

## ORBIT - Online Repository of Birkbeck Institutional Theses

---

Enabling Open Access to Birkbeck's Research Degree output

### Nietzsche and value of truth

<https://eprints.bbk.ac.uk/id/eprint/40174/>

Version: Full Version

**Citation: Williamson, Emily Amelia (2016) Nietzsche and value of truth. [Thesis] (Unpublished)**

© 2020 The Author(s)

---

All material available through ORBIT is protected by intellectual property law, including copyright law.

Any use made of the contents should comply with the relevant law.

---

# **Nietzsche and the Value of Truth**

by

**Emily Amelia Williamson**

**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for  
the degree of Master in Philosophical Studies (MPhilStud)**

**Birkbeck, University of London, September 2015**

## **Declarations**

I confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own and the work of other persons is appropriately acknowledged.

Signed:

The copyright of this thesis rests with the author and no quotation from it or information derived from it may be published without the prior written consent of the author.

## **Acknowledgment**

I would like to thank my supervisor, Professor Ken Gemes, for his guidance and advice in the preparation of my thesis.

## **Abstract**

My thesis examines the value of truth in the work of Friedrich Nietzsche. The thesis has two parts. The first part focuses on Nietzsche's critique of what he calls the unconditional will to truth, or the conviction that nothing is more valuable than truth. I start by elucidating all the senses of the unconditional will to truth, and then turn to the substance of Nietzsche's critique. I detail the reasons for this critique—Nietzsche's view that the unconditional will to truth denies the nature of both the world and human beings—and reconstruct the genealogical method that Nietzsche uses to expose the unconditional will to truth's internal inconsistencies. Nietzsche's critique undermines the unconditional status of the will to truth, and opens it up to revaluation.

The second part of the thesis focuses on Nietzsche's revaluation of truth. I start by arguing that Nietzsche revalues truth as the driver of rigorous critical inquiry. I show how the notion of honesty is key to this valuation of truth, so much so that Nietzsche designates it one of his four cardinal virtues. Nietzsche differentiates between this new virtuous honesty—epitomised by himself and the so-called free spirits—and a more traditional type of honesty akin to sincerity, by using two different German words. An analysis of the contexts in which Nietzsche uses these terms allows me to paint a detailed picture of their respective meanings. Finally, I explore the role Nietzsche gives to art in helping the free spirits maintain their honesty and truthfulness. Furthermore, I show how creative activity generally, in particular value creation, answers two of Nietzsche's concerns associated with the demise of the unconditional will to truth—how to provide life with meaning and affirm it in all its horror.

## **Table of Contents**

Declarations and acknowledgment	2
Abstract	3
Table of contents	4
Abbreviations	5
Introduction	6
<b>Part 1: Nietzsche's Critique of the Unconditional Value of Truth</b>	
Chapter 1. The will to truth	10
Chapter 2. Why Nietzsche critiques the unconditional will to truth	20
Chapter 3. How Nietzsche critiques the unconditional will to truth	37
<b>Part 2: Nietzsche's Revaluation of Truth</b>	
Chapter 4. How Nietzsche revalues truth	49
Chapter 5. Two degrees of honesty: <i>Ehrlichkeit</i> and <i>Redlichkeit</i>	68
Chapter 6. Art versus honesty	90
Conclusion	114
Bibliography	119

## **Abbreviations**

I use the following abbreviations to reference Nietzsche's works in the thesis.

A— *The Antichrist*

BGE— *Beyond Good and Evil*

BT— *The Birth of Tragedy*

D— *Daybreak: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality*

EH— *Ecce Homo*

GM— *On the Genealogy of Morals*

GS— *The Gay Science*

HAH— *Human, All Too Human*

TI— *Twilight of the Idols*

WTP— *The Will to Power*

Z— *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*

## **Introduction**

Perhaps Nietzsche's most famous pronouncement, from *The Gay Science*, is that God is dead, but that his shadow is still to be vanquished. This shadow is evident in what Nietzsche calls the unconditional will to truth, the conviction that nothing is more valuable than truth. Truth acquired unconditional status from its close association with God. God's commandment against false testimony made the need to tell the truth a moral imperative. Despite the rise of atheism, Nietzsche finds the conviction that nothing is more valuable than truth alive and well at the heart of science, as its driving value, but one that is at odds with science's critical spirit and naturalistic explanations. Worryingly, the unconditional valuation of truth also perpetuates the ascetic ideal, a life-denying affective and conceptual system of thought associated with Judaeo-Christian religion. Nietzsche subjects the unconditional will to truth to critical scrutiny, and questions whether truth should indeed have unconditional status. The first part of the thesis is an exposition of Nietzsche's critique.

In chapter one, I examine the passages of the published works in which Nietzsche discusses the unconditional will to truth. The salient features I identify it as having are: that it is a conviction founded on a moral injunction against deception; that it is contrary to what Nietzsche calls an intellectual conscience, in brief, an interrogative or critical stance towards beliefs and judgments; and that it is a byword for the ascetic ideal. In chapter two, I review Nietzsche's reasons for critiquing the unconditional will to truth. These reasons boil down to two life-denying desires—for the world to be radically different from the way it is, and for us to be radically different from the way we are, especially our need for

falsification to make the world habitable. In chapter three, I focus on Nietzsche's genealogy of the unconditional will to truth, reconstructing his account of its origination and evolution to demonstrate how it is essentially self-negating. It is the unconditional will to truth's refinement into the intellectual conscience that leads to the repudiation of Christian morality and the loss of the unconditional will to truth's grounding. Therefore the time is ripe for the unconditional will to truth itself to undergo critical scrutiny to determine what value it has for life. The second part of the thesis focuses on Nietzsche's revaluation of truth.

I start part two, in chapter four, by arguing that Nietzsche values truth principally as the driver of critical inquiry, over and above any particular result of such inquiry, because it is critical inquiry that overturns life-inimical judgments and prevents new judgments calcifying into dogma. This is in keeping with Nietzsche's rejection of truth in the traditional correspondence sense as absolute and eternal, and his conception of truth as perspectival interpretation. Furthermore, I show how Nietzsche's valuation of truth as the driver of critical inquiry is evident in the positive value he assigns the intellectual conscience, whose sceptical, interrogative spirit crystallises in scientific methods. Such methods are upheld by Nietzsche himself, and by his free spirits, who are characterised by their insatiable curiosity and scrupulous honesty.

In chapter five, I demonstrate the important role that honesty plays in Nietzsche's valuation of truth as the driver of critical inquiry. This is honesty as the frank and unflinching expression of the way things are. It is characterised by intellectual curiosity and a commitment to critical inquiry to the point of self-inflicted cruelty. Nietzsche makes this newer type of honesty one of his four



cardinal virtues, differentiating it from an older, more traditional sort of honesty characterised by sincerity, a closed mind and self-serving self-deception. Nietzsche differentiates between these sorts of honesty by using two different German terms, whose contexts I analyse to provide an account of their respective meanings. Maintaining the newer type of honesty is a punishing task, but one that can be invigorating for insatiably curious types such as Nietzsche himself and the free spirits. However, the realisations it gives rise to could lead them to the brink of illness and suicide were it not for the power of art to falsify, or aestheticise, reality.

In the sixth and final chapter, I examine the tension between Nietzsche's virtue of honesty, and the value he places on art as mitigating honesty's unwelcome effects. I argue that honesty and art are not mutually exclusive, but compatible, with art allowing the maintenance of truthfulness and providing a model of human cognition that Nietzsche sees as conducive to solving problems, including philosophical problems. Nietzsche envisages the final self-overcoming of Christian morality in terms of a union of artistic practices and scientific methods, in which the toxic view of reality that the latter reveal is rendered palatable by the refinements of art, to the extent necessary for health and wellbeing.

Crucially, there is one form of creation that Nietzsche sees as filling a void in meaning left by the self-overcoming of Christian truthfulness and the implosion of the ascetic ideal. It was the conceptual component of the ascetic ideal that provided much-needed meaning for man's existence. Scientific interpretations do not provide existential meaning by themselves, but art, conceived generally

as creation, does. Nietzsche sees that the creation of personalised values informs individuals' goals and actions, invests the world with meaning, and allows them, and indeed mankind, to grow and flourish. Honest individuals take full account of their needs and experiences to avoid creating values rooted in self-deception. Similarly, character stylisation requires an honest account of individuals' strengths and weaknesses before the application of artistic techniques renders the overall effect pleasing. I demonstrate how, for Nietzsche, such honest creative activity is expressive of genuine life affirmation. I close the thesis by providing a comprehensive overview of Nietzsche's inquiry into the value of truth.

## **Part I: Nietzsche's Critique of the Unconditional Value of Truth**

### **Chapter 1. The will to truth**

I start my investigation of Nietzsche's critique of the unconditional value of truth by considering what he means by his oft-repeated expression *the will to truth*. As Scott Jenkins notes, there is disagreement among Nietzsche scholars over the meaning of this expression (Jenkins 2012: 266). To resolve this disagreement, it will be helpful to carefully examine the passages in the published works in which Nietzsche discusses the will to truth. These passages are the fifth book of *The Gay Science*, titled 'We Fearless Ones'; the first part of *Beyond Good and Evil*, titled 'On the Prejudices of Philosophers'; and the third essay of *On the Genealogy of Morals*, titled 'What is the Meaning of Ascetic Ideals?'. Drawing on these texts, I identify four features of the unconditional will to truth: i) that it is a faith or conviction; ii) that it is contrary to what Nietzsche calls an intellectual conscience; iii) that it is a moral injunction against deception; and iv) that it is dependent on what Nietzsche terms the ascetic ideal.

Nietzsche's exposition in *The Gay Science* and *On the Genealogy of Morals* makes plain that the unconditional will to truth is the conviction that truth is the primordial value of all values. In the former work, Nietzsche asserts that science—a domain that is ostensibly hostile to faith—is founded on 'the unconditional will to truth', defined as 'the principle, the faith, the conviction' that '[n]othing is needed *more* than truth, and in relation to it everything else has only second-rate value [...] that truth is more important than any other thing, including every other conviction' (GS: 344). The unconditional will to truth therefore equates to

the maxim “truth at any price” (*ibid.*). Nietzsche provides a similar definition of the unconditional will to truth in *On the Genealogy of Morals*, where he says that ‘it is the faith in a *metaphysical* value, the absolute value of *truth*’ (GM III: 24).

The ‘unconditional’ in ‘the unconditional will to truth’ pertains to two different aspects of the will to truth. Firstly, it pertains to the value of *truth*, as opposed to falsity or untruths, or as Bernard Reginster puts it, ‘the *content* of that will, that is, the unconditional value assigned to knowing the truth’ (Reginster 2013: 453). The unconditionality means that truth is more important than all other values, and that it does not derive its value from any other values. Simon May’s four ‘axioms of “the will to truth”’ are helpful in understanding what it means for the value of truth to be unconditional (May 1999: 151). The axioms are as follows:

- ‘(1) Truth is always more valuable than falsity.
- (2) Truth-seeking is always more valuable than any other activity.
- (3) Truth-telling is always more valuable than deception (whether of myself or others).
- (4) Other activities are valuable [...] only insofar as they enhance truth-knowing, -seeking, or -telling’ (*ibid.*).

Secondly, the ‘unconditional’ pertains to the *belief* in the supreme value of truth, or as Nietzsche writes, the ‘belief that truth is inestimable and cannot be criticised’ (GM III: 25). Nietzsche regards beliefs as ‘a considering-something-true’ (WTP: 15). Therefore belief in the proposition ‘truth is unconditionally valuable’ is a normative commitment to the truth of that proposition. As Reginster notes: ‘The commitment to the value of truth is [...] “unconditional,” since there can be no believing without undertaking such a

commitment' (Reginster 2013: 447). For example, Nietzsche notes that people who take themselves to be free thinkers, or 'free spirits' as he calls them, are actually anything but free in thought because they '*still have faith in truth*' (GM III: 24). It is the unconditionality of this faith that prevents them being free spirits: 'it is precisely in their faith in truth that they are more rigid and unconditional than anyone' (*ibid.*). The two aspects of the unconditionality of the will to truth can therefore be summarised as the will to truth is an unconditional belief or conviction in the unconditional value of truth.

Nietzsche says that those who uphold the will to truth—"men of knowledge", including atheists and sceptics—have an 'intellectual conscience' and insist 'on intellectual cleanliness' (*ibid.*). Elsewhere, Nietzsche uses the term *intellektuellen Rechtschaffenheit*, which translates as intellectual integrity or honesty (A: 12). An intellectual conscience is the preserve of a select few. It involves submitting each and every belief to critical scrutiny through a painstaking examination of the evidence for and against before deciding whether to adopt or reject it:

*'the great majority of people lacks an intellectual conscience [...] does not consider it contemptible to believe this or that and to live accordingly, without first having given themselves an account of the final and most certain reasons pro and con, and without even troubling themselves about such reasons afterward: the most gifted men and the noblest women still belong to this "great majority"'* (GS: 2).

The ability to submit beliefs to such rigorous examination marks the essential difference between free thinkers and 'fettered spirits' (HAH 1: 225). The free

thinker, with his 'spirit of truth-investigation' 'demands reasons' whereas the fettered spirits 'demand faith' (*ibid.*). Importantly, such critical scrutiny of beliefs is a continual and never-ending process that is the responsibility of each individual. For Nietzsche, any judgment is only ever temporary, and always liable to revision, however strong the belief in it. For example, he notes: 'At times we find certain solutions of problems that inspire strong faith in *us*; some call them henceforth *their* "convictions." Later—we see them only as steps to self-knowledge' (BGE: 231).

We must guard against beliefs turning into convictions if we are to be intellectually conscientious. Convictions are antithetical to an intellectual conscience because they signal a lack of independent critical scrutiny. Hence Nietzsche writes that: 'Convictions are prisons. They do not see far enough, they do not see things *beneath* them: but to be permitted to speak about value and disvalue one must see five hundred convictions *beneath* one—*behind* one' (A: 54). The 'man of conviction', with his need for incontrovertible judgments—'some unconditional Yes and No' as Nietzsche puts it—is weak of will, and reliant on preexisting convictions rather than his own intellect to guide his existence (*ibid.*). Yet being intellectually honest involves making 'every Yes and No a question of conscience' (*op. cit.* 50). In fact, rather than settling for yes and no at all, Nietzsche suggests we should only ever settle for maybe. Nietzsche sees that the philosophers of the future will trade in 'dangerous maybes' (BGE 2).

The upshot is that there is at least one point about which the men of knowledge are *not* intellectually conscientious—their conviction that truth is unconditionally

valuable. This conviction enjoys unconditional status and has not been subjected to the critical inquiry that an intellectual conscience demands. As Nietzsche sums this up in book four of *The Gay Science*: 'what gives you the right to consider such a judgment true and infallible? For this *faith*—is there no conscience for that? Have you never heard of an intellectual conscience? A conscience behind your "conscience"?' (GS: 335).

As I mention above, Nietzsche takes the conviction that 'truth is more important than [...] every other conviction' to be the founding principle of science. Yet as a conviction, it is contrary to scientific method and inquiry. Hence Nietzsche writes: 'Would it not be the first step in the discipline of the scientific spirit that one would not permit oneself any more convictions?' (*op. cit.* 344). The conviction would be all very well if truth and only truth was useful to mankind. Yet Nietzsche sees untruth as also being useful: 'Precisely this conviction could never have come into being if both truth and untruth constantly proved to be useful, which is the case' (*ibid.*). I expand on Nietzsche's view of the utility and value of untruths in the next chapter. The important point here is that Nietzsche's belief that untruths are useful, indeed essential, to life leads him to argue that the founding principle of science—the will to truth—is not based on 'a calculus of utility' at all, but on a moral injunction against deception (*ibid.*). Specifically, the will to truth is tantamount to a desire not to deceive others or ourselves: "will to truth" does *not* mean "I will not allow myself to be deceived" but—there is no alternative—"I will not deceive, not even myself"; *and with that we stand on moral ground*' (*ibid.*). Yet for Nietzsche, deception is an intrinsic part of life and thought, an idea I return to in the next chapter.

Nietzsche believes that the moral injunction against deception originally evolved from a fear of being deceived by others. Nietzsche does not explain in GS: 344 exactly where this fear of deception came from, apart from saying that we think that it is 'harmful, dangerous, calamitous', but his notebooks suggest an answer. If someone in society is prone to deceive and dissimulate, it means they are unknowable and unpredictable, and therefore could be dangerous. The 'demand for truthfulness' arises from the attempt to counteract this danger:

'Within a herd, within any community [...] the overestimation of truthfulness makes good sense. Not to be deceived—and consequently, as a personal point of morality, not to deceive! [...] In dealing with what lies outside, danger and caution demand that one should be on one's guard against deception [...] Mistrust as the source of truthfulness' (WTP: 278).

This is part and parcel of our desire for the world to be stable and predictable, to minimise the anxiety that the opposing conditions occasion us. Such anxiety is a form of suffering: 'contradiction, deception, change—causes of suffering! [...] the will to truth is [...] merely the desire for a world of the constant' (*op. cit.* 585). At first glance, this evolutionary explanation seems to cast doubt on Nietzsche's insistence that untruth is necessary for survival, a charge I attempt to deflect in my reading of Nietzsche's conception of truth and untruth in chapter four.

The final aspect of the will to truth I highlight is its relationship to the ascetic ideal. Nietzsche says that the will to truth is '*faith in the ascetic ideal itself*, even if as an unconscious imperative'; and that the will to truth is 'sanctioned and guaranteed by [the ascetic] ideal alone (it stands or falls with this ideal)' (GM III: 24). The ascetic ideal is 'one of the most widespread and enduring of all phenomena' (*op. cit.* 11). It is a 'closed system of will, goal and interpretation'



that manifests itself in our principal systems of thought, namely, religion and science (*op. cit.* 23). The term *science* (*Wissenschaft*) is shorthand for all scholarly subjects, including the natural sciences.

There seem to be two components to the ascetic ideal: an affective component and a conceptual one. The affective component takes the form of a deep-seated repulsion or aversion to the world and everything in it. This results in a desire to transcend life. Hence Nietzsche defines the ascetic ideal as:

‘this hatred of the human, and even more of the animal, and more still of the material, this horror of the senses, of reason itself, this fear of happiness and beauty, this longing to get away from all appearance, change, becoming, death, wishing, from longing itself—all this means—let us dare to grasp it—a *will to nothingness*, an aversion to life, a rebellion against the most fundamental presuppositions of life, but it is and remains a *will!*... And [...] man would rather will *nothingness* than *not will*’ (*op. cit.* 28).

The desire to transcend life, ‘this longing to get away’, manifests itself in different ways. In the Judaeo-Christian tradition, the ascetic priest is the embodiment of the ascetic ideal. The priest represents ‘the incarnate desire to be different, to be in a different place’ (*op. cit.* 13). His greatest desire is to escape the earthly realm altogether, and he treats life as merely ‘a bridge’ that leads to ‘quite a different mode of existence which it opposes and excludes’ (*op. cit.* 11). He believes this alternative mode of existence to be far superior to earthly life, a realm where humanness, with all of its passions, pains and suffering, is transcended.

In science, the desire for transcendence takes the form of a dispassionate quest for unconditional truths, a quest that hankers after a world unlike the one that actually exists. Nietzsche does not believe that there is an otherworldly realm of any description, and therefore does not see that there is anywhere to transcend to. This is why he calls the ascetic ideal ‘a will to nothingness’ (I owe this point to Richard Schacht 2013: 339). The will to nothingness also points to the demand endemic to science for an ascetic attitude towards truth-seeking, namely, the suppression of emotions, passions and instincts, or as Nietzsche puts it, ‘the affects grown cool, the tempo of life slowed down, dialectic in place of instinct’ (GM III: 25). In Nietzsche’s view, to stamp out such affective states completely is to stamp out life itself.

Yet although the desire for transcendence is a desire for nothingness, it at least provides believers in the ascetic ideal with something to will for. Nietzsche sees the need to will something, the need for a goal, as a fundamental feature of ‘the human will’: ‘*That the ascetic ideal has meant so many things to man, however, is an expression of the basic fact of the human will, its *horror vacui*. It needs a goal—and it will rather will *nothingness* than *not* will*’ (op. cit. 1). So it would be a mistake to think that the ascetic ideal is just the “life *against* life” affectation (op. cit. 13). In providing a focus for willing, the ascetic ideal is a means of preserving life, and this is the reason for its endurance: ‘*the ascetic ideal springs from the protective instinct of a degenerating life which tries by all means to sustain itself and to fight for its existence*’ (ibid.). It is the conceptual component of the ascetic ideal that serves this life-preserving function. By ascribing meaning to the psychological sickness of world-weariness and self-

disgust, the ascetic ideal is a palliative to this sickness. Nietzsche sees that meaningless suffering is worse than suffering per se:

‘Apart from the ascetic ideal, man, the human *animal*, had no meaning [...] His existence on earth contained no goal; “why man at all?”—was a question without an answer [...] The meaninglessness of suffering, *not* suffering itself, was the curse that lay over mankind so far—and the ascetic ideal offered man meaning!’ (*op. cit.* 28).

In brief, the Judaeo-Christian tradition alleviates suffering by giving it a new meaning of just punishment for sin. Thus ‘the invalid has been transformed into “the sinner”’, and his suffering is reinterpreted as ‘feelings of guilt, fear, and punishment’ (*op. cit.* 20). This reinterpretation is effective in relieving man’s depression and world-weariness by producing ‘orgies’ of other feelings associated with guilt and punishment, and by awakening his interest in life with mysterious religious notions including ‘the secrets of the torture chamber, the inventiveness of hell’ (*ibid.*). The highest metaphysical value animating this religious tradition is of course God, a being whom Nietzsche says is synonymous with truth: ‘the Christian faith, which was also Plato’s, that God is truth, that truth is *divine*’ (*op. cit.* 24).

