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Nietzsche's Project of Reevaluation

What Kind of Critique?

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1. Introduction

Are good things good because we take them to be good, or do we take them to be good because they are good? According to one of our myths, we came to realize, in one of our foundational moments, that if it is the good we're talking about, the real one, the one that we in fact mean to be talking about when we're talking about *the* good, then the answer is, it ought to be, the latter: we take the good to be good because it is good; the goodness of *the* good is independent from us taking it to be so. Indeed, this conception of the good is so deeply engrained in our way of life, this myth so foundational, that even the suggestion that there might be an alternative, as in the question "Is the good good because we take it to be good?" is liable to strike us as nonsensical.[1]

One version of this myth is found in Plato's *Euthyphro*, where *the good* is discussed under the guise of the divine or the pious. In one of the central moments of the dialogue, Socrates asks Euthyphro whether "the pious is loved by the gods because it is pious, or [whether] it is pious because it is loved by the gods."[2] In its context, the question can seem to be intended to work as a challenge to Euthyphro's attempt to characterize

the pious in terms of its being loved by the gods; it can seem to work as a rhetorical question designed to call to mind that the goodness of the pious does not reside in its being loved by the gods, but that on the contrary, the gods too must have reason to love it: they must love it because it is in itself good. Yet this move, which may seem innocuous, is in fact, to speak somewhat grandiosely (and quite anachronistically), one of the "founding moments" of "Western" moral rationality. Saying that what makes the pious good—in the way pious things are good—is not that the gods love it but that it is good in itself, and that if the gods love it is because it is good in itself, and thus only insofar as they are in the business of loving what is in itself love-worthy, effectively amounts to displacing moral authority from the powerful authority that *wills* it to be good to the *rational exercise* of that authority's will. And once we follow Plato's Socrates in thus displacing moral authority from the will of a certain type of individual, endowed with a certain authoritative status, to the rational exercise of its will—once, that is, we sever moral authority from the "authoritative status" of certain individuals and anchor it instead in their ability to let themselves be guided by reason (by moral truth, by goodness)—we are within the space of the form of moral rationality that has dominated "Western" *philosophical* moral discourse since Plato's days.

Moreover, as I suggested, this way of thinking is so deeply engrained in us, and shapes our moral experience to such an extent, that it informs even our ability to conceive possible alternatives. Thus we are prone to think that holding that the good is good because we take it to be so must ultimately amount to holding that there is no good at all. We're led to think, that is, that those who hold that the good is attitude-dependent must be confused in one of two ways: because by thinking of the good as attitude-dependent they effectively (if inadvertently) commit to the view that there is no good, while insisting on their entitlement to treat certain things as good; or because, like the radical nihilist, they explicitly hold that there is no good, while inadvertently treating things as good (as the nihilist who screams "That isn't fair!" in the parking lot scene in *The Big Lebowski*).[3] And so our traditional way of thinking about the good makes it seem as if there is no coherent alternative to it, as if the denial that the good is good in itself invariably could and would have to be traced back to some confusion.

Much of Nietzsche's work, including most of his most widely commented works, is dedicated to a radical critique of traditional morality and to what he would eventually come to refer to as an "Umwerthung aller

Werthe"—what we usually think of, in English, as the reevaluation of all values.[4] And one of the central elements of his approach to morality is the rejection of the idea of the good in itself, of the valuable in itself. Instead, Nietzsche indexes goodness to perspectives, to ways of life and, ultimately, to the will to power of the valuing individual. This all is of course almost too obvious to be worth mentioning. But I mention it nonetheless because it being so, we should expect to find in Nietzsche's work an alternative to what I just described as traditional Western moral rationality, an alternative to a conception of morality and its relationship to rationality that is anchored in the idea that the good is good in itself. And yet, contemporary interpretive trends present a Nietzsche that seems to me to remain too close to the *form* of morality that was in fact the primary target of his critical work. My overarching goal in this paper is to bring into view just this: how the traditional way of thinking—according to which values are valuable in themselves—is, in spite of appearances, still at work in a range of approaches to Nietzsche, and how it renders such approaches blind to some of Nietzsche's most insightful contributions to our understanding of *our experience of value*. Naturally, beyond simply showing that this traditional way of thinking continues to inform Nietzsche scholarship, I shall also endeavor to show why this is exegetically problematic, and to suggest that it is philosophically incapacitating.

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It has become commonplace to think of genealogy as a form of critique. It has become common to use the phrase "genealogical critique" to describe Nietzsche's method, and to identify the critical dimension of genealogy with the project of *Umwertung*. "Genealogy," "critique," and re-evaluation" are thus often treated as more or less equivalent terms for referring to Nietzsche's project and method. The tendency is understandable. Nietzsche himself can often seem to suggest that genealogy is part of a critical method. Thus he writes in a passage that has become a *locus classicus* for discussions of this question, "We need a *critique* of moral values, *the value of these values must first be called into question*—and for that there is needed a knowledge of the conditions and circumstances in which they grew, under which they evolved and changed."[5]

Yet in spite of passages like this, and of the uncontroversially close connection that he draws between genealogy on the one hand, and critique and *Umwertung* on the other, it seems to me doubtful that genealogy

should be regarded as a proper part of *Umwertung*. Even in this passage, what Nietzsche writes is that the critique of moral values, the calling into question of the value of moral values, *requires genealogical knowledge*; not that such knowledge, or that the production of such knowledge, amounts in itself to a critique of moral values. Similarly, in his account of the *Genealogy* in *Ecce Homo*, he describes the three essays that make up the body of the book as "three decisive preliminary studies by a psychologist for the revaluation of all values."[6] Since Nietzsche himself describes genealogical work as *preliminary* for *Umwertung*, we should exercise caution, and speak, at most, of the *critical vocation* of the genealogical method, not of genealogical critique, of genealogy as *Umwertung*, etc. And note that the point is not innocuous, and the motivation for it is more than a matter of principled fastidiousness. Whether we identify genealogy with critique will have important consequences on our conceptions of Nietzschean methodology and of what we take *Umwertung* to be. And it will have important consequences on our attitude toward the worry that Nietzsche might be guilty of the genetic fallacy.[7] For if genealogy is "history, properly done" and if it is also critique, then the latter worry, the worry that Nietzsche is guilty of the genetic fallacy, is indeed at the very least highly plausible. Nietzsche would be relying on facts about the origin of values in order to appraise them.[8]

Yet even leaving aside, for the time being, and for the sake of simplicity, whether or not genealogy is, properly speaking, part of Nietzsche's project of a critique of morality, and whether the latter can in turn be identified with the Nietzschean project of *Umwertung*; account taken, second, that of these three driving concepts (genealogy, critique, *Umwertung*) the latter is the most distinctively Nietzschean, it should be clear that how we understand *Umwertung* will affect our understanding of the critical vocation of Nietzschean genealogy, of how the genealogical method is meant to function. It is thus our overall understanding of Nietzsche's project of a critique of morality that is at stake in our understanding of *Umwertung*.

