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NIETZSCHE'S NATURALISM RECONSIDERED

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NIETZSCHE'S NATURALISM RECONSIDERED

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According to one recent scholar, “Most commentators on Nietzsche would agree that he is in a broad sense a naturalist in his mature philosophy” (Janaway 2007: 34). This may come as a surprise to those who think of Martin Heidegger, Walter Kaufmann, Paul DeMan, Sarah Kofman, Gilles Deleuze, and Alexander Nehamas, among others, as “commentators” on Nietzsche. And yet there are, indeed, clear signs that in the last twenty years, as Nietzsche studies has become more philosophically sophisticated, the naturalist reading of Nietzsche has come to the fore, certainly in Anglophone scholarship.¹ In *Nietzsche on Morality* (Leiter 2002), I set out a systematic reading of Nietzsche as a philosophical naturalist, one which has attracted considerable critical comment, including from some generally sympathetic to reading Nietzsche as a philosophical naturalist.² I should like here to revisit that reading and, more importantly, the question of whether and in what sense Nietzsche is a naturalist in philosophy.

I. Nietzsche's Naturalism

Christopher Janaway claims that most Nietzsche scholars now accept that Nietzsche is a naturalist in what Janaway calls the “broad sense”:

* Discussion with students in my Spring 2008 seminar on “Nietzsche, Naturalism, and Moral Psychology” at the University of Texas at Austin was extremely helpful to me in working on this paper; I am especially grateful to Christopher Raymond for several important insights. I was also helped by discussion at the conference on “Nietzsche, Naturalism and Normativity” at the University of Southampton in July 2008; I can recall particularly helpful comments or questions on that occasion from Ken Gemes, Christopher Janaway, Peter Kail, and David Owen.

¹ See, e.g., Bittner (2001), Clark (1990), Hussain (200_), Richardson (2004), Schacht (1988).

² See, e.g., Gemes & Janway (2005); Acampora (2006); Janaway (2007).

He opposes transcendent metaphysics, whether that of Plato or Christianity or Schopenhauer. He rejects notions of the immaterial soul, the absolutely free controlling will, or the self-transparent pure intellect, instead emphasizing the body, talking of the animal nature of human beings, and attempting to explain numerous phenomena by invoking drives, instincts, and affects which he locates in our physical, bodily existence. Human beings are to be “translated back into nature,” since otherwise we falsify their history, their psychology, and the nature of their values—concerning all of which we must know truths, as a means to the all-important revaluation of values. This is Nietzsche’s naturalism in the broad sense, which will not be contested here. (Janway 2007: 34)

This is less a “broad sense” of naturalism, however, than it is “Laundry List Naturalism.”

Why are *these* a set of views a philosophical naturalist *ought* to hold? What is it that makes them the views of a philosophical naturalist at all?³

My aim in the 2002 book was to make some philosophical sense of why something like Janaway’s Laundry List Naturalism seems, in fact, to be descriptively adequate to some of what Nietzsche says in a naturalistic spirit. I suggested that underlying this kind of Laundry List Naturalism was, in fact, a kind of familiar “Methodological Naturalism” (hereafter “M-Naturalism”), according to which “philosophical inquiry...should be continuous with empirical inquiry in the sciences” (2002: 3). Many philosophers are and have been Methodological Naturalists, but to

³ Janaway tells me that he thinks opposition to “transcendent metaphysics” is what unites the elements on the list, though it is hard to see how skepticism about that kind of metaphysics commits one to thinking “drives, instincts, and affects...in our physical, bodily existence” are explanatorily primary. Even if it were sufficient, it would simply push the question back one level: why is opposition to transcendent metaphysics the mark of naturalism, as opposed, e.g., to methodological continuity with the empirical sciences?