Science alleviates suffering in a different way. This is a domain where ‘so much that is useful remains to be done’ in terms of research and discovery (*op. cit.* 23). This provides scholars with a very good reason to engage themselves in endless academic endeavours, and in their industriousness, forget their suffering. In burying themselves in their work, scholars do not have to confront their own ‘discontent, disbelief, gnawing worm, *despectio sui*, bad

conscience' (*ibid.*). Hence Nietzsche says that science is a 'means of self-narcosis' (*ibid.*). Science has shrugged off religion's 'dogmatic concepts [...] ("God," "soul," "freedom," "immortality")' in the name of the ostensibly objective study of real life (*op. cit.* 25). Yet the highest metaphysical value animating scientific endeavour is God by another name—truth. As Nietzsche puts it: 'science and the ascetic ideal, both rest on the same foundation [...] on the same overestimation of truth (more exactly: on the same belief that truth is inestimable and cannot be criticised). Therefore they are *necessarily* allies' (*ibid.*). In this way, science is simply the most recent development of the ascetic ideal, and indeed its strongest manifestation. I expand on the connection between science and religion with reference to the will to truth in the third chapter.

The four aspects of the will to truth that I have outlined provide the basis for a thorough understanding of why Nietzsche questions the will to truth. This is the subject of the next chapter. The important point to note for now is that the will to truth itself, or rather, the inconsistencies at its heart, gives rise to such questioning. Thus Nietzsche writes in *Beyond Good and Evil* 'what questions has this will to truth not laid before us! What strange, wicked, questionable questions!' (BGE: 1). The questions are why we value truth, and if we do, why we should value truth: 'What in us really wants "truth"?', and, 'Suppose we want truth: *why not rather* untruth? and uncertainty? even ignorance?' (*ibid.*). The questions are strange and wicked because posing them—calling the will to truth into question—goes against a philosophical tradition that takes for granted that truth is unconditionally valuable.

## **Part I: Nietzsche's Critique of the Unconditional Value of Truth**

### **Chapter 2. Why Nietzsche critiques the unconditional will to truth**

Part of the reason that Nietzsche critiques the unconditional will to truth is because he believes that it constrains life more than it enhances it. In other words, he sees the effects of the unconditional will to truth as more life-denying than life-affirming. In short, the unconditional will to truth leads to two life-denying desires—for the world to be radically different from the way it is, and for us to be radically different from the way we are. Nietzsche summarises these desires in a note as follows: '1. How can one get free from the false, merely apparent world? [...]; 2. how can one become oneself as much as possible the antithesis of the character of the apparent world?' (WTP: 584). I address these points in turn, first by looking at how the unconditional will to truth denies the nature of the world, and then by looking at how it denies our nature—specifically, our need for falsification to make life possible, and illusion to make life bearable. I then dispel the thought that Nietzsche values untruth more highly than truth, by showing how untruth can work against life, and how the value that truth and untruth have for life is more important than the value of truth and untruth per se.

#### ***How the unconditional will to truth denies the nature of the world***

Nietzsche identifies in the unconditional will to truth a belief in 'a "true" world', and at the heart of this belief, he sees a desire to 'get free from the false, merely apparent world' (*ibid.*). Here Nietzsche is referring to the distinction that philosophers have drawn between the 'apparent' world or the world of appearance—made up of all the things we perceive around us—and the 'real' or

‘true’ world—conceived as an order of immutable mind-independent objects or things-in-themselves. This ‘real’ or ‘true’ world has properties of permanence, uniformity and stability. As Nietzsche puts it, ‘the true world, to which one seeks the way, cannot contradict itself, cannot change, cannot become, has no beginning and no end’ (*ibid.*). This is the world where ‘truths’ are traditionally thought to be found, and to which they are traditionally thought to correspond. This is why Nietzsche says that ‘the will to truth is [...] merely the desire for a world of the constant’ (*op. cit.* 585). The conviction that there is nothing more valuable than truth therefore equates to the conviction that there is nothing more valuable than constancy.

However, Nietzsche believes that the idea of an eternal and immutable world order—a ‘world of the unconditional and self-identical’—is pure invention (BGE: 4). For Nietzsche, there is no world apart from the so-called apparent world, and indeed the very distinction between real or true, and apparent or false, is redundant. As he puts it: ‘The “apparent” world is the only one: the “real” world has only been *lyingly added*’ (TI III: 2); and ‘[t]he “true world” and the “apparent world”—that means: the mendaciously invented world and reality’ (EH Preface: 2). Moreover, as Nietzsche sees it, the world is an ever-changing, chaotic, ambiguous mass of units of power. It has properties of ‘change, becoming, multiplicity, opposition, contradiction, war’ (WTP: 584). The notion of a ‘real’ or ‘true’ world as a timeless, stable and immutable realm is a gross misconception. Yet this is the conception of the world that Nietzsche sees scholars affirming through their faith in the unconditional value of truth. Even those who have renounced the notion of correspondence truths, or things-in-themselves, affirm the notion of a true world if they uphold truth as an unconditional value. This is

because, in Nietzsche's eyes, the unconditional value of truth is but another manifestation of belief in a true world:

'The truthful man, in the audacious and ultimate sense presupposed by the faith in science, *thereby affirms another world* than that of life, nature, and history; and insofar as he affirms this "other world," does this not mean that he has to deny its antithesis, this world, *our world?*' (GM III: 24).

In this way, scholars who ascribe unconditional value to truth still perpetuate the notion of a world that does not exist, one that opposes the nature of the material world in which everything is interconnected and interdependent. Hence scholars are affirming nothingness, and their unconditional valuation of truth is a form of nihilism (I owe this point to May 1999: 155-156). Another important aspect of the scholar's affirmation of another world has to do with the will to truth's moral justification, which is something I address in the next chapter.

The scholar's affirmation of the 'true' world goes hand in hand with his withdrawal from the material world. There are two aspects to the scholar's withdrawal: passivity, that is, spectating on life but not participating in it, and the repression of emotions and personal interests. Nietzsche does not see the scholar's quest for 'true' knowledge through scientific or objective research as a form of active engagement with the world, but a form of passive reflection on it. Hence he describes the scholar, or 'objective person', as a mere 'instrument for measuring' or 'an arrangement of mirrors' (BGE: 207). This type of person has no personality or individuality, none of his own 'substance and content', but doggedly applies himself to his research tasks, to 'whatever wants to be known, without any other pleasure than that found in knowing and "mirroring"' (*ibid.*). The scholar has divorced himself from his personal feelings, desires and

interests. Hence his life is characterised by ‘the affects grown cool, the tempo of life slowed down, dialectic in place of instinct, seriousness imprinted on faces and gestures (seriousness, the most unmistakable sign of [...] struggling, laborious life’ (GM III: 25). The scholar’s repression of his feelings is partly due to the mistaken belief that this will aid his objectivity, but also to his need to forget his suffering. In this way, science is ‘a means of self-narcosis’ (*op. cit.* 23). All in all, scholarly pursuits involve ‘a certain *impoverishment of life*’ (*op. cit.* 25), even ‘a concealed will to death’ (GS: 344).

Nietzsche sees the dispassionate mode of inquiry that science promotes as ineffectual and counterproductive. Not only is it a passive, rather than an active, way of engaging with the world, but it is extremely limited in terms of what it allows us to understand of the world. Hence Nietzsche writes that ‘an interpretation that permits counting, calculating, weighing, seeing, and touching, and nothing more’, otherwise known as “a scientific” interpretation of the world’, could well be ‘one of the *most stupid* of all possible interpretations of the world, meaning that it would be one of the poorest in meaning’ (*op. cit.* 373). The reason Nietzsche says this is because he believes that the only way we experience or grasp anything is by means of ‘affective interpretations’ that are always from a particular interested or partial perspective. There is no way of eliminating particularity from an interpretation. As Nietzsche notes: ‘The perspective [...] decides the character of the “appearance”! As if a world would still remain over after one deducted the perspective!’ (WTP: 567). As each perspectival interpretation captures only a tiny fraction of what is otherwise infinitesimally complex, the closest we can get to objectivity is to entertain the greatest number of interpretations as possible in order to obtain as rounded a



picture as possible: 'There is *only* a perspectiv[al] seeing, *only* a perspectiv[al] "knowing"; and the *more* affects [subjective feelings] we allow to speak about one thing, the *more* eyes, different eyes, we can use to observe one thing, the more complete will our "concept" of this thing, our "objectivity," be' (GM: III: 12). Even if it were possible to suspend our feelings, this would incapacitate the intellect and thwart any understanding: to 'suspend each and every affect, supposing we were capable of this—what would that mean but to *castrate* the intellect?' (*ibid.*).

The unconditional will to truth devalues our world in favour of an impossible conception of it as a "world of truth", where it is stripped of its '*rich ambiguity*' (GS: 373). The reverence for the world of truth is the 'reverence for everything that lies beyond your horizon' (*ibid.*). Yet Nietzsche sees nothing beyond this horizon, and therefore regards any attempt to go beyond it as futile. The only arena in which truth-seeking takes place and truths are created (more of this in chapter four) is this world, the so-called apparent world: 'if, with the virtuous enthusiasm and clumsiness of some philosophers, one wanted to abolish the "apparent world" altogether—well, supposing *you* could do that, at least nothing would be left of your "truth" either' (BGE: 34). It makes more sense to appreciate the world we have, for all its constant change and ambiguity. Nietzsche thinks the Greeks had the right idea about life—they embraced the world of appearance, realising that there is nothing to be gained from reaching beyond it: 'Oh, those Greeks! They knew how to live. What is required for that is to stop courageously at the surface, the fold, the skin, to adore appearance, to believe in forms, tones, worlds, in the whole Olympus of appearance. Those Greeks were superficial—*out of profundity*' (GS Preface: 4).

The unconditional will to truth also devalues our mode of cognition, for we tend to believe that ‘our square little reason’ is the necessary means of accessing or mastering the world of truth (GS: 373). The application of reason involves the attempt to adopt a perspective-free viewpoint, specifically, the ‘renunciation of all interpretation (of forcing, adjusting, abbreviating, omitting, padding, inventing, falsifying, and whatever else is of the *essence* of interpreting)’ (GM III: 24). This is absurd, because, as Nietzsche sees it, there is no cognition without perspectival interpretation, and there is no possibility of obtaining a perspective-free view of the world: ‘That mountain there! That cloud there! What is “real” in that? Subtract the phantasm and every human *contribution* from it, my sober friends! If you *can*! [...] There is no “reality” for us—not for you either’ (GS: 57). As interpretations are the only means we have of representing the world, they are the only means by which life takes place: ‘there would be no life at all if not on the basis of perspectival estimates and appearances’ (BGE: 34).

### ***How the unconditional will to truth denies our need for falsification***

For Nietzsche, falsification is an integral part of human cognition. It occurs as a result of the transformation of raw sense data into conscious mental content. As I explained above, Nietzsche believes that we experience the world by means of perspectival interpretations or, to use Lanier Anderson’s term, ‘cognitive representations’ (Anderson 2005: 188). These representations arise from the confluence of the raw sense data with our concepts of logic and reason. In its original form, the original sense data or ‘material of the senses’ is chaotic and obscure, mirroring the way the world is. It is only the imposition of our concepts of logic and reason that transforms the material into something

“recognisable” (WTP: 569). Nietzsche summarises this process as: ‘the fuzziness and chaos of the sense impressions are, as it were, logicised’ (*ibid.*).

Consequently, all cognitive representations are falsifications in the sense that they are distortions of the original sense material. In other words, the falsification is of the sense material, rather than of a ‘true’ world of independent things-in-themselves. This means there is only one world, the world of the senses, but formless and formed versions of it: ‘the antithesis of this phenomenal world is not “the true world,” but the formless unformulable world of the chaos of sensations—*another kind* of phenomenal world, a kind “unknowable” for us’ (*ibid.*). The idea of our experiences being founded on an unknowable world of sensations could be seen as bringing back the distinction between appearance and reality that Nietzsche says he rejects. However, I think Nietzsche would resist this charge because, in his view, the senses ‘show [us] becoming, passing away, change’, indicating that we do experience these things (TI III: 2). Perhaps he describes the chaos of sensations as “unknowable” to indicate a lack of correspondence between the chaos of sensations and our epistemological categories of reason. As Christoph Cox expresses this idea: ‘we might say that the world outside of our rational interpretation is [...] “unknowable for us” in the sense that it does not conform to the rational structure of our ordinary experience’ (Cox 1999: 146).

This rational structure is a function of consciousness. Consciousness serves a social purpose, namely, the need to communicate with others. Hence Nietzsche says that ‘[c]onsciousness is really only a net of communication between human beings’ (GS: 354). Consciousness evolved to enable us to communicate our

need for help and protection to others. In other words, it was useful to our survival. Successful communication requires us to use the same language, or signs, in order to be understood, such 'that consciousness does not really belong to man's individual existence but rather to his social or herd nature' (*ibid.*). In this way, when we become conscious of sense material, we 'fix' it using 'signs' in order to render it communicable, and in so doing, translate it 'into the perspective of the herd', rendering it a distorted version of the original (*ibid.*). This explains Nietzsche's understanding of 'becoming conscious' as 'a great and thorough corruption, falsification, reduction to superficialities, and generalisation' (*ibid.*).

What renders the sense material recognisable and communicable is our 'logic and [...] categories of reason' (WTP: 584). These allow us to 'reduce the confusing multiplicity to a purposive and manageable schema' (*ibid.*). By logic and categories of reason, Nietzsche has in mind such notions as equality, substances, movement, and cause and effect. Yet even though these concepts are inventions, falsifications, they are essential for life:

'We have arranged for ourselves a world in which we can live—by positing bodies, lines, planes, causes and effects, motion and rest, form and content; without these articles of faith nobody now could endure life. But that does not prove them. Life is no argument. The conditions of life might include error' (GS: 121).

For example, early people who were able to quickly perceive different predatory creatures and edible materials as being alike were more likely to survive, despite the fact that 'nothing is really equal' (*op. cit.* 111). Substances do not

refer to anything real, but merely obscure the fact that everything is constantly changing: 'the beings that did not see [the changes in things] so precisely had an advantage over those that saw everything "in flux"' (*ibid.*). The concept of cause and effect simplifies 'an infinite number of processes' occurring simultaneously, which presumably would be overwhelming and unfathomable (*op. cit.* 112). We isolate cause and effect from this multitude of processes, but 'such a duality probably never exists; in truth we are confronted by a continuum out of which we isolate a couple of pieces [...] The suddenness with which many effects stand out misleads us; actually, it is sudden only for us' (*ibid.*). Our mistake, says Nietzsche, is to mischaracterise these logical notions as tools for establishing what is true and real, rather than tools for 'making the world manageable and calculable' (WTP: 584). In other words, we believe our logical notions to be criteria for discovering 'truth and *reality*', when they are really 'a system of systematic falsification' (*ibid.*).

The unconditional will to truth advocates renouncing all such falsifications precisely because they are not true. Yet such renunciation would be suicidal because it is only by means of these falsifications that life is possible:

'the falsest judgments [...] are the most indispensable for us [...] without accepting the fictions of logic, without measuring reality against the purely invented world of the unconditional and self-identical, without a constant falsification of the world by means of numbers, man could not live [...] renouncing false judgments would mean renouncing life and a denial of life' (BGE: 4).

The process of representation or interpretation enables us to carve a world for ourselves out of obscure, tumultuous and ambiguous sense data. The

imposition of order and form on the overwhelming disorder and chaos of the original sense material is necessary because it makes the world regular, predictable and comprehensible, and therefore habitable. The world that emerges is of our own creation, and it is the only world there is:

‘In all perception, i.e., in the most original appropriation, what is essentially happening is [...] an imposition of shapes upon things [...] Thus arises our world, our whole world: and no supposed “true reality”, no “in-themselves of things” corresponds to this whole world which we have created, belonging to us alone” (1885: Notebook 38 [10]).

### ***How the unconditional will to truth denies our need for illusions***

Nietzsche believes that we need illusion to make life bearable, as a counter to the suffering that existence inevitably entails. This suffering is especially problematic because there does not appear to be any reason for it. Nietzsche diagnoses the meaninglessness of suffering as the modern-day scourge:

‘man was surrounded by a fearful *void*—he did not know how to justify, to account for, to affirm himself; he *suffered* from the problem of meaning. He also suffered otherwise, he was in the main a sickly animal: but his problem was *not* suffering itself, but that there was no answer to the crying question, “*why* do I suffer?” Man, the bravest of animals and the one most accustomed to suffering, does *not* repudiate suffering as such; he *desires* it, he even seeks it out, provided he is shown *a meaning* for it, a *purpose* of suffering. The meaninglessness of suffering, *not* suffering itself, was the curse that lay over mankind so far’ (GM III: 28).

This lack of meaning, for suffering as well as for existence, is one of the reasons that the ascetic ideal became so entrenched, an idea I return to in the

next chapter. It is a certain type of person that experiences this problem of a lack of meaning—‘nobly formed natures’, who ‘feel profoundly the weight and burden of existence, and must be deluded by exquisite stimulants into forgetfulness of their displeasure’ (BT: 18). These exquisite stimulants can take various forms, and Nietzsche highlights three in particular. First is the ‘Socratic love of knowledge’, which promotes the ‘delusion’ that knowledge can ‘heal the eternal wound of existence’ and provides a purpose in the quest for truth (*ibid.*). Second is ‘art’s seductive veil of beauty’, which distracts us with its ‘great and sublime forms’ (*ibid.* and *op. cit.* 21). Third is ‘the metaphysical comfort’ to be found in the notion of ‘eternal life’ provided by tragic myths (*op. cit.* 18). These three manifestations of illusion give the noble types a reason to keep living: ‘the insatiable will always finds a way to detain its creatures in life and compel them to live on, by means of an illusion spread over things’ (*ibid.*). Here I am going to concentrate on artistic illusion, because this is Nietzsche’s focus in his later works such as *The Gay Science*, and because the apparent tension between art and the intellectual conscience provides important insights into Nietzsche’s view of the value of truth. This is something I address in chapter six.

Nietzsche says that art makes life tolerable: ‘[a]rt [is] the *good* will to appearance [...] As an aesthetic phenomenon existence is still *bearable* for us’ (GS: 107). Art makes life tolerable because it beautifies what is ugly or repellant about life, specifically, truth: ‘Truth is ugly. We possess *art* lest we *perish of the truth*’ (WTP: 822). Truth is ugly because it encompasses everything we find unpalatable, painful and deplorable about life and human nature, and I say more about this in chapter four. Essentially, artists teach us how to disguise this ugliness—how to ‘make things beautiful, attractive, and

desirable for us when they are not’—which allows us to experience them as valuable (GS: 299). Artists also teach us how to apply this skill outside the artistic domain, to ourselves, enabling us to be ‘the poets of our life’ (*ibid.*). This means we are able to emphasise certain aspects of ourselves and underplay others to obtain an overall favourable impression or positive valuation of ourselves:

‘Only artists [...] have taught us to esteem the hero that is concealed in everyday characters; only they have taught us the art of viewing ourselves as heroes—from a distance and, as it were, simplified and transfigured—the art of staging and watching ourselves. Only in this way can we deal with some base details in ourselves’ (*op. cit.* 78).

Nietzsche characterises artistic practice in terms of deception and untruth. For example, Nietzsche says that art is ‘this kind of cult of the untrue’ (*op. cit.* 107), where ‘the *lie* is sanctified and the *will to deception* has a good conscience’ (GM III: 25). He describes an artist as: ‘Falseness with a good conscience; the delight in simulation [...] the inner craving for a role and mask, for *appearance*’ (GS: 361). The unconditional will to truth requires that we reject lies and deception purely on the grounds that they are not true. For example, Nietzsche says that religion, which promotes truthfulness as its highest moral standard, ‘relegates art, *every* art, to the realm of *lies*; with its absolute standards, beginning with the truthfulness of God, it negates, judges, and damns art’ (BT Attempt at Self-Criticism: 5). Yet art is valuable because it provides new perspectives on both ourselves and life in general, allowing us to see both in a new appreciative light (I owe this point to Janaway 2014: 55). Nietzsche expresses the point thus: ‘Without this art we would be nothing but



foreground and live entirely in the spell of that perspective which makes what is closest at hand and most vulgar appear as if it were vast, and reality itself' (GS: 78). In short, art allows us to affirm life.

***How deception can be as life-denying as the unconditional will to truth***

Contrary to what Nietzsche says are our 'accustomed value feelings'—presumably those that accord ultimate value to truth—untruth proves to be just as useful as truth. Hence Nietzsche writes that 'untruth [is] a condition of life' (BGE: 4). I have shown two ways in which untruth can be considered a condition of life. Untruths in the sense of falsifications are necessary for us to make sense of the overwhelming chaos of sense material and create a habitable world for ourselves, and untruths in the sense of artistic illusions are necessary to make life bearable. In this way, untruths are valuable because they have practical utility for life. Thus Nietzsche uncouples the truth of a interpretation from its value. In other words, we should value an interpretation for how beneficial it is to life, rather than for how accurately it represents the world. As Nietzsche puts it: 'The falseness of a judgment is for us not necessarily an objection to a judgment [...] The question is to what extent it is life-promoting, life-preserving, species-preserving, perhaps even species-cultivating' (*ibid.*).

Nietzsche repudiates the unconditional will to truth insofar as it recommends the rejection of 'semblance, meaning error, deception, simulation, delusion, self-delusion' (GS: 344). Such rejection is hostile to life, the stuff of which is 'semblance, art, deception, points of view, and the necessity of perspectives and error' (BT Attempt at Self-Criticism: 5). However, this does not mean either

that Nietzsche rejects the will to truth wholesale, or that he venerates in place of the will to truth the 'will to deception' (BGE: 2) or the 'will to appearance' (GS: 107). The will to truth does have positive connotations in Nietzsche's work, particularly in conjunction with the notion of intellectual conscience, on which I elaborate in chapter four. In brief, the will to truth can be manifested in healthy or unhealthy ways, with Christians and scholars manifesting it in an unhealthy way (I owe this point to Gemes 2006). Similarly, deception can work against life. It can work against life precisely when the deception is 'unconditional and otherworldly', rather than 'conditional and this-worldly', as Cox points out (Cox 1999: 42).