With this in view, I can formulate my overarching goal in this paper somewhat more precisely. My goal is to argue that a widespread way of understanding Nietzschean *Umwertung* (and the closely related ideas of critique and genealogy) is still under the grip of a traditional conception of values, and that it renders us blind to another, more Nietzschean and deeper form of *Umwertung*, to the functioning of the genealogical method, and to some of Nietzsche's deepest insights about values.[9]

My strategy will be to focus on an emerging "debate" within Anglo-American Nietzsche scholarship. In the next part of the paper, I will present and analyze, in some detail, this emerging debate, which turns on whether Nietzsche's critique of morality is to be understood as a form of *internal* or *external* critique.[10] I will argue that a central problem with that debate is that it is based on a common assumption about the critical dimension of Nietzsche's work, and in particular of his idea of *Umwertung*—namely, that *Umwertung* consists of an evaluation of values *based on an evaluative standpoint that serves as its ground*. This assumption, as we shall see, is closely related to the traditional conception of values discussed above, the very conception of values that is the primary target of Nietzsche's critique. In the third part of the paper, I will sketch an alternative conception of Nietzschean *Umwertung*, one that brings clearly into view the distinctiveness of Nietzschean style of critique, how it relates to genealogy and, most importantly, how it supposes a more radical break with traditional conceptions of values than is often acknowledged.

2. Internalist and Externalist Interpretations of Nietzsche's Critique of Morality

The last decade has seen the emergence of an interpretive trend regarding Nietzsche's genealogical method. Some interpreters, notably Aaron Ridley, David Owen, and Allison Merrick, have identified a "dominant [exegetical] strategy" according to which "Nietzsche's genealogical descriptions stimulate a transcendent critique of our moral values by appealing to some external benchmark."[11] Their central argument against such *externalist* interpretations, originally formulated by Ridley, is that they would render the genealogical method vulnerable to what they refer to as the *authority problem*. Ridley presents the way of reading Nietzsche that leads to the authority problem as follows:

> The re-evaluation of values, it is said, can only be undertaken from an evaluative standpoint; in order to be authoritative, that standpoint must be somehow immune to re-evaluation (or at any rate to devaluation); Nietzsche, however, gives us no reason to think that his own evaluative standpoint is immune to re-evaluation in the relevant way; therefore, the only thing

that Nietzsche's re-evaluation can tell us about the value of our existing values is how they look from the perspective of his own preferred values, values whose superiority he merely asserts, rather than defends or demonstrates.[12]

Schematically, the source of the authority problem, on Ridley's reconstruction, lies in the following line of reasoning (the labels are mine):

1. *The Grounding Requirement* (Background Assumption): Reevaluation "can only be undertaken from an evaluative standpoint."[13]

2. *The Immunity Constraint* (Premise): A reevaluation has authority only if the standpoint from which it is "undertaken" is "immune to reevaluation."

3. *Nietzschean Vulnerability* (Premise): Nietzsche "gives us no reason to think that his own evaluative standpoint is immune to re-evaluation in the relevant way."

4. *The Authority Problem* (Conclusion): "Nietzsche's evaluative standpoint, and the re-evaluation that he undertakes from it, need have no authority for us" ("if we're comfortable with our existing values, and with our existing evaluations of them").[14]

The argument that, in Ridley's view, leads to the authority problem is based on the second and third items on the list, along with another component of Nietzsche's conception of values. On this way of understanding Nietzsche, reevaluation involves an *evaluating standpoint*—the standpoint from which reevaluation is undertaken—and an *evaluated* standpoint—the standpoint that is the target of reevaluation. Therefore, if, as the Immunity Constraint suggests, the authority of a reevaluation requires that the reevaluating standpoint itself be immune to reevaluation, then unless Nietzsche's reevaluating standpoint is taken to be immune to reevaluation, his reevaluations could have no authority. Moreover, since Nietzsche himself rejected the idea that there are unconditional values (the only kind of values that would be, from any standpoint, invulnerable to reevaluation), from Nietzsche's own perspective, his reevaluations could only have authority over those who subscribe to the evalua*ting* standpoint.[15] Hence the authority problem: "the

only thing that Nietzsche's re-evaluation can tell us about the value of our existing values is how they look from the perspective of his own preferred values, values whose superiority he merely asserts, rather than defends or demonstrates."[16] The strategy of Ridley, Owen, and Merrick for avoiding the authority problem is to suggest that genealogy and reevaluation are meant to work as internal critiques, that the evalua*ting* standpoint on which they are grounded coincides with the evalua*ted* standpoint that is their target.

The conception of Nietzschean *Umwertung* at work in this way of reading Nietzsche, which confers the Grounding Requirement its apparent necessity, is, in my view, rather un-Nietzschean. In order to bring this (i.e. the un-Nietzschean character of this conception of *Umwertung*) into view, I will argue that the latter leads to a number of exegetical impasses regarding Nietzsche's intended audience and regarding the originality and scope of his project of *Umwertung*. Then, in the next section, I will offer an alternative account of how *Umwertung* is meant to work and a brief discussion of what this way of understanding *Umwertung* reveals about Nietzsche's conception of values and of moral rationality.

2.1. Nietzsche's Target Audience

One of the main points of contention between internalists and externalists is the intended audience of Nietzsche's *Umwertungen*. But some of the exegetical problems with the conception of *Umwertung* at work in both interpretations come into view precisely if we consider its implications for the question of Nietzsche's target audience. Internalists and externalists both subscribe to what we may think of as a *restricted audience claim*, according to which Nietzsche's texts are addressed primarily to a certain type of reader. Internalists think that the problem of authority arises precisely when a critique is grounded on a standpoint that isn't shared by those who subscribe to the *criticized* standpoint. Accordingly, in their view, if Nietzsche's reevaluations can be authoritative, it is because the *evaluating* standpoint that grounds his critiques, the *evaluated* standpoint that they target, and the standpoint of his intended audience all coincide, and all differ from Nietzsche's own all-things-considered standpoint.