understand Nietzsche, everything turns on the precise *kind* of M-Naturalism at issue. I emphasized two commitments of Nietzsche's M-Naturalism. First, I claimed that Nietzsche is what I called a Speculative M-Naturalist, that is, a philosopher, like Hume, who wants to "construct theories that are 'modeled' on the sciences...in that they take over from science the idea that natural phenomena have deterministic causes" (Leiter 2002: 5). Speculative M-Naturalists do not, of course, appeal to *actual* causal mechanisms that have been well-confirmed by the sciences: if they did, they would not need to *speculate*! Rather, the idea is that their speculative theories of human nature are informed by the sciences and a scientific picture of how things work. Here, for example, is Stroud's influential formulation of Hume's Speculative M-Naturalism:

[Hume] wants to do for the human realm what he thinks natural philosophy, especially in the person of Newton, had done for the rest of nature.

Newtonian theory provided a completely general explanation of why things in the world happen as they do. It explains various and complicated physical happenings in terms of relatively few extremely general, perhaps universal, principles. Similarly, Hume wants a completely general theory of human nature to explain why human beings act, think, perceive and feel in all the ways they do....

[T]he key to understanding Hume's philosophy is to see him as putting forward a general theory of human nature in just the way that, say, Freud or Marx did. They all seek a general kind of explanation of the various ways in which men think, act, feel and live....The aim of all three is completely general—they try to provide a basis for explaining *everything* in human affairs. And the theories they advance are all, roughly, deterministic. (Stroud 1977: 3, 4)

So Hume models his theory of human nature on Newtonian science by trying to identify a few basic, general principles that will provide a broadly deterministic explanation of human phenomena, much as Newtonian mechanics did for physical phenomena. Yet the Humean theory is still *speculative*, because its claims about human nature are not confirmed in anything resembling a scientific manner, nor do they even win support from any contemporaneous science of Hume's day.

Nietzsche's Speculative M-Naturalism obviously differs from Hume's in some respects: Nietzsche, for example, appears to be a skeptic about determinism based on his professed (if not entirely cogent) skepticism about laws of nature.⁴ Yet Nietzsche, like Hume, has a sustained interest in explaining why "human beings act, think, perceive and feel" as they do, especially in the broadly ethical domain. Like Hume, Nietzsche proffers a speculative psychology, though as I have argued elsewhere (Leiter 2007; Knobe & Leiter 2007) and will return to below, Nietzschean speculations seem to fare rather well in light of subsequent research in scientific psychology. And this speculative psychology (as well as the occasional physiological explanations he offers in passing) appear to give us causal explanations for various human phenomena, which, even if not law-governed, seem to have a deterministic character (cf. Leiter 2002: 5).

But I also emphasized a second aspect of Nietzsche's M-Naturalism. As I noted, *some* M-Naturalists demand a kind of "results continuity" with existing science: "philosophical theories" should, they believe, "be supported or justified by the results of the sciences" (Leiter 2002: 4). I argued, however, there is only one kind of "results continuity" at work in Nietzsche, namely, the result that the German Materialists of his day thought followed from advances in physiology, namely, "that man is not of a

⁴ [cites and discussion]

‘higher...[or] different origin’ than the rest of nature” (Leiter 2002: 7).⁵ Arguably, Nietzsche’s main bit of *Substantive* Naturalism--meaning “the (ontological) view that the only things that exist are *natural*” [Leiter 2002: 5]--is a consequence of this “results continuity. We should perhaps pause to recall how profound an influence the discoveries about physiological influences on conscious experiences and attitudes had on Nietzsche.

The influential German Materialism of the 1850s embodied a naturalistic world-view, well-articulated by one of its leading proponents, the medical doctor Ludwig Büchner in his 1855 best-seller *Kraft und Stoff (Force and Matter)*, as follows: "the researches and discoveries of modern times can no longer allow us to doubt that man, with all he has and possesses, be it mental or corporeal, is a *natural product* like all other organic beings" (1870: lxxviii). "Man is a product of nature," declared Büchner, "in body and mind. Hence not merely what he is, but also what he does, wills, feels, and thinks, depends upon the same natural necessity as the whole structure of the world" (1870: 239). German Materialism may have had its origins in Feuerbach's works of the late 1830s and early 1840s, but it really exploded onto the cultural scene in the 1850s, under the impetus of the startling new discoveries about human beings made by the burgeoning science of physiology. After 1830 in Germany, "Physiology...became the basis for modern scientific medicine, and this confirmed the tendency, identifiable throughout the whole of the nineteenth century, towards integration of human and natural

