

Nietzsche's Psychology

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1. Problems about Science and Truth

Nietzsche has an uneasy and conflicted relation to science. He attacks it forcefully and on many grounds – but as we know he also expresses quite positive views of it. My first project is to sketch an account of his overall position on science, and on the closely associated topic of truth. I will argue that not only is Nietzsche principally favorable towards science, but that he makes it – in particular one branch of it, psychology – *the* project that will save us from nihilism. So our future runs through it.

Science can play this role despite how its will to truth has been a main contributor to nihilism, because there's a way (Nietzsche thinks he has found) to 'heal' it of its life-depressing features. We do so by embedding this project within certain new values Nietzsche 'creates'; my second main aim is to give an account of these values, and to situate them within Nietzsche's broader view of values. I want to map the very large-scale logic of Nietzsche's thinking on truth and values – or rather to offer a certain hypothesis as to what this logic is.

Psychology, we'll see, brings these two topics of truth and values into closest relation. For psychology, properly done, finds out the truth about values, and in particular about the value of truth. It is in this role that it is the culminating science, so properly the 'queen' of the sciences, as he famously puts it in BGE 23. By understanding its proper role as such, we see the fuller shape of his 'theory of science', and resolve those apparent conflicts in his views of it.

These conflicts at first look utter and irresolvable. Sometimes he judges science [*Wissenschaft*] to be misguided and worthless, yet elsewhere he puts it near the heart of his own identity and allegiance.

The first key to understanding this division is a simple, even trivial point. As with every important term Nietzsche uses, we need to be alert for a dual usage of 'science'. We must distinguish: i) 'science' referring to the *prevailing* practice – to what *has been called* science so far, and ii) 'science' referring to a *reformed* practice that makes it what it has long claimed and aspired to be – to what science *can be*, and should become.

It is one of Nietzsche's characteristic idiosyncrasies, I suggest, that he uses *many* or indeed *all* terms – all important ones that is – in these dual senses. And he does so without, for the most part, flagging when he's doing so – for example

by appending either 'so far' or 'as it can be' when he speaks of (e.g.) science. I think there are various reasons he proceeds so. For one thing he very often wavers between understanding himself as destroying (and replacing) an existing practice, or as revising it. (Think of philosophy, morality, the human.) This ambivalence is inevitable given how he wants to push his criticisms down to the very roots – to see them as *radical*. By coming to the roots he reaches where these practices are fully at issue.

So he wavers between two 'meanings' for the term for the practice – two ideas of what's 'essential' to it. i) Sometimes science (e.g.) is defined by what's attacked in its current practice. The rejected features are essential to it, and hence the attacks are deadly. ii) But sometimes science is instead defined by worthy ambitions not yet realized – before Nietzsche that is. And then 'beneath' these errors there is a positive project he claims to fulfill. The way he allows words to bear *both* senses – in different contexts, even in the same case, explains I think a remarkable portion of the apparent contradictions we find in his texts.¹

Let's pursue this point about dual usage into some basic questions that arise for Nietzsche's view of science. These concern truth, and science's relation to truth. He sees science as defined by its pursuit of truth (e.g. GS 344). So we must try to determine: whether/how Nietzsche *values science as a means to truth*. And we can analyze this problem into these sub-questions: 1) whether (and how) Nietzsche values truth, and 2) whether Nietzsche judges science to be a good means to truth.

Each of these is a complex, vexed question in its own right, but both are crucially affected by the fact that Nietzsche subjects 'truth' to the same dual handling as 'science': he sometimes denounces truth, sometimes affirms it, depending upon whether he takes his critiques to bear on essential or on secondary aspects of the practice. And the latter likewise depends on whether 'truth' is defined by the prevailing conception of truth, or by aspirations buried in it.

I will argue that Nietzsche's principal view of science and truth is positive: science does give (a kind of) truth, and this truth is good. The main challenges

1 The point, though simple, has complex connections. It reflects Nietzsche's theory of language – his views about how words mean. They *do* have their meanings both from history and prospectively, in both directions from the moment in which we use them. Nietzsche gives up the usual philosopher's effort to specify his/her words' meanings by current definition (which aspires to be explicit and precise). His words are about social practices whose meanings have been shaped from the past by their development. But these practices are willful and directed, and in the open-ended manner of will to power: that is, their aims are not fixed and bounded, but project their own amendment and improvement. They have in prospect a higher potential that *also* gives meaning to the practice. Nietzsche's main allegiance, I think we can see, is to these prospective meanings, so that he mainly wants to see science (e.g.) to mean what it best *can* be.

to my yes-yes position are: 1) Nietzsche's attacks on the possibility or value of truth, and 2) Nietzsche's attacks on science's ability to find truth.

1) I can't rehearse all the variety of attacks Nietzsche makes against the value of truth.² Sometimes he suggests the very notion of truth is incoherent – and elsewhere that truth is unachievable. But I think the attacks most important to him are directed at the value of truth, or at the value of the effort at truth. And in my view the key statement of this attack – or rather challenge – occurs in the well-known sections near the end of GM III, where the 'will to truth' is diagnosed as yet another manifestation of the 'ascetic ideal'. (So the will to truth belongs to 'morality', Nietzsche's favorite target.) And as ascetic, the will to truth is *hostile to life*, hinders its ability to thrive or grow. So the lesson seems to be: *avoid it* (willing truth).