Christianity is a form of deception that manifests both unconditionality and otherworldliness. Nietzsche objects to Christianity's pretensions to ultimacy, to be the supreme power. Hence Nietzsche notes: 'one always pays dearly and terribly when religions [...] insist on having their own *sovereign* way, when they themselves want to be ultimate ends and not means among other means' (BGE: 62). The people that pay are the 'higher' or stronger types, for whom religious dogma is particularly constrictive and potentially destructive. Moreover, the absolutism of religious teachings places them beyond question or critical scrutiny. Beliefs held uncritically, on the basis of faith alone, are contrary to an intellectual conscience:

'One sort of honesty has been alien to all founders of religion and their kind: They have never made their experiences a matter of conscience for knowledge. "What did I really experience? What happened in me and around me at that time? Was my reason bright enough? Was my will opposed to all deceptions of the senses and bold in resisting the fantastic?"

None of them has asked such questions, nor do any of our dear religious people ask them even now. On the contrary, they thirst after things that *go against reason*, and they do not wish to make it too hard for themselves to satisfy it' (GS: 319).

Nietzsche also objects to the way in which Christianity's sanctification of an otherworldly eternal realm, heaven, and an otherworldly being, God, leads its adherents to recoil from this life in the unfounded belief that their 'real' lives in the otherworldly realm are still to come, whereupon the suffering occasioned by their existence on earth will be over:

'Christianity was from the beginning, essentially and fundamentally, life's nausea and disgust with life, merely concealed behind, masked by, dressed up as, faith in "another" or "better" life. Hatred of "the world," condemnations of the passions, fear of beauty and sensuality, a beyond invited the better to slander this life, at bottom a craving of the nothing, for the end, for respite' (BT Attempt at Self-Criticism: 5).

Nietzsche views interpretations that are conditional and contingent more favourably because they share the same characteristics as the world and, as such, affirm the world. As Cox puts the point, 'only those interpretations that affirm this conditionality, contingency, and relativity will affirm life' (Cox 1999: 43). The usefulness or life-enhancing nature of such interpretations varies by person and by time. What enhances the life of a 'higher' or stronger type of person does the very opposite for a weaker type: 'What serves the higher type of men as nourishment or delectation must almost be poison for a very different and inferior type' (BGE: 30). Even for the same person, what is life-enhancing will change over time: 'At times we find certain solutions of problems that inspire strong faith in *us*; some call them henceforth *their* "convictions." Later—we see

them only as steps to self-knowledge, signposts to the problem we *are*' (*op. cit.* 231).

How exactly is life enhanced? Here I follow May in elucidating three criteria that Nietzsche values for being life-enhancing—power, power sublimation and the creation of form (May 1999: 26). Power does not just take the form of strength or force, but also the feeling or sensation of power. Nietzsche believes that anything that heightens our feeling of power is life-enhancing: 'What is good?—All that heightens the feeling of power, the will to power, power itself in man. What is bad?—All that proceeds from weakness' (A: 2). However, power must be 'sublimated' or harnessed in the service of an overarching goal if it is not to be expressed in a destructive fashion (May 1999: 27). For example, Nietzsche lauds the highest or sovereign men for coordinating and unifying a large range of diverse and contrary drives in the service of an important purpose or task. The sovereign's drives are highly organised and constructive, with a clear sense of direction. This is a sign of strength: 'The multitude and disgregation of impulses and the lack of any systematic order among them result in a weak "will"; their coordination under a single predominant impulse results in a "strong will"' (WTP: 46).

Crucially, the goal in the service of which power is harnessed—the creation of form—must commend life as opposed to denigrating it. Form-creation can occur in three ways. The first is the creation of valuations that commend life. For example, Nietzsche advocates that we '*limit* ourselves to the purification of our opinions and valuations and to the *creation of our own new tables of what is good*, and let us stop brooding about the "moral value of our actions"!' (GS:

335). People who indulge in such brooding dwell on the past and ‘never live in the present’ (*ibid.*). The second is the creation of artworks that make life appear beautiful, and the third is the artistic shaping of our characters, which is a more personal version of the artistic beautification of life. I have elaborated on the value of these artistic forms of creation above, but reiterate here that their aim is to render both life and ourselves affirmable. For example, character-styling is a way for a person to reintegrate the weaker aspects of his character into a more pleasing picture that he is able to endorse and thereby ‘*attain* satisfaction with himself’ (*op. cit.* 290). As Nietzsche expresses the point:

‘To “give style” to one’s character—a great and rare art! It is practiced by those who survey all the strengths and weaknesses of their nature and then fit them into an artistic plan until every one of them appears as art and reason and even weaknesses delight the eye’ (*ibid.*).

The criterion of form-creation is necessary because power and power sublimation alone do not guard against the possibility of them being expressed in life-denying ways. Nietzsche repudiates the unconditional will to truth as manifested in religion and science for precisely this reason.

## **Part I: Nietzsche's Critique of the Unconditional Value of Truth**

### **Chapter 3. How Nietzsche critiques the unconditional will to truth**

I now examine Nietzsche's method of critiquing the unconditional will to truth. In brief, Nietzsche critiques the unconditional will to truth by means of a genealogical analysis that charts its origination and evolution. I reconstruct this genealogical analysis, demonstrating along the way how it reveals two aspects of the unconditional will to truth that undermine its status as an ultimate value, meaning a value that trumps all other values. These two aspects are that the unconditional will to truth is: i) contrary to what Nietzsche calls the scientific spirit, because it takes the form of an unquestioned and unjustified presupposition; ii) self-negating, insofar as it leads to the repudiation of its own metaphysical justification. In this way, Nietzsche's genealogical analysis devalues the unconditional will to truth by revealing its internal inconsistencies.

To understand how truth became an ultimate value, it is helpful to consider the first two stages of Nietzsche's six-stage history of the development of the idea of the 'true world' in a passage entitled 'How the "True World" Finally Became a Fiction' in *Twilight of the Idols* (translation altered). The first stage in this history is the Platonic conception of the true world as a realm of eternal forms, to which certain people had access in the here and now, namely, 'the wise, the pious, the virtuous' (TI: IV). In this first stage, Nietzsche says that the notion of the true world is synonymous with the claim "I, Plato, *am* the truth." (*ibid.*). The Platonic conception of the true world equates truth with eternal, immutable and original forms that are conceived as being metaphysically prior to their imperfect counterparts in the material world. In other words, 'the "true" world is not one

which changes and becomes, but one which *is*' (Notebook 1887: 9[38]). It is this putative true world of original forms that is considered more valuable and desirable than the material world, partly because of a strong desire for stability and order: 'the "true" world is supposed to be the good world—why? appearance, change, contradiction, struggle devalued as immoral; desire for a world in which these things are missing' (WTP: 578).

In the second stage of the development of the idea of a 'true world', the true world of Platonic forms 'becomes Christian' (TI: IV). The true world is now the kingdom of God, no longer accessible in the here and now, and only 'promised to the wise, the pious, the virtuous man ("to the sinner who repents")' (*ibid.*). Since for Nietzsche, Christianity is just a popularised form of Platonism ('Christianity is Platonism for "the people"' (BGE: Preface)), presumably at the second stage, God, rather than Plato, *is* the truth, making the two notions interchangeable. As Nietzsche puts it elsewhere, 'God is truth, [...] truth is *divine*' (GM III: 24). With the institutionalisation of Christianity, this equation of God with truth takes the form of a moral commandment against false testimony, or, in other words, a moral imperative to always tell the truth whatever the consequences. Eventually, this morality leads to the development of what Nietzsche refers to as 'the European conscience', 'scientific conscience', 'intellectual cleanliness at any price' (GS: 357), or 'intellectual conscience' (*op. cit.* 335). The intellectual conscience is a more refined or rigorous version of the moral imperative to always tell the truth. It is an unremitting truthfulness that involves rejecting any belief or statement that cannot be proven to be true. It is only a matter of time before the intellectual conscience takes into its purview Christian doctrine itself, whereupon belief in God becomes a '*lie*' and belief in

the idea that nature and history attest to God's existence becomes 'indecent and dishonest' (*op. cit.* 357). In short, all 'Christian interpretations' become considered counterfeit (WTP: 1). In this way, Christian morality contains the seeds of its own destruction. Hence Nietzsche writes: 'You see what it was that really triumphed over the Christian god: Christian morality itself, the concept of truthfulness that was understood ever more rigorously, the father confessor's refinement of the Christian conscience, translated and sublimated into a scientific conscience, into intellectual cleanliness at any price' (GS: 357). Nietzsche expresses the same point more emotively in his notes: 'The end of Christianity—at the hands of its own morality [...] which turns against the Christian God (the sense of truthfulness, developed highly by Christianity, is nauseated by the falseness and mendaciousness of all Christian interpretations of the world and of history [...])' (WTP: 1).

Generally speaking, Nietzsche sees the rise of what he terms scientific atheism as a positive development in European history: 'the decline of the faith in the Christian god, the triumph of scientific atheism, is a generally European event in which all races had their share and for which all deserve credit and honour' (GS: 357). Nietzsche welcomes two aspects of science. Firstly, he approves of its remit of tangible earthly phenomena, and its naturalistic explanations of these phenomena, as opposed to Christianity's fixation on an otherworldly realm, and its metaphysical explanations of earthly phenomena. Nietzsche sums up the contrast as: 'Christianity, which is at no point in contact with actuality [...] must naturally be a mortal enemy of the "wisdom of the world", that is to say of *science*' (A: 47). Secondly, Nietzsche endorses what he calls scientific spirit, to be understood in broad terms as intellectual discipline,



‘clarity and severity in matters of intellectual conscience’ or ‘freedom of intellect’ (*ibid.*). The scientific spirit involves an instinctual and ruthless critical attitude towards all beliefs, it is ‘the instinctive distrust of the devious courses of thinking which, in consequence of long training, has taken root in the soul of every scientific man’ (HAH I: 635). Such devious thinking quickly turns an opinion into a fanatical conviction. Hence it is scientific method, rather than the results of science, that characterises the scientific spirit, and that guards against the rise of blind faith and superstition: ‘the scientific spirit is based upon a knowledge of method, and if the methods were lost, all the results of science could not prevent the renewed prevalence of superstition and absurdity’ (*ibid.*). Nietzsche’s appreciation of scientific method extends so far that he advocates that everyone ‘become thoroughly acquainted with at least *one* science’ in order to appreciate ‘how necessary is the extremest carefulness’ in belief-formation (*ibid.*). I elaborate on the characteristics of scientific spirit or method in the next chapter.

The key point here is that scientific method treats all convictions with critical suspicion, entertaining them only as hypotheses for experimental testing:

‘In science convictions have no rights of citizenship, as one says with good reason. Only when they decide to descend to the modesty of hypotheses, of a provisional experimental point of view, of a regulative fiction, they may be granted admission and even a certain value in the realm of knowledge—though always with the restriction that they remain under police supervision, under the police of mistrust’ (GS: 344).

Yet despite this, there is one conviction that science upholds, having taken entirely on trust, namely, faith in truth as the ultimate value. In this sense, science, or rather scientists, are still ‘unconditional about *one* thing [...] their faith in truth’ (GM III: 24). This is the unconditional will to truth, the ‘unconditional faith or conviction [...] that truth is more important than every other thing, including every other conviction’ (GS: 344). This conviction is ‘so commanding and unconditional that it sacrifices all other conditions to itself’, crystallising in the idea that “‘*Nothing* is needed *more* than truth, and in relation to it everything else has only second-rate value’ (*ibid.*). Therefore although science has repudiated religious ‘dogmatic concepts’ such as “‘God,” “soul,” “freedom,” “immortality””, with its faith in the sanctity of truth, science’s ultimate value is the same as Christianity’s (GM III: 25). Hence Nietzsche describes scientists as ‘godless [...] anti-metaphysicians’ who are motivated by ‘a faith millennia old, the Christian faith, which was also Plato’s, that God is truth, that truth is *divine*’ (*op. cit.* 24). Scientific practice involves treating all convictions with critical suspicion, yet, as an unquestioned and unjustified assumption, the conviction that truth has ultimate value is contrary to this practice.

Nietzsche identifies the unconditional will to truth as science’s driving value, it is the ‘prior conviction’ that ‘*make[s] it possible for this discipline to begin*’ (GS: 344). Science needs a driving value because it is a mode of interpretation or description that does not itself create values: ‘Science [...] first requires in every respect an ideal of value, a value-creating power, in the *service* of which it could *believe* in itself—it never creates values’ (GM III: 25). While there is no science “‘without presuppositions””, the presupposition that truth is unconditionally valuable is not empirical or even pragmatic. It is not grounded by the fact that

truth is always of benefit to life, but by the Christian moral imperative not to deceive. As Nietzsche expresses it, the unconditional will to truth means: ‘there is no alternative—“I will not deceive, not even myself”; *and with that we stand on moral ground*’ (GS: 344). The moral ground of the unconditional will to truth is therefore at odds with science’s focus on earthly phenomena and its naturalistic or this-worldly interpretations of such phenomena. In other words, the grounding for science’s driving value does not derive from the same non-moral domain of ‘life, nature, and history’ as science. Hence Nietzsche asks: ‘*Why have morality at all* when life, nature, and history are “not moral”?’ (*ibid.*). In brief, the Christian moral imperative against deception still animates science in the form of its unconditional valuation of truth. In this way, science affirms an otherworldly metaphysical world, and in so doing slanders the material world:

‘those who are truthful in that audacious and ultimate sense that is presupposed by the faith in science *thus affirm another world* than the world of life, nature, and history; and insofar as they affirm this “other world”—look, must they not by the same token negate its counterpart, this world, *our world*?’ (*ibid.*).

The original Christian moral grounds for the unconditional will to truth are inconsistent with the predominant acceptance of the idea that “‘God is dead,” that the belief in the Christian god has become unbelievable”’ (*op. cit.* 343). As I explain above, this event occurred as the moral commandment against deception evolved into the ‘scientific conscience’, an insistence on ‘intellectual cleanliness at any price’ (*op. cit.* 357). The scientific conscience has subjected the notion of God to critical scrutiny and rejected it as dishonest. Yet since it was the notion of God that sanctioned the idea of truth as ultimately valuable,

that granted truth divine status, the same process of critical scrutiny should now apply to the unconditional will to truth. As Nietzsche puts it: 'From the moment faith in the God of the ascetic ideal is denied, *a new problem arises*: that of the *value* of truth' (GM III: 24). The upshot is that, as a consequence of its evolution into the scientific conscience, the unconditional will to truth must now undergo experimental questioning to determine what value it has for life: 'the value of truth must for once be experimentally *called into question*' (*ibid.*).

In this way, the unconditional will to truth is self-negating. Its indictment against deception means that it has repudiated its own original metaphysical grounding. This leaves the will to truth with no justificatory backbone. As James Mangiafico neatly summarises this point: 'Wanting only what is true and having realised that its own metaphysical foundation is untrue, the will to truth is now forced to draw one final inference: it must exclude itself from the domain of that which it accepts' (Mangiafico 1997: 177). In this way, the unconditional will to truth brings about its own downfall, or to use Nietzsche's terminology, it overcomes itself. This process of 'self-overcoming' is characteristic of ultimate values like 'Christian truthfulness', a process that Nietzsche summarises as follows:

'All great things bring about their own destruction through an act of self-overcoming [...] In this way Christianity *as a dogma* was destroyed by its own morality; in the same way Christianity *as morality* must now perish, too: we stand on the threshold of *this* event. After Christian truthfulness has drawn one inference after another, it must end by drawing its *most striking inference*, its inference *against* itself; this will happen, however, when it poses the question "*what is the meaning of all will to truth?*" (GM III: 27).

It is important to note that as long as science continues to uphold truth as unconditionally valuable, it continues to manifest the ascetic ideal. Nietzsche points out that, although it is generally assumed that science has refuted the ascetic ideal, insofar as it has exposed religious interpretations as dishonest, it is actually the latest development of the ascetic ideal, and moreover the strongest form of it:

[Science's] relation to the ascetic ideal is by no means essentially antagonistic; it might even be said to represent the driving force in the latter's inner development. [...] This pair, science and the ascetic ideal, both rest on the same foundation [...] on the same overestimation of truth (more exactly: on the same belief that truth is inestimable and cannot be criticised). Therefore they are *necessarily* allies [...] this "modern science" [...] is the *best* ally the ascetic ideal has at present, and precisely because it is the most unconscious, involuntary, hidden, and subterranean ally! [...] The ascetic ideal has decidedly not been conquered: if anything, it became stronger, which is to say, more elusive, more spiritual, more captious, as science remorselessly detached and broke off wall upon wall, external additions that had coarsened its appearance' (*op. cit.* 25).

There are two ways in which science manifests the ascetic ideal. These correspond to the two components of the ascetic ideal that I outlined in chapter one—an affective component that takes the form of an aversion towards earthly life, and a conceptual component that provides a meaning for existence and the suffering it entails. Nietzsche sums up the affective component as:

'this hatred of the human, and even more of the animal, and more still of the material, this horror of the senses, of reason itself, [...] this longing to get away from all appearance, change, becoming, death, wishing, from

longing itself—all this means [...] an aversion to life; a rebellion against the most fundamental presuppositions of life' (*op. cit.* 28).

Science manifests an aversion to life in four main ways. Firstly, science's abiding objective of finding unconditional truths denigrates reality—which Nietzsche sees as characterised as 'change, becoming, multiplicity, opposition, contradiction, war' (WTP: 584)—by attempting to redefine it as stable, permanent and predictable, or relocate it in a realm that has these properties. Secondly, in upholding the idea that a dispassionate, perspective-free viewpoint is necessary to glean truths, science also denigrates human cognition, which Nietzsche believes only occurs by means of affective interpretations and perspectives. Thirdly, science's reverence for truth above all else necessarily devalues man himself. This devaluation also occurs as a result of science re-situating man firmly within an indifferent natural world order, where he has no more significance than any other animal. Hence man becomes replaceable 'in the great chain of being', and his 'existence appears more arbitrary, beggarly, and dispensable in the *visible* order of things' (GM III: 25). In this way, science causes man to lose his sense of 'dignity and uniqueness', and relocate 'his former respect for himself' in the feelings of '*self-contempt*' that arise from his thoroughgoing naturalisation (*ibid.*). Fourthly, an aversion to life is manifest in scientific practice itself. Scholars tend to spectate on rather than participate in life, and repress their personal feelings, desires and interests such that their lives are greatly impoverished.

Nevertheless, the service of truth provides a much-needed meaning for existence and the suffering that it necessarily entails. Scholars' wholehearted

commitment to the quest for truth infuses their lives with meaning and diverts their attention from their suffering, suffering that is compounded by the life-aversive affective component of the ascetic ideal. Nietzsche caricatures such scholars in a passage titled 'The Leech' in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, which describes a man lying by a swamp having his arm bitten by leeches. The man is 'conscientious in spirit', 'master and connoisseur of [...] the leech's *brain*' (Z IV: 4). His longstanding commitment to his research into the brain of the leech has led to a high degree of personal self-sacrifice, reducing his life to his investigative activities and his world to the 'handsbreadth of ground' on which he pursues them:

'the leech's *brain*:—that is *my* world! [...] How long have I been pursuing this one thing, the brain of the leech, that the slippery truth might here no longer slip away from me! [...] for this I have thrown away everything else; for this everything has become the same for me; and close by my knowing lies my black unknowing' (*ibid.*).

Hence scholars sublimate their suffering—their 'discontent, disbelief, gnawing worm, *despectio sui*, bad conscience'—in the never-ending treadmill of scholarly research in the service of the truth (GM III: 23). Moreover, scholars are in denial about this state of affairs, 'refus[ing] to admit to themselves what they are, [...] drugged and heedless men who fear only one thing: *regaining consciousness*' (*ibid.*). What scholars ignore is that scientific interpretation is one of many different interpretations of the world, another 'regulative fiction', rather than a way of life (GS: 344).

In summary, despite two key differences between Christianity and science, science is another form of the ascetic ideal. Whereas Christianity is fixated on an otherworldly realm, providing metaphysical explanations for earthly phenomena, science focuses on the earthly world, and provides naturalistic explanations for earthly phenomena. Whereas Christianity accepts beliefs on the grounds of blind faith and conviction, science approaches them with ruthless critical suspicion. Despite these differences, the ascetic ideal reigns supreme in science because it is preserved in the 'overestimation of truth' that is science's driving value (GM III: 25). This overestimation of truth is a hangover of the moral commandment to tell the truth sanctioned by God. In other words, 'the ascetic ideal has hitherto *dominated* all philosophy, because truth was posited as being, as God, as the highest court of appeal' (*op. cit.* 24).

However, now that 'faith in God of the ascetic ideal is denied', the will to truth is open to critique, it is finally '*permitted* to be a problem' (*ibid.*). Questioning the will to truth, or more specifically, 'pos[ing] the question "*what is the meaning of all will to truth*"' is to necessarily undermine the will to truth's divine, inestimable status, and place the final nail in the coffin for 'Christianity *as morality*' (*op. cit.* 27). This will herald the final self-destruction of the ascetic ideal: 'As the will to truth gains self-consciousness [...] morality will gradually *perish* now: this is [...] the most terrible, most questionable, and perhaps also the most hopeful of all spectacles' (*ibid.*). The self-overcoming of 'Christian truthfulness' was always inevitable (*ibid.*), for it leads ineluctably to the realisation that 'reverence for truth is already the consequence of an illusion', that such reverence is warrantless in the absence of the metaphysical foundations that it has already cast off for



being untrue (WTP: 602). The disintegration of the final vestige of Christian truthfulness will spell the end of the life-denying ascetic ideal.