Externalists, by contrast, take Nietzsche's reevaluations to be grounded in his own standpoint, a standpoint that is external to the target of his critiques. So they think the intended audience of Nietzsche's critical reevaluations are those who already share his standpoint. In their view, the evaluating standpoint that grounds the critique, the standpoint of its

intended audience, and Nietzsche's own all-things-considered standpoint coincide, but they differ from, and are external to, the evalua*ted* standpoint that is criticized. Based on passages like the following, Ridley, Owen, and Merrick all present Brian Leiter as an externalist reader. In *Nietzsche on Morality*, Leiter writes: "recall what Nietzsche's goal is in undertaking a "revaluation of all values": he wants to alert *"higher" types* to the fact that MPS [morality in the pejorative sense] is not, in fact, conducive to their flourishing. Thus, he needs to "wake up" *his appropriate readers*—those whose "ears are related" to his—to the dangers of MPS, a task made all the more difficult by MPS's pretension to be "morality itself." Given, then, that Nietzsche's target is a certain sort of misunderstanding *on the part of higher men*."[17] Now, on a first approximation, the idea of writing for an audience who already shares one's own standpoint, of addressing a critical work to someone who already accepts its results, could seem counterintuitive.[18] Perhaps for this reason, internalists find the idea by default implausible, and think that if externalists endorse it, it is only because they must do so in order to avoid the authority problem. As Merrick writes: "To evade the problem of authority one must argue that Nietzsche limits his audience to those for whom his arguments are compelling, those who already share his descriptive and evaluative sensibilities, those, in other words, who already accept Nietzsche's authority on the matter."[19] In fact, Ridley and Owen go as far as to describe the externalist version of the restricted audience claim as a "somewhat desperate tactic" for avoiding the authority problem.[20]

Yet Nietzsche's numerous remarks about who his books are meant for and how they are to be read is at odds with this off-handed dismissal of the externalist version of the restricted audience claim. Consider, for instance, the second section of the "Preface" to the *Genealogy*, where Nietzsche directly addresses his readers in order to highlight his indifference toward their reception of his claims: "And this is the only thing proper for a philosopher. . . . our thoughts, values, every 'yes,' 'no,' 'if' and 'but' grow from us with the same inevitability as fruits are born on the tree. . . . Do *you* like the taste of our fruit?—But of what concern is that to the trees? And of what concern is that to *us* philosophers?"[21] The closing rhetorical question underscores Nietzsche's indifference to his readers' approval. And while there is, undoubtedly, some interpretive leeway as to what exactly he seeks to accomplish by highlighting this purported indifference, the fact that he does highlight it lends enough plausibility to the externalists' conception of his intended target audience, enough at least to rule out its dismissal as a "somewhat desperate" tactic.

At the same time, it would be hasty to conclude the correctness of the externalist stance, according to which Nietzsche's target audience are *only* those who already share his evaluative standpoint. After all, in the passage, Nietzsche is directly *addressing* readers whose reaction toward the *Genealogy* is, manifestly, still an open question, readers who *may or may not disapprove* of those views and attitudes.[22] So contrary to what externalists suggest, Nietzsche is *not only* writing for those who already share his evaluative standpoint. He also writes for readers who do not share that standpoint; he addresses them, taunts them and works on them from the very beginning of the book.

That Nietzsche simultaneously addresses both types of audience suggests that neither internalist nor externalist interpretations of his critical strategy are correct. However, Ridley's characterization of Nietzsche's position, endorsed by Owen and Merrick, suggests that the distinction between externalist and internalist readings exhausts the interpretive possibilities. For as we saw, the Grounding Requirement, according to which *Umwertungen* "must be undertaken from an evaluative standpoint," is part of a view according to which *Umwertung* necessarily involves an evaluat-*ing*, critical standpoint, and an evaluat*ed*, critically examin*ed* standpoint, and the values that are part of the evaluat*ing* standpoint are deployed as standards for assessing those within the reevaluat*ed* standpoint. But if this is right, then one of two things must hold: either the values of the evaluat*ing* standpoint coincide with those of the evaluat*ed* standpoint, and the critique is *internal*, or the two sets of values are disjoint, in which case the critique is *external*.[23]

But perhaps this isn't right. Perhaps rather than attempt to identify Nietzsche's target audience on the basis of the evaluative standpoint on which his critique is grounded, we ought to call into question the Grounding Requirement itself, the idea that his critiques are *grounded* on an evaluative standpoint. As we've just seen, it is this requirement that forces upon us the choice between internalist and externalist interpretations. If, by contrast, Nietzschean *Umwertung* is not grounded on an evaluative standpoint, if it does not consist in the deployment of a set of values as standards for reevaluating a reevaluat*ed* standpoint, then it might be reasonably expected to have the potential to work on readers regardless of their prior axiological commitments.[24]

But how could *Umwertung* not be grounded on an evaluative standpoint? To begin to see this, consider more closely Nietzsche's rhetorical strategy when explicitly addressing various types of readers in single breath.

In his discussion of the title of *Human, All Too Human* (subtitled *A Book for Free Spirits*) in *Ecce Homo*, he writes:

> *Human, All Too Human* is the monument to a crisis. It calls itself a book for *free* spirits: almost every sentence is the manifestation of a victory—I used it to liberate myself from things that *did not belong* to my nature. Idealism is one of them: the title says 'where *you* see ideal things, *I* see—human, oh, only all too human!' . . . I know people *better* . . . The term 'free spirit' does not want to be understood in any other way: a spirit that *has become free*, that has taken hold of itself again.[25]

Through the title alone, Nietzsche sets up an opposition between two standpoints: the standpoint of someone who remains under the spell of idealism (who remains human, all too human), and the standpoint of someone who has liberated herself from that spell (the free spirit). He also attributes these standpoints to two different versions of himself, and, as it turns out, to three possible types of readers. There is the Nietzsche who was under the spell of idealism, who used the book to liberate himself from it. And there is the Nietzsche who occupies the liberated standpoint, the one who wrote the title, who addresses his readers through the title, and who, through a "choral" use of the first person pronoun that brings together in unison the voices of the writer of *Human, All Too Human* and of its commentator in *Ecce Homo*, also addresses his readers in that commentary of the title. As for the types of readers, there is the type to whom the title only *refers*: unliberated, all-too-human readers that still see the world through ideals; and the type to whom, as the subtitle tells us, the book is addressed: the free spirits. But note that in writing that he liberated himself from things that *did not belong to his nature*, Nietzsche also introduces a distinction, within unliberated readers, between those in whose nature it is to remain unfree, and those whose nature is compatible with liberation.