⁵ Janaway (2007: 37) says: “the status of this as a ‘result’ is perhaps debatable: it is hard to say whether the exclusively empirical nature of humanity was a conclusion or an assumption of scientific investigation in the nineteenth century or at any time.” I find this quite surprising. If one discovers that conscious experiences have a neurophysiological explanation, or an explanation in terms of the biochemistry of the brain, hasn’t one adduced some evidence that bears on whether man is of a “higher or different origin” than the rest of nature? Our consciousness and our capacity for self-reflection, for spirituality, for “inwardness” are all among the typical phenomena appealed to as evidence of our “higher” or “different” nature, perhaps as glimpses of our immaterial “soul” even. If, in fact, they are explicable through processes and mechanisms that are operative in other parts of the natural world, is that not evidence that we are not of “a higher or different origin” than other natural things? If not, what would be?

sciences" (Schnädelbach 1983, p. 76). In his 1843 *Philosophy of the Future*, Feuerbach could write that, "The new philosophy makes man, along with nature as the basis of man, into the one and only universal and highest object of philosophy: anthropology, including physiology, becomes the universal science" (Sec. 54). The 1850s saw an explosion of books drawing on the new sciences, and articulated the German Materialist's naturalistic view. As one scholar has written: "[T]he German materialists...took the German intellectual world by storm during the 1850s" (Vitzthum 1995: 98). A critic of materialism writing in 1856 complained that, "A new world view is settling into the minds of men. It goes about like a virus. Every young mind of the generation now living is affected by it" (quoted in Gregory 1977: 10). We know from Thomas Brobjer's research (Brobjer 2008: __-__) that Nietzsche, as a young man, had read Feuerbach and was also a regular reader of the journal *Anregung für Kunst, Leben und Wissenschaft* which, in the early 1860s, published many articles about materialism, including by Büchner.

Yet the crucial moment for Nietzsche was his discovery in 1866 of Friedrich Lange's recently published *History of Materialism*, a book which opened up for him the whole history of philosophical materialism up to and including German Materialism, as well as introducing him to the profound developments in modern natural science, especially chemistry and physiology. As with Schopenhauer, the impact on the young Nietzsche was dramatic. "Kant, Schopenhauer, this book by Lange--I don't need anything else," he wrote in 1866 (quoted in Janz 1978 vol. I: 198). He viewed the work as "undoubtedly the most significant philosophical work to have appeared in recent decades" (*ibid.*), and called it in a letter of 1868 "a real treasure-house," mentioning,

among other things, Lange's discussion of the "materialist movement of our times" (quoted in Stack 1983: 13). Lange, himself, was one of a number of "neo-Kantian" critics of Materialism who held, first, that modern physiology vindicated Kantianism by demonstrating the dependence of knowledge on the peculiarly human sensory apparatus (Lange 1950: 322 [discussing the "confirmation from the scientific side of the critical standpoint in the theory of knowledge"] and 3rd Sec., Ch. IV ["The Physiology of the Sense-Organs and the World as Representation"]); and, second, that the Materialists were naive in believing science gives us knowledge of the thing-in-itself rather than the merely phenomenal world (cf. p. 84 ["the physiology of the sense-organs has...produced decisive grounds for the [epistemological] refutation of Materialism"]; pp. 277 ff.; p. 329). Yet Lange's general intellectual sympathies were clearly with the Materialists as against the idealists, theologians, and others who resisted the blossoming scientific picture of the world and of human beings. Thus, for example, Lange remarks: "if Materialism can be set aside only by criticism based upon the [Kantian] theory of knowledge...in the sphere of positive questions it is everywhere in the right..." (1950: 332).