However, the ascetic ideal has provided a meaning for man's 'existence on earth', indeed, it has been 'the only meaning offered so far', the only interpretation of suffering that filled a 'tremendous void' of meaning, and staved off 'suicidal nihilism' (GM III: 28). Consequently, on the complete demise of Christian morality, the problem of meaning will again become acutely salient and give rise to nihilism. Nietzsche defines nihilism in different ways throughout his writings. Here I understand it both in terms of its intimate connection with meaninglessness, as 'belief in absolute *worthlessness*, i.e., *meaninglessness*' (WTP: 617), and in terms of the process that gives rise to this feeling of meaninglessness, namely, the self-destruction of ultimate values: 'What does nihilism mean? *That the highest values devalue themselves*' (*op. cit.* 2). The important point is that after the unconditional will to truth has devaluated itself, the resulting nihilism clears the way for the revaluation of the will to truth: 'why has the advent of nihilism become *necessary*? Because the values we have had hitherto thus draw their final consequence; because nihilism represents the ultimate logical conclusion of our great values and ideals —because we must experience nihilism before we can find out what value these "values" really had' (*op. cit.* Preface: 4). Such revaluation involves the adoption of an evaluative standpoint that is necessarily non-nihilistic, a point that it is important to bear in mind when I take up the problem of meaning in chapter six. However, I first want to offer an interpretation of how Nietzsche revalues truth.

## **Part 2: Nietzsche's Revaluation of Truth**

### **Chapter 4. How Nietzsche revalues truth**

In this chapter, I show how Nietzsche revalues truth having called it into question. I argue that Nietzsche values truth principally as the driver of a mode of critical or experimental inquiry that enables us to surpass life-inimical interpretations and that prevents new interpretations from becoming dogmatic, or in Nietzsche's words, 'prevent[s] the renewed prevalence of superstition and absurdity' (HAH I: 635). To put it another way, Nietzsche values the truthful attitude that animates critical inquiry over and above any particular result of this inquiry. The reason for this valuation is bound up with Nietzsche's conception of truth as perspectival interpretation. I start by showing how Nietzsche's conception of truth relates to the perspectival interpretative activity that enables us to construct a view of the world in order to make life possible within it. I then show how Nietzsche's valuation of truth as the driver of critical inquiry is evident in the positive value he ascribes to what he calls the intellectual conscience and scientific method. Finally, I show how the figure of the free spirit epitomises this valuation of truth.

#### ***Truth as perspectival interpretation***

To recap, Nietzschean truth does not belong to a transcendent realm of eternal, stable and unchanging things-in-themselves. For Nietzsche, the idea of such realm is a chimera. Nietzsche interprets reality as ever-changing and turbulent, contradictory and ambiguous, complex and chaotic. This is because the world and everything in it is made up of dynamic quanta, units of power that are part of the will to power—'a monster of energy [...] iron magnitude of force'—that

Nietzsche sees as constituting the world and everything in it (WTP: 1067). The dynamic quanta are in a perpetual play for power, striving unceasingly to increase their power and prevent other quanta from depleting it. The result is a state of constant change, tension and discord, a constant shift in the balance of power between the multitude of quanta, a world in which 'everything is bound to and conditioned by everything else' (*op. cit.* 584). No unconditional facts or truths can be wrought from this state of affairs, only interpretations that are informed by particular perspectives or points of view. In Nietzsche's words: 'facts is precisely what there is not, only interpretations. We cannot establish any fact "in itself": perhaps it is folly to want to do such a thing' (*op. cit.* 481). It is the conception of truth as an absolute standard or a statement of universal and enduring validity that Nietzsche denies and disvalues. This conception of truth is completely impossible on Nietzsche's worldview, and also unintelligible, because of the way that we cannot glean or know anything without interpreting it: 'The world with which we are concerned is false, i.e., is not a fact but a fable and approximation on the basis of a meagre sum of observations; it is "in flux," [...] as a falsehood always changing but never getting near the truth: for—there is no "truth"' (*op. cit.* 616).

As Nietzsche sees it, our senses show us the world in all its chaotic changeability and ambiguity. Yet the interpretative process abstracts a coherent and comprehensible view of the world from this complex and confusing sensory experience, from the 'motley whirl of the senses' (BGE: 14). So it is not our senses that distort *reality* such that there is a 'real' world distinct from the one that is apparent to us in experience. Rather, it is the interpretative process that distorts the material of the senses in order to make it comprehensible and

meaningful. In other words, the interpretative process, or 'the active and interpreting forces' select from the evidence of the senses to transform pure 'seeing' into 'seeing *something*' (GM III: 12). Therefore the interpreting forces falsify the evidence of the senses, rather than the senses falsifying the world. As Nietzsche expresses this idea:

'the senses [...] do not lie at all. It is what we *make* of their evidence that first introduces a lie into it, for example the lie of unity, the lie of materiality, of substance, of duration... "Reason" is the cause of our falsification of the evidence of the senses. In so far as the senses show becoming, passing away, change, they do not lie [...] being is an empty fiction. The "apparent" world is the only one: the "real" world has only been *lyingly added*' (TI III: 2).

Consequently, we characterise the world in the process of interpreting our sensory experience of it. Nietzsche says that the world 'is in all eternity chaos', that it lacks the 'order, arrangement, form, beauty, wisdom' that we attribute to it (GS: 109). These attributions are of our own invention. Nietzsche calls them 'aesthetic anthropomorphisms' to reflect that they are necessarily human in character (*ibid.*). Yet they make the world in experience comprehensible, manageable and habitable, for '[w]e can comprehend only a world that we ourselves have made' (WTP: 495). We would find it hard, if not impossible, to flourish if we experienced the world as constant change and chaos, with no enduring substances, things, concepts or natural laws to anchor us. However, this does not mean that such attributions originate in the world, as opposed to in our interpretations of the world:

'One should not understand this compulsion to construct concepts, species, forms, purposes, laws ("a world of identical cases") as if they enabled us to fix the *real world*; but as a compulsion to arrange a world for ourselves in

which our existence is made possible:—we thereby create a world which is calculable, simplified, comprehensive, etc., for us' (*op. cit.* 521).

In short, we are engaged in a continuous process of creating and recreating the character of the world through the process of interpreting our sensory experience of it. Since the only means we have of conceptualising our sensory experience is the interpreting forces, the interpretations that result are an indissoluble part of our conception of the way things are (I owe this point to Remhof 2015: 233). In this way, we create the world in the process of interpreting it:

'In all perception, i.e., in the most original appropriation, what is essentially happening is [...] an imposition of shapes upon things [...] Thus arises our world, our whole world: and no supposed "true reality", no "in-themselves of things" corresponds to this whole world which we have created, belonging to us alone" (1885: Notebook 38 [10]).

It is because we cannot escape our interpretative system, because '[w]e cannot look around our own corner', so to speak, that we can never know whether there is any intelligible 'existence without interpretation' (GS: 374). Certainly, for Nietzsche, the process of interpretation enables life to take place; our existence depends on it: 'all existence is [...] essentially actively engaged in *interpretation*', and without interpretation, existence has no "sense" (*ibid.*).

When Nietzsche talks about us falsifying the evidence of our senses, I take him to be referring to the mismatch between the evidence of our senses and our categories of reason. I also take him to be referring to the idea that there is no position we can take outside the perspectives that inform our interpretations of

the sensory evidence, that there is no possibility of a perspective-free viewpoint (see chapter two for more on these points). Steven Hales and Rex Welshon also highlight that implicit in Nietzsche's claim that our interpretations are false is his view that the idea of '*extra-perspectival truth*' is 'an absurdity and a nonsense' (Hales and Welshon 2000: 34-35). However, this does not preclude Nietzsche upholding the possibility of some interpretations being true 'in *all human perspectives*' (*op. cit.* 34). One example of this is Nietzsche's claim that objectivity as an impartial disinterested viewpoint is impossible—for '[t]here is *only* a perspectiv[al] seeing, *only* a perspectiv[al] "knowing"' (GM: III: 12)—which purports to be true for all humans, at least within the theoretical paradigm of perspectivism.

Nietzsche believes that perspectivally true statements result from the same interpretative process as any other statement. This is why he says that truth is created, rather than found, and that it is a process of determining (what is true), rather than of becoming aware of something that is true in a fixed and pre-given sense. What motivates this process of determining something to be true is the 'drive to truth' or a "'belief" in truth' (WTP: 552). In Nietzsche's words:

'Will to truth is a making firm, a making true and durable [...] "Truth" is therefore not something there, that might be found or discovered—but something that must be created and that gives a name to a process, or rather to a will to overcome that has in itself no end—introducing truth, as a *processus in infinitum*, an active determining—not a becoming-conscious of something that is in itself firm and determined' (*ibid.*).

Nietzsche's conception of truth as perspectival interpretation divests truth of its traditional qualities of permanence, neutrality and absolute correspondence with reality. Nietzsche makes truth conditional, provisional and replaceable, only ever in ascendance until a rival truth becomes dominant. Nietzsche take this attitude towards his own views, as the following assertions make clear:

'For me they were steps, I have climbed up upon them—therefore I had to pass over them. But they thought I wanted to settle down on them' (TI I: 42); and

'We take our accidental positions [...] as hostels for a night, which a wanderer needs and accepts—we beware of settling down' (WTP: 132).

There will always be rival truths because a multitude of different perspectives, and the extreme complexity and ever-changing nature of the world, mean that there is an infinite number of equally valid interpretations of it. As Nietzsche puts this, there is '[n]o limit to the ways in which the world can be interpreted' (*op. cit.* 600), and there could be 'many other ways of creating an apparent world' (*op. cit.* 569).

Nietzsche diagnoses that our belief in absolute, extra-perspectival truth comes from our psychological need for '*certainty* [...] that something should be firm', for 'a support, a prop [...] backbone, something to fall back on' (GS: 347), which turns into the belief that unconditional or fixed foundations in the form of eternal facts or absolute truths really exist (I owe this point to Cox 1999: 47-48). Nietzsche also recognises that we tend to identify as absolute truth whatever facilitates life: 'Appearance is an arranged and simplified world, at which our practical instincts have been at work; it is perfectly true for *us*; that is to say, we live, we are able to live in it: proof of its truth for us' (WTP: 568). Yet Nietzsche

sees that both true and untrue interpretations are capable of facilitating life, and as such, there is no intrinsic relation between the usefulness of an interpretation and truth: 'a belief, however necessary it may be for the preservation of the species, has nothing to do with truth' (*op. cit.* 487).

Nietzsche identifies the distinction we draw between true and false, or truth and untruth, as an interpretation that we project into the world as another way of making sense of it. It is part of an organisational schema that facilitates life: 'The fictitious world of subject, substance, "reason," etc., is needed—: there is in us a power to order, simplify, falsify, artificially distinguish' (*op. cit.* 517). In Nietzsche's view, true and false are intrinsically related, because they are both species of interpretation. This explains why Nietzsche is insistent that untruth can be of just as much value as truth if it helps preserve or enhance life; in other words, 'both truth and untruth constantly [prove] to be useful' (GS: 344). Instead of opposites manifesting a difference in kind, Nietzsche sees them manifesting a difference of degree. As Nietzsche notes, 'opposites [...] do not exist in themselves and [...] actually express only variations in degree that from a certain perspective appear to be opposites. There are no opposites: only from those of logic do we derive the concept of opposites—and falsely transfer it to things' (WTP: 552). In the case of "true" and "false", Nietzsche says there is no 'essential opposition', but 'degrees of apparentness and, as it were, lighter and darker shadows and shades of appearance' (BGE: 34).

This suggests that, rather than two contrary values, true and false, there is one spectrum of value, that of apparentness or appearance. How apparent something is depends on the extent to which we interpret it, for it is only through



interpretation that seeing is possible, or that ‘seeing becomes seeing *something*’ (GM III: 12). The more interpretations we entertain, the more apparent some object or situation becomes, and therefore the more complete our idea of it: ‘the *more* affects we allow to speak about one thing, the *more* eyes, different eyes, we can use to observe one thing, the more complete will our “concept” of this thing, our “objectivity” be’ (*ibid.*). This explains why Nietzsche says that there is no ‘truth’ to be had in an ‘isolated judgment’ (WTP: 530), and that objectivity is the ability to entertain a multiplicity of interpretations, or ‘to employ a *variety* of perspectives and affective interpretations in the service of knowledge’ (GM III: 12).

The object of interpretation is, again, the evidence of the senses. This is where all our evidence for truth comes from: ‘All credibility, all good conscience, all evidence of truth come only from the senses’ (BGE: 134). It is our senses that make reality, in the Nietzschean sense of the term, ‘appear’, unlike branches of science such as logic or maths (TI III: 3). This is because the senses are ‘subtle instruments for observation’, and Nietzsche says that we know only as much as we acknowledge of what they show us: ‘We possess scientific knowledge today to precisely the extent that we have decided to *accept* the evidence of the senses—to the extent that we have learned to sharpen and arm them and to think them through to their conclusions’ (*ibid.*).

The aforementioned points explain why Nietzsche sees as mendacious the desire not to see, or interpret, what our senses show us about the nature of reality: ‘I call a lie: wanting *not* to see something one does see, wanting not to see something *as* one sees it’ (A: 55). This implies that Nietzsche identifies

truthfulness with the contrary desire, namely, wanting to see, that is, interpret, what the senses show us. The truthful man wants to see as much as possible of what his senses show him of reality. Consequently, the more interpretations we harbour, the more we become 'master over the multiplicity of sensations', and it is the drive for such mastery that Nietzsche says is synonymous with truth (WTP: 517).

Thus it makes sense that Nietzsche values whatever encourages interpretation, and disvalues whatever arrests or discourages it. An example of someone who closes his mind to interpretative activity is the 'man of conviction' (A: 54). Nietzsche takes a dim view of convictions precisely because they deter interpretative activity, they are 'prisons' that constrict our view of the world, and overlook its rich complexity and ever-changing nature (*ibid.*). What characterises the man of conviction is that he relies on pre-existing interpretations and value hierarchies to guide his life: 'Not to see many things, not to be impartial in anything, to be party through and through, to view all values from a strict and necessary perspective—this alone is the condition under which such a man exists at all' (*ibid.*). The man of conviction is therefore 'the antithesis, the *antagonist* of the truthful man—of truth' precisely because he does not want to see anything new, or rather, he does not have 'the *capacity* for an unconstrained view' (*ibid.*). In contrast, the intellectual conscience is something that animates the interpretative process, and therefore Nietzsche values it highly.

### ***The intellectual conscience***

The intellectual conscience involves a constant sceptical or critical attitude towards propositions or beliefs. This attitude is characterised by ‘denial and doubt’, ‘scepticism’, ‘scrutiny, [...] mistrust, and contradiction’ (GS: 110). It takes the form of a critical inquiry that knows no bounds, a relentless questioning that Nietzsche associates with truthfulness: ‘*Truthfulness*—I favour any *skepsis* to which I may reply: “Let us try it!” But I no longer wish to hear anything of all those things and questions that do not permit any experiment. This is the limit of my “truthfulness”; for there courage has lost its right’ (*op. cit.* 51). Nietzsche associates truthfulness with scepticism and intellectual experimentation or interrogation because they open up new interpretative vistas, are an appropriate response to the complexity and ever-changing nature of the material to be interpreted, and are pleasurable in their own right: ‘to stand in the midst of this *rerum concordia discors* [discordant concord of things] and of this whole marvellous uncertainty and rich ambiguity of existence *without questioning*, without trembling with the craving and the rapture of such questioning [...] that is what I feel to be *contemptible*’ (*op. cit.* 2), and ‘The joy in shaping and reshaping—a primeval joy!’ (WTP: 495).

Although Nietzsche finds this questioning pleasurable, it also requires an inordinate amount of effort. It is far easier to believe you have secured the ‘truth’, and cease inquiry, than to keep questioning. Such a belief arrests further inquiry and cedes to lazy thinking and a desire for reassurance:

‘The view that *truth is found* and that ignorance and error are at an end is one of the most potent seductions there is. Supposing it is believed, then the will to examination, investigation, caution, experiment is paralysed: it

can even found as criminal, namely as *doubt* concerning truth—"Truth" is therefore more fateful than error and ignorance, because it cuts off the forces that work toward enlightenment and knowledge. The affect of *laziness* now takes the side of "truth" [...] it is more comfortable to obey than to examine; it is more flattering to think "I possess the truth" than to see only darkness around one—above all: it is reassuring, it gives confidence, it alleviates life—it "improves" the character, to the extent that it lessens mistrust' (*op. cit.* 452).

The spirit of the intellectual conscience crystallises in scientific methods, or 'strict methods of investigation', because these involve constant and rigorous questioning and experimentation and therefore foster 'distrust and precaution' as a matter of course (HAH I: 633). So, notwithstanding science's failure to question the unconditional value of truth and the dogged quest by some scientists for eternal facts or absolute truths, what Nietzsche sees as most valuable in science is its methods, rather than any of its so-called findings or discoveries. Nietzsche praises methods in various places, for example:

'[T]he pathos that man possesses truth is now of very little consequence in comparison with the certainly milder and less noisy pathos of the search for truth, which is never weary of learning afresh and examining anew' (*ibid.*);

'for the scientific spirit is based upon a knowledge of method, and if the methods were lost, all the results of science could not prevent the renewed prevalence of superstition and absurdity' (*op. cit.* 635).

'methods, one must repeat ten times, *are* the essential, as well as being the most difficult, as well as being that which has habit and laziness against it longest' (A: 59);

‘The most valuable insights are the last to be discovered; but the most valuable insights are *methods* [...] Our objectives, our practices, our quiet, cautious, mistrustful manner’ (*op. cit.* 13); and

‘It is not the victory of science that distinguishes our nineteenth century, but the victory of scientific method over science’ (WTP: 466).

What animates or perpetuates scientific method is the search for truth, a never-ending search that ‘is never weary of learning afresh and examining anew’ (HAH I: 633). Consequently, for Nietzsche, ‘the fundamental secret of science’ is that ‘the search after truth’ is more important or worthwhile than any result—than ‘truth itself’ (BT: 15), in the perspectival sense I outline in the previous section. In placing more value on the interrogative and experimental process than on the results of this process, scientific method continuously generates new interpretations that allow us to surpass life-inimical interpretations and prevent new interpretations calcifying into dogma or superstition. This reflects Nietzsche’s valuation of truth, namely that ‘one should value more than truth the force that forms, simplifies, shapes, invents’ (WTP: 602).

The proliferation of interpretations that scientific method produces broadens our view of reality. The broader one’s view of reality, or the more reality one incorporates into one’s interpretative worldview, however unpalatable or unsavoury it might be, the more truthful one is, and also the stronger and greater one is. For example, Nietzsche’s Zarathustra desires the type of person who has the strength of character to ‘[conceive] reality *as it is*’, someone who ‘is not estranged or removed from reality but is reality itself and exemplifies all that

is terrible and questionable in it—*only in that way can man attain greatness*’ (EH IV: 5). Having an intellectual conscience and upholding scientific methods separate the higher from the lower man, the truthful from the mendacious man, regardless of any other praiseworthy characteristics the former may have. Someone could be a genius, but if he ‘tolerates slack feelings in his faith or judgments’ and ‘does not account *the desire for certainty* as his inmost craving and deepest distress’, he would still be a lesser type of human being in Nietzsche’s eyes (GS: 2).

Therefore Nietzsche measures greatness by how much truth a person can tolerate: ‘How much truth does a spirit *endure*, how much truth does it *dare*? More and more that became for me the real measure of value’ (EH Preface: 3). What does it mean to say someone can ‘endure’ truth? In light of the preceding exposition, I see two aspects to this truth endurance. Firstly, I take Nietzsche to mean the amount of sensory evidence that someone wants to see without wanting to aestheticise it to make it more palatable (I elaborate this idea in chapter six):

‘it might be a basic characteristic of existence that those who would know it completely would perish, in which case the strength of a spirit should be measured according to how much of the “truth” one could still barely endure—or to put it more clearly, to what degree one would *require* it to be thinned down, shrouded, sweetened, blunted, falsified’ (BGE: 39).

Secondly, I take Nietzsche to mean the extent to which someone avoids settling for one view, how much he can take on of the hard work of relentless questioning of even ‘the smallest things’ (A: 59), of making ‘every Yes and No a

question of conscience', for as Nietzsche puts it: 'the service of truth is the hardest service' (*op. cit.* 50). To be intellectually conscientious or '*honest* in intellectual things' requires a relentless fight to stop any of one's thoughts solidifying into a fixed or unchallenged viewpoint. Hence Nietzsche advocates:

'Never keep back or bury in silence that which can be thought against your thoughts! Give it praise! It is among the foremost requirements of honesty of thought. Every day you must conduct your campaign also against yourself. A victory and a conquered fortress are no longer your concern, your concern is truth—but your defeat is no longer your concern, either!' (D: 370).

Nietzsche himself has a '[p]rofound aversion to reposing once and for all in any one total view of the world' and a '[f]ascination of the opposing point of view: refusal to be deprived of the stimulus of the enigmatic' (WTP: 470). Rigid adherence to a single worldview is similar to harbouring faiths, convictions or other dogmatic views. Such views stupefy the senses, restrict the number of interpretations that allow us to apprehend what they show us and reflect a need for certainty that attests to psychological weakness and insecurity:

'[f]anaticism is the only "strength of will" that even the weak and insecure can be brought to attain, being a sort of hypnotism of the whole system of the senses and the intellect for the benefit of an excessive nourishment (hypertrophy) of a single point of view and feeling that henceforth becomes dominant' (GS: 347).

The type of people who best epitomise the intellectual conscience and scientific method are the Nietzschean free spirits. I turn now to Nietzsche's

characterisation of the free spirits to shed more light on what the intellectual conscience and scientific method disclose about Nietzsche's valuation of truth.