It thus seems that Nietzsche knows well what we are sometimes prone to forget: that reading involves entertaining views and perspectives different from our own while placing the latter on hold (rather than immediately deploying them as standards for mechanically endorsing or dismissing what we read). In deploying this *typology* of potential types of readers through the title and subtitle, and eventually the commentary, of *Human, All Too Human*, he effectively offers his potential readers, regardless of their background, three alternative standpoints for consideration, as if he were saying

"it is up to you, identify yourself with the unfree spirit in whose nature it is to remain unfree (and do what you will with this book—of what concern is that for me?); identify yourself with the unfree spirit in whose nature it is *not* to remain unfree—and with the free spirits—and use this book, as I did, to liberate yourself from that which does not belong to your nature; identify yourself with the free spirits, and enjoy this celebration of your crisis and self-overcoming."

So while Nietzsche does, as internalists suggest, explicitly address readers who occupy a different evaluative standpoint than his own, a reader who may disagree with him, who may still be under the grip of *ideals*, who remains all too human, it is not at all obvious that he does it, *or that he would need to do it*, by occupying or pretending to occupy their standpoint. His strategy is rather to *bring into view different standpoints and ethical attitudes*, to *display* and (arguably) even exaggerate the difference between his standpoint and attitude and that of his readers, to taunt them by showing their own in a different light and by showing disdain for the kind of reader who would remain committed to their preconceptions.[26]

But does this not reveal the correctness of the Grounding Assumption, and the corresponding picture of critique that goes in hand with it, according to which a critique of values amounts to the reevaluation of some evaluat*ed* values on the basis of some evaluat*ing* values? After all, the internalist may point out that Nietzsche's strategy in the title of *Human, All Too Human* and its commentary in *Ecce Homo* could only be effective insofar as there is substantive overlap between his standpoint and that of his readers. Indeed, only readers who, *like Nietzsche*, are committed to freedom as a core value are likely to be moved by his disdain of constitutively unfree spirits, to side with him, and to continue to treat the book as though it might have been written for them, at least potentially free spirits.

The last observation, while true, is tangential to the correctness of the Grounding Assumption and the corresponding picture of critique. There is, after all, a difference between, on the one hand, occupying a standpoint and being motivated by it, and even displaying it and emphasizing it in order to elicit a certain reaction from an audience, and on the other hand, *grounding* a critique on that standpoint by relying on it as a standard for evaluating the target of the critique. It is of course uncontroversial that Nietzsche did not think it possible to occupy an axiologically neutral or disinterested standpoint; his projects are always explicitly undertaken, his texts written, from his particular, non-neutral, axiologically committed perspective, an aspect of his work that he often highlights. But this does

not imply, as internalists contend, and externalists seem to grant, that his critique of morality or his *Umwertung* is *grounded* on that standpoint—not, at any rate, in any way that would be analogous to how the conclusions of sound arguments are grounded on their premises, and which would require his target audience to share that standpoint, much in the same way that recognizing the soundness of an argument requires recognizing the truth of its premises. At the risk of sounding repetitive, for the point is important: just as it is possible for someone to deploy an argument whose premises they do not subscribe to, and just as it is possible for someone to entertain and learn something from an argument the premises of which they do not endorse, so it is possible for someone writing from an axio-logically committed standpoint to deploy critiques that are not grounded on that standpoint, and for readers to consider critiques that are based on standpoints different than their own and to learn something in the process. What the title and remarks in *Human, All Too Human* show is that it is part of Nietzsche's overall *rhetorical* strategy to *exhibit* his standpoint. The reason Nietzsche's *Umwertungen* are not vulnerable to the authority problem is not that, based on the very evaluative standpoint that they criticize, they function as internal critiques. It is rather that, not being grounded on any particular evaluative standpoint, they give no room for the question of the authority to gain any traction. And indeed, would it not be surprising if for Nietzsche, if from a Nietzschean perspective, the attitude that one is to have toward values were a matter of authority, of rational authority?

But what, then, is Nietzsche's strategy? How are his texts meant to work on his target audience? What is, as we like to say "in philosophy," his argument? This will be the topic of the next section. There are, however, a few other problems with internalist and externalist approaches, and a few related aspects of Nietzsche's idea of *Umwertung*, that I'd like to bring into view before sketching my positive account of Nietzsche's method. For the time being, allow me to settle, first, for noting that in his commentary of the title of *Human, All Too Human*, Nietzsche displays a *typology* of potential readers without spelling out what the reader is to do and how she is to react in the face of this typology; and second, for venturing the suggestion that perhaps this has something to do with the fact that even if Nietzsche is quite aware that bringing this typology into view can have the effect of alerting his readers to the possibility of occupying those various standpoints, it would be quite out of character and confused for him to attempt to derive, from that typology, claims about how his reader is to

(must, ought to, should, on pains of irrationality) read his text, or about what reader-type his reader is to (must, ought to, should . . .) identify with.

As for the question of Nietzsche's intended audience, it should be clear that, contrary to what internalists and externalists seem to assume, Nietzsche does not restrict his target audience either to readers who share his evaluative standpoint or to readers who do not. While he certainly says that his books are for those who share his standpoint, he also says that such readers have yet to come into being. And he says this to his actual readers, whom he often characterizes as people who, beyond simply not sharing his standpoint, are not even in a position to understand it.

2.2. The Novelty of *Umwertung*

Another exegetical problem with the conception of *Umwertung* at issue is that it renders Nietzsche's insistence on the historically unprecedented character of his idea of *Umwertung* rather obscure. In the Preface to the *Will to Power* Nietzsche tells us that the book is "the history of the next two centuries," that its author is "a spirit of daring and experiment that has already lost itself once in the labyrinth of the future," a "soothsayer-bird spirit who *looks back* when relating what will come"; and that the title "that this gospel of the future wants to bear" is "The Will to Power: Attempt at a Re-evaluation of All Values" (*Umwerthung aller Werthe*).[27] Nietzsche, that is, goes well out of his way to emphasize the originality of *Umwertung*, so novel indeed that its possibility is only beginning to be explored, and lies ahead even of this soothsayer-bird who must look back at the very moment of relating the future that lies ahead of us. By contrast, the form of revaluation described above, characterized by the Grounding Requirement, and consisting in the assessment of values on the basis of the values that make up an evaluative standpoint, is anything but innovative. For it essentially amounts to reflexively occupying an evaluative standpoint. This, accordingly, is a second problem with the Grounding Requirement: it goes hand in hand with a picture of *Umwertung* that renders Nietzsche's insistence on the novelty of the idea enigmatic.