Nietzsche thinks the asceticism of our truth-aim shows up in many different places, for example in a) its effort to still the passions (for the sake of objectivity), b) its intent to refrain from acting on the world in order to match or mirror it, and c) its intent to subordinate one's individuality to a collective, long-term enterprise (to play a small role in something immense).

In all of these ways, the objective stance required for science involves a kind of 'unselfing' that detaches us from our personal projects. And most damaging in this respect is the *reflexive* application of science, where its objective eye is brought to bear on the scientist's own (and our) values. For insofar as we understand our values scientifically, we are outside of and alienated from them. And precisely this is the large-scale culture-historical problem we face: that science is exposing the roots and aims of morality, undermining it, and pushing us towards a nihilistic inability to value – to care very much about anything.

So what we need at this historical moment, *it seems*, is something quite antithetical to science and its will to truth. It seems we need new values that *renounce* the ascetic and moral will to truth (and science). The new values, it seems, will be of something quite different from truth. In response to this I will argue (in chapter 3) that Nietzsche *retains* the will to truth as a crucial component of the values he advocates. Science – a certain kind of psychology – is part of the new ideal he advocates to us, and it is so that we can do this science, that the new values are needed. So an 1888 note says about the 'yes-saying type' of the present: "one must grasp the enormous fact that a good conscience of science exists" (NL 1888 14[156], KSA 13, 340).

2) In addition to these doubts against truth (or the effort at truth), Nietzsche raises doubts against science's aptitude for truth. It's not even any good for truth, it seems. Again I can only catalogue his principal arguments: i) science expresses special interests; ii) science rests on unexamined premises; iii) science relies on

2 I treat truth at length in ch. 4 of my (Richardson 1996).

metaphors (e.g. a ‘law’ of nature) and fictions; iv) science can’t explain, only describe; and v) science can only deal with quantities, can’t grasp qualities.

I think the last of these gets the most to the heart of Nietzsche’s complaint against science: in insisting on a quantitative understanding, it can’t grasp the crucial character of the world, its point of view and meaning, as will. So GS 373 speaks of “[s]cience’ as prejudice”, due to the “insistence by the intellectual middle class” that “the only rightful interpretation of the world should be one to which [they] have a right [...] one that permits counting, calculating, weighing, seeing, grasping, and nothing else” (GS 373). But, Nietzsche continues, a “‘scientific’ interpretation of the world, as you understand it, might be one of the stupidest of all possible interpretations of the world [...] [A]n essentially mechanistic world would be an essentially meaningless world” (GS 373).³ Quantities don’t bring us to the insides of things, their perspectivity and willfulness.

But we must read this in light of the distinction drawn above: all these attacks are directed against ‘science so far’. In their cumulative criticisms they project a ‘new science’ that would emerge by learning these various lessons. This positive view of truth and science is especially dominant in the late works and notes. In BGE 204 he calls himself “a scientific man”. And the key to these positive views, I will now try to show, is his conception of psychology, as the truth-giving science crucial to his own thinking. It’s with respect to psychology that the main issues about truth come to a head, are faced, and resolved. So it’s here we can study his resolution of what he sees as his main philosophical problem, and as our main cultural concern.

2. The new Psychology

The simple methodological point I’ve made about science and truth applies also to psychology: Nietzsche’s wildly contrary judgments of it reflect mainly his oscillation between identifying ‘psychology’ with what it has been, and with a new practice he anticipates – and indeed begins to carry out.

He is highly critical of “psychology so far [*bisherige Psychologie*]” (BGE 47; WP 692 = NL 1888 14[121], KSA 13, 301). He says that it has been “rudimentary” (NL 1888 14[125 and 129], KSA 13, 306, 310) and “naïve” (NL 1888 14[126], KSA 13, 308). BGE 229 calls us to chase away “the clumsy psychology of before [*von Ehedem*]”. And I think he also means psychology as it

3 Note how ‘science’ is in scare quotes here: Nietzsche means science as done so far. WP 565 (NL 1886–1886 6[14], KSA 12, 238) says that “knowledge [*Erkenntnis*]” applies to quantities whereas qualities are individual and inescapably perspectival.

has been when in *Twilight of the Idols* he groups it with metaphysics, theology, and epistemology as “pre-science” (TI Reason 3).

He claims himself to finally put psychology on the right footing: “What philosopher before me was a psychologist instead of its opposite, a ‘higher fraud’, an ‘idealist’? Psychology did not exist until I appeared” (EH Fate 6). He claims, that is, to be the *first* (true) psychologist, founding a new practice;⁴ he takes great pride in himself as such. If there is a science he practices, it can only be psychology.

