

Introduction

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“What is philosophy?” is a question first raised by Plato when he invented the term and drew a sharp distinction between philosophical inquiry, on the one hand, and Homeric poetry, pre-Socratic natural science, and Sophistic argumentation, on the other. Plato’s definitional answer was that philosophy is the love of wisdom, which meant a search for truth, conducted primarily in the foundational areas of ontology, epistemology, and philosophy of mind, and having important consequences for the axiological fields of ethics, politics, and aesthetics. This answer remained constant throughout the subsequent history of philosophy, despite the important glosses added by Aristotle’s teleology, Descartes’ dualism, Hume’s skepticism, Kant’s idealism, Hegel’s historicism, and Schopenhauer’s voluntarism.

Nietzsche was one of the first Western thinkers to take issue with Plato’s influential metaphilosophical definition and distinctions. He attacked Platonic rationalism in all his works and criticized the Platonic will to truth in his later writings. He challenged Plato’s Socratic equation of knowledge, virtue, and happiness and he argued that it was actually Plato’s understanding of knowledge as power that impelled him to legislate new anti-Homeric values. He weaved together poetry and philosophy in his magnum opus, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, and he called for a new species of philosophers in *Beyond Good and Evil*. In short, Nietzsche initiated a series of anti-Platonic philosophical reflections about the nature of philosophy.

Nietzsche’s vigorous challenge to the philosophers’ traditional conception of their practice has been the starting point for some of the most influential studies of his thought. Philosophers, historians of philosophy, and scholars specializing in Nietzsche have aimed to show that his writings should nevertheless be counted as philosophical – either because they are not as different from traditional philosophy as he claims or because they are innovating the field with a new and important vision of what

philosophy should be. Those taking the former approach include Martin Heidegger, Walter Kaufmann, Arthur Danto, Richard Schacht, Maude-marie Clark, John Richardson, and Brian Leiter. Those taking the latter approach include Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze, Alexander Nehamas, Bernard Williams, Richard Rorty, and Robert Pippin.

Some of the central questions in this ongoing conversation have been: What is Nietzsche's own philosophical method (if any)? Is it permissible for him to avoid logical argumentation in favor of experimental and affective rhetorical strategies? Does Nietzsche think that philosophy is continuous with the natural sciences or is it supposed to be an autonomous value-legislating activity that guides them? Nietzsche offers a radical critique of all theological thinking but does this mean there is no room left for any religiosity in his philosophy? Given Nietzsche's critique of the unconstrained will to truth, does he think that philosophy should aim at some kind of truth, objectivity, or systematic knowledge, and, if so, what kind? What should we make of Nietzsche's emphasis on the literary, poetic, and artistic aspects of philosophical thought and how should we interpret his own poetic philosophizing in works like *The Gay Science* and *Zarathustra*? Why does Nietzsche spend so much time looking at the origins of philosophical theories and what is his conception of philosophical progress? How does Nietzsche understand the relationship between philosophy and metaphysics and does he himself propose any metaphysical ideas or theories? What are we to make of Nietzsche's emphasis on seeing philosophy through the perspectival optics of life and on evaluating philosophers according to their strength or health? To what extent does Nietzsche reduce the activity of philosophy to psychology or even autobiography? In what ways does Nietzsche aim to restore the ancient conception of philosophy as a therapeutic way of life and how should we interpret his association of philosophy with the tragic?

The purpose of this new collection of essays on Nietzsche's metaphilosophy is to continue this ongoing conversation in a more explicit, concentrated, and self-conscious manner. By Nietzsche's metaphilosophy, we mean his first-order and prescriptive philosophical investigation into the nature, method, and aim of philosophy.¹ Thus, by inquiring into Nietzsche's metaphilosophy, we are seeking his answers to three questions: What should philosophy be? How should philosophy be done? Why, or to

¹ This definition of metaphilosophy follows the proposal found in Overgaard, Gilbert, and Burwood (2013).

what end, should philosophy be practiced? Any learned student of Nietzsche will agree that there is a wealth of such reflections in his texts and that this is one of his most interesting and valuable contributions to philosophy. To think deeply about Nietzsche is to be forced to confront and evaluate his very original and distinctive metaphilosophical philosophizing. This is because, like Plato, Aristotle, Kant, and Hegel before him, Nietzsche believed that his philosophizing about philosophy determined the course of his philosophizing about everything else. At the same time, this means that Nietzsche's metaphilosophical positions, like those of his predecessors, are often bound up with answers to more standard philosophical questions, and so the essays in this volume will also engage with these answers and the current debates about them.

