For Nietzsche, while logic represents the highest expression of human cognitive activity, it remains a process that determines entities that are not *really* there. As discussed above, human knowledge *constitutes reality* insofar as it populates experience with fictitious entities – entities that carry merely epistemic, not metaphysical, value. Thus, in this section of WM-1917, Nietzsche asks himself: "Are the axioms of logic adequate to reality or are they a means and measure for us to *create* reality, the concept 'reality' [*Wirklichkeit*] for ourselves?" With its concepts, logic makes up entities that we *believe actually exist*: we "make of logic a criterion of true being, [by] positing as realities [*Realitäten*] all those hypostases: substance, attribute, object, subject, action, etc.; that is, [by] conceiving a metaphysical world, that is, a 'true world' (– *this, however, is the apparent world once more*)" (WM-1917, § 339/PF 9[97], 1887). Once again, Nietzsche affirms that the world we can communicate, the world to which we attribute consistency and objectivity, is in fact the product of a constitutive process – one that systematizes an originally unstructured and disordered experiential field. What we call "reality" is thus a theoretical entity elaborated from a disordered experiential basis that can only be known by us in symbolic (human) form.

3. Concluding remarks

Returning to the passages from Carnap's 1922 manuscript discussed in the first section of this paper, we are now in a position to appreciate their consistency with the Nietzschean themes explored above. What is particularly striking in this manuscript is Carnap's characterization of reality as involving "order and individual determinability" and his description of "chaos" as containing "no identical elements, that is no elements that can be grasped as individuals and retained as the same" (Carnap 1922: 1). As previously noted, Nietzsche appears to converge with this view, as he likewise maintains that the knowable world comprises an ordered reality composed of entities that possess only epistemic – not metaphysical – value and that this reality is constructed on the basis of an unstructured, chaotic foundation. Moreover, for both thinkers, this chaos can only be described negatively. Indeed, Carnap explicitly asserts that "we know nothing of an original chaos" (Carnap 1922: 1); it can be described only by eliminating

the very features that render experience determinable and consistently communicable, chief among them the fiction of “identity”. Both Carnap and Nietzsche stress that the act of identifying something is a necessary condition for its expression, yet this act of identification is made possible only through symbolic structuring, the significance of which is purely practical, not metaphysical.

Although Nietzsche and Carnap pursue different aims and philosophical orientations, we can thus discern convergence around key epistemological principles – principles which, in all likelihood, stem from a common post- and neo-Kantian background. In other words, as anticipated, the ostensibly pseudo-Nietzschean elements identified in Carnap’s early system may in fact be genuinely Nietzschean, given that they can be consistently encountered in Nietzsche’s writings.

However, as mentioned above, it is almost certain that Carnap did not consult WM-1917 prior to 1924, and his explicit reference to this volume in 1928 only allows us to think that he may have engaged with it at some point during his research and deemed it worth mentioning. Nevertheless, Carnap’s reference to Nietzsche on the issue of subjectivity signals a clear point of agreement between the two – at least with respect to their *attitude* towards illusory metaphysical notions (such as the “I” or the subject) that have no legitimate place in philosophy. More precisely, these are concepts that, while lacking *metaphysical legitimacy*, may nonetheless retain philosophical relevance *as epistemic notions*. This insight is central to both Carnap’s analytic system and Nietzsche’s attempt to shed light on the actual value of the elements of reality, which, for him, are purely human epistemic constructions. Without seeking to provide a systematic reconstruction of reality, Nietzsche addresses important points that lie at the heart of Carnap’s work. Setting aside the notion of a “will to order” or “system” – terms that have no real counterparts in Nietzsche’s thought – the view that reality is a realm of fictitious entities constituted through the organization of what is experienced (*das Erlebten*) into cognitively significant bundles is clearly articulated in WM-1917 and aligns with Nietzsche’s epistemological concerns. While we cannot claim that Carnap was directly influenced by Nietzsche on this point, we may nonetheless conclude that this theme marks a philosophically significant, if unexpected, point of contact between the two thinkers.

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