And the way Nietzsche revises science, generally, is by making this revised psychology its ‘queen’, as he puts it in the famous paragraph *Beyond Good and Evil* 23. Psychology came to the front of Nietzsche’s mind as he was writing this book; the word is scarcely used before this point (1885–86). And this paragraph plays a crucial strategic role within BGE: positioned at the end of Part I, it sets the stage for all the rest of the book. It sums up how ‘the prejudices of the philosophers’ are exposed and the way opened up to a new philosophical practice. Here’s how the paragraph begins and then ends:

All psychology so far has got stuck in moral prejudices and fears; it has not dared to descend into the depths. [...] Never yet did a deeper world of insight reveal itself to daring travelers and adventurers, and the psychologist who thus ‘makes a sacrifice’ – it is not the *sacrificio dell’ intelletto*, on the contrary! – will at least be entitled to demand in return that psychology shall be recognized again as the queen of the sciences, for whose service and preparation the other sciences exist. For psychology is now again the path to the fundamental problems. (BGE 23).

This paragraph can show us how to organize a great amount of what Nietzsche says/thinks about science, as I’ll later try to show. But first we need to see what the new psychology will be.

What, first, does Nietzsche mean by ‘psychology’ in general – whether old or new? Psychology treats *why* people do things, the *reasons* for actions, the *explainers* of behavior. I think it’s important that it does more than simply ‘describe’, which is the most, we’ve seen, that a merely quantitative science can do. Moreover psychology treats these explainers ‘in the abstract’, i. e. not in particular cases, but in types. So TI attacks “Colportage [book-peddler] –Psychologie”, psychologizing “in the act”, in individual cases; the psychologist “never works ‘from nature’ [...] ... only the general case enters his consciousness’. (TI Skirmishes 7; cf. NL 1887 9[110], KSA 12, 398.) So psychology delineates ‘psychological types’ and explains behavior by these. Notice how extremely often ‘*Psychologie*’ occurs in phrases like “psychology of the ‘improver’ of humans” (TI Improvers 5), “of the redeemer” (AC 28), “of the priests” (AC 49), “of ‘belief’” (AC 50).

4 BGE 12 speaks of “... citizens’ rights in science. When the new psychologist puts an end to the superstitions which have so far flourished . . . around the idea of the soul”.

Also qua science, psychology rests on a basic theory about these explainers: what kinds of things they are, and how they explain. So it depends (each particular psychology does) on a particular *ontology* for this class of entities that explain our behavior. Such a theory is also present in our commonsensical accounts of others and ourselves; it's contained in our very vocabulary for thinking about people. This background theory we all operate with in explaining people's behavior can also be called a 'psychology'. And Nietzsche does also use the term in this further sense – not for the science but for this commonsensical 'theory' of ourselves.⁵

What are the crucial changes Nietzsche means to make in the science of psychology, to correct the errors he finds in 'psychology so far'?

1) Perhaps the most vital change is a change in spirit (as it were): a new degree or kind of *honesty*.⁶ Honesty in general, let's say, is recognizing (becoming aware of, articulating) one's own motives. Such honesty has always been a virtue in science, of course – it belongs to the scientific method to root out subjective biases that would distort one's view and theory. But Nietzsche wants to make it the *chief* virtue, and to give it a particularly aggressive form: the psychologist must be more than just willing to acknowledge why one does (what one does), he/she needs a passion to discover and 'bring to light' one's reasons and values, *against* the prevailing and default tendency to conceal them.

2) The new psychology's greater honesty is manifested in one crucial breakthrough: it exposes the *moral* aims and reasons in what we do – and the reasons behind these moral aims. This is Nietzsche's chief claim to new insight: he sees the moral roots of traditional psychology, sees how they have distorted it. This is the change in psychology he most often stresses. "The power of moral prejudices has penetrated deeply into the most spiritual world, which would seem to be the coldest and most devoid of presuppositions, and has obviously operated in an injurious, inhibiting, blinding, and distorting manner." (BGE 23).⁷

Morality misleads psychology above all by its will/need to find *responsible* and *guilty*, and to *punish*: "The whole doctrine of the will, this most fateful falsification in psychology so far, was essentially invented for the end of punishment" (WP 765 = NL 1888 15[30]2, KSA 13, 425). To ground

5 EH CW 3 says that a race's psychology is the measure of its cleanliness. TI errors 3 says that the "oldest and most enduring psychology [...] considered all events to be deeds, all deeds to be the result of a will".

6 BGE 227: "Honesty, supposing that this is our virtue from which we cannot get away, we free spirits – well, let us [...] not weary of 'perfecting' ourselves in our virtue, the only one left us." See also e.g. D 456, BGE 295.

7 BGE 47 says that psychology so far has 'suffered shipwreck' because it believed in opposite moral values. WP 271 says that psychology has been corrupted by the predominance of moral values (NL 1888 14[108], KSA 13, 286).

responsibility (the old) psychology has needed to posit explainers with certain features. This has let it to construct a standard picture of the logic of action. Such psychology looks for:

2. i) a faculty of *will*, as this is *usually* understood, i.e. a capacity for deliberation issuing in acts of choice, which directly explain what's then done. Morality's aim to find us responsible and punishable crafts this conception of why we act. Its interest is to induce us to think not just one another but also ourselves culpable in our actions – in our actions both done and prospective. This interest focuses the explanation for the act in punctate events of choice: these explain it all by themselves. And these choices are themselves explained as due solely to that persisting faculty – its persistence allows the person to be punished after those events are long past. “Whenever a particular state of affairs is traced back to a will, and intention, or a responsible action, becoming is stripped of its innocence. The notion of will was essentially designed with punishment in mind, which is to say the desire to assign guilt” (TI Errors 7) There are a couple special features of this faculty that deserve mention.