### ***The free spirit***

It has to be said that, apart from Nietzsche himself, the free spirit is an as yet unrealised possibility, but Nietzsche foretells their coming: 'Already I see them *coming*, slowly, slowly; and perhaps I am doing something to hasten their coming' (HAH I Preface: 2). Nietzsche describes free spirits as 'already a "revaluation of all values", an *incarnate* declaration of war and victory over all ancient conceptions of "true" and "untrue"' (A: 13). The free spirit is the embodiment of the revaluation of all values because of his experimental '*methods*' or '*practices*', which are prompted by his 'quiet, cautious, mistrustful manner' (*ibid.*). In a nutshell, the free spirit 'will not easily let go of the questionable character of things' (GS: 375). In this way, the free spirit has 'truth, or at least the spirit of truth-investigation, on his side' (HAH I: 225). The spirit of truth-investigation takes the form of a rabid intellectual curiosity: 'In the background of his activities and wanderings [...] stands the note of interrogation of an increasingly dangerous curiosity' (*op. cit.* Preface: 3).

Unsurprisingly then, 'ultimate convictions' or 'strong faith' are anathema to the free spirit. Like a "burned child" avoids fire, free spirits have learned to mistrust convictions. This is presumably because convictions have proved to be wrong, in the sense of being belied by the evidence of the senses, but also because they frustrate curiosity, discourage critical review, and preclude the feelings of pleasure and freedom that come from not being confined to a single viewpoint, not being backed into a corner intellectually speaking (GS: 375). Thus the free



spirit ‘delights and luxuriates in the opposite of a corner, in the boundless, in what is “free as such”’ (*ibid.*). Consequently, the free spirit is attracted to ignorance and uncertainty as these motivate further interrogation and inquiry. Certainty is repellant to the free spirits; they do not ‘prefer even a handful of “certainty” to a whole cartload of beautiful possibilities’ (BGE: 10). The paradigm free spirit, or the ‘*free spirit par excellence*’, is strong enough not to yield to any innate desire for certainty, but is accustomed to hanging in suspense, in ‘tak[ing] leave of all faith and every wish for certainty, being practiced in maintaining himself on insubstantial ropes and possibilities and dancing even near abysses’ (GS: 347). He spurns ‘all crude, four-square opposites’ and takes pride in ‘reservations’ (*op. cit.* 375). The free spirit welcomes ‘the news that “the old god is dead”’, because this gives him leave to experiment with ideas and opens up the possibility of new interpretations, which Nietzsche sees as an overwhelmingly good thing: ‘our heart overflows with gratitude, amazement, premonitions, expectation. At long last the horizon appears free to us again [...] all the daring of the lover of knowledge is permitted again’ (*op. cit.* 343).

Consequently, to use Reginster’s words, the free spirit’s curiosity is characterised by a ‘desire not for the *state* of knowing or being certain, but for the *activity* of *inquiry*, of *seeking* the truth’ (Reginster 2013: 457). Nevertheless, the free spirit desires truth as much as he desires ‘uncertainty and ignorance’, because his search for truth would be hollow or disingenuous without a genuine desire to discover it (*ibid.*). Yet the tendencies from which the free spirit’s ideas or ‘tenets’ arise—namely, engaging in free as opposed to ‘fettered’ thinking, valuing the search for truth more than the end result—means that the result of the search is qualitatively better in the sense of being ‘truer and more

reliable' (HAH I: 225). Hence Nietzsche says that knowledge comes about precisely from ignorance and uncertainty: 'And only on this now solid, granite foundation of ignorance could knowledge rise so far—the will to knowledge on the foundation of a far more powerful will: the will to ignorance, to the uncertain, to the untrue! Not as its opposite, but—as its refinement!' (BGE: 24).

The interrogative practices and mistrustful mindset of the free spirit means that he does not accept dominant viewpoints without question, and as a result 'thinks otherwise than is expected of him in consideration of his origin, surroundings, position, and office, or by reason of the prevailing contemporary views' (HAH I: 225). The same applies to values. Free spirits do not simply adopt preexisting values and their hierarchies, but are actively engaged in revaluing values, or re-ranking them for themselves. Nietzsche and his critique of the unconditional will to truth and revaluation of truth, along with all other values, is a case in point: 'Toward *new philosophers*; there is no choice; toward spirits strong and original enough to provide the stimuli for opposite valuations and to revalue and invert "eternal values"' (BGE: 203). Nietzsche says that the free or 'strongest' spirits 'have so far done the most to advance humanity' (GS: 4). This is because they have undermined existing values, by 'toppling the old boundary markers and the old pieties' and creating new ones (*ibid.*). At the same time, they have propagated their interrogative practices, or 'reawakened again and again the sense of comparison, of contradiction, of the pleasure in what is new, daring, untried; they compelled men to pit opinion against opinion, model against model' (*ibid.*). This helps society to progress in its thinking, and liberates those who have the potential to become great or free-spirited themselves from the prevalent and prescriptive ideas and moral values that

stymie them. Indeed, Nietzsche suggests that the overcoming of such moral values is a measure of the efficacy of the investigative practices: 'Method in investigation is attained only when all moral prejudices have been overcome' (WTP: 583).

It is important to note that the free spirit does not value the activity of truth investigation ascetically, for three main reasons. Firstly, this activity does not does not inspire revulsion towards life, but for those, like Nietzsche, who have the strength to undertake it, brings pleasure. For example, Nietzsche says that the death of God and Christian morality invokes emotions of 'light, happiness, relief, exhilaration, encouragement, dawn' (GS: 343). This is because of the possibilities of inquiry that arise in its wake, and there is 'rapture' to be found in questioning' (*op. cit.* 2).

Secondly, the activity of truth investigation is life-affirming. For a start, it is rooted in the world of sensuous experience, rather than in the so-called true world of being, and as such, does not slander the former world. In addition, interrogative activities can reawaken an interest in and enthusiasm for life. For example, Nietzsche admits that he finds life more attractive—in the sense of being 'truer, more desirable and mysterious every year'—since he realised that it 'could be an experiment of the seeker for knowledge—and not a duty, not a calamity, not trickery' (*op. cit.* 324). Recall that Nietzsche says the free spirit's curiosity is dangerous, presumably because it brings reality into closer view, and this could be harmful: 'it might be a basic characteristic of existence that those who would know it completely would perish' (BGE: 39). Nevertheless, this danger is precisely what Nietzsche sees as reinvigorating and enriching life: 'the

secret for harvesting from existence the greatest fruitfulness and the greatest enjoyment is—to *live dangerously!*' (GS: 283).

Lastly, the free spirit does not undertake truth-seeking religiously, which is to say that he does not subordinate his whole life to it, unlike the ascetic scholar with his complete subservience to unconditional truth. The free spirit knows 'how to escape from his own virtues occasionally!' (D: 510), and how '[n]ot to remain stuck to [his] virtues and become as a whole the victim of some detail in [him]' (BGE: 41). The free spirit is not in the constant thrall of his truth-seeking, he is the master of it. This is what it is '[t]o live with tremendous and proud composure' (*op. cit.* 284).

## **Part 2: Nietzsche's Revaluation of Truth**

### **Chapter 5. Two degrees of honesty: *Ehrlichkeit* and *Redlichkeit***

In this chapter, I show how the notion of honesty figures in Nietzsche's valuation of truth as the driver of critical inquiry that I defended in the previous chapter. To do this this, it is necessary to examine which German word for honesty Nietzsche uses in which context, with the two main terms being *Ehrlichkeit* and *Redlichkeit*<sup>1</sup>. As Melissa Lane points out, Nietzsche starts to carve out different meanings for these terms from *Daybreak* onwards, with the start of his self-professed "campaign against *morality*" (Lane 2007: 28). I examine the instances of these terms in the published works to reveal the meanings Nietzsche imputes to them. I suggest that *Ehrlichkeit* and *Redlichkeit* represent two different degrees of honesty for Nietzsche, with the stronger form being *Redlichkeit*. What makes *Redlichkeit* the stronger form is its foundation in curiosity, specifically, the type of curiosity manifested by the free spirit. The *Redlichen* are intellectually conscientious and committed to critical inquiry, and therefore to truthfulness, in a way that the *Ehrlichen* are not. Although the *Ehrlichen* have honest intentions, they are not intellectually curious, tending to close their minds to whatever goes against prevailing beliefs and, in some cases, unwittingly deceiving themselves in a self-serving way.

#### ***Ehrlichkeit***

*Ehrlichkeit* comes from the root verb *ehren*, to honour, and therefore has connotations of sincerity and honourability. *Ehrlichkeit* is an old virtue, one

---

<sup>1</sup> Less often, Nietzsche uses a third term for honesty, *rechtschaffen*, whose meaning, certainly in *The Antichrist*, seems to be synonymous with *redlich*. See section on *Redlichkeit* for examples.

practised by the 'hereditary aristocracies', originating in their need 'to *seem* honest' and good in order to foster 'a feeling of trust and security [that] multiplied the sum of actual physical power a hundredfold' (D: 248). The picture of *Ehrlichkeit* that emerges from an analysis of the appearances of both the noun and its adjectival counterpart in Nietzsche's published works reflects these origins. *Ehrlichkeit* is honesty as a feeling or intention, rather than the honesty as an intellectual practice that characterises *Redlichkeit*. In other words, the *Ehrlichen* are only honest as far as their intentions go, insofar as they mean or believe themselves to be honest, rather than being honest deep down, or honest through and through. Therefore, as well as honest and honestly, *Ehrlichkeit* and *ehrlich* have been translated in the English versions of Nietzsche's published works as 'sober seriousness' (*op. cit.* Preface: 3), 'earnestness' (*op. cit.* 215) and 'sincerity' (*op. cit.* 322), and 'honourable' (*op. cit.* 84). Importantly, the sincerity of the *Ehrlichen* is completely ingenuous, with Nietzsche describing them as 'the simple, the pure' with 'innocent eyes' (*op. cit.* 543).

Nietzsche uses *Ehrlichkeit* and its cognates to describe the earnestness with which some people adhere to certain ideas, particularly religious tenets or conventional morals. For example, Nietzsche speaks of the 'honesty of devotion' (*Ehrlichkeit der Hingebung*) of committed Christians who take 'joy in submission', and who are 'enthusiasts for humility and worship' (*op. cit.* 60). Nietzsche also uses *Ehrlichkeit* to describe the sincerity with which some people devote themselves to being upstanding moral citizens, devotion that entails a good measure of personal sacrifice. At the same time, Nietzsche recognises that the self-sacrifice is actually a smokescreen for the feelings of

power and ecstasy that the *Ehrlichen* get from their devotion. These feelings derive from the thought that they are aligning themselves with the ‘powerful being, whether a god or a man’ to whom they are devoted, and at the same time they are transforming themselves into god-like beings (*op. cit.* 215). As these people are not truthful in the Nietzschean sense of being scrupulously critical or inquisitive, they never acquire the self-knowledge that would allow them to grasp the real motivation for their devotion to morality. As Nietzsche puts it:

“‘Enthusiastic devotion’, ‘sacrifice of oneself’—these are the catchwords of your morality, and I can readily believe that you are, as you say, ‘in earnest about it’ (*es damit ehrlich meint*): but I know you better than you know yourselves when your “earnestness” (*Ehrlichkeit*) is able to walk arm in arm with such a morality [...] The truth of the matter is that you only *seem* to sacrifice yourselves: in reality you transform yourselves in thought into gods and enjoy yourselves as such’ (*ibid.*).

Nietzsche describes the dedication of these people as *ehrlich* despite the pseudo nature of their self-sacrifice. Nietzsche captures the same sense of double standards in his use of the term “‘honest’ lie (*“ehrliche” Lüge*)’ in GM III: 19. In this passage, Nietzsche discusses educated, so-called good people who have assimilated the prevailing morality so completely and thoroughly that they are not even capable of being *ehrlich*. Hence Nietzsche remarks that ‘[t]hese “good men”—they are one and all moralised to the very depths and ruined and botched to all eternity as far as honesty (*Ehrlichkeit*) is concerned’ (*ibid.*). If such people told lies, they would be dishonest (*unehrliche*) lies, as opposed to honest (*ehrliche*) ones, because they are so self-deluded. To quote Nietzsche in full:

‘Our educated people of today, our “good people,” do not tell lies—that is true; but that is *not* to their credit! A real lie, a genuine, resolute,

“honest” (*ehrliche*) lie [...] would be something far too severe and potent for them: it would demand of them what one *may* not demand of them, that they should open their eyes to themselves, that they should know how to distinguish “true” and “false” in themselves. All they are capable of is a *dishonest* (*unehrliche*) lie; whoever today accounts himself a “good man” is utterly incapable of confronting any matter except with *dishonest mendaciousness* (*unehrlich-verlogen*)—a mendaciousness that is abysmal but innocent, truehearted, blue-eyed, and virtuous’ (*ibid.*).

The “good people” are mendacious—cannot ‘open their eyes to themselves’—because they do not have the self-knowledge to recognise the psychological roots of their moral values, specifically, their goodness. Nietzsche sees this goodness as originating from its very opposite, namely, vengeful feelings of *ressentiment* arising from a thwarted desire for social dominance. I explain the concept of *ressentiment* more thoroughly below. Nietzsche can be seen to signal the pseudo nature of the goodness by using inverted commas every time he mentions “good man” or “good men” in this passage. The characterisation of the “good men” provides a stark contrast with the noble men that Nietzsche describes in the first essay of *The Genealogy of Morals*.

The ‘noble man’ would be capable of telling an honest lie (*ehrliche Lüge*), because, unlike the ‘man of *ressentiment*’, he is essentially ‘honest and straightforward with himself’ (GM I: 10). These characteristics are evident from the way in which the noble man expresses his emotions and creates his values. The noble man discharges his emotions when they arise, such that *ressentiment* ‘consummates and exhausts itself in an immediate reaction, and therefore does not *poison*’ (*ibid.*). In addition, the noble man creates the value of



goodness 'in advance', rather than as a reaction to the hostility of the world, and 'spontaneously out of himself', rather than out of *ressentiment* (*op. cit.* 11). The noble man's honesty is also manifest in the way he satisfies his desires and instincts as and when he likes, disregarding 'all social constraints' and indulging in 'murder, arson, rape, and torture' with an 'innocent conscience' (*ibid.*). Nevertheless, the noble man is *ehrlich* rather than *redlich* because he is not given to scrupulous examination of his motives for action or the source of his beliefs. He acts impulsively, even rashly, and unreflectingly, driven by a 'hidden core' that takes him 'in search of spoil and victory' (*ibid.*).

What marks the essential difference between the "good men", and the noble men in *The Genealogy of Morals* and self-sacrificial people in *Daybreak*, is that the values and judgments of the "good" derive from *ressentiment*. In Nietzsche's lexicon, *ressentiment* is a psychological reaction to feelings of powerlessness or impotence in 'a hostile external world' (*op. cit.* 10). It is a mechanism whereby the traditional valuations of desired but unobtainable traits, such as strength and superiority, and of possessed but unwanted traits, such as powerlessness and passivity, are inverted. For example, instead of being a contemptuous trait, '[w]eakness is [...] lied into something *meritorious*', with 'impotence' becoming "goodness of heart", 'anxious lowliness' becoming "humility", subordination becoming "obedience" and 'cowardice [...] lingering at the door, [...] being ineluctably compelled to wait' becoming "patience" (*op. cit.* 14). Nietzsche diagnoses *ressentiment* as 'the psychological problem of Christianity', defining it as the denial and condemnation of 'the drive whose expression one is, continually to display, by word and deed, the antithesis of this drive' (WTP: 179). For this reason, the 'man of *ressentiment* is neither upright nor naive nor honest

(*ehrlich*) and straightforward with himself. His soul *squints*; his spirit loves hiding places, secret paths and back doors' (GM I: 10). To understand thoroughly the meaning of this statement, I now sketch the psychology of the man of *ressentiment* using the example of the ascetic priest. In doing so I am following Reginster in taking the priest, rather than the slave, as the paradigm of the man of *ressentiment* (Reginster 1997: 289).

The priest has a 'deeply repressed [...] vengefulness' on account of his political 'impotence' and his subordination to the 'knightly-aristocratic' class (GM I: 7). The priest's repression of his vengefulness leads him to revalue the values that he would like to manifest himself, namely 'superiority in power' (*op. cit.* 5) or 'political superiority' (*op. cit.* 6). The priest revalues such superiority as bad or evil, and comes to despise the characteristics that go hand-in-hand with it, namely, 'victory, spoil, and seduction' (*op. cit.* 8). Instead, the priest upholds the values of patience, humility, justice and neighbourly love. Yet the priest deceives himself on two counts. Firstly, not only does the priest mistakenly take himself to believe that superiority in power is undesirable and contemptible, but he is also unaware that his negative revaluation of superiority in power actually reflects a strong desire for it. It is the same mechanism at work in his positive valuation of love:

'One should not imagine it grew up as a denial of that thirst for revenge, as the opposite of Jewish hatred! No, the reverse is true! That love grew out of it as its crown [...] driven [...] by the same impulse that drove the roots of that hatred deeper and deeper' (*ibid.*).

Secondly, the priest's positive revaluation of values that are contrary to those he desires deep down works to partly gratify the subterranean desires. For a start, the priest's overt benevolence gives him a feeling of power and superiority: 'The happiness of "slight superiority," involved in all doing good, being useful, helping, and rewarding, is the most effective means of consolation for the physiologically inhibited, and widely employed by them when they are well advised' (GM III: 18). In addition, the way in which the priest explains the suffering of his congregation in terms of punishment for sin serves to render himself indispensable to them. The sick suffer with 'the deep depression, the leaden exhaustion, the bleak melancholy of the physiologically inhibited' (*op. cit.* 17). The priest exploits the sick's '*sense of guilt*' to make them believe they are to blame for their condition: "I suffer: someone must be to blame for it"—thus thinks every sickly sheep. But his shepherd, the ascetic priest, tells him: "Quite so, my sheep! someone must be to blame for it: but you yourself are this someone, you alone are to blame for it [...]" (*op. cit.* 15).

The priest then whips up '*orgies of feeling*' that work to deflect the suffering by providing a release and diversion from the negative feelings: 'To wrench the human soul from its moorings, to immerse it in terrors, ice, flames, and raptures to such an extent that it is liberated from all petty displeasure, gloom, and depression as by a flash of lightening' (*op. cit.* 20). However, this deflection is only ever temporary. It does not cure the suffering, and actually exacerbates it: 'Every such orgy of feeling has to be *paid* for afterward [...] it makes the sick sicker' (*ibid.*). The important point is that the priest promotes his '*lies*' of guilt, sin, fear and punishment, not 'with honest (*Ehrlichkeit*) hatred and love', but from 'the most cowardly, cunning, lowest instincts', namely, so that those that

suffer are in 'need of a priest at all times' (A: 49). In this way, the priest obtains the power he unconsciously desires: 'the priest *rules* through the invention of sin' (*ibid.*). All in all, the priest, like all men of *ressentiment*, can be said to manifest 'the counterfeit and self-deception of impotence' (GM I: 13). The man of *ressentiment* does not recognise that he harbours desires contrary to the values he affirms, nor does he recognise that it is the contrary desires that lead him to affirm the values with which he affiliates himself. Consequently, unlike the noble man, the man of *ressentiment* does not '[live] in trust and openness with himself' and therefore is neither truthful, nor honest (*ehrlich*) (*op. cit.* 10).

### ***Redlichkeit***

*Redlichkeit*, from the root verb 'reden', to speak or talk, has connotations of frankness. This is the highest order of honesty in Nietzsche's account, and it is a new virtue. Nietzsche defines it as a '*virtue in process of becoming*', as 'the youngest virtue, still very immature' (D: 456). Despite this, *Redlichkeit* is the first of Nietzsche's 'four cardinal virtues' and applies to ourselves and others: '*Honest (Redlich) towards ourselves and whoever else is a friend to us*' (*op. cit.* 556). Simply put, *Redlichkeit* is the frank and unflinching expression of reality as obtained through the senses, however unpalatable it may be, or, to borrow Lane's words, *Redlichkeit* involves 'a severe and unblinking acknowledgment of nature and reality, of the way things are, which does not attempt to moralise away suffering or harm' (Lane 2007: 36).

*Redlichkeit* is closely aligned with truthfulness in the specifically Nietzschean sense of taking a particularly rigorous attitude to truth investigation. Alan White (2001: 66-72) outlines a six-stage genealogy of *Redlichkeit* from sections 110

and 111 in *The Gay Science* that I overview here as it is helpful in understanding the intimate connection between *Redlichkeit* and truthfulness. In the first stage, what White calls ‘the will to life’ dominates (*op. cit.* 66). This is the time when ‘the intellect produced nothing but errors’ (GS: 110). However, by chance, some of these errors enabled our human ancestors to survive. This included the propositions ‘that there are enduring things; that there are equal things’ (*ibid.*) It was these ideas that allowed our ancestors to quickly overlook subtle differences between different animals and edible plants to conclude they are alike and suitable for consumption. Had they not have done this, they may have starved: ‘Those [...] who did not know how to find often enough what is “equal” as regards both nourishment and hostile animals [...] were favoured with a lesser probability of survival than those who guessed immediately upon encountering similar instances that they must be equal’ (*op. cit.* 111).