While a reaction to German Materialism did set in by the 1870s and 1880s, Nietzsche's youthful engagement with the Materialists made a profound and lasting impression on him. In early 1868, he briefly contemplated switching from the study of philology to chemistry, and starting in the late 1860s, he began an intensive reading of books on natural science (Brobjer 2008: __-__), readings which continued into the 1880s (Janz 1978 vol. II: 73-74). He admits that in the late 1870s, "A truly burning thirst took hold of me: henceforth I really pursued nothing *more* than physiology, medicine and natural sciences" (EH III:HAH-3). This impression is evident even in his mature work of the 1880s. In *Ecce Homo*, he complains of the "blunder" that he "became a philologist--

why not at least a physician or something else that opens one's eyes?" (EH, II, 2). Even in the often misunderstood Third Essay of the *Genealogy*--in which Nietzsche attacks only the *value* of truth, not its objectivity or our ability to know it--Nietzsche refers to "there being so much useful work to be done" in science and adds, regarding the "honest workers" in science, that, "I delight in their work" (GM III:23). As Clark notes, Nietzsche's mature works--the *Genealogy*, *Twilight of the Idols*, *The Antichrist*, *Ecce Homo*--"exhibit a uniform and unambiguous respect for facts, the senses, and science" (Clark 1990: 105).⁶

⁶ Hussain (2004) makes an interesting and complicated argument to the effect that we should understand Nietzsche's naturalism through the lens of Ernst Mach, in order to understand how Nietzsche "could simultaneously reject the thing-in-itself, accept a falsification thesis, *and* be an empiricist" who is also "science-friendly" (2004: 327-28). For Mach, on this account, is an empiricist who believes "we do have direct access to all the reality there is, namely, the world of sensory elements," but at the same holds that "any attempt to have a thought that represents something about the world of sensory elements uses concepts that falsify" the sensory elements (2004: 353, 351). Yet Mach is still "science-friendly" since he holds that "ordinary empirical claims could still convey information about the flux of sensations despite being literally false" (2004: 354).

It is a bit puzzling, though, how a Machian Nietzsche remains "friendly" to science in the sense emphasized by Clark (in the text) and undisputed by Hussain. Hussain contends that a Machian Nietzsche thinks causal claims "falsify" reality, even though they "are of course still useful for communicating information about relatively stable complexes of sensations and their relations." But how can they be "false" *and* communicate "information"? Lies, when recognized as such, communicate information, even though they are "literally false," but that is because of inferences one can draw about the motives and intentions of the liar, yet that does not seem to help in this instance. The idea must be, rather, that the statements, though literally false, are *partially* true in some sense. But how is this latter proposal going to help with Nietzsche? After all, it is "causal" claims that are "literally false," and causal claims are the ones Nietzsche needs. *Ressentiment*, he says in the *Genealogy* (to take but one example), has an "actual physiological cause" (I:15): if that is *literally false*, then what remainder is left over that is true, and that commends Nietzsche's causal/explanatory account against the moral and religious accounts he wants to displace?

The philosophical difficulties with the proposed reading become more urgent given some of the historical and textual questions that arise. Did Mach really have any impact on Nietzsche? The major work by Mach in question didn't even appear until 1886, the same year as *Beyond Good and Evil*, on which it is supposed to have had an impact. Hussain admits that explicit evidence of influence is hard to come by. His more ambitious interpretive claim is that the Machian Nietzsche helps us make sense of crucial sections of a late work (of 1888), *Twilight of the Idols*. In particular, it is supposed to help us explain what Nietzsche means by his talk of the "apparent" world as being the *only* world. Hussain (2004: 345) invokes a passage from Mach's *Analysis of Sensations* (of 1886) which he says evokes Nietzsche's views in TI, especially in the famous section of TI on "How the 'True World' Finally Became a Fable." This passage, of course, has been interpreted by Clark, John Wilcox, and others as Nietzsche describing the own trajectory of his thinking about the appearance/reality distinction. Yet apart from both Nietzsche and Mach describing the thing-in-itself as "superfluous," I fail to see any interesting similarity between this TI passage and the one from Mach that Hussain calls to our attention. Indeed, the dissimilarities are more striking. There is nothing in the TI passage, for example, to suggest Nietzsche's affinity with the Machian view that "the world" is "*one* coherent mass of sensations, only more strongly coherent in the ego." Moreover, the argument in the TI passage seems to suggest, rather clearly, that "positivism" is only the 4th