As the editors of this volume, we are especially interested in these questions, and we have invited leading scholars in the international field of Nietzsche studies to contribute their responses. By facilitating this thematic conversation, we hope to advance the topic of metaphilosophy to the forefront of Nietzsche studies and to help make it possible for scholars to address this topic as an independent area of investigation. In so doing, we also hope to bring Nietzsche's metaphilosophical reflections to the attention of those working in the burgeoning field of metaphilosophy. This is because contemporary metaphilosophical investigations often have an historical component, and we hope that this anthology will help to place Nietzsche within the canon of innovative and influential metaphilosophical philosophers.

We begin our volume in Part I by considering the evolution of Nietzsche's metaphilosophical views throughout the course of his career. The first two contributors, Marco Brusotti and Matthew Meyer, are interested in tracking this development with special attention to Nietzsche's pivotal concept of the free spirit, while the third, Antoine Panaioti, dwells on Nietzsche's poetic images and metaphors. For Brusotti, the key moments are Nietzsche's naturalistic emphasis in *Human, All Too Human* on philosophy as an historical form of inquiry, his resulting prescriptive decision in *Beyond Good and Evil* that the philosopher of the future is supposed to create values, and his final shift in *Ecce Homo* to thinking of himself as performing just this task. Meyer, by contrast, claims that even in his earliest writings, starting with his discussion of the pre-Platonic philosophers in *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*, Nietzsche is already committed to thinking of the philosopher as an artistic value-creator. However, he argues, Nietzsche constructs his "free spirit" works (from *Human* through *The Gay Science*)

as a dialectical *Bildungsroman* in which the traditional conception of philosophy, as the search for truth at all costs, undergoes a self-overcoming and thereby makes possible, in *Beyond Good and Evil*, the aesthetic conception of philosophy sketched in his earliest works. Panaïoti supplements both these accounts with his discussion of Nietzsche's early unpublished and unfinished essay on truth, "On the Pathos of Truth," his essay on Schopenhauer, *Schopenhauer as Educator*, and his poetic magnum opus, *Zarathustra*. In his view, Nietzsche's early writings are especially concerned with the question of how the philosopher's inspired personal truth, unlike that of the scientist or scholar, can involve myth and illusion; and his mature writings answer this question by emphasizing the world-historical context of the philosopher's futuristic and transgressive legislative task.

In Part II, our contributors discuss Nietzsche's conception of the nature of philosophy compared to religion and the natural sciences. Like Meyer, Rebecca Bamford is especially interested in Nietzsche's "free spirit" writings, especially *Human, Daybreak*, and *The Gay Science*. She argues that his project in these unified texts conceives philosophy as a kind of experimental form of inquiry that is best suited for a dynamic and co-constitutive partnership with the natural and physical sciences. Like Brusotti, Robert B. Pippin and Paul S. Loeb concentrate instead on Nietzsche's later text, *Beyond Good and Evil*. According to Pippin, Nietzsche's esoteric writing practice in this book helps him to convey his own philosophical religiosity (including especially his reverential gratitude for existence) and also his philosophical admiration for the pedagogical and ennobling benefits of the religious way of life. By contrast with Bamford and Pippin, Loeb argues that Nietzsche hopes to emancipate genuine philosophers (as exemplified by his idealized Zarathustra) from the long-standing ascetic influence of science and religion in order that they may finally embrace their proper role as the autonomous value-creating rulers in both these spheres.

In Part III, our contributors turn to discuss the question of Nietzsche's philosophical methodology. According to Mark Alfano, the central epistemic component is affective perspectivism, that is, Nietzsche's use of rhetorical tropes (such as apostrophic address) to orient and reorient the knowledge-gathering perspectives of his readers by engaging, modulating, and inducing their affects, emotions, drives, values, and virtues. Tsarina Doyle explores this theme further by proposing that, according to Nietzsche, value-legislating philosophers employ a distinctive methodology that involves adopting a broad and elevated perspective that considers the

evaluative human being's immersion in the natural world but avoids the reductionist practices of the natural sciences. Nietzsche's will-to-power thesis, she argues, provides him with a new and nondualist account of how our values fit into nature by identifying values themselves as causes or degrees of power of psychic drives. Paul Katsafanas also focuses on Nietzsche's account of values, but he is more interested in outlining the methodology whereby Nietzsche rationally compares and assesses competing sets of normative claims – namely, by articulating various rationally defensible constraints, such as not presupposing false claims about human agency and not issuing prescriptions that ultimately undermine human flourishing.