2.3. The Scope of *Umwertung*

We saw that in *Ecce Homo* Nietzsche describes the essays that make up the *Genealogy* as "three decisive preliminary studies by a psychologist for the revaluation of all values."[28] In discussing that claim, I emphasized that

Nietzsche describes his genealogical essays as preliminary to *Umwertung*. But it is worth noting that he characterizes the latter as bearing upon *all* values. The same is true of the passage from *The Will to Power* we just considered, where he writes about the revaluation of *all* values, not of a particular value, or a particular set of values. In fact, most of Nietzsche's uses of the word *Umwerthung* are within the phrases *"Umwerthung aller Werthe"* and *"Umwerthung der Werthe überhaupt"* ("re-evaluation of all values" and "re-evaluation of values in general").[29] Since at least in these predominant contexts, the target of *Umwertung* is not a particular value or set of values, the conception of reevaluation sketched above, according to which it consists in the assessment of a particular evaluat*ed* standpoint on the basis of an evaluat*ing* standpoint, does not seem to capture his conception of *Umwertung*. For how could the assessment of particular values on the basis of other values lead to a reevaluation of all values?

2.4. The Novelty and the Scope of the Problems Combined

It might be tempting to think that the answer to this last question is that the slow, piecemeal critique of values might, in the long run, at least approximate the goal of a reevaluation of *all* values. However, the conception of *Umwertung* that then begins to emerge leads to an exacerbated version of the novelty problem, and makes it hard to account for Nietzsche's claim to the effect that genealogy is needed as a preliminary for *Umwertung*.

   To see this, suppose that the Grounding Requirement is correct, that reevaluation requires deploying some values as evaluative standards, and consider the values that function as such for some particular reevaluative project, and the reevaluat*ing* values at work in it. In order for that reevaluation to be the reevaluation of *all* values, the reevaluat*ing* values must themselves be then reevaluated. But since, *ex hypothesi*, they must be reevaluated by reference to themselves, they can at best be said to be reevaluated in a vacuous sense. The reevaluation would, at best, serve to identify and resolve inconsistencies within the overall evaluat*ing* standpoint. So in this view, undertaking the reevaluation of all values turns out to be the same as occupying an evaluative standpoint with a modicum of reflexivity. It becomes hard to see whether there is any *substantive* sense in which one may speak of the reevaluation of *all* values (rather than of the reevaluation of all values that aren't one's own on the basis of one's own). It also becomes hard to see what distinguishes reevaluation from the simple fact of having an evaluative standpoint, why Nietzsche took it

to be historically unprecedented, or why he took the idea of reevaluation to require genealogical knowledge at all.

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But what is the alternative? What else might *Umwertung* consist in? Nietzsche's *Umwertung* functions at the level not of particular values, but, as Nietzsche himself frequently writes, of values *überhaupt* (in general). In other words—and this is crucial—*Umwertung* is primarily the reevaluation of our *conception* of values, of what they are and, most importantly, of the relationship in which we stand to them. This reevaluation corresponds, *grosso modo*, to a shift between the positions mentioned in the *Euthyphro*. It corresponds, that is, to a shift away from a traditional conception of values according to which values are valuable in themselves, and hence according to which a commitment to "the right" values can and ought to be—and in the best cases is—rationally grounded (following a traditional, foundationalist conception of practical rationality), towards a novel, Nietzschean conception of values according to which values are expressions of a way of life, and each person's commitment to values is the commitment to *their* particular way of life. In the next section, I'll offer a more detailed sketch (but a sketch nonetheless) of this conception of *Umwertung*, and how it relates to the project of genealogy and to Nietzsche's methodology more broadly.

3. Genealogy and *Umwertung*

> We should admit to ourselves with all due severity exactly *what* will be necessary for a long time to come and *what* is provisionally correct, namely: collecting material, formulating concepts, and putting into order the tremendous realm of tender value feelings and value distinctions that live, grow, reproduce and are destroyed,—and, perhaps, attempting to illustrate the recurring and more frequent shapes of this living crystallization,—all of which would be a preparation for a *typology* of morals. . . . that supposedly modest little *descriptive* project, left in rot and ruin, even though the subtlest hands and senses could hardly be subtle enough for it. Precisely because moral philosophers had only a crude knowledge of moral *facta*, selected

and arbitrarily abbreviated at random—for instance, as the morality of their surroundings, their class, their church, their *Zeitgeist*, their climate and region,—precisely because they were poorly informed (and not particularly eager to learn more) about peoples, ages, and histories, they completely missed out on the genuine problems that only emerge from a comparison of many *different* moralities.[30]

The passage is from the first section of "On the Natural History of Morals," the central part of *Beyond Good and Evil*. Nietzsche suggests that the problems of morality, what should be the topic of a science of morality, first appear through the comparison of various forms of morality. Hence the need for a typology of morality, for a descriptive, natural history of morality that offers a typology of moralities.

Throughout the section, Nietzsche contrasts this idea of a typology of morals (and the preliminary, information gathering and organizing work that it requires) with what "all philosophers" hitherto have sought to accomplish "under the guise of a science of morals: to ground morality." Ultimately, Nietzsche suggests, because philosophers took this to be the primary goal of a science of morals, they neglected the typology of morals, thereby depriving themselves of the means to identify the proper (*Eigentliche*) problems of morality:

> they completely missed out on the genuine problems that only emerge from a comparison of many *different* moralities. As strange as it may sound, the problem of morality has itself been *missing* from every "science of morals" so far: there was no suspicion that anything was really a problem. Viewed properly, the "grounding of morals" (as philosophers have called it, as they demanded it of themselves) was only an erudite form of good *faith* in the dominant morality, a new way of *expressing* it; as such, it was itself already situated within the terms of a certain morality. In the last analysis, it even constitutes a type of denial that these morals *can* be regarded as a problem.[31]

Or we might say: by taking for granted that they subscribed to their morality because it was good in itself, and not because it was theirs, philosophers thought that the main task of a science of morals was to show that this was indeed morality in itself. They thereby rendered themselves blind to

the possibility that they subscribed to it merely because it was theirs. What Nietzsche exposes here is a certain form of parochialism that consists in taking what is familiar, what is the local norm, to be normative for similar phenomena in all contexts; a parochialism that consists, that is, in reifying local ways of acting and interacting with others, and in regarding them as norms that ought to regulate how people in general, human being as such, ought to act; in mistaking local customs for universally valid norms that determine how people ought to act and interact by virtue of the fact that they are human.

There are two important aspects of the traditional moral philosophers' starting assumption: on the metaphysical register, the idea that moral values are valuable in themselves; on the practical register, the corresponding, closely related view that the source of moral commitments, their ground, is recognition of "the" moral values, the ones that are (thought to be) good in themselves. Thus it is not only the idea that moral values are valuable in themselves that is at work in traditional morality, but a whole approach to moral psychology, moral epistemology and moral philosophy that come with it.