By introducing Nietzsche's naturalism within a broader typology of *kinds* of naturalism, I appear to have sowed confusion among some scholars. Christopher Janaway's recent critique of my naturalist reading is illustrative. He complains that:

[N]o scientific support or justification is given—or readily imaginable—for the central explanatory hypotheses that Nietzsche gives for the origins of our moral beliefs and attitudes. For a prominent test case, take Nietzsche's hypothesis in the *Genealogy's* First Treatise that the labeling of non-egoistic action, humility, and compassion as “good” began because there were socially inferior classes of individuals in whom feelings of *ressentiment* against their masters motivated the creation of new value distinctions. This hypothesis explains moral phenomena in terms of their causes, but it is not clear how it is *justified* or *supported* by any kind of science, nor indeed what such a justification or support might be. (2007: 37)

This challenge, of course, simply ignores my claim that Nietzsche, like Hume, was a *Speculative* M-Naturalist, as Nietzsche had to be given the primitive state of psychology in the 19th-century. A *Speculative* M-Naturalist simply does *not* claim that the explanatory mechanisms essential to his theory of why humans think and act as they do are supported by existing scientific results. To be sure, what Nietzsche does do is appeal to psychological mechanisms—such as the seething hatred characteristic of *ressentiment*—for which there seem to be ample evidence in both ordinary and historical

stage in Nietzsche's thinking, one he leaves behind by the final 6th stage, when the “apparent” world is also abolished (on the grounds that there is no contrasting “true” world).

Hussain's Machian reading may fare somewhat better with *parts* of the “‘Reason’ in Philosophy” section of TI, though even here I am worried that the *actual* points of reference by Nietzsche are to Heraclitus and Democritus, not any contemporaries, and that Nietzsche's own summary of the argument (in section 6 of “‘Reason’ in Philosophy”) has no discernible Machian elements. Indeed, this last section (which Hussain ignores) fits rather better, I think, with Clark's interpretation of the passage (1990: __-__).

experience, and weave a narrative showing how these simple mechanisms could give rise to particular human beliefs and attitudes. It is, moreover, quite easy to see what empirical evidence would bear on this: e.g., evidence that a psychological state usefully individuated as *ressentiment* serves diagnostic or predictive purposes. Even in the First Essay of the *Genealogy*, Nietzsche elicits a variety of kinds of evidence of his own in support of the existence of this psychological mechanism: for example, the facts about the etymology of the terms “good” and “bad”; the general historical fact that Christianity took root among the oppressed classes in the Roman empire; and the rhetoric of the early Church Fathers. Here we see Nietzsche arguing for a characteristically scientific kind of inference: namely, to believe in the causal role of a particular psychological mechanism, for which there is ample independent evidence, on the basis of its wide explanatory scope, i.e., its ability to make sense of a variety of different data points.

Janaway, it bears noting, in fact endorses a weaker version of my reading of Nietzsche as an M-Naturalist, though the weakening seems to derive from his misunderstanding of the role of “results continuity” in my interpretation of Nietzsche’s M-Naturalism. He writes that “Nietzsche is a naturalist to the extent that he is committed to a species of theorizing that explains *X* by locating *Y* and *Z* as its causes, where *Y* and *Z*’s being causes of *X* is not falsified by our best science” (2007: 38). Janaway prefers this account, because of his doubts about whether there are actual scientific *results* supporting Nietzsche’s actual causal explanations. Since my reading of Nietzsche’s naturalism, however, emphasized its *speculative* character, Janaway’s formulation may serve instead as a way of stating a pertinent constraint on *speculative* explanations: namely, that they not invoke entities or mechanisms that science has ruled out of bounds.