In the second stage, the will to truth emerged with the Eleatics, pre-Socratic philosophers who ‘denied and doubted’ the aforementioned propositions and exposed them as ‘natural errors’ (*op. cit.* 110). Despite this insight, the Eleatics repeated the very same error by imputing to themselves the characteristics they had exposed as being erroneous through their invention of an ‘unchangeable and impersonal’ sage with ‘universality of intuition’ (*ibid.*). For the notion of the sage to make sense, the Eleatics ‘had to *deceive* themselves about their own state: they had to attribute to themselves, fictitiously, impersonality and changeless duration’ (*ibid.*). What led to the revelation of this contradiction was *Redlichkeit*, hand in hand with scepticism: ‘The subtler development of honesty (*Redlichkeit*) and scepticism eventually made these people, too, impossible; their ways of living and judging were seen to be also dependent upon the

primeval impulses and basic errors of all sentient existence' (*ibid.*). At this third stage, the will to life and the will to truth coexist in the acknowledgement that some basic errors, such as notions of endurance and equality, are necessary for survival, but also that a recognition of differences—or in other words, precision and accuracy—aims at truth, and allows us to decide which of the propositions that represent the basic errors are more beneficial for life:

‘This subtler honesty (*Redlichkeit*) and skepticism came into being wherever two contradictory sentences appeared to be *applicable* to life because *both* were compatible with the basic errors, and it was therefore possible to argue about the higher or lower degree of *utility* for life; also wherever new propositions, though not useful for life, were also evidently not harmful to life: in such cases there was room for the expression of an intellectual play impulse, and honesty and skepticism were innocent and happy like all play’ (*ibid.*).

In the fourth stage, the will to truth became as powerful a force as the will to life: ‘eventually knowledge and the striving for the true found their place as a need among other needs’ (*ibid.*). Thereafter, the will to truth merges with the will to life as ‘a *single* force’ under the term knowledge, or ‘*Erkenntnis*’ (White 2001: 70). Truth-seeking ‘instincts’—namely ‘scrutiny, denial, mistrust, and contradiction’—which were previously considered to be “‘evil’”, attained the status of ‘*good*’ (GS: 110). Nietzsche describes the merging of will to truth with the will to life in knowledge as follows:

‘knowledge became a piece of life itself, and hence a continually growing power—until eventually knowledge collided with those primeval basic errors: two lives, two powers, both in the same human being. A thinker is now that being in whom the impulse for truth and those life-preserving

errors clash for their first fight, after the impulse for truth has proved to be also a life-preserving power' (*ibid.*).

This fusion could only occur in a world in which God sanctified truth, or, as White puts it: 'only as accuracy guaranteed by good or God to be beneficial—could *Erkenntnis* as cognition of truth [...] become "a piece of life itself"' (White 2001: 70). Therefore it is the death of God that heralds the penultimate stage in the development of *Redlichkeit*. At this fifth stage, the will to truth gains the upper hand over the will to life. The refinement of the intellectual conscience exposes religious interpretations as unsubstantiated and dishonest (*unerhlich*). Although one would expect Nietzsche to use *unredlich* here, given the close association between *Redlichkeit* and the intellectual conscience, perhaps he uses *unerhlich* to emphasise his view of the dishonourableness of Christian moral interpretation, especially as he is highlighting its pervasiveness in all aspects of life and nature:

'Looking at nature as if it were proof of the goodness and governance of a god; interpreting history in honour of some divine reason, as a continual testimony of a moral world order and ultimate moral purposes; interpreting one's own experiences as pious people have long enough interpreted theirs, as if everything were providential, a hint, designed and ordained for the sake of the salvation of the soul—that is *all over* now, that has man's conscience *against* it, that is considered indecent and dishonest (*unehrlich*) by every more refined conscience' (GS: 357).

Nietzsche credits Schopenhauer and his 'unconditional and honest (*redliche*) atheism' with this development, saying he 'was the *first* admitted and inexorable atheist among us Germans' (*ibid.*). It is atheism that exposes the '*lie involved in*

*belief in God*' and undermines the life-denying unconditional will to truth's divine, inestimable status (GM III: 27). However, Christian interpretations provided life with meaning, and repudiating them raises the question of whether existence has any meaning. Nietzsche sees that, in answering this question in the negative, Schopenhauer makes the same mistake as the Eleatics. This is because he affirms the notion of a domain of true identities separate from experience and thereby perpetuates 'those Christian-ascetic moral perspectives in which one had *renounced faith* along with the faith in God' (GS: 357). This leads to the sixth and final stage, Nietzsche's own characterisation of *Redlichkeit*, one that does not entertain the possibility of unconditional and self-identical truths or definitive interpretations, as I have shown in previous chapters, but one that gives life meaning and purpose, at least for those who are capable of being *redlich*. I now turn to the detail of Nietzsche's own presentation of *Redlichkeit*.

It is 'honest (*redliche*) atheism' that leads to the repudiation of Christian interpretations of life, nature and history. Unsurprisingly then, Christians and religious thinkers are the main group that Nietzsche deems not to be *redlich*. Examining precisely why Nietzsche rebukes Christians for being *unredlich* reveals the main characteristics of *Redlichkeit*. Nietzsche writes that Christianity does not '[educate] the sense of honesty (*Redlichkeit*) and justice', and that there is a lot of 'dishonesty (*Unredlichkeit*) [...] still practised in Protestant pulpits' (D: 84). There are two main reasons for this. Firstly, Christianity and the promoters of its doctrines accept and promote dogmatic biblical propositions unquestioningly and uncritically, and secondly, they interpret all their experiences along religious lines with no desire or thought to question them



using reason. On the first point, Nietzsche writes that Christians unabashedly assert religious pronouncements as being true with no shred of proof other than the feeling that their selflessness somehow guarantees the truth of the pronouncements:

‘the Christian “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” [has] never been made with total honesty (*Redlichkeit*) and yet always without a bad conscience: one has advanced such propositions [...] boldly as the truth in the face of all appearance and has felt in doing so no religious or moral pang of conscience [...] Many worthy people still stand at this *level of truthfulness*: when they *feel* themselves selfless they think they are permitted to *trouble themselves less* about truth’ (*op. cit.* 456).

Being *redlich* is not to assert ‘conjectures as boldly as if they were dogmas’, but to be in ‘honest perplexity (*einer redlichen Verlegenheit*)’ about interpretations, including those of biblical passages (*op. cit.* 84). On the second point, Nietzsche castigates ‘founders of religions’ for lacking the ‘sort of honesty’ (*Redlichkeit*) necessary to make ‘their experiences a matter of conscience for knowledge’, and necessary to interpret them using reason, rather than ‘*against reason*’ and in terms of ““miracles” and “rebirths”” (GS: 319). Making experiences a matter of conscience and interpreting them using reason involves posing questions such as: ““What did I really experience? What happened in and around me at that time? Was my reason bright enough? Was my will opposed to deceptions of the senses and bold in resisting the fantastic?”” (*ibid.*). Some philosophers are guilty of a similar lack of criticality, and are wont to present as truths, what are really their assumptions, hunches, abstracted desires and prejudices. Moreover, they find post-hoc rationalisations to substantiate these ‘truths’, but are not

intellectually conscientious enough to recognise or admit to it. Consequently, Nietzsche writes that such philosophers 'are not honest (*redlich*) enough in their work, although they all make a lot of virtuous noise when the problem of truthfulness is touched even remotely' (BGE: 5).

The more *redlich* we are, the less we are tempted to interpret new experiences and perceptions in terms of regnant moral frameworks or previous experiences: 'As soon as we see a new image, we immediately construct it with the aid of all our previous experiences, *depending on the degree* of our honesty (*Redlichkeit*) and justice' (GS: 114). The less *redlich* we are, and therefore the weaker we are, the more we tend to ignore or dissolve the differences between things: 'Those who want to mediate between two resolute thinkers show that they are mediocre; they lack eyes for seeing what is unique. Seeing things as similar and making things the same is the sign of weak eyes' (*op. cit.* 228). Part of what it is to demonstrate *Redlichkeit*, to speak frankly and unflinchingly about reality, is to find new ways of interpreting it. As Nietzsche has Zarathustra point out: 'Ever more honestly (*redlicher*) it learns to talk, the I: and the more it learns the more it finds words and honours for body and earth' (Z I: 3). This makes sense in the context of Nietzsche's views that there is an infinite number of valid ways of interpreting reality, and that the only way we have of apprehending reality is by interpreting the evidence of the senses to transform 'seeing' into 'seeing *something*' (GM III: 12).

Another major aspect of *Redlichkeit* is engaging in behaviour that constitutes, or is conducive to, truth-determination, specifically, intellectual scrutiny, critique, scepticism and experimentation, and avoiding the temptation to develop fixed

ideas or opinions, or to uphold beliefs simply because they are widely accepted: 'To admit a belief merely because it is a custom—but that means to be dishonest (*unredlich*), cowardly, lazy! (D: 101). Consequently, *Redlichkeit* requires one to police one's thoughts continually by countering them with opposing thoughts: 'Never keep back or bury in silence that which can be thought against your thoughts! Give it praise! It is among the foremost requirements of honesty of thought (*Redlichkeit zu Denkens*)' (*op. cit.* 370). As Nietzsche writes in *The Antichrist*, using *rechtschaffen* in a sense that seems to me to be consistent with *redlich*, being intellectually honest means making any affirmation or denial a matter of stringent debate: 'What does it mean to be honest (*rechtschaffen*) in intellectual things? That one is stern towards one's heart, that one despises "fine feelings", that one makes every Yes and No a question of conscience!' (A: 50).

*Redlichkeit* is undoubtably hard work. It takes strength of character, and involves treating ourselves cruelly. There are three main reasons for this. Firstly, *Redlichkeit* involves going against an innate desire for certainty, a desire that constitutes the 'inmost craving and deepest distress' (GS: 2). As Nietzsche puts it in *The Antichrist*, again using *rechtschaffen* in a synonymous way to *redlich*, '[o]ne must be honest (*rechtschaffen*) in intellectual matters to the point of harshness' (A: Foreword). This desire for certainty leads weaker, less honest people, to all too eagerly accept something as proof of a conviction, without undertaking the rigorous method of scrutiny, contradiction and interrogation that is characteristic of *Redlichkeit*. In other words, those who Nietzsche sees as perpetuating religious and other metaphysical convictions let the strength of

their 'demand that [...] something should be firm' lead them to be 'more negligent about the demonstration of this certainty' (GS: 347).

Secondly, *Redlichkeit* involves going against an innate desire for the simple, superficial and obvious, rather than the profound and complex. The *Redlichen* seek knowledge with 'profundity, multiplicity, and thoroughness', by overcoming the 'will to mere appearance, to simplification' with 'a *will* which is a kind of cruelty of the intellectual conscience and taste' (BGE: 230). It is a kind of cruelty because 'any insistence on profundity and thoroughness is a violation, a desire to hurt the basic will of the spirit which unceasingly strives for the apparent and superficial—in all desire to know there is a drop of cruelty' (*op. cit.* 229). Such cruelty assumes a literal manifestation in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* in the figure of the leech scholar. The scholar is lying in a swamp allowing ten leeches to bite into his arm for the sake of his conscientious study into the brain of the leech, and his desire to increase his knowledge on this subject. The man asserts that he is disgusted by 'half measures' and that he '[wants] to be honest (*redlich*)', a quality he equates with being 'severe, strict, narrow, cruel, unrelenting' (Z IV: 4). Hence cruelty goes hand in hand with *Redlichkeit*, with Nietzsche writing that 'it would sound nicer if we were said, whispered, reputed to be distinguished not by cruelty but by "extravagant honesty" (*Redlichkeit*)' (BGE: 230).

The third reason why being *redlich* is hard work is because the realisations that arise from its practice can be difficult to bear. These realisations include unsavoury features of human psychology and nature, as well as the 'general untruth and mendaciousness' revealed through science, and 'that delusion and error are conditions of human knowledge and sensation' (GS: 107). Nietzsche

believes that these realisations would ‘lead to nausea and suicide’ were it not for the counterforce of art, a topic I explore further in the next and final chapter.

The upshot of all this is that many people, including religious believers and men of conviction, are not capable of being *redlich*, because the condition of their existence is ‘[n]ot to see many things, not to be impartial in anything, to be party through and through, to view all values from a strict and necessary perspective’ (A: 54). Such a person rejects anything that goes against established opinion or extant truths, ‘and tries to remove it from his mind as fast as he can’ (GS: 25). Moreover, he shuns the challenge of creating new truths, since he is in the thrall of the ‘many old ones’ (*ibid.*). Nietzsche therefore calls such people ‘[n]ot predestined for knowledge’ (*ibid.*). If such people did attempt to adopt an intellectual conscience, and subject each one of their convictions to rigorous scrutiny and question, it would annihilate them: ‘The believer is not free to have a conscience at all over the question “true” and “false”: to be honest (*rechtschaffen*) on *this* point would mean his immediate destruction’ (A: 54). Nietzsche therefore advises the *redlich* not to foist their realisations on people who are not equipped to assimilate them, as this would be a form of torture:

‘let us act humanely with our “sense of honesty” (*Sinn für Redlichkeit*)—even though we do possess in it a thumbscrew which we could fasten on to all those great self-opinionated believers who even now still want to impose their belief on the whole world and torment them to the quick’ (D: 536).

The taxing nature of *Redlichkeit* means that it needs to be worked on and maintained unless it is to either degenerate into empty posturing without the practices that constitute it, or give way to the desire for an easy life. On the first

point, Nietzsche emphasises that we are only *redlich* while we are doing the things that it takes to be *redlich*. We need to remain master of this virtue, as we do of all our virtues. In particular, Nietzsche warns against letting *Redlichkeit* degenerate into ‘our vanity, our finery and pomp, our limit, our stupidity’ and cautions us not to be religious about it: ‘let us see to it that out of honesty we do not finally become saints and bores’ (BGE: 227). If one is truly *redlich*, one does not have the time or inclination to advertise it. Nietzsche therefore advocates the company of men who are ‘too serious in their passion for knowledge and for honesty (*Redlichkeit*) to have time or inclination for fame’ (D: 482). In other words, *Redlichkeit* ceases where pride, vanity and boastfulness start:

‘These are beautiful, glittering, jingling, festive words: honesty (*Redlichkeit*), love of truth, love of wisdom, sacrifice for knowledge, heroism of the truthful—they have something that swells one’s pride. But we hermits and marmots have long persuaded ourselves in the full secrecy of a hermit’s conscience that this worthy verbal pomp, too, belongs to the old mendacious pomp, junk, and gold dust of unconscious human vanity’ (BGE: 230).

On the second point, the *redlich* might be tempted to give up on *Redlichkeit* in order to make their lives easier. Nietzsche captures this idea by personifying *Redlichkeit* as weary and in need of help. Nevertheless, we must remain firm, Nietzsche says, and marshall our distaste for anything less than the highest order of honesty and curiosity:

‘Honesty (*Redlichkeit*) [...] let us work on it with all our malice and love [...] And if our honesty should nevertheless grow weary one day and sigh and stretch its limbs and find us too hard, and would like to have things better, easier, tenderer, like an agreeable vice—let us remain *hard* [...] And let us

dispatch to her assistance whatever we have in us of devilry: our disgust with what is clumsy and approximate, our “*nitimur in vetitum*” [we strive for the forbidden], our adventurous courage, our seasoned and choosy curiosity, our subtlest, most disguised, most spiritual will to power’ (*op. cit.* 227).

Curiosity is a crucial component of *Redlichkeit*. This is pure curiosity, not curiosity for an ulterior motive, such as the desire to earn plaudits or alleviate boredom:

‘Often mere *amour-plaisir* [love based on pleasure] of knowledge (curiosity) is felt to be quite sufficient, or *amour-vanite* [love based on vanity], being accustomed to it with the ulterior motive of honours and sustenance; for many people it is actually quite enough that they have too much leisure and do not know what to do with it except to read, collect, arrange, observe, and recount—their “scientific impulse” is their boredom’ (GS: 123).

The curiosity inherent in *Redlichkeit* is the sort of curiosity manifested by the free spirits. This explains why Nietzsche characterises the insatiably curious free spirits in terms of *Redlichkeit*: ‘Honesty (*Redlichkeit*), supposing that this is our virtue from which we cannot get away, we free spirits’ (BGE: 227). Free spirits demonstrate *Redlichkeit* in the intellectually conscientious way in which they approach the interpretation of their experiences. As Nietzsche sums this approach up: ‘we others who thirst after reason [and] are determined to scrutinise our experiences as severely as a scientific experiment—hour after hour, day after day. We ourselves wish to be our experiments and guinea pigs’ (GS: 319).

Free spirits achieve such scrutiny by continually asking themselves difficult questions about the nature of their experiences. Importantly, free spirits relish such questions, for they are drawn to ‘everything problematic’, and take ‘delight in an *x*’ (*op. cit.* Preface: 3). Consequently, as soon as they answer one question, they immediately take up another, for ‘[a] matter that becomes clear ceases to concern us’ (BGE: 80). To become bored with what we already possess and to ‘lust for what is new’ is part of human nature, and applies equally to people who love knowledge and truth: ‘Gradually we become tired of the old, of what we safely possess, and we stretch out our hands again’ (GS: 14).

The free spirits would not be *redlich* were they not cruel with their intellectual conscientiousness. They do not balk at, and are equipped to take on, any investigative task. Hence Nietzsche describes them as ‘investigators to the point of cruelty, with uninhibited fingers for the unfathomable [...] ready for every feat that requires a sense of acuteness and acute senses, ready for every venture’ (BGE: 44). However, this cruelty is counteracted by the ‘great *passion*’ with which the free spirits seek knowledge (GS: 351). Without this passion, they would not be able to live as they do, embroiled in the thorniest of problems: ‘in the thundercloud of the highest problems and the heaviest responsibilities (by no means as an observer, outside, indifferent, secure, and objective)’ (*ibid.*).

The other reward for the practitioners of *Redlichkeit*, aside from indulging their passion, is to liberate themselves from the traditional moral value system of good and evil. For example, Nietzsche writes that ‘[i]t would mean a *relapse* for us, with our irritable honesty (*Redlichkeit*), to get involved entirely in morality



[...] We should be *able* also to stand *above* morality' (*op. cit.* 107). As Nietzsche has the old pope point out to Zarathustra, his 'over-great honesty (*Redlichkeit*) will yet lead [him] away beyond good and evil too!' (Z IV: 6). In contrast, people who are not *redlich*, and who have no intellectual conscience, persist in judging by traditional morals, and continue 'handling [their] scales, calling this good and that evil' (GS: 2). Outside the straightjacket of traditional morality, *Redlichkeit* allows two things. Firstly, a frank acknowledgement of whatever desires and instincts occur naturally in us, which is not only healthy, but leads to better self-knowledge:

'The realm of morality should be reduced and restricted, step by step; one should bring to light and honour the names of the instincts really at work in it [...] the ever more commanding voice of one's "honesty" (*Redlichkeit*) should shame one into unlearning that shame which would like to deny and lie away the natural instincts' (1887 Notebook 10[45]).

Secondly, *Redlichkeit* enables its practitioners to create their own 'valuations, and tables of what is good', allowing them to judge their actions by these standards, rather than by someone else's morals writ large in the form of 'universal law' (GS: 335). There are two benefits to this. First, it liberates the *Redlichen* from the potentially stultifying or destructive effects of these one-size-fits-all generalisations, or 'recipes against [...] passions' (BGE: 198). Second, it is a more appropriate way of judging actions that Nietzsche sees as being unique and incomparable, and also unknowable. Nietzsche says that it is impossible to know what caused any of our actions, or in other words, 'the law of their mechanism is indemonstrable' (GS: 335). In order to create '*our own new tables of what is good*, and [...] stop brooding about the "moral value of our

actions””, Nietzsche says ‘we must become the best learners and discoverers of everything that is lawful and necessary in the world: we must become *physicists*’ (*ibid.*). Why physicists? Because physicists engage in hypothesising and questioning, apply reason to solve problems, and favour this-worldly over metaphysical interpretations. Importantly, what inspires this mode of interpretative practice is nothing other than *Redlichkeit*: ‘long live physics! And even more so that which *compels* us to turn to physics—our honesty (*Redlichkeit*)’ (*ibid.*).

## **Part 2: Nietzsche's Revaluation of Truth**

### **Chapter 6. Art versus honesty**

In the previous chapter, I showed that one of the reasons why Nietzsche's new virtue of honesty is hard work and involves self-inflicted cruelty is because it leads to realisations about existence that are psychologically difficult to bear. Nietzsche says that these realisations would have the potential to cause nausea and suicide were it not for the palliative of art. Art also enables us to affirm life despite these terrible realisations:

'If we had not welcomed the arts and invented this kind of cult of the untrue, then the realisation of general untruth and mendaciousness that now comes to us through science—the realisation that delusion and error are conditions of human knowledge and sensation—would be utterly unbearable. *Honesty* would lead to nausea and suicide. But now there is a counterforce against our honesty that helps us to avoid such consequence: art as the *good* will to appearance' (*op. cit.* 107).

However, there is a concern that this vital role for art stands at odds with the high value Nietzsche confers on honesty and truthfulness. This is because Nietzsche describes art as the 'cult of the untrue' and '*good* will to appearance'; elsewhere, as 'the cult of surfaces', '*falsifying* [life's] image' and 'the will to the inversion of truth, to untruth at any price' (BGE: 59); and as something in which 'the *lie* is sanctified and the *will to deception* has a good conscience' (GM III: 25). Nietzsche refers to the artist as '[f]alseness with a good conscience', someone who takes 'delight in simulation', and indulges an 'inner craving for a role and mask, for *appearance*' (GS: 361). In short, the problem is one of

reconciling honesty—with its intimate relationship with truthfulness and its requirement for intellectual conscientiousness—with art, which seems decidedly untruthful.

In this chapter, I attempt to defuse the concern that honesty and truthfulness clash with artistry characterised this way. I argue that honesty and artistry are not mutually exclusive, but compatible. That a balance can be found between the two is something that Nietzsche suggests in his use of the word ‘counterforce’ in the passage from *The Gay Science* above. Moreover, Nietzsche is explicit about the possibility of a synthesis of honesty—characterised by scientific method and truthfulness—with certain aspects of artistry, although he sees such a union as a long way off: ‘the time seems remote when artistic energies and the practical wisdom of life will join with scientific thinking to form a higher organic system in relation to which scholars, physicians, artists, and legislators—as we know them at present—would have to look like paltry relics of ancient times’ (*op. cit.* 113). Such a union would be an extrapolation of the coalescence, under ‘one organising force’, of the separate disciplines that now constitute ‘scientific thinking’, namely, ‘the impulse to doubt, to negate, to wait, to collect, to dissolve’ (*ibid.*). The toxic effect of the stand-alone disciplines was tempered by their coalescence, implying that the harmful effects of honesty could be tempered by a union with artistry:

‘So many things have to come together for scientific thinking to originate; and all these necessary strengths had to be invented, practiced, and cultivated separately. As long as they were still separate, however, they frequently had an altogether different effect than they do now that they are

integrated into scientific thinking and hold each other in check. Their effect was that of poisons' (*ibid.*).