But what are "the problems of morality" that Nietzsche alludes to? And how is the idea of a typology of moralities supposed to bring these problems into view? Nietzsche himself does not offer a simple answer to the first question, and so it seems to me that to offer one would be to offer an overdetermined interpretation of the text. But one thing is certain: he is not concerned, at all, by the possibility that denying that values are valuable in themselves would deprive us of the conceptual means to render values, and to render our commitment to our values, intelligible. That is the primary worry of the traditional philosopher who hastens to ground morality before coming to understand the problems of morality. And it is the worry of the nihilists, a worry for the time of nihilism, a time to which, as Nietzsche writes in the Preface to the *Will to Power*, the *Umwertung* of all values is a response.

Thus we can at least safely say that the problems of a science of morals are the host of problems that first come into view once we give up that traditional assumption, once we call into question the rationality of morality, not by denying that morality is rational, but by calling into question the idea that the type of rationality that must necessarily underlie our moral lives is, as it has traditionally been taken to be, structurally analogous to the type of rationality operative in rational belief formation and revision, and according to which our attitudes toward values must

ultimately be motivated by, and traceable to, attitude-independent reasons. "The problem of morality" is acknowledging that there is much more decision making, much more of willing, and much less of grounds involved in moral commitment than the tradition has taken there to be.

As for the second question, a typology of moralities and a natural history of morality might contribute to that reconceptualization of moral values by bringing into view the fact that our own particular morality is but one among many possible forms of morality, that different peoples, in different lands, in different periods, have subscribed to different moralities; that moral reasoning and moral-ground-giving are, as Nietzsche suggests in that opening section of "On the Natural History of Morals," only forms of *faith* at work in each particular morality, new ways of *expressing* it, of consolidating it, and that as such, they are themselves always already situated within the bounds of that particular moral standpoint that they purport to ground.

Umwertung, accordingly, works not at the level of particular values. If the idea of *Umwertung* is the idea of an *Umwertung* of all values, if it applies to values *überhaupt* (in general), it is because it operates at the level of *the concept of* morality itself, of what moral values are, of what moral commitment is. What the typology of moralities is meant to bring into view is that there is a host of questions to be raised about these concepts, questions which, through the assumption that the valuable is valuable in itself, the Western philosophical tradition has rendered intractable. *Umwertung* itself, reevaluation, is the outcome of that process of questioning and problematizing morality. It is not merely a reappraisal of existing values on the basis of existing values, and its result is less a new view about which values are highest and which lowest than a new conception of values.

This idea of a typology and its effects, which we find in *Beyond Good and Evil*, are forerunners of the idea of genealogy. If in a typology we see variation of forms of morality, their relationship to the cultural and natural milieus within which they emerge, and (perhaps, as Nietzsche says) recurrent patterns, in a genealogy we see the historical processes of coming into being and disappearing of such forms of morality, what we may describe as the dialectical emergence and development of different moralities and their corresponding moral types.[32] Genealogy is meant to bring into view, perhaps even to emphasize, that the source of moral commitment *tends* to lie not in a disinterested acknowledgment of the truth about "the valuable in itself," but in an effort to preserve and persevere in one's way of life.

And it matters, of course, that this is only a tendency, and that once we come to see that moral commitment tends to be the commitment to a familiar way of life because it is familiar, we can also resist that tendency by calling into question our parochial commitments.

Typology and genealogy are both descriptive historical enterprises: typology produces the record of the different forms of morality that have existed, genealogy the record of the processes whereby they have come into being, undergone transformations, disappeared. Neither amounts to an *Umwertung* of values, but both of them bring into view the possibility and necessity of the task by revealing the need to call into question the conception of moral life and of values operative in traditional philosophy—they bring into view "the problem of morality."

It is true that in writing his histories of morality and of philosophical discourse about morality, Nietzsche never ceases to foreground his own allegiances and commitments. But his argumentative strategy does not consist in offering arguments against traditional morality which would be *grounded* on the values to which he subscribes or on those he criticizes. This would be anathema to the very idea that there is something confused and blinding about the traditional project of grounding morality. His strategy consists rather in displaying a range of moral values and systems of values, and showing that, in each case, the commitment to the relevant set of values can invariably be traced back to something other than what is presented as its grounds and which invariably serves the function of perpetuating the way of life to which those values is bound. And note: the crucial point here is not only that *Umwertung* consists in a revision of what one takes to be one's reasons for valuing the particular values that one values—a view arguably shared by Ridley—but also that this revision is a revision of one's concept of what value is, and that it is brought about through the description of the variety of moral types (in typology) and of their genesis (in genealogy), rather than through the deployment of a range of values as standards of assessment for the reevaluation of one's own.[33]

But how could typology and genealogy, and more generally, how could the history of morality bring someone to call into question traditional morality? Would this not amount to an instance of the genetic fallacy? The question itself should be rejected. Nietzsche's works are not intended to be conclusive, in the sense that they are not intended to *command assent on pains of irrationality*. They couldn't be, since on his view, there is ultimately no rational grounding for morality, no set of claims that would show that being rational *requires* committing to a particular morality.[34]

Typologies and genealogies bring into view that systems of values, and the justificatory discourses surrounding them, tend to be such as to promote and perpetuate the particular ways of life of those who subscribe to them; they bring into view that within any given community, there are strong, generally unacknowledged, practical incentives to treat as good, and as good in itself, what is generally taken to be good within those communities. One may react to such descriptive observations in a number of ways. Schematically:

1. Disputing their accuracy.

2. Accepting their accuracy but maintaining that while in other communities people are committed to values simply because they are the dominant ones within their community and mistakenly treat them as valuable in themselves, one's own case is the exception, as one just happens to be part of the one community built around the values that are actually valuable in themselves. There are, moreover, two versions of this stance: some may claim to be committed to the values of their community only because they are the "right ones"; others may acknowledge that they are committed to them because they take them to be the right ones, while also acknowledging that the fact that they are the dominant values of their community has played an important role in their being committed to them.

3. One may also come to think that one's commitment to one's own values, and the various procedures for vindicating the legitimacy of that commitment and the treatment of those values as valuable in themselves, are largely accidental; they largely result from the fact that one is a member of one's own community, and committed to the way of life that is dominant in that community.

To come to think of values in this last way is, effectively, to begin to operate an *Umwertung aller Werte*. But one of the key points here is that Nietzsche's goal as a writer is not to compel all his readers to adopt one such reaction. Typology or genealogy do not impose, conclusively, this change of attitude. They are preliminary studies that provide the source material for a novel conception of values, a form of moral rationality that

offers an alternative to the tradition, and according to which our values are valuable because and insofar as we take them to be valuable.