But even so, it may seem an unnecessarily weak criterion: why not expect, instead, that a good speculative naturalist will rely on explanatory mechanisms that enjoy some evidential support, or that enjoy a wide explanatory scope, of the kind we expect genuine explanations in the sciences to exemplify? I do not think there is text in Nietzsche that settles this matter, and so this is more a matter of giving the most philosophically appealing reconstruction of his actual explanatory practice. We shall return to that practice in the next section

II. Two Nietzsches: Humean and Therapeutic

In my reading of Nietzsche as a philosophical naturalist, I emphasized two respects in which naturalism was either subordinated to or displaced by other philosophical concerns. Even though, as I argued, “the bulk of [Nietzsche’s] philosophical activity is devoted to variations on this naturalistic project” (Leiter 2002: 11)--that is, to explaining morality in naturalistically respectable terms—it is equally clear that Nietzsche’s “naturalism is enlisted on behalf of a ‘revaluation of all values,’” that is the project of trying “to free...nascent higher types from their ‘false consciousness,’ i.e., their false belief that the dominant morality is, in fact, *good for them*” (Leiter 2002: 26, 28; cf. 283). That means, of course, that even when Nietzsche’s texts are informed by his M-Naturalism, he has important reasons to employ a variety of rhetorical devices aimed at unsettling readers from their existing moral commitments.

In addition to the fact that Nietzsche’s M-Naturalism is an instrument in the service of the revaluation of values, there is also the important point that he actually uses the term “philosopher” as an honorific to designate those who “create” values (Leiter 2002: 11) That activity is *not* part of the naturalistic project, except in the very weak

sense of perhaps observing the stricture of “ought implies can,” i.e., we should not valorize any capacities and achievements that are, in fact, beyond the ken of creatures like us.

Let us call “the Humean Nietzsche” the Nietzsche who aims to explain morality naturalistically (in the senses already discussed), and contrast him with the philosopher we will call “the Therapeutic Nietzsche” who wants to get select readers to throw off the shackles of morality (or MPS, as I have called it [2002: 78-79]). The “revaluation of values” involves enlisting the Humean Nietzsche for the Therapeutic Nietzsche’s ends, though the Therapeutic Nietzsche has (as I argued in my book) a variety of other rhetorical devices at his disposal beyond the Humean Nietzsche’s understanding of morality: for example, exploiting the genetic fallacy (leading his readers to think that there is something wrong with their morality because of its unseemly origin) or exploiting their will to truth (by showing that the metaphysics of agency on which their morality depends is false). That the Therapeutic Nietzsche should avail himself of such non-rational devices is hardly surprising, indeed, follows from the Humean Nietzsche’s picture of persons. As I noted in Leiter (2002: 155):

Nietzsche’s naturalism, and the prominent role it assigns to non-conscious drives and type-facts, leads him to be skeptical about the efficacy of reasons and arguments. But a skeptic about the efficacy of rational persuasion might very well opt for persuasion through other rhetorical devices.

And so Nietzsche does, again and again, in the *Genealogy* and elsewhere. As I wrote: since “the ultimate goal of the *Genealogy*...is to free nascent higher human beings from their false consciousness about MPS...Nietzsche has no reason to disown fallacious

forms of reasoning [such as the genetic fallacy] as long as they are rhetorically effective” (2002: 176).

Now Janaway (2007) has recently laid considerable emphasis on the Therapeutic Nietzsche, arguing, plausibly, that Nietzsche wanted to engage his readers emotionally or “affectively,” because such engagement was a necessary precondition for altering the reader’s views about evaluative questions. As Janaway puts it: “without the rhetorical provocations, without the revelation of what we find gruesome, shaming, embarrassing, comforting, and heart-warming we would neither comprehend nor be able to revalue our current values” (2007: 4; cf. 96-98).