2. ii) This faculty must operate *consciously*. “The entire theory of responsibility depends upon the naïve psychology that the only cause is will and that one must know oneself to have willed in order to believe in oneself as cause.’ (WP 288 = NL 1888 14[126], KSA 13, 308).

2. iii) This faculty must operate *freely*, and not be compelled to its choice by other factors. For it needs to be the *last* explainer of the action, so that responsibility settles in it, and is not diffused to further (prior) causes. “People were considered ‘free’ so that they could be judged and punished, so that they could be guilty” (TI Errors 7).

Nietzsche of course rejects nearly all of this. The new science of psychology needs a new basic theory of its entities. It needs to be informed, above all, by the recognition of what values really are, and the role these play in explaining, and giving meaning to, what we do. Nietzsche thinks of his *Genealogy of Morality* as doing psychology in this favored new way, as he says in EH: “A psychologist's three crucial preparatory works for a revaluation of all values. – This book contains the first psychology of the priest” (EH GM).

Begin with (ii) how the new psychology greatly downgrades consciousness. WP 434 speaks of “[t]he rudimentary psychology that considered only the conscious motives of men, as causes, that took ‘consciousness’ for an attribute of the soul, that sought a will (i.e., an intention [*Absicht*]) behind all action” (NL 1888 14[128], KSA 13, 310). Nietzsche thinks the main or even sole explainers of actions are unconscious factors. They are unconscious *not* by being purely mechanistic, however; they are studied by psychology, as ‘affects’, and not by physiology (which treats ‘organic functions’) (cf. NL 1888 13[3], KSA 13, 214 f.). They are willful and intentional, but in broader senses than allowed in

morality's psychology. They are ways of meaning, and they give meaning principally in their willing and valuing.

This unconscious willing has (i) a different logic than the faculty of will that morality imagines. It is not, like a faculty, a capacity at the disposal of the person him/herself. Indeed it is not something single in the individual, but multiple – separately present in the many particular drives that constitute the person. These compete with one another to move the body – or rather they're the body's own many competing dispositions. What the body does is in each case explained by *multiple* wills, with 'responsibility' diffused among them. Moreover they explain the doing not by way of punctate choices, but by (as it were) a rising or falling effort against other drives. This effort happens in the body itself, of course, and thereby also in the doing itself (whereas the choice was thought to precede the deed). Nevertheless they do explain the doing, by giving its meaning: what it means to do.

These wills not only share 'responsibility' with one another, they also (iii) disperse it beyond the person him/herself. For Nietzsche thinks of these wills as pieces, within the individual, of larger social and cultural phenomena. My drives come to me from my parents, friends, and all the culture around me. Hence psychology needs to operate at a social and historical level, as well – to explain why just these wills and aims occur in a population, so producing its characteristic types of individuals. It studies, in other worlds, the *values* general in a society, which collect, in different combinations and strengths, in particular individuals.

3) Beyond this different account of the general logic of will, Nietzsche has of course a more specific proposal. Will has, in particular, the character of *will to power*, i. e. it has a deeper aim and point than all its particular ones. The latter are themselves somehow 'for the sake of' power: "To understand [psychology] as morphology and evolution-doctrine [*Entwicklungslehre*] of the will to power, as I do – nobody has yet come close to doing this even in thought" (BGE 23); (much less incorporated it into his/her will and values). And an 1888 note: "Psychology (doctrine of affects) as morphology of the will to power" (NL 1888 13[3], KSA 13, 214).⁸

But *how* will the new psychology *study* these newly-clarified entities? What's its *method* for identifying these explainers? Psychology studies wills, which are perspectival, and hence not just quantities but qualities. There is a first-personal 'what it's like' or 'how it looks/feels' that's essential to these wills. Hence to do psychology, to grasp these qualities, one requires first-personal acquaintance

8 WP 692 says that the "will of psychology so far" is an "unjustified generalization", which abstracts away "its content, its *Wohin?*" (NL 1888 14[121], KSA 13, 301); this is not will to life but will to power.

with those wills oneself. Psychology sees-and-feels how a kind of action would, in a kind of circumstances, be done with a certain will.

Hence we might call Nietzsche's method '*perspectival*', in that it involves occupying perspectives, and experiencing/noticing their involvements in one another.⁹ So for example the famous diagnosis in GM I of Christian morality as rooted in *ressentiment*, depends on Nietzsche's confidence in his own ability to occupy feelingly (and imaginatively) the Christian stance, and to identify the contribution in it of that reactive attitude. (See how the opening of EH stresses his ability to see from both above and below, capacities he thanks his father and mother for.) And he conveys this psychological insight to us only insofar as we occupy these stances ourselves. For he studies these wills/values not in their role in his own life, but 'in the abstract', as part of the common emotive equipment everyone takes on in the culture. This way the new psychology vitally occupies perspectives involves a kind of 'subjectivity' at odds with the 'objectivity' called for by 'science so far'. It precludes the mathematical determination of explainers as quantities.