Finally, in Part IV, our contributors discuss Nietzsche's view of the aims of philosophy. Beatrix Himmelmann and Scott Jenkins are both interested in his account of the role of traditional metaphysics. Dwelling especially on Nietzsche's critique of Schopenhauer and on his remarks in the "Reason" section of *Twilight of the Idols*, Jenkins argues that, according to Nietzsche, metaphysical value judgments about a supersensible realm have the same psychological function as moral judgments about human actions. They satisfy the philosophers' feelings of *ressentiment* and they serve as a vehicle for their vengeful fantasies of punishing and destroying those aspects of reality (such as becoming) that they perceive to be the cause of their suffering. For Himmelmann, by contrast, there is an instructive comparison to be drawn between the critiques of traditional metaphysics posed by Nietzsche and by his most famous interpreter, Martin Heidegger. According to her analysis, both of them claim to have developed a non-metaphysical philosophy of finitude that will do justice to the reality of human life and human endowments. But she thinks that Nietzsche's genealogical investigation of dynamic and agonistic will to power is far more successful in this respect than Heidegger's nonempirical inquiry into transcendent Being. Like Jenkins and Himmelmann, João Constâncio and Jacqueline Scott agree that according to Nietzsche one of the most important goals of philosophy is to show human beings how to affirm life and avoid nihilism. Constâncio and Scott argue in addition that Nietzsche's concern with aesthetic taste and the sense for the tragic are essential to this goal. As support, each of them offers an analysis of a central passage in Book V of *The Gay Science*. According to Constâncio, *GS* 373 presents Nietzsche's view that philosophy should involve the exercising of one's aesthetic good taste by engaging in a quasi-Kantian reflective activity – that is, in an imaginative, experimental multiplication of affective perspectives – that allows one to acknowledge, question, and revere the tragic mystery,

uncertainty, and ambiguity of existence (as admitting infinite interpretations). By contrast, Scott argues that *GS* 382 presents Nietzsche's view that philosophy should incorporate a pessimism of strength, that is, one's courageous and cheerful acceptance of the tragic, problematic, and nihilistic nature of human existence (as characterized by meaningless suffering) and one's use of the pain involved in this acceptance as a stimulus to the artistic creation of meanings and values that allow one to affirm one's present-day life.

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PART I

Evolving Metaphilosophies

CHAPTER I

Metaphilosophy and “Natural History”
Nietzsche’s Beyond Good and Evil on the Free Spirit

Marco Brusotti

One way of dealing with the question “what is *philosophy*?” is asking what a *philosopher* is – or should be. For Nietzsche, this is a fundamental issue. He often frames the question in genetic terms: how does one become a philosopher? Giving an answer to this question is the task of the “natural history [*Naturgeschichte*]” of the free spirit. It is not an impersonal question: Nietzsche himself functions as the model for the free spirit (or superior man) whose “natural history” he intends to write. Focusing on the writing process that led to *Beyond Good and Evil*, the present chapter reconstructs this project and its metaphilosophical implications (see Section 1.1), asking whether this “natural history” can be qualified as naturalistic (see Section 1.2). In the writings of 1888, questions about Nietzsche himself and his personal role in history come to take the place of general issues concerning the philosopher and his task. The conclusion of the chapter will briefly address this shift.

1.1 The Natural History of the Free Spirit

In 1879, Heinrich Köselitz writes to Nietzsche that “even the most honest philosopher . . . depicts *himself* without any embarrassment whatsoever, for instance when he writes a natural history of the genius.”¹ Although Köselitz does not refer explicitly to Nietzsche, his remark could be read as an implicit reference to his correspondent: the author of *Human, All Too Human* would be this “most honest philosopher” who, in writing a “natural history of the genius,” ends up delivering a self-portrait. In any case, Köselitz says of this peculiar “natural history” what an aphorism from *Human* claims of knowledge in general: “*Life as the yield of life*. – No matter how far a man may extend himself with his knowledge, no matter

¹ “selbst der redlichste Philosoph . . . z.B., wenn er eine Naturgeschichte des Genie’s schreibt, ganz ungeniert *sich* hinmalt” (*KGB* III/7.3: 213).

how objectively he may come to view himself, in the end it can yield to him nothing but his own biography" (*HH* 513). Some years later, in *Beyond Good and Evil*, writing their own autobiography seems to be the general destiny of the "great philosophers" – rather than of would-be "natural historians": "every great philosophy so far" has been such a naive self-portraiture, "namely, the personal confession of its author and a kind of involuntary and unconscious memoir." In particular, it is the morals a philosopher advocates that show "*who he is* – that is, in what order of rank the innermost drives of his nature stand in relation to each other" (*BGE* 6). To this extent, the task now is to bring to light the drives that turn philosophies into unconfessed autobiographies.

A corresponding way of doing philosophy would be to engage in painting a sort of *conscious* self-portrait. Would this be possible? In the mid-1880s, Nietzsche intended to write a "natural history [*Naturgeschichte*]," if not of the genius (as in Köselitz's letter), then of the superior man and/or of the free spirit. This project involves writing a natural history of Nietzsche himself, even if not merely of "Mister Nietzsche" (*GS* P:2).