I outline three principal advantages of such a union—that it allows us to remain honest, and therefore truthful, provide meaning for our lives, and as a result, affirm them. However, it is first necessary to explain why Nietzsche thinks that the fruits of honest investigation lead to nausea and suicide.

### ***How honesty leads to nausea and suicide***

The world that emerges from the honest interrogative practices that Nietzsche has undertaken is 'in all eternity chaos—in the sense not of a lack of necessity but of a lack of order, arrangement, form, beauty, wisdom' (*op. cit.* 109). On this view of the world, the following concepts are revealed to be 'aesthetic anthropomorphisms' (*ibid.*), or 'erroneous articles of faith': 'that there are enduring things; that there are equal things; that there are things, substances, bodies; that a thing is what it appears to be; that our will is free; that what is good for me is also good in itself' (*op. cit.* 110). It is hard to renounce such articles of faith, partly because they enable our existence, and partly because knowledge of their falsity will not on its own extirpate them from our feelings: 'We still draw the conclusions of judgments we consider false, of teaching in which we no longer believe—our feelings make us do it' (D: 99). As Aaron Ridley points out, such judgments still work to satisfy 'patterns of need and feeling' that knowledge of the judgments' falsity does not change (Ridley 2007: 75). That is not to say such a change in our feelings is impossible, only that it will take a very long time: 'We have to *learn to think differently*—in order at last, perhaps very late on, to attain even more: *to feel differently*' (D: 103).

Consequently, at least for the time being, 'delusion and error are conditions of human knowledge and sensation' (GS: 107).

So part of the reason why honesty, and the intellectually conscientious view of reality it entails, would lead to nausea and suicide is that it exposes the world as being 'ungodly, immoral, "inhuman"', and that the way we have interpreted it is 'false and mendacious' and 'according to our *needs*' (*op. cit.* 346). In other words, it reveals that the world can only meet our needs when mediated by false concepts, or as Nietzsche puts it, '[t]hat lies are necessary in order to live is itself part of the terrifying and questionable character of existence' (WTP: 853). Yet Nietzsche sees art providing salvation for those who understand this: 'Art as the *redemption of the man of knowledge*—of those who see the terrifying and questionable character of existence, who want to see it' (*ibid.*).

Furthermore, 'insight into the horrible truth' of the nature of the world can also paralyse men who are characterised more by their actions than by their intellectual endeavours (BT: 7). A case in point is Hamlet, whose inability to exact revenge on his uncle is diagnosed by Nietzsche as the result of Hamlet having 'looked truly into the essence of things', and gained 'true knowledge' (*ibid.*). Such knowledge includes the insight that action is pointless, for it reveals the necessity of the way things are, that 'their action could not change anything in the eternal nature of things' (*ibid.*). Consequently, Hamlet, and the Dionysian man who resembles him, 'feel it to be ridiculous or humiliating that they should be asked to set right a world that is out of joint' (*ibid.*). Yet artistic illusion can motivate action despite this thought. Nietzsche summarises the argument as follows: 'Knowledge kills action; action

requires the veils of illusion [...] when the danger to his will is greatest, *art* approaches as a saving sorceress, expert at healing. She alone knows how to turn these nauseous thoughts about the horror or absurdity of existence into notions with which one can live' (*ibid.*). In this case, Nietzsche sees art providing salvation for the man of action: 'Art as the *redemption of the man of action*—of those who not only see the terrifying and questionable character of existence but live it, want to live it, the tragic-warlike man, the hero' (WTP: 853).

Lastly, the intellectual conscience has led to a lack of meaning for existence and suffering now that the ascetic ideal is in the process of self-destruction. Recall that the ascetic ideal '*offered man meaning!* It was the only meaning offered so far; any meaning is better than none at all' (GM III: 28). Nietzsche asserts that humans have an intractable need for a meaning for existence and suffering, and even find suffering desirable, provided they have a good reason for it. The problem Nietzsche highlights is one of 'the meaninglessness of suffering, *not* suffering itself', for it is a lack of meaning that could lead to 'suicidal nihilism' (*ibid.*). More worryingly, Nietzsche diagnoses a complete lack of desire for meaning—as in the case of the so-called 'last men' presented in the prologue of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*—as a sign of humanity on the wane. In Nietzsche's words, 'man *has to* believe, to know, from time to time *why* he exists; his race cannot flourish without a periodic trust in life—without faith in *reason in life*' (GS: 1). I say more on this matter in the section on meaning below. The important point here is that '[a] "scientific" interpretation of the world' alone cannot provide meaning, for it is 'one of the poorest in meaning' (*op. cit.* 373), and that science's ability to ameliorate suffering is not in itself a meaning. As Nietzsche believes that artistic practices in their most basic conception as

form-creation *can* provide such meaning, he calls art '*the redemption of the sufferer*—as the way to states in which suffering is willed, transfigured, deified, where suffering is a form of great delight' (WTP: 853).

### ***Truthfulness***

Art functions to detract from 'the terrifying and questionable character of existence' (*ibid.*). As I mention above, we are able to aestheticise the external world by superimposing 'order, arrangement, form, beauty, wisdom' on the chaos and ugliness we see in it (GS: 109). In other words, art is able to 'make things beautiful, attractive, and desirable for us when they are not', with Nietzsche reminding us that 'in themselves they never are' (*op. cit.* 299). As well as counteracting the ugliness we see in the external world with various aesthetic effects, we can achieve the same end by adjusting our position in relation to the external world:

'Moving away from things until there is a good deal that one no longer sees and there is much that our eye has to add if we are still to see them at all; or seeing things around a corner and as cut out and framed; or to place them so that they partially conceal each other and grant us only glimpses of architectural perspectives; or looking at them through tinted glass or in the light of the sunset; or giving them a surface and skin that is not fully transparent' (*ibid.*).

Nietzsche's argument here is that '[t]ruth is ugly' (WTP: 822)—with truth being the sight of the way things are before aesthetic effects. As his aforementioned comment about 'nausea and suicide' suggests, Nietzsche sees ugliness as having nefarious effects on our health and strength: 'Reckoned physiologically,



everything ugly weakens and afflicts man. It recalls decay, danger, impotence; he actually suffers a loss of energy in its presence' (TI IX: 20). As the beautifying effects of art reduce this ugliness, they counter its damaging effects: 'As an aesthetic phenomenon existence is still *bearable* for us' (GS: 107). Consequently, Nietzsche notes: 'We possess art lest we *perish of the truth*' (WTP: 822).

It is important to note that aestheticising is a response or reaction to having seen the world as it is, rather than something that prevents sight of it: 'whoever stands that much in *need* of the cult of surfaces must at some time have reached *beneath* them with disastrous results' (BGE: 59). It is because the need for aestheticising is a direct consequence of honesty and its unpleasant realisations that Nietzsche calls art 'the *good* will to appearance' (GS: 107), and says that 'the *will to deception* has a good conscience' in art (GM III: 25). The upshot of all this is that art is not a way of evading the truth, but of continuing to see it. As May puts this: 'Though art is ethically opposed to truthfulness, insofar as it is innately fiction-creating, it is psychologically supportive of truthfulness, in that it enables us to live with the truth' (May 1999: 33). To borrow Nietzsche's analogy, art is to truth what sugar is to a bitter medicine (GS: 299). Hence Nietzsche says that we have '*ultimate gratitude to art*' (*op. cit.* 107).

So Nietzsche does not advocate truthfulness at the expense of our health or our life. Indeed, part of the reason why Nietzsche critiques the unconditional will to truth is that he sees it as being inimical to life in various respects (see chapter two). When it comes to truth, Nietzsche says that '[t]he value for *life* is ultimately decisive' (WTP: 493). For this reason, whether something is true is of secondary

importance to whether it benefits life: 'The falseness of a judgment is for us not necessarily an objection to a judgment [...] The question is to what extent it is life-promoting, life-preserving, species-preserving, perhaps even species-cultivating' (BGE: 4). As Christopher Janaway neatly summarises this point, Nietzsche sees 'the value of truth-acquisition as conditional—on the values of health, strength, affirmation, or the degree of viability, bearability, and self-satisfaction we can sustain' (Janaway 2014: 53). Aesthetic modelling is one way we have of ensuring that our health is not compromised by the sight of truth, and another way, as Janaway notes, is to avoid looking any deeper than superficial appearances. Nietzsche vaunts the Greeks for being able to do precisely this:

'Oh, those Greeks! They knew how to live. What is required for that is to stop courageously at the surface, the fold, the skin; to adore appearance, to believe in forms, tones, words—in the whole Olympus of appearance. Those Greeks were superficial—*out of profundity*. And is not this precisely what we are again coming back to, we daredevils of the spirit [...] Are we not, precisely in this respect, Greeks? Adorers of forms, of tones, of words?' (GS Preface: 4).

However, it is important to bear in mind that artistic falsifications and appearances are not fundamentally opposed or different to reality, but a more refined version of it: 'the artist places a higher value on appearance than on reality [...] "appearance" here signifies reality *once more*, only selected, strengthened, corrected' (TI III: 6). Nietzsche makes no ultimate distinction between appearance and reality, but between 'degrees of apparentness and, as it were, lighter and darker shadows and shades of appearance—different

“values,” to use the language of painters’ (BGE: 34). Nietzsche’s question ‘[t]o what extent can truth endure incorporation?’ (GS: 110) can therefore be understood in terms of how much truth we can stand to see *without* resorting to artistic refinement. The answer depends on how strong the person is: ‘the strength of a spirit should be measured according to how much of the “truth” one could still barely endure—or to put it more clearly, to what degree one would *require* it to be thinned down, shrouded, sweetened, blunted, falsified’ (BGE: 39).

The stronger the person, the less aestheticising is required. Modest falsification is to add finishing touches to what is otherwise an un-falsified view of reality: ‘We do not always keep our eyes from rounding off something and, as it were, finishing the poem; and then it is no longer eternal imperfection that we carry across the river of becoming’ (GS: 107). In this case, the concealment is partial, reality is still on view ‘around a corner’, in ‘glimpses’ or ‘cut out and framed’ (*op. cit.* 299). People like Nietzsche and the free spirits are even delighted and invigorated by the sight of truth, and do not require a great deal of aestheticising to counteract its effects. Nietzsche even makes it his new year’s resolution to not do anything more than turn away from the ugliness to achieve respite from it: ‘*For the new year* [...] I want to learn more and more to see as beautiful what is necessary in things [...] I do not want to wage war against what is ugly [...] *Looking away* shall be my only negation’ (*op. cit.* 276).

Weaker characters need to falsify reality a good deal more, with the degree of falsification depending on the extent to which they have been ‘burnt’ by looking deeper than superficial appearances (BGE: 59). For example, artists proper can

be burnt to the extent that they become divorced from reality—both that of the outside world and of their own mental states: ‘Whoever is completely and wholly an artist is to all eternity separated from the “real,” the actual; on the other hand, one can understand how he may sometimes weary to the point of desperation of the eternal “unreality” and falsity of his innermost existence’ (GM III: 4). Religious types are in a similar position to artists, but ‘cling to a religious interpretation of existence’ out of a fear of truth:

‘these born artists who can find the enjoyment of life only in the intention of *falsifying* its image (as it were, in a longwinded revenge on life): the degree to which life has been spoiled for them might be inferred from the degree to which they wish to see its image falsified, thinned down, transcendentalised, deified—the *homines religiosi* might be included among artists, as their highest rank’ (BGE: 59).

The so-called ‘ethical teacher’ promotes such complete and systematic falsifications in his instinct to preserve the human race (GS: 1). He reinvents reality to the extent that he no longer sees anything of it at all. This is the wholesale replacement of existence with a different, completely fabricated existence: ‘the ethical teacher comes on stage, as the teacher of the purpose of existence; and to this end he invests a second, different existence and unhinges by means of his new mechanics the old, ordinary existence’ (*ibid.*). Yet how does this degree of falsification encourage the maintenance of an honest or truthful approach? The answer is that it doesn’t, because these virtues are wholly absent. This is not ‘art as the *good* will to appearance’ at all (*op. cit.* 107), but the will to deception with a bad conscience, because honesty and truthfulness are nowhere in evidence. Nietzsche regards such people as having

a 'bad intellectual conscience' for precisely this reason (*op. cit.* 2). Nietzsche calls art 'the *good* will to appearance' to emphasise that its falsifications are to support the intellectually conscientious practices of honesty and truthfulness (I owe this observation to Ridley 2007: 80).

The other way in which 'art as the *good* will to appearance' supports truth-seeking is by providing a more appropriate model of cognition for knowledge acquisition. Nietzsche believes that objective approaches encouraging the adoption of a perspective-free and impartial viewpoint are antithetical to 'scientific curiosity' and not conducive to solving philosophical problems:

'All great problems demand *great love* [...] It makes the most telling difference whether a thinker has a personal relationship to his problems and finds in them his destiny, his distress, and his greatest happiness, or an "impersonal" one, meaning that he can do no better than to touch them and grasp them with the antennae of cold, curious thought. In the latter case nothing will come of it; that much one can promise in advance, for even if great problems should allow themselves to be be *grasped* by them they would not permit frogs and weaklings to *hold on* to them' (GS: 345).

What activates the intellect and allows for 'seeing', 'knowing', understanding and problem-solving is the engagement of as many 'perspective and affective interpretations' as possible: 'the *more* affects we allow to speak about one thing, the *more* eyes, different eyes, we can use to observe one thing, the more complete will our "concept" of this thing, our "objectivity," be' (GM III: 12). Nietzsche goes further and says that the psychological condition of intoxication is necessary for perception, as well as for pure art: 'For art to exist, for any sort of aesthetic activity or perception to exist, a certain physiological precondition is

indispensable: *intoxication*' (TI IX: 8). Intoxication is the byproduct of all 'great desires, all strong emotions', and is characterised by a 'feeling of plenitude and increased energy' (*ibid.*). As well as motivating creation and perception, intoxication improves certain aspects of cognition. For example, an artist in the Dionysian state—which, in his late writings, Nietzsche regards as the ideal creative or artistic state—is highly attuned to his emotions, and this improves his powers of representing, understanding, divining and communicating:

'In the Dionysian state [...] the entire emotional system is alerted and intensified: so that it discharges all its powers of representation, imitation, transfiguration, transmutation [...] It is impossible for the Dionysian man not to understand any suggestion of whatever kind, he ignores no signal from the emotions, he possesses to the highest degree the instinct for understanding and divining, just as he possesses the art of communication to the highest degree' (*ibid.*).

Importantly, Dionysian intoxication in no way disallows honesty and truthfulness, as Nietzsche also uses these terms to characterise Dionysus. Dionysus is a 'philosopher' with 'explorer and discoverer courage, his daring honesty (*gewagten Redlichkeit*), truthfulness (*Wahrhaftigkeit*), and love of wisdom' (BGE: 295). All this suggests that artists are skilled at harnessing their emotions in coming up with new perspectives and interpretations, which Nietzsche sees as our only means of apprehending the world and attaining knowledge of it.

## ***Meaning***

Aesthetic beautification is not the only type of creative practice that Nietzsche values. There are two other types of creation that he sees as enhancing life—value creation and the stylisation of our characters, which Nietzsche considers to be ‘a great and rare art’ (GS: 290). My focus here is on value creation, because it is by creating new individual values that we are able to invest existence with meaning and affirm our lives after the intellectual conscience has brought about the collapse of the ascetic ideal. This collapse allows ‘the *creation of our own new tables of what is good*’ in a way that does not appeal to religious morality (*op. cit.* 335). Generating meaning through the creation of new values is, I contend, a more robust way of generating meaning than through illusions in the sense of fictional propositions about ourselves or our lives. The latter is beset by the problem of explaining how such propositions have the power to move and motivate us when we are aware of them as being fictional. On the other hand, it is more straightforward to see how our values causally influence our actions and direct the course of our lives. As Nietzsche says, ‘our opinions, valuations, and tables of what is good certainly belong among the most powerful levers in the involved mechanism of our actions’, even though ‘the law of their mechanism is indemonstrable’ (*ibid.*).

Hence Nietzsche describes values as ‘physiological demands for the preservation of a certain type of life’ (BGE: 3), or as a ‘standpoint’, more precisely, a ‘standpoint of conditions of preservation and enhancement for complex forms of relative life-duration within the flux of becoming’ (WTP: 715). As May notes, the demand element of valuing has an objective flavour that determines what sort of person is suited to a certain sort of life, while the

standpoint element has a subjective flavour that conditions which parts of the world an individual sees and how they see them (May 1999: 9-10). In this way, the standpoint element is similar to Nietzsche's concept of perspectivism, which is the process of each living organism interpreting or understanding the world from its own point of view: 'every centre of force—and not only man—construes all the rest of the world from its own viewpoint, i.e., measures, feels, forms, according to its own force' (WTP: 636). In short, the creation of values can be described as 'the strength to create for ourselves our own new eyes—and ever again new eyes that are even more our own' (GS: 143).

Aside from an unconscious or instinctual element, there are two other key elements to value creation (I owe this observation to Harper 2012). We need to both articulate and communicate the new values—'it is enough to create new names and estimations and probabilities in order to create in the long run new "things"' (GS: 58)—and put them into practice—'to *be* something new, to *signify* something new, to *represent* new values' (BGE: 253). More importantly, the creation of *honest* values requires a thorough apprehension and scrutiny of our experiences, making them 'a matter of conscience for knowledge' (GS: 319), and diligent self-observation, asking of each of our automatic or instinctual judgments "'How did it originate there?" [...] and then also: "What is it that impels me to listen to it?"' (*op. cit.* 335).

For example, in the previous chapter, I showed how Nietzsche critiques the Eleatics' values—their ways of living and judging—because of the values' dependence on the basic errors that the Eleatics had rejected for being wrong, such as the notion of enduring things, and the values' origins in the impulses for



‘tranquility, for sole possession, or for dominion’, despite the Eleatics denying that such impulses play a part in knowledge (*op. cit.* 110). Nietzsche sees inherent in Christian values an insidious disgust with life and a desire for it to be over. Lastly, the slaves overlook that their values are rooted in their feelings of impotence and *ressentiment*: ‘The slave revolt in morality begins when *ressentiment* itself becomes creative and gives birth to values’ (GM I: 10). Thus as all these values express something quite different from what their creators suppose, they have a kernel of self-deception that prevents their creators from genuinely affirming life. However, it is essential to find the right balance of self-reflection, for too much actually stymies creativity (I owe this observation to May 1999: 160-161). An artist who is too busy to reflect on the value of creation could end up producing ‘works *that far excel his own judgment*’ (GS: 369). A case in point is Greek art and poetry, which Nietzsche says ‘never “knew” what it did’ (*ibid.*).

Honest value-creation also requires knowledge of the natural world and human nature, or ‘of everything that is lawful and necessary in the world’, with Nietzsche remarking that ‘hitherto all valuations and ideals have been based on *ignorance* of physics or were constructed so as to *contradict* it’ (*op. cit.* 335). Part of this is acknowledging that values that assume the status of ‘universal law’ are unsuitable grounds on which to judge actions that are unique and incomparable (*ibid.*). This provides an additional imperative for individuals to create their own values. Yet as May points out, Nietzsche does not deny that values *can* have universal applicability if they help us thrive (May 1999: 12-13). Self-discipline falls into this category, as Nietzsche considers it an essential

component in pursuing a goal or interest, which in turn, leads us to the view that life is worthwhile:

‘What is essential “in heaven and earth” seems to be, to say it once more, that there should be *obedience* over a long period of time and in a *single* direction: given that, something always develops, and has developed, for whose sake it is worth while to live on earth; for example, virtue, art, music, dance, reason, spirituality’ (BGE: 188).

More specifically, self-discipline expresses ‘hatred of the *laissez aller*, of any all-too-great freedom, and implants the need for limited horizons and the nearest tasks—teaching the *narrowing of our perspective*’, which Nietzsche considers to be ‘a condition of life and growth’ (*ibid.*). Even obedience to Christianity, and the need to interpret everything according to ‘a Christian schema’, led to the development of ‘strength, ruthless curiosity, and subtle mobility’ (*ibid.*), as well as ‘discipline’ and ‘*persistence*’ (*op. cit.* 263). Nevertheless, at the same time, disciples of Christianity had ‘an irreplaceable amount of strength and spirit [...] crushed, stifled, and ruined’ (*op. cit.* 188). Preventing the latter is why it is important for individuals to create their own honest values and ideals. Hence Nietzsche advises that for self-preservation and growth, values, like virtues, must also ‘be *our* invention, *our* most personal defence and necessity [...] each one of us should devise *his own* virtue, *his own* categorical imperative’ (A: 11).

To create values is also to create meaning. As Nietzsche has Zarathustra explain, ‘[t]he human being first put values into things, in order to preserve itself—it created a meaning for things, a human’s meaning!’ (Z I: 15). Elsewhere, Nietzsche uses an analogy of the construction of a state to explicitly link the

creation of form—of which value-creation can be considered one type—with the creation of meaning. Nietzsche likens the founders of states to ‘unconscious artists’, whose

‘work is an instinctive creation and imposition of forms; they are the most involuntary, unconscious artists there are—whenever they appear something new soon arises, a ruling structure that *lives*, in which parts and functions are delimited and coordinated, in which nothing whatever finds a place that has not first been assigned a “meaning” in relation to the whole’ (GM II: 17).