3. What's Psychology for?

I've tried to sketch some main features of the new psychology Nietzsche advocates – as a science, with its ontology and methodology. These are some of the ways this science must be changed, to escape the second set of objections above – those against its *adequacy for truth*, its ability to find truth.

But what about his attacks on the value of truth itself, and on the effort at truth? Given that a new psychology could ferret out truths about why we act and value as we do – should we want it to? Here we return to psychology's role in that dramatic historical story Nietzsche tells; we've seen its main line: that we live in the nihilistic age that results from morality's self-undermining. Morality undercuts itself, and we lose the only values (action-guiding rules, maxims, ideals) we have had. We are at risk of losing purpose altogether – of ceasing to care much for anything. And *psychology*, we should now see, is the 'cutting edge' of this large cultural-historical process.

Psychology is the very point at which 'morality undermines itself' – so the culmination and focus of that enormous cultural-historical process. Nietzsche's broad story is that morality generates the will to truth, which then exposes the faulty justifications and motives for morality. The important work occurs not in refutations of arguments (e.g. for the existence of God, or the objectivity of moral values) but in exposures of the *reasons* and *motives* for moral values. These

9 "My writings speak only of my own experiences [*Erlebnissen*] – fortunately I have experienced much" (NL 1886–1887 6[4], KSA 12, 232).

values become unbelievable – cease to impel us – when we see their why. Hence morality is undermined finally by precisely the kind of psychologies of it Nietzsche offers. These expose morality's real aims. And in doing so psychology exposes *errors* embedded in these aims, errors which, as itself a will to truth, it rejects.¹⁰

However the will to truth, offshoot of morality, seems to undercut itself as well, by the same kind of discovery. For psychology finds that its own will to truth, like morality, is 'ascetic' and hostile to life. This ascetic character occurs already, we've seen, in the way it 'takes a step back' in its effort to study. And it takes its most heightened form in psychology's power to undermine values, to *depress* our willful effort at things. As we understand values we step out of them, we suspend their force. Psychology, cutting edge of the will to truth, seems most of all to land and keep us in a nihilistic alienation from values. Thus the impression of many has been that Nietzsche expects the truth-aim to be jettisoned along with morality.

I think, instead, the will to truth – in the form of psychology in particular – is *crucially retained* by Nietzsche, and in fact serves as *the way out of nihilism* (which we would otherwise lack). He thinks the will to truth can and must survive the collapse of moral values.

For, firstly, the point is not to create new values out of nothing; we can't give ourselves, from scratch, the passion for them (as Pippin (2010) persuasively develops). Instead we must learn to transmute existing passions/wills. So it's very important that the destruction of morality not lay the ground quite bare – we need something to survive it, something we can develop. We need, that is, some passion to help carry us out of the withering of morality. And it is psychology, I suggest, that Nietzsche expects will so serve us: it is the life-buoy that we hold fast to from the old values, and that lets us save ourselves from nihilism. So we find a way to use this last force in morality to energize a new project.

But how can psychology – ultimate form of the will to truth – play this role, when it has that ascetic and life-denying character? Nietzsche claims to see a way to make the will to truth something healthy, to make it 'further life'. Psychology, exposing the ascetic and 'anti-life' motives in this will itself, can be a means of its self-healing. By seeing this influence, we can work against it – can revise our will to truth so that it *doesn't* express this ascetic will. We can cultivate instead certain 'healthy' motives that will also bears.

Nietzsche notices the experience of growth and power involved in his overcomings of values. So will to truth has healthy sources too, which can be

10 See how Nietzsche collects many diagnoses under the heading "psychology of error": TI Errors 6; WP 664 (NL 1883–1884 24[9], KSA 10, 647); WP 666 (NL 1886–1887 7[1], KSA 12, 247); NL 1888 16[85 and 86], KSA 13, 515; NL 1888 18[17], KSA 13, 537.

avored and furthered. For example we can will truth not from fear, but in courage – which indeed has been an element in the will to truth all along. See the important section ‘On Science’ in *Zarathustra*. Here the “conscientious one [*Gewissenhafte*]” attributes science to the long-standing motive of fear – fear of “beasts”, including “the beast within”: “This long and ancient fear, finally become refined, spiritual, intellectual – today, it seems to me, it is called: ‘science’” (Z IV Science, KSA 4, 377). But Zarathustra replies that he’ll turn this ‘truth’ on its head: courage has been the prehistory of humans. “This courage, finally become refined, spiritual, intellectual, this human courage with eagle’s wings and serpent’s cleverness: this, it seems to me, today is called – ” (Z IV Science, KSA 4, 377). At this moment he’s interrupted by the group, who complete the thought with ‘Zarathustra’. But surely Zarathustra himself was going to say ‘science’. Nietzsche’s point is to insist on healthy motives at the root of science – not a reactive and defensive fear, but an active courage striving for more – whose potential can be taken up and best realized now.¹¹