We do well to recognize, and separate, the Therapeutic and Humean Nietzsches, as Janaway, alas, fails to do. For he claims that it is wrong to treat style—the rhetorical devices central to Nietzsche’s therapeutic aims—as “mere modes of presentation, detachable in principle from some elusive set of propositions to which his philosophy might be thought to consist,” since to do so, “is to miss a great part of Nietzsche’s real importance to philosophy” (2007: 4). “Nietzsche’s way of writing,” Janaway explains, “addresses our affects, feelings, or emotions. It provokes sympathies, antipathies, and ambivalences that lie in the modern psyche below the level of rational decision and impersonal argument.” This, Janaway says, is “not some gratuitous exercise in ‘style’ that could be edited out of Nietzsche’s thought” (2007: 4).

These, and similar passages in Janaway’s book,⁷ seem to conflate the Humean and Therapeutic Nietzsches. There can be no doubt that Nietzsche’s practical objective is to

⁷ See esp. p. 212, where Janaway claims, without any support, that “it is beyond question that Nietzsche regards the *Genealogy* as providing greater knowledge about morality than any combination of the traditional *Wissenschaften* could have attained unaided,” which would only be true if one conflates the therapeutic aims with Nietzsche’s philosophical theses about morality.

transform the complacent consciousness of (at least some of) his readers about the received morality, and it seems equally clear that he thinks the only way to do that is by engaging them emotionally. Yet the proposition that readers will only change their most basic moral commitments if their underlying affective states are aroused and altered is, itself, a philosophical position that can be stated unemotionally. What Janaway fails to establish is that one can not, in fact, separate out the Humean Nietzsche's philosophical positions (about agency, motivation, the origins of morality, etc.) from the mode of presentation that is essential to the Therapeutic Nietzsche's aims.

Consider the analogous case of Freudian psychoanalysis. Unlike Nietzsche, of course, Freud's books had no therapeutic aim: therapy took place in the psychoanalyst's office. Freud's books, by contrast, expressed the cognitive content of his philosophical or theoretical positions: about the structure of the mind, the interpretation of dreams, the course of human psychic development and—most importantly for our purposes—the centrality of the mechanism of transference to therapeutic success. Yet a correct theoretical description of transference is no substitute for the patient's actual *experience* of transference in the therapeutic setting, when he projects onto the analyst the heretofore repressed feelings that had been the source of his suffering, thus permitting the patient to recognize the reality of those feelings at last.

I assume no one denies that one can separate the theoretical account of transference as a therapeutic mechanism from the actual experience of cure via psychoanalysis culminating (more or less) with the moment of transference. Nietzsche differs from Freud in many respects, but only one that matters in this context: his books are both the expression of the theoretical position *and* the therapeutic method. The

Humean Nietzsche's theoretical positions—e.g., what he thinks explains the genesis of our current morality, how he understands the mechanisms of human psychology, what he takes to the causal consequences of moral beliefs, and so on—are both explicit and implicit in a text that also aims to produce a therapeutic effect on certain readers, i.e., to free them from their false consciousness about the dominant morality. Just as successful therapeutic transference requires the patient to experience the repressed feelings directed at the analyst, so too a successful revaluation of values requires engaging the reader subconsciously at the affective level, so that he feels revulsion, disgust, and embarrassment about his existing moral beliefs. From none of this, however, does it follow that one can not separate out philosophical or cognitive content from the therapeutic technique, that we can not separate the Humean and Therapeutic Nietzsche's.