Meaning arises from the form and endures thanks to its position in the overall structure (I owe this observation to Ridley 2014: 225-226). All in all, in creating his own values, an individual creates goals that serve the values, or to put it another way, he is able to ‘out of himself posit ends’ that become ‘the ground and force of his being’ (A: 54). Consequently, he looks to the world to see how he can accomplish these ends: he ‘wants to do great things, [and] also wills the means for it’ (*ibid.*). This makes the world, or certain aspects of it, particularly salient or meaningful to him. The creation of values also fills the void in meaning that emerges with the demise of the ascetic ideal. However, Nietzsche also upholds value creation as a worthwhile end in its own right, a view he epitomises in the figure of the overman (*Übermensch*), who represents humanity at its finest. The overman invests the world with meaning after the death of God by creating new values—he is ‘the sense of the earth’ (Z Preface: 3). Nietzsche hopes that others will be inspired to follow the overman’s lead, having Zarathustra say that he wants to ‘lure many away from the herd’ and

seeks '[c]ompanions' or '[f]ellow creators [...] who inscribe new values on new tablets' (*op. cit.* 9).

Nietzsche also attempts to warm his readers to the idea of creating meaning for themselves by invoking the figure of the 'last man' (*op. cit.* 5; translation adjusted). The last man lives perfectly contentedly, with no need for ultimate values to provide him with existential meaning. He 'no longer shoot[s] the arrow of [his] yearning over beyond the human' (*ibid.*). Instead, he derives satisfaction from his easy, comfortable life, with the diversion of work and petty pleasures. In this way, the last man's happiness is 'contrived' or 'invented' rather than genuine, and Nietzsche has Zarathustra describe him in unflattering terms, as 'most despicable human', 'as inexterminable as the ground-flea' and 'who makes everything small' (*ibid.*). The last man does not even know the meaning of the word 'creation', and his inability to be creative will bring humanity to its knees: 'the good, now "the last men," [...] are unable to *create*; they are always the beginning of the end' (EH IV: 4). The implications are clear. Nietzsche believes that the ability to live without the need for meaning is not a matter of pride, nor, more importantly, will it allow the human race to flourish. In this way, the last men 'sacrifice all man's future' (*ibid.*).

### **Affirmation**

Artistry and honesty both play a part in Nietzsche's value of life affirmation, which amounts to loving life for everything that is 'questionable and terrible' in it (TI III: 6). Nietzsche's ideal form of life affirmation is *amor fati*—meaning love of fate—which he describes in the following terms:

‘My formula for greatness in a human being is *amor fati*: that one wants nothing to be different, not forward, not backward, not in all eternity. Not merely bear what is necessary, still less conceal it—all idealism is mendaciousness in the face of what is necessary—but *love* it’ (EH II: 10); and

‘a Dionysian affirmation of the world as it is, without subtraction, exception, or selection [...] The highest state a philosopher can attain: to stand in a Dionysian relationship to existence—my formula for this is *amor fati*. It is part of this state to perceive not merely the necessity of those sides of existence hitherto denied, but their desirability [...] for their own sake, as the more powerful, more fruitful, *truer* sides of existence, in which its will finds clearer expression’ (WTP: 1041).

Honesty is necessary to bring the questionable and terrible character of existence to light, but is not in itself an affirmative stance. In addition, as Anderson points out (Anderson 2005: 195), honesty’s links to ‘courage’, ‘hardness against oneself’ and ‘cleanliness in relation to oneself’ smack of the life-denying asceticism of which Nietzsche disapproves in the unconditional will to truth (EH Preface: 3). In the quote from *The Will to Power* above, Nietzsche uses the term Dionysian to describe affirmation that incorporates honest recognition of what the world is necessarily like. Nietzsche applies the same term to the tragic artist: ‘The tragic artist is *not* a pessimist—it is precisely he who *affirms* all that is questionable and terrible in existence, he is *Dionysian*’ (TI III: 6). This suggests that affirmation has a specifically creative character, a connection that is also evident from Zarathustra’s assertion that redemption means ‘to work creatively on the future, and creatively to redeem—all that *was*’ (Z III: 12: 3).

In these uses of the term Dionysian, Nietzsche has moved beyond the sense he gave it in *The Birth of Tragedy*, where he juxtaposed it with Apollonian. In this early work, tragedy unites both Dionysian and Apollonian forces, with the former exposing the worst aspects of life and the latter seducing us into affirming them by means of 'countless illusions of the beauty of mere appearance that at every moment make life worth living [...] and prompt the desire to live on in order to experience the next moment' (BT: 25). Later, Nietzsche's virtue of honesty takes the place of tragedy in exposing the terrible aspects of human existence, with affirmation deriving from creative acts, rather than passive appreciation of beautiful illusions. Such acts of creation can take the form of producing visual art or music, conceiving new values, or styling our characters. If these creative acts are undertaken honestly, they do not edit the ugliness out of reality, but expose it. Nietzsche emphasises that 'art [...] brings to light much that is ugly, hard, questionable in life' (TI IX: 24).

For example, Nietzsche says that tragic art exposes the 'fearsome and questionable', but celebrates a particular courageous and fearless response to it: 'Bravery and composure in the face of a powerful enemy, great hardship, a problem that arouses aversion—it is this *victorious* condition which the tragic artist singles out, which he glorifies' (*ibid.*). Moreover, looking at such art arouses a similar combative attitude in the viewer. Giving style to our character starts with the requirement to conduct an honest 'survey' of 'all the strengths and weaknesses of [our] nature' before fashioning them into 'an artistic plan' that makes even less desirable traits seem pleasing (GS: 290). Aside from making ourselves 'tolerable to behold', the aim of this stylisation is to be able to

affirm or '*attain* satisfaction with' ourselves, for dissatisfaction leads to pernicious feelings of vengeance (*ibid.*).

By a process of association, art inspires others to be creative. Nietzsche says both that emotional intoxication motivates aesthetic activity, and that observing the result of such intoxication inspires the very same feeling in the observer. Hence Nietzsche writes that 'all beauty incites to procreation—that precisely this is the *proprium* of its effect' (TI IX: 22), and 'the effect of works of art is to *excite the state that creates art*—intoxication' (WTP: 821). This is a good thing because creative activity is an affirmative life force. Nietzsche says that the stimulation of life is the very meaning of art. An artist's 'basic instinct' is 'directed towards the meaning of art, which is *life* [...] Art is the great stimulus to life' (TI IX: 24).

At the same, artistic practices provide a welcome break from the hard work that honesty entails, preventing us from becoming religiously or ascetically honest such that we compromise our health and lives. We should not 'for the sake of the over-severe demands that we make on ourselves [...] become virtuous monsters and scarecrows' (GS: 107). To prevent this from happening, we can employ the artistic practices of seeing ourselves 'from a distance' and 'staging and watching ourselves' in order to change our perspective, or break the 'spell of that perspective which makes what is closest at hand and most vulgar appear as if it were vast, and reality itself' (*op. cit.* 78). In other words, distance and a change of perspective enable us to lighten up, and not take ourselves so seriously:

‘At times we need a rest from ourselves by looking upon, by looking *down* upon, ourselves and, from an artistic distance, laughing *over* ourselves or weeping *over* ourselves. We must discover the *hero* no less than the *fool* in our passion for knowledge [...] Precisely because we are at bottom grave and serious human beings—really, more weights than human beings—nothing does us as much good as a *fool’s cap*: we need it in relation to ourselves—we need all exuberant, floating, dancing, mocking, childish, and blissful art lest we lose the *freedom above things* that our ideal dreams of us’ (*op. cit.* 107).

Suffering is one of the terrible aspects of life with which Nietzsche is concerned, and it can seem as though he views creative activity as both a palliative for suffering and the result of it: ‘Creating—that is the great redemption from suffering, and life’s becoming lighter. But that the creator may be, that itself requires suffering and much transformation’ (Z II: 2). This is how Reginster reads Nietzsche (Reginster 2014). On this view, tragic art renders the terrible aspects of life ‘problematic’, ‘challenging’ or as resistances to overcome (*op. cit.* 35). Actively seeking and overcoming challenges is part of what it is to affirm life, for it signals abundant energy and happiness. This is the situation of the “well-born”, who do not have to deceive themselves into feeling happy, but simply are happy, ‘rounded men replete with energy and therefore *necessarily active*’ (GM I: 10). As Reginster puts it: ‘happiness lies, in Nietzsche’s view, in the taking up of challenges, the activity of confronting and overcoming resistance [...] the paradigm of which is *creative* activity’ (Reginster 2014: 35). Although Reginster and Nietzsche do not explicitly say so, the strong connection between happiness and activity is indicative of happiness in the



fuller sense of *eudaimonia*, or flourishing, rather than happiness as a feeling of contentment.

However, this line of interpretation justifies suffering in terms of the pleasure to be had in overcoming resistance, and, as May points out, there is a sense in which suffering does not need any justification if life is genuinely affirmed (May 2011b). May sees the need to justify suffering as a symptom of the religious morality that Nietzsche wants to overcome. Questions about how to justify suffering are suggestive of “*a will to nothingness*”—defined as ‘an aversion to life, a rebellion against the most fundamental presuppositions of life’ (GM III: 28). This is because they signal a desire for a world that does not necessarily involve suffering, in other words, a world that does not exist. For this reason, the posing of such questions indicates only partial affirmation. To put it another way, inherent in the ‘will to justify’ is detachment from the object of justification, which allows for the possibility of not affirming it, ‘it presupposes that there is the alternative of saying No, even if it rejects that alternative’ (May 2011b: 86-87). Nietzsche shows he is thinking along these lines when he writes:

‘The whole pose of “man *against* the world,” of man as a “world-negating” principle, of man as the measure of the value of things, as judge of the world who in the end places existence itself upon his scales and finds it wanting—the monstrous insipidity of this pose has finally come home to us and we are sick of it’ (GS: 346).

However, this also exposes Nietzsche’s earlier assertion that an honest view of reality would lead to nausea and suicide without the counterforce of art as precisely the “man *against* the world” position that he refutes. Such refutation is,

however, evident from the absence of a justificatory bent in Nietzsche's concept of *amor fati*, and his desire to see 'as beautiful what is necessary in things' without aestheticising (*op. cit.* 276). In other words, the position that creative activity alleviates suffering is still suggestive of a desire for a world that does not exist, a world without suffering, which militates against wholehearted affirmation of life. The implication is that creative activity only demonstrates genuine affirmation of life when it is not motivated by a need to overcome suffering, or in other words, when it is the expression of someone who is not, or no longer, suffering, and who already fully affirms life (I owe this observation to May 2011b: 85-86).

In conclusion, I have shown how artistry can be seen as the necessary correlative of honesty rather than its opponent. To borrow Anderson's words, 'honesty and artistry are mutually limiting regulative ideals' (Anderson 2005: 206). Honesty involves taking an intellectually conscientious and truthful look at reality, and our perceptions and experiences of it, but it is extremely taxing. Artistry allows us to maintain our honesty to the extent that our health and lives require. Art's emotion-driven model of cognition also hones our perceptive powers. In its most basic conception as form-creation, individuals create new values that give meaning to their lives, plugging the void left by the collapse of the ascetic ideal. At the same time, Nietzsche sees a lack of desire for meaning as contemptible, and as presaging the decline of humanity. Moreover, creative activity that honestly acknowledges the ugly and terrible elements of existence is an expression of life affirmation. In this paradigm of genuine life affirmation, suffering does not arise as a problem, and existence stands in no need of justification.

## **Conclusion**

In this thesis, I have undertaken a thorough survey of Nietzsche's critique of the unconditional will to truth, and offered an interpretation of his subsequent revaluation of truth. In the first part of the thesis, I thoroughly explicated all the senses of the unconditional will to truth, and explored Nietzsche's reasons for calling it into question. I then reconstructed Nietzsche's account of how the unconditional will to truth originated and developed, and elucidated the substance of his critique. In the second part of the thesis, I focused on Nietzsche's revaluation of truth. I argued that Nietzsche values truth principally as the driver of critical inquiry, the sort of inquiry that overturns life-inimical beliefs and prevents the formation of new dogma. I demonstrated the importance of honesty for Nietzsche's valuation of truth, explored the relationship between honesty and truthfulness, and expounded honesty's salient features. Finally, I showed how honesty can be reconciled with the artistic practices that Nietzsche sees as providing its counterforce, and how these practices help perpetuate truthfulness. I now tie together strands from the preceding chapters to provide a comprehensive overview of Nietzsche's inquiry into the value of truth.

Nietzsche's critique of the unconditional will to truth is bound up with his condemnation of Christian morality. Nietzsche recognises that what underpins and justifies the unconditional will to truth is God, for 'God is the truth' and therefore 'truth is divine', and must be upheld whatever the consequences (GS: 344). These consequences prove catastrophic for Christian morality. As the moral imperative to tell the truth evolves into the intellectual conscience, the

very notion of God comes to be rejected for being, at best, unproven, at worst, untrue. The death of God, or the rise of scientific atheism, brings about the collapse of the entire Christian interpretative system, for 'Christian morality [...] stands or falls with the belief in God' (TI IX: 5). As Nietzsche sees it, the death of God means that one cannot help oneself to any part of Christian morality, and so the unconditional will to truth has repudiated its own justificatory backbone. Thus there is an inevitability about the collapse of 'Christian truthfulness', whose last vestiges Nietzsche sees lingering in science as the discipline's driving value, for in the end, '[a]ll great things bring about their own destruction through an act of self-overcoming' (GM III: 27). Thus the time is ripe for a critique of the unconditional will to truth. Nietzsche takes on the task of revaluing the unconditional will to truth, questioning whether it should indeed have unconditional value.

Nietzsche's answer is that valuing truth unconditionally is both inimical and slanderous to life. Inimical, because Nietzsche sees that untruth has just as much pragmatic benefit for life as truth. Conceptual falsifications are necessary for us to make sense of the overwhelming chaos of our sensory experience and forge a comprehensible and habitable world for ourselves. Aesthetic falsifications are necessary to prevent the ugliness of reality damaging our health and depleting our strength. Slanderous, because the unconditional will to truth devalues our world in favour of a world of truth, a world of uniformity, permanence and stability, a world that does not exist. The stuff of life is 'semblance, art, deception, points of view, and the necessity of perspectives and error' (BT: 5). These are things the unconditional will to truth would have us reject wholesale, and thereby abolish life itself.

The world as Nietzsche sees it is an ever-changing and chaotic mass of power, 'a monster of energy', an 'iron magnitude of force' (WTP: 1067). There is nothing unconditional about the world, there are no things-in-themselves. The relationships between things are only ever conditional and temporary, qualities that also apply to our needs and judgments. The world's '*rich ambiguity*' means that there are an infinite number of ways of interpreting it, with no single interpretation capable of capturing even a fraction of the whole (GS: 373). The more interpretations we entertain to make sense of the world, the better, for interpretations are the only way we glean anything, and the only way we can judge them is by pitting them against each other.

What encourages the generation and comparison of interpretations is the intellectual conscience, an attitude of critical inquiry and scrutiny that resists any desire for certainty. Ceding to such desire testifies to weakness, to the need for 'a support, a prop' (*op. cit.* 347). Nietzsche sees the intellectual conscience formalised in scientific methods, the secret bullet of science. These methods counter 'the Christian instincts' that still fester inside us (A: 59), and ward off dogmatism. Dogmatism does not admit of the world's conditionality and multiple interpretability, and at the same time, it paralyses the drives for inquiry and investigation. Similarly, the notion of truth, in the absolutist sense of the term, arrests knowledge-directed cognition, namely, 'the will to examination, investigation, caution, experiment [...] forces that work toward enlightenment and knowledge' (WTP: 452).

I contend that it is as the driver of critical inquiry or investigation that Nietzsche values truth. Nietzsche values the methods that enable such inquiry over its

results. It is methods that overturn life-inimical judgments and interpretations, and prevent new ones calcifying into dogma. In other words, methods 'prevent the renewed prevalence of superstition and absurdity' (HAH: 635). To put it succinctly, Nietzsche seems to value truthfulness more than truth per se. This makes sense in light of Nietzsche's conception of truth as replaceable and perspectival interpretations, rather than timeless and objective reflections of the world's essential character.

Honesty (*Redlichkeit*) is an integral part of truthfulness, and one of Nietzsche's cardinal virtues. Honesty entails intellectual conscientiousness to the point of harshness. The honest do not accept any proposition unquestioningly, and are critical about the nature of their experiences. They make each of them 'a matter of conscience for knowledge' (GS: 319), rather than automatically interpreting them in terms of regnant moral or interpretative frameworks. Honesty is characterised by a 'deep' and unflinching look at reality, and recognition of the need for falsifications to survive it. Hence Nietzsche describes mendaciousness as the desire *not* to see reality as it is, and by implication, honesty as the contrary desire. The honest resist any desire to adhere to a superficial view of reality, and their deep view leads them to certain unpleasant realisations about the nature of human existence.

Nietzsche sees art as mitigating both the unpleasant realisations that honest practices throw up, as well as providing respite from the taxing nature of these practices. Art is the '*good* will to appearance' that staves off the nausea and suicide that honesty would entail (*op. cit.* 107). Nietzsche's vision for the final self-overcoming of Christian morality is a union of artistic practices and scientific

methods, with art acting as 'a necessary correlative of, and supplement for science' (BT: 14). Art allows the honest (*Redlichen*) to aestheticise the ugly aspects of existence that scientific methods reveal, to the extent their health requires, thereby helping perpetuate their truthfulness. It also allows them to harness their senses and emotions in creating new interpretations, a model of cognition that Nietzsche sees as more conducive to problem-solving than scientific detachment. Moreover, the creation of personalised values invests life with meaning after the demise of the ascetic ideal, compensating for scientific interpretations' inherent lack of meaning, and allowing mankind to thrive. So long as it is in its guise as the good will to appearance—as a supplement rather than a substitute for honest practices—art, and creative activity more generally, is the expression of genuine life-affirmation.

## **Bibliography**

### ***Works by Nietzsche***

*Beyond Good and Evil* (BGE), in *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, trans. W. Kaufmann (New York, Random House, 2000).

*Birth of Tragedy, The* (BT), in *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, trans. W. Kaufmann (New York, Random House, 2000).

*Daybreak* (D), trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1982).

*Ecce Homo* (EH), in *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, trans. W. Kaufmann (New York, Random House, 2000).

*Gay Science, The* (GS), trans. W. Kaufmann (New York, Vintage Books, 1974).

*Human, All-Too-Human*, trans. H. Zimmern and P. V. Cohn (New York, Dover Publications, 2006).

*On the Genealogy of Morals* (GM), in *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, trans. W. Kaufmann (New York, Random House, 2000).

*Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (Z), trans. G. Parkes (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005).

*Twilight of the Idols* (TI) and *The Anti-Christ* (A), trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1968).

*Will to Power, The* (WTP), trans. W. Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale (New York, Vintage Books, 1968).

*Writings from the Late Notebooks*, trans. K. Sturge (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003).



### ***Other works referenced***

- Acampora, C. D. (ed.) (2006), *Nietzsche's On the Genealogy of Morals: Critical Essays*, Lanham, MD, Rowman and Littlefield.
- Anderson, R. L. (2005), 'Nietzsche on truth, illusion, and redemption', *European Journal of Philosophy*, 13, 185-225.
- Bevir, M., Hargis, J. and Rushing, S. (ed.) (2007), *Histories of Postmodernism*, New York, Routledge.
- Came, D. (ed.) (2014), *Nietzsche on Art and Life*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- Cox, C. (1999), *Nietzsche: Naturalism and Interpretation*, Berkeley, University of California Press.
- Gemes, K. (2006), "'We remain of necessity strangers to ourselves": The key message of Nietzsche's Genealogy', in Acampora (2006), 191-208.
- Gemes, K. and Richardson, J. (ed.) (2013), *The Oxford Handbook of Nietzsche*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- Hales, S. D. and Welshon, R. (2000), *Nietzsche's Perspectivism*, Urbana, University of Illinois Press.
- Harper, A.M. (2012), *Nietzsche on Value Creation*, [https://www.ideals.illinois.edu/bitstream/handle/2142/42404/Aaron\\_Harper.pdf](https://www.ideals.illinois.edu/bitstream/handle/2142/42404/Aaron_Harper.pdf).
- Janaway, C. (2014), 'Beauty is false, truth ugly: Nietzsche on art and life', in Came (2014), 39-56.
- Jenkins, S. (2012), 'Nietzsche's questions concerning the will to truth', *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 50, 265-289.
- Lane, M. (2007), 'Honesty as the best policy: Nietzsche on *Redlichkeit* and the contrast between Stoic and Epicurean strategies of the self' in Bevir *et al.* (2007), 25-51.

- Mangiafico, J. (1997), 'Nietzsche and the value of truth', *Philosophy Today*, 41, 174-180.
- May, S. (1999), *Nietzsche's Ethics and his War on 'Morality'*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- May, S. (ed.) (2011a), *Nietzsche's On the Genealogy of Morality: A Critical Guide*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- May, S. (2011b), 'Why Nietzsche is still in the morality game', in May (2011a), 78-100.
- Reginster, B. (1997), 'Nietzsche on ressentiment and valuation', *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 57, 281-305.
- Reginster, B. (2013), 'Honesty and curiosity in Nietzsche's free spirits', *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 51, 441-463.
- Reginster, B. (2014), 'Art and affirmation', in Came (2014), 14-38.
- Remhof, J. (2015), 'Nietzsche's conception of truth: Correspondence, coherence, or pragmatist?', *Journal of Nietzsche Studies*, 46, 229-238.
- Ridley, A. (2007), *Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Nietzsche on Art*, Abingdon, Routledge.
- Ridley, A. (2014), 'Nietzsche and music', in Came (2014), 220-235.
- Schacht, R. (ed.) (2001), *Nietzsche's Postmoralism*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Schacht, R. (2013), 'Nietzsche's Genealogy', in Gemes and Richardson (2013), 323-343.
- White, A. (2001), 'The youngest virtue', in Schacht (2001), 63-78.