Above all, I claim, this healthy motive in the will to truth finds fruition for Nietzsche in the use of psychology for a campaign of *freedom*.¹² Psychology exposes the motives in the values we live by, and exposes in particular how these motives were embedded by social, historical processes around and behind us. This ‘genealogy’ makes possible for us what was never so before: we can judge whether we concur with those motives – and can work to *change* those values insofar as we do not concur. Psychology can show, in the most famous case, how *ressentiment* helps motivate the values we have grown up into. It makes it possible for us to *free* ourselves from this foreign constraint – to recraft our values for ourselves. By seeing these truths about our values – all the ways they’ve been shaped by other forces – we take a kind of power over those forces, we grow by overcoming them.

So the will to truth survives, amended. And it recognizes the new psychology as its own highest form. Now the will to truth comes into its own, its asceticism subordinated in a more positive project. GS 123 says that it’s only today that knowledge becomes an end in itself, not just a means – that it becomes something more than an *ethos*: a passion. The will to truth now separates itself as an autonomous and ruling drive. So it realizes something it contained all along, the basic aim in scientific method.¹³

11 So EH Preface 3: “How much truth does a spirit endure, how much truth does it dare? More and more that became for me the genuine measure of value Error (belief in the ideal) is not blindness, error is cowardice.” Also EH BT 2.

12 I develop this in ch. 2 §4 of my (Richardson 2004), and in my (Richardson 2009).

13 See WP 457 (NL 1888 15[52], KSA 13, 442 ff.) and WP 466 (NL 1888 15[51], KSA 13, 442).

4. Psychology as Queen of the Sciences

Let's return to the question in what sense psychology is supposed to be the 'queen' of the sciences, as we saw Nietzsche puts it in BGE 23. How does it 'rule' the other sciences? What kind of priority is it now supposed to have? Even if we go along with the idea of a new science of psychology, it seems misguided to try to make this alter the character of the sciences generally.

Indeed we've seen reasons to doubt the new psychology is a science at all: it relies on the scientist's subjectivity, and seems not sufficiently objective. It treats the 'qualities' of things, and not quantities as the other sciences try to do. If Nietzsche wants to amend the other sciences by making them *more like psychology in these respects* – that looks worrisome. How would chemistry (e.g.) profit by engaging the subjectivity of the chemist – his/her experience of viewpoints or wills?

An extension of the new psychology's method to other sciences would seem to depend on supposing that the *entities treated* by chemistry (e.g.) are likewise perspectival – wills that need to be 'occupied' in order to be fully understood. Of course Nietzsche does sometimes extend his will to power doctrine beyond humans and even beyond living organisms generally, to apply to physical forces. And if this is his considered view, he would give psychology the priority that Aristotle attributes to metaphysics: it identifies the ultimate being (substance for Aristotle, but will to power for Nietzsche), which the other sciences then give specifications of. But I doubt many of us are persuaded that chemistry or physics would improve, if it took its objects to be wills to power.

So perhaps (we should hope) it's not that psychology alters how the other sciences are done. Perhaps it 'rules' them just in the sense that it uses the results of the other sciences. So we might read BGE 23's image of psychology as the *fruit* of the tree of sciences, which grow outward toward it and find their highest value in it.

But I do think Nietzsche also wants the new psychology to affect how the other sciences are done. This is not, though, by giving them its own ontology, but by diagnosing them – and showing them how to diagnose themselves. Nietzsche expects this diagnosis to improve how the other sciences are done – improve them both as science, but more importantly as practices within the personal lives of scientists.

Psychology studies what motivates science – what motivates the scientist's pursuit of science. We need a 'psychology of the scientific needs' (NL 1885–1886 2[117], KSA 12, 120; NL 1886–1887 5[50], KSA 12, 203). And Nietzsche thinks this reveals the same kinds of *moral* motives as we've seen shaped our usual psychology. Indeed he thinks that science's conceptions of physical things have their origins in that prevailing view of ourselves as discretely causal (hence punishable) wills. Science models its entities after that view, so

that it likewise tends to 'harden' them, to suppose them well-bounded, discrete, persisting – to treat them as 'atoms' of some kind. When we see how it is a moral need (to assign responsibilities) that lies behind this atomization of the world, we distrust it. And Nietzsche wants psychology to teach the chemist and physicist to mistrust it, themselves, so that their practice of science is informed by the recognition of certain temptations and biases, likely at work in themselves, as well as in current theory.

Beyond this, and maybe more plausibly, psychology will also inform the scientist of certain 'occupational hazards' – ways the commitment to science can harm him/her personally. As we've seen, the scientist's effort at objectivity threatens a de-selfing: absorption in questions of objective fact can express and reinforce an avoidance of existential questions, of questions about oneself. Even if psychology's diagnoses do not change the scientist's practice, they can change the place of this practice in his/her life – and help the scientist to realign it within a healthier personal project.

With all of these criticisms, then, Nietzsche means not to ruin the will to truth that impels toward science, but to make it healthy, by overcoming these moral/ascetic sources. WP 594: "science acquires a new charm after morality has been eliminated" (NL 1883–1884 24[18], KSA 10, 656).