At least for a while, Nietzsche conceived the whole book he was working on – *Beyond Good and Evil* – as such a natural history of the free spirit (or superior man). In this book, however, the term "natural history" surfaces only once, in the title of part five: "On the Natural History of Morals [*zur Naturgeschichte der Moral*]." Thus, *Beyond Good and Evil* does not define the concept of "natural history"; even in part five, the term does not occur in any of its aphorisms, but only in the title. During the complex genesis of the book, Nietzsche had tried to use the term in different contexts. The different working titles, schemes, and tables of contents drafted during the writing process show a certain indecision: in each of them, the term "natural history" occurs in a different position and/or with a different role. Only after taking different alternatives into consideration did Nietzsche select the term for the title of a chapter whose earlier working titles had instead laid the focus on psychology.² Finally, however, in a late table of contents, the title "Fingerzeige eines Moral-Psychologen [*Hints by a Psychologist of Morality*]" was deleted and substituted with "On the Natural History of Morality [*Zur Naturgeschichte der Moral*]" (*KGW IX/5*: W I 8, p. 159).

² "Moral-Psychologie" (*KGW IX/5*: W I 8, p. 173), "Zur Moral-Psychologie" or "Fingerzeige eines Moral-Psychologen," as well as "Selbstgespräch eines Psychologen" (*KGW IX/5*: W I 8, p. 174). These titles for the *Hauptstück* on moral psychology occur in drafts of "Zur Naturgeschichte des höheren Menschen" (*KGW IX/5*: W I 8, p. 173 f).

Given this late decision, one might wonder how far the new title really corresponds to the content. Indeed, most of the aphorisms that comprise this fifth part are no more closely connected with natural history than the content of other sections of the work. Moreover, a few of the aphorisms of part five deal with something more specific than a natural history of morality in general. During the complex genesis of *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche had focused on the natural history of the superior man, of the free spirit, or even of the scholar. In these earlier stages, as the term "natural history" occurred mainly with a narrower scope, Nietzsche considered "On the Natural History of the Free Spirit" or "On the Natural History of the Superior Man" not only as working titles for a *Hauptstück*,³ but occasionally also for the entire book – and thus as possible alternatives to "Beyond Good and Evil."⁴ In these schemes, natural history even seems to be the encompassing theme of the book.⁵

What should such a natural history accomplish? According to an aphorism of part seven ("Our Virtues"), man in general must be conceived as *homo natura*. This general task of "translat[ing] man back into nature" (BGE 230) involves the more particular one of providing a natural history of the free spirit. Thus, the free spirit must translate even *himself* back into nature. The task of recognizing "the basic text of *homo natura*" requires one

to become master over the many vain and overly enthusiastic interpretations and connotations that have so far been scrawled and painted over that eternal basic text of *homo natura*; to see to it that man henceforth stands before man as even today, hardened in the discipline of science, he stands before the *rest* of nature, with intrepid Oedipus eyes and sealed Odysseus ears, deaf to the siren songs of old metaphysical bird catchers who have been piping at him all too long, "you are more, you are higher, you are of a different origin!" (BGE 230)⁶

³ "Zur Naturgeschichte des freien Geistes" (KGW IX/5: W I 8, p. 173; KSA 12:2[40]; KGW IX/5: W I 8, p. 174; KSA 12:2[44]) was a working title for the *Hauptstück* whose final version is called simply "der freie Geist." For the working title "Zur Naturgeschichte des höheren Menschen," cf. KGW IX/5: W I 8, p. 159; KSA 12:2[51].

⁴ "Zur Naturgeschichte des freien Geistes. Gedanken und Gedankenstriche" (KGW IX/4: W I 7, p. 78; KSA 12:3[2]; cf. KGW IX/4: W I 7, p. 5; KSA 12:3[1]). "Zur Naturgeschichte des höheren Menschen. Gedanken eines Müßiggängers" (KGW IX/5: W I 8, p. 172; KSA 12:2[46]). "Zur Naturgeschichte des höheren Menschen. Gedanken eines Erziehers" (KGW IX/5: W I 8, p. 173; KSA 12:2[41]). "Zur Naturgeschichte des höheren Menschen. Gedanken eines Erziehers. Psychologen" (KGW IX/5: W I 8, p. 174; KSA 12:2[43]).

⁵ At one point, for instance, "what is noble?" ("was ist vornehm?") was conceived as a section of this "natural history of the Superior Man" (KGW IX/5: W I 8, p. 173; KSA 12:2[41]).

⁶ This aphorism employs a whole array of intersecting metaphors and similes to describe the multifarious errors of metaphysical anthropology as well as the different ways of eliminating them.