Once we see this, the oddity of the idea that Nietzschean *Umwertung* could be vulnerable to a *problem of authority* can begin to come into view. The goal of *Umwertung* is precisely to shift away from a conception of values according to which commitment to values is a matter of authority, and thus, according to which the commitment to values must (or even could) be grounded on the authority of rational argument. On Nietzsche's view, commitment to values is *ultimately* groundless; it is the expression of a force, nothing over and above *the individual's commitment* to a way of life, a commitment that can be freely made or passively acquired. Accordingly, the idea of a critique of morality that has the form of a battery of arguments intended to show, *conclusively*, that the reader *should* or *ought* to adopt a difference stance toward their own axiological commitments, and thus, the idea of a critique of morality whose success would depend on its having the authority to command assent over all those whose moral standpoint it targets by virtue of its being grounded on the appropriate evaluative standpoint, is strongly anti-Nietzschean.[35] As Nietzsche himself puts it in his commentary to *Beyond Good and Evil* in *Ecce Homo*, "From this moment forward all my writings are fish hooks: perhaps I know how to fish as well as anyone?—If nothing was caught, I am not to blame. *There were no fish*."[36]

4. Concluding Remarks

One of the key components of the traditional picture of morality is the idea that values are valuable in themselves. It is widely acknowledged—certainly by sophisticated interpreters—that Nietzsche rejected this idea. So how could one hold that the traditional conception of values is still at work in much of contemporary Nietzsche interpretation? There is a number of ways in which one could reject the notion of the valuable in itself while remaining hostage to the traditional view. To go back to the *Euthyphro*, one might, for instance, opt for the alternative offered by Socrates taken literally: the reason that values are valuable is because the gods, or some other recognized higher authority, value them. But one might also adopt what could seem—somewhat naively, in my view—the only alternative: that the value of values is always instrumental.[37] Common to these two "alternatives" is the idea that the individual's commitment to values is—that is, that it ought

to be—rational, in the sense that it must be rationally motivated, hence, *grounded* on reasons: further ends to whose pursuit one is committed, the dictum of what one recognizes as an authority in matters of value, the fact of their being intrinsically valuable. The idea that values are valuable for attitude-independent reasons, and that the commitment to values can and must, accordingly, be grounded on such reasons, is but a notational variant of the traditional idea that values are valuable in themselves.

It is in this respect that I see the traditional conception of morality at work in much contemporary Nietzsche scholarship. It can be seen at work, as I have attempted to show, in conceptions of *Umwertung* according to which the latter is a form of critique consisting in the reappraisal of a set of evalua*ted* values *on the basis of* an evaluative standpoint, and in the very worry about authority that motivates the adoption of such conceptions of *Umwertung*. For the latter are based on the following assumptions: that Nietzsche's aim, as a writer, is to command assent from his target audience; that his strategy is to offer conclusive reasons that must be recognized as such by that audience on pains of irrationality; that such reasons must in fact consist in the audience's pre-existent commitments to a range of values; and that on these values, accordingly, the reevaluation must itself be grounded. But these assumptions jointly betray a conception of values according to which the commitment of values must ultimately be grounded on reason, and according to which the recognition of such reasons ought to be enough to persuade anyone to endorse the relevant values.

To reject such a picture, on the other hand, is not to commit to an irrationalism, both implausible and impracticable, according to which our axiological lives lacks rational structure altogether. It is simply to acknowledge what we have, for a while already, come to accept about epistemic rationality: that being rational does not consist in being able to trace back all our beliefs and values to an unshakable foundation from which they're derivable, but to be able to revise any of them, at any given moment, and to revise them in accordance to the appropriate procedures. Of course, part of Nietzsche's project consists precisely in enquiring into the idea of appropriateness that remains in matters of value, if such a remainder there be. And of course, it is well beyond my present aims to even begin to address that question. My aim has been merely to point out that what is at issue in Nietzschean *Umwertung* is the urgency of this very question: what notion of appropriateness applicable to our commitment to values are we left with once we abandon not only the idea that values

are valuable in themselves, but also the more general, and more deeply engrained assumption that the commitment of values must be grounded in the authority of reason?

Notes

1. The alternative at issue here, the one that is likely to strike us as nonsensical, is not one according to which there is no "real" good but merely a collective treating-things-as-though-they-were-good; it is rather one according to which there is such a thing as the good, but what makes it good is that we take it to be so.

2. Plato, *Euthyphro*, in *Complete Works*, trans. G.M.A. Grube, ed. John M. Cooper and D.S. Hutchinson (Indiana: Hackett Publishing, 1997), 10c (with minor modifications).

3. Ethan Coen and Joel Coen, *The Big Lebowski* (Universal City: Universal Studios Home Entertainment, 1998), DVD.

4. The German *Umwertung* is usually translated as "reevaluation" or "revaluation." I suspect that this choice of translation has lent plausibility to a somewhat inaccurate understanding of the notion within Anglophone scholarship. So I shall use the (contemporary) German *Umwertung* in what follows, except when citing discussions that use "reevaluation," and when citing Nietzsche, where I shall rely on his spelling (consistent with conventions of his time) and write "Umwerthung" and "Werthe."

5. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Genealogy of Morals*, trans. Carol Diethe, ed. Keith Ansel Pearson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), Preface, §6.

6. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, in *Basic Writings*, ed. and trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Random House, 1992), 769.

7. The genetic fallacy, a subspecies of the naturalistic fallacy, consists in deriving normative claims about something from descriptive claims about its origins (where normative claims can be evaluative claims about the value of something, or prescriptive claims about what the appropriate standpoint toward that thing is). E.g., Edmund was born out of wedlock, therefore he is morally deficient (evaluative claim), and must be treated as such (prescriptive claim).

8. Alexander Nehamas, *Nietzsche: Life as Literature* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), 246n1; and Raymond Geuss, "Nietzsche and Genealogy," in *Morality, Culture and History: Essays on German Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 22–23.

9. To suggest this is not, however, to impute to the authors I'll be discussing the view Nietzsche was committed to the idea that values are valuable in themselves. The issue is rather that although they deny this, they operate with, and ascribe to Nietzsche, a concept of "value" that remains too close to the traditional one.

10. A critique of a standpoint S is *external* if and only if it is grounded in (i.e., if the acceptance of its validity requires) the adoption of a standpoint S' that is manifestly excluded by S; otherwise it is *internal*. I shall henceforth use the label "*externalist*" to refer to interpretations according to which Nietzsche's critique of morality was *grounded* in an *evaluative standpoint* external to the moral standpoint it targets, and "*internalist*" to refer to those according to which it is *grounded* on an *evaluative standpoint* internal to its target. In so doing, I am following Ridley et al. in using the pair of labels to refer to views that build on the assumption that Nietzschean critiques are *grounded in evaluative standpoints*, even though this is an assumption that I shall be calling into question.