5. Not just Psychologist but Philosopher

We've seen that psychology – as will to truth – is the passion we find left to us from morality, to build into healthier, post-moral values. But it's still vague just how this 'healing' of the will to truth – this annulment or (at least) containment of its ascetic, anti-life tendency – is supposed to work. It's also unclear who or what is supposed to carry out this 'healing'. According to Nietzsche it's not the psychologist him/herself, but the *philosopher*. We need to locate this new character, and see how he/she works.

Nietzsche views himself as chiefly a philosopher, I think. Although he claims to make a great advance within science, as a psychologist, and although this advance informs his philosophizing, the latter is his most important work, and also the place he (thinks he) completes himself as a person. And the philosopher's main work, he claims, is to 'make new values' – something psychology itself can't do. This has always been the main work of philosophers, who have never been 'just' scientists (and not impelled 'just' by the will to truth).

This stress on creation mixes an *artistic* element into philosophy – and into Nietzsche's conception of the new philosophers in particular. It may seem to involve the *priority* of art over science – that the philosopher (the human ideal) 'makes things up' instead of seeking truths. And indeed Nietzsche's stress on art,

so often at science's expense, has been read as renouncing the truth-project of philosophers before him.

I will try to show though that this artistic side to philosophy does not make the philosopher any less committed to truth. The new philosophers' creations will be informed and oriented by science – by psychology in particular.¹⁴ And the point of art is to help our passion for truth be liveable – indeed not just liveable but life-enhancing, empowering. So Nietzsche's art is his creation of values that let us best cultivate that passion for the truth.

These values that Nietzsche creates lie in a different place than we expect. The values he mostly talks about are values he (thinks he) *discovers*, and describes *as scientist* (psychologist). So we must distinguish, in Nietzsche's references to value, between those in which he creates, and those in which he tries to – claims to – tell the truth. For psychology can't itself create values, but it can discover them: it describes and explains the values already 'causing' behavior. For this it relies, we've seen, on first-personal acquaintance with the values and wills it studies. But it then 'steps back' to see these as kinds, explained by other factors (as the Christian value of love is explained by priestly hate). Psychology studies these values, it doesn't endorse them; it tells truths about them without valuing them so itself. Most broadly, Nietzsche thinks, psychology discovers, and will continue to confirm, that human and indeed animal behavior is best explained by wills aiming at power, basically *valuing* power.

So when the philosopher 'creates values', it is *not* the value of power. Nietzsche thinks he reads this value off the world, and that an honest psychology will concur. This aim (power, growth) is the principal character of the drives – the willful dispositions – that explain what we do. Nietzsche suggests, to each of us his readers, that we ourselves already have this composition, this deep aim built into us. And because he discovers it in us already (he thinks), he can use it as a basis for argument, as a criterion for judging other and alterable values we may hold. When he appeals to it, it is only as to something we *already* value.

Nor, when the philosopher (Nietzsche) creates values, is it the value of truth. Nietzsche relies, we've seen, on the *established* character of this value – the strength of the passion for truth, passed on to us from morality. Truth, as the kernel of the ascetic ideal, is indeed the crucial and distinctive *human* value. And it is only because we *already* care about truth, though partly for the wrong reasons, that his answer to the problem of nihilism can work.

So Nietzsche thinks he *finds*, not creates, both of these values he so stresses: the value of power, the value of truth. He discovers them in (and only in) our valuing of them. However he also thinks he finds a deep and debilitating

14 See BGE 210 on critical science as a tool of philosopher.

conflict between these two values. He finds, as we've seen, that the will to truth has helped push us towards the nihilistic loss of values that now threatens us.

The values Nietzsche *creates*, by contrast, are values which, he suggests, can enable us to pursue the passion for truth in a way that serves our underlying will to power. He creates values that let that passion for truth carry out its devastating genealogies of values, without depressing and weakening us. He creates the values that make possible a '*gay science*' – gayety even in seeing through values and overcoming them.

So what values do we need, in order to live with as much as possible of that psychological truth? What values could keep the will to truth, in its sharpened and aggressive form, as psychology, from having the ascetic and life-undermining effects it has had so far?

I think the key point in the new values Nietzsche 'creates' is the '*saying Yes*' to everything, the universal affirmation.¹⁵ It is this overall or ultimate positive view, that lets us take joy in diagnosing and exposing the truth about ourselves (our values). It allows us to love even the ugly truths. It keeps the insight from *alienating* us from what it exposes.

This 'universal Yes' is the heart of the crucial 'new values' Nietzsche means to create. Adopting these values will let us love what we come to understand – though not in a way that blunts the diagnostic critique. We love these things in the very badness we expose in them, and finding out its particular manner of badness is the way to find out just how it is also, more deeply good. This universal Yes is a kind of theology of life, that finds all life good and indeed holy.

Now I have said that Nietzsche considers himself to 'create' rather than discover this value of saying Yes – to offer it to us as an answer to the conflict between the two values he claims are built into us, power and truth. But I think he is somewhat divided here. He sometimes tries out arguments to show that this value – saying Yes – is also already present in us, indeed present in us at a founding level that gives it authority. He tries out ways to show that we already do say Yes, deep down, and that we just need to reflect this in the rest of our valuing. Nietzsche's main such attempt is the idea that there is a point of view of 'life itself', a kind of undermost aiming and valuing in it, and that what this values is precisely life: life wants only to have 'more' life, so that for it all life is good.¹⁶

But here I want to focus what is perhaps Nietzsche's more promising line, and the one that fits better into the rest of his views. (Given the rest, how can he believe in a point of view of 'life itself?') This abandons effort to give any prior

15 I elsewhere (unpub.) call this his *value monism*: it is the view that 'everything is good' – a positive valuing of everything.

16 I develop this line of argument in my (Richardson forthcoming).

reality to the value of saying Yes: it's not already something we want, even unbeknownst to ourselves. Instead, as I've said, Nietzsche sees himself as 'creating' this value, and doing so for a certain purpose, in response to a problem he thinks we'll acknowledge. But this avowal that he creates it poses certain puzzles about this value – in particular: how can we believe it if he tells us he has made it up?

This special status of the value is reflected, I think, in a certain ambiguity as to just what this value is. I've called the value 'saying Yes' or 'universal affirmation', which is viewing everything as good. So the value is not the first-order 'everything is good', but the valuing of things so; the value is a way of valuing, and so second-order. Nietzsche makes this clear in all the strategies and exercises he offers to help us achieve this valuing. The principal of these exercises employs the idea of eternal return: by striving to will each and every thing to be eternal, we inculcate in ourselves the habit of valuing Nietzsche advocates. He commends this value to us not by trying to show us that everything *is* good, but by such indirections.

Of course this universal Yes mustn't blunt our critical eye: the new psychology looks always for the unacceptable – for what needs to be overcome. The constant aim is to grow, to become different, to be better than the present which is 'not good enough'. But this destroying bent of the will to truth (as of the will to power) is contained within – or one always comes back to – a gladness in everything, even (and most importantly) in the case of the weakness and sickness one discovers in oneself, in the world. This prevents that diagnostic exposure from disenchanting the world, and robbing it of value.

Perhaps we should think of this Yes-valuing as operating in a particular context or situation: in the stance in which we 'look back' at something already done, already extant, and assess it. Perhaps it's not meant to intrude on the prospective stance in which we assess what's to be done – there we continue to find bad things, there we continue to 'say no'. So the critical eye dominates in psychology's prospective effort to find out the truth about our values, and Nietzsche preaches a merciless exposure of the sick and petty in them. And the affirmative view comes afterwards, as it were, in the moment of reflection on what we now see exposed before us – these ugly new truths. ("Truth is ugly [*hässlich*]" WP 822 = NL 1888 16[40]6, KSA 13, 500.) Nietzsche wants to say Yes in that reflective moment, because this timely Yes can prevent the diagnosis from spoiling what it reveals. It lets us find beauty in life even as ugly.

Nietzsche offers this new value to us tentatively, 'as experiment': to be tried out to see whether it furthers us, and life. Hence this value he takes himself to create – the universal Yes – is to be judged by the standards of the two chief values he believes we already have. These are power – valued at the bottom in all our drives – and truth – valued in us as heirs of the long cultural process that made us humans. We *should* value saying Yes, because we already do, and must,

value these other things, and because saying Yes is the best way to keep these two values from defeating one another – the best way to bring them into fruitful interplay.

Let's come back finally to the questions of science and truth. Nietzsche thinks, I suggest, that the highest power lies in living with the most truth – so long as that truth is used to free ourselves *from* hindering values, *in* an affirmative project (a way to grow). We grow by seeing how much of the truth about our values we can incorporate. When Nietzsche speaks of how life depends on error and falsehood, this only makes clearer the extent of the accomplishment, the power, in seeing through that error nevertheless, and living with more and more truth.

In his early writings Nietzsche insists that the 'knowledge-drive' needs to be limited or restricted, for the sake of a healthy culture.¹⁷ I suggest that later on Nietzsche thinks he has a way to avoid this – a way to give the will to truth the most unrestricted scope, yet without making it life-hostile. We can do so with the value of saying Yes.

But what about that value itself: is it off-limits to the will to truth, or can it be safely exposed to it? I've said that Nietzsche mainly conveys this new value not as any kind of thesis, but in stories, images, tasks, riddles, that are not evaluable as true or false. He refrains from presenting things' goodness as a value 'really there' in them independently of our valuing. What he claims to be true is not that all things are good, but that we can solve a deep problem by learning to value them so. As experiments, these new values are to be tested by whether they indeed have these effects.

Of course these new values are also subject to psychological scrutiny and diagnosis, but Nietzsche thinks they will withstand it. The motives for these new values aren't such that exposure will deflate them, he thinks. The will to truth can live with these values and still respect itself, indeed respect itself the more because the values make its own asceticism liveable. They give the will to truth the opportunity of the very widest scope of exercise, and let it be what it best can be.

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17 See the notes collected by Breazeale as *Philosophy and Truth* (1979).

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