11. Aaron Ridley, "Nietzsche and the Re-evaluation of Values," in *Nietzsche's* On the Genealogy of Morals: *Critical Essays*, ed. Christa Davis Acampora (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006), 77–92; David Owen, *Nietzsche's Genealogy of Morality* (Stocksfield, UK: Acumen Publishing, 2007), ch. 8; Alison Merrick, "On Genealogy and Transcendent Critique," *Journal of Nietzsche Studies* 47, no. 2 (2016), 228. Although Merrick writes of *immanent* and *transcendent* critiques rather than of *internal* and *external* critiques, her use of the first pair of terms corresponds to my use of the second one.

12. Ridley, "Nietzsche and the Re-evaluation of Values," 78. Note that the passage in question is not written in Ridley's own voice, but is rather a description of the line of reasoning that, on his view, leads to the authority problem. His own solution to the problem, however, is not based on a wholesale rejection of that line of reasoning. He only takes issue with the assumption that the authority of reevaluation must be based on an evaluative standpoint that is *immune* to reevaluation, replacing it by the weaker and more plausible constraint that it be based on a standpoint that is compatible with the one that is the target of reevaluation. Account taken of this emendation, the passage accurately captures Ridley's own conception of how reevaluation is meant to function.

13. Ridley's formulation of the Grounding Requirement, while sufficiently precise for his purposes, is somewhat imprecise for ours. He writes that "*re-evaluation can only be* 'undertaken' *from an evaluative standpoint*," while the idea is in fact that reevaluation must be *grounded on*, rather than merely undertaken from, an evaluative standpoint. To see the difference, and its importance, note that the view that all standpoints are evaluative (in the sense that part of what it is to have a standpoint is to be committed to a range of evaluative standards) makes it vacuously true that all critiques are undertaken from an evaluative standpoint, and is consistent with the view that it is possible to criticize an evaluative standpoint without grounding the critique on an evaluative standpoint by, say, criticizing the conception of values that undergirds it.

14. All citations are from Ridley, "Nietzsche and the Re-evaluation of Values," 78.

15. As I noted in the introduction, part of my goal is to show that the traditional conception of values, as valuable in themselves, is still operative in the reception of Nietzsche's work. But crucially, the suggestion is not that some contemporary interpreters explicitly (and rather implausibly) attribute Nietzsche a conception of values as valuable in themselves. Ridley's insistence on the importance of the Nietzsche's rejection of unconditional values (i.e., values that are valuable in themselves) as one of the potential sources of the authority problem indicates that if the traditional conception of values is operative in his reading of Nietzsche, it is in a much subtler way than through its overt endorsement.

16. Ridley, "Nietzsche and the Re-evaluation of Values," 78.

17. Brian Leiter, *Nietzsche on Morality* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 125 (emphasis added).

18. This *could* seem counterintuitive *on a first approximation*. But the idea that one writes not to persuade those who disagree with one's standpoint, but to articulate why it might be better to agree, for those who already agree, or who at least are on the fence about agreeing, is of course anything except counterintuitive.

19. Merrick, "On Genealogy and Transcendent Critique," 231.

20. Ridley, "Nietzsche and the Re-evaluation of Values," 133.

21. Nietzsche, *Genealogy*, Preface, §2.

22. In the passage, Nietzsche uses the second person plural to address his target audience: "Ob sie e u c h schmecken, diese unsre Früchte?" Nietzsche, *Genealogy*, Preface, §2.

23. See note 10 above.

24. Here, the distinction between what *motivates someone* to put forth a critique and what *grounds* a critique is essential. The present point is not that we should entertain the view that Nietzsche's critique is not motivated by his own values, or that his critiques are undertaken from a standpoint that is axiologically neutral. The point is only that *deploying* the critique need not require either endorsing or rejecting those aspects of the evalua*ted* standpoint that it targets.

25. Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, 739. Note that in section 2 of the foreword to *The Genealogy*, Nietzsche traces the latter's project back to *Human, All Too Human*.

26. In this regard, it seems to me to be right to emphasize, as Ridley, Janaway, and Owen have, the rhetorical importance of Nietzsche's attention to and work on his readers' affects, so long as one does not take the idea to be that Nietzsche's strategy seeks to persuade his audience primarily by engaging their affective capacities instead of his rational capacities, a dichotomy rejected by Nietzsche (a point emphasized by Owen). See Christopher Janaway, *Beyond Selflesness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), esp. chap. 12; Aaron Ridley, *Nietzsche's Conscience: Six Character Studies from the Genealogy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998); and David Owen, "Nietzsche's Genealogy Revisited," *Journal of Nietzsche Studies*, no. 35–36 (2008), 147.

27. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, trans. Walter. Kaufman and R.J. Hollingdale (New York: Vintage Books, 1968), 3.

28. Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, 769.

29. This is not to deny that there are contexts in which Nietzsche uses *Umwertung* to refer to the reevaluation, conceived of as a reversal, of particular sets of values by particular groups of people (e.g., Nietzsche, *Genealogy*, I, §7–§8); but only to indicate the need to distinguish between that restricted sense of *Umwertung* primarily in the earlier occurrences of the term in Nietzsche's writings, and the deeper and more comprehensive one that he embarked upon later on.

30. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage, 1989), 287 (emphasis added).

31. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 287.

32. Nietzsche's terminology suggests that he is thinking of moral systems, and their corresponding moral types, as analogous to biological species; typology would correspond to taxonomy, genealogy to evolutionary theory.

33. See Ridley, "Nietzsche and the Re-evaluation of Values," 81.

34. That there is no rational foundation of morality in the sense at issue here does not entail that being moral is irrational, but only that it is not a requirement for being rational.

35. To insist, the view that I have been defending is not that any of the contemporary interpreters of Nietzsche that I have been discussing make the sophomoric mistake of taking him to subscribe to the idea of values that are valuable in themselves (see notes 9 and 20). The issue is rather that while denying this in letter, their conception of Nietzschean *Umwertung*, according to which it must be "grounded on" or "draw upon" an evaluative standpoint, and of how Nietzsche's texts are meant to work, which might render them vulnerable to an authority problem, betrays the persistence of this traditional conception of values. Ridley, for instance, while arguing that Nietzsche rejected the idea of unconditional values, relies on the idea of intrinsic values, according to which an individual's attitudes toward particular values must be grounded on reasons.

36. Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, 766.

37. While I cannot elaborate on the point here, this is a picture explicitly rejected by Nietzsche in his attack on the British genealogies in the opening sections of the first essay of the *Genealogy*.

Critique in
German Philosophy

From Kant to Critical Theory

Edited by

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