In this connection, we should remind ourselves how prevalent the Humean Nietzsche's project is—not just in the *Genealogy*, but in *Daybreak*, in “Beyond Good and Evil” (the “Natural History of Morals” chapter most obviously), in *Twilight of the Idols*, and elsewhere. In a footnote from my book (Leiter 2002: 6 n. 10) that Janaway invokes more than once, I describe Nietzsche's M-Naturalism as reflecting “Nietzsche's actual philosophical practice, i.e., what he spends most of his time doing in his books.” To this, Janaway objects that, “Nietzsche's methods, on the evidence of ‘what he spends most of his time doing in his books,’ are characterized by artistic devices, rhetoric, provocations of the affects, and exploration of the reader's personal reactions, and show little concern for methods that could informatively be called scientific (2007: 52). Yet this criticism just betrays Janaway's conflation of the Humean and Therapeutic Nietzsches. The Therapeutic Nietzsche does, indeed, depend on “artistic devices, rhetoric, provocations of

the affects, and explorations of the reader's personal reactions," and much of the corpus is given over to the therapeutic project; but this does not change the fact that the therapeutic project is pursued within and informed by the framework of the Humean Nietzsche's picture of persons and morality, which also permeates the corpus. The latter is a recognizably naturalistic conception, one which, in fact, explains why rational discursiveness—in contrast to the stylistic devices Janaway emphasizes—is an ineffective therapeutic technique.⁸

⁸ Janaway pursues the same line of critique, involving the same confusion between the Humean and Therapeutic Nietzsche's, in a different way as well. He suggests that Nietzsche could not have been an M-Naturalist because he rejects the "disinterested, impersonal, and affectively detached" posture of the scientific inquirer: Nietzsche "champions a literary, personal, affectively engaged style of inquiry that deliberately stands in opposition to science as thinks it tends to conceive itself: as disinterested, impersonal, and affectively detached" (2007: [340 of article]). His evidence for this consists in the claim that Nietzsche's "most fundamental" objection to his friend Paul Ree's "results and methods" is that Ree assumes that "selflessness...is constitutive of morality" that "selflessness has positive value" (2007: [342 in article]). That is certainly Nietzsche's *substantive* objection to Ree's position, but I do not see any evidence that it constitutes Nietzsche's objection to Ree's *methodology*. GM I:1 starts by wondering about the motives of the "English psychologists" (of whom Ree is the exemplar), but then GM I:2 moves to a genuine methodological objection, namely, treating the current use or meaning of something as warranting an inference about its origin (see Leiter 2002: __-__ for discussion). To create a connection between Nietzsche's opposition to altruism as a moral ideal and his views about epistemically reliable methodologies of inquiry, Janaway appeals (2007: [342-343 of article]) to GS 345 in which Nietzsche says that "'Selflessness' has no value in heaven or earth; all great problems demand great love." Yet this passage actually says nothing at all about methods of inquiry, though Janaway glosses it as follows: "adherence to the conception of morality as selflessness left Ree, unwittingly, trapped in a sterile mode of investigation that could bring only philosophical failure" (2007: [article page 343]). If this were really what was at issue, one might expect some textual evidence from GM expressing this worry. But other than a throwaway line in which N. calls the English psychologists "old, cold, boring frogs" (GM I:1) in the context of querying their motives, the only apparent GM evidence Janaway can adduce is this:

[I]n the epigram of GM III wisdom is a woman who loves only someone "carefree, mocking, violent," the opposite of the [type described in GS 345]. That epigram introduces Nietzsche's essay on the meanings of the ascetic ideal, and points forward to the essay's culminating claim that contemporary objective, scientific method...is but another version of an originally Christian, metaphysical faith in ascetic self-denial before something absolute and quasi-divine, namely truth. (2007: [article 343])

Tellingly, Janaway doesn't actually cite any text from GM III, and his characterization of the argument there seems to be inaccurate, in particular, in characterizing Nietzsche's objection as being towards "objective, scientific method" as opposed towards science's overvaluation of truth (cf. Leiter 2002: 265 ff.). Science may, as Janaway claims, be "committed to a vision of itself as affect-free, disinterested, and impersonal," but apart from a few clock-like scholars, Nietzsche denies that *Wissenschaft* is really like this—even the English psychologists have concealed motives, as he tells us in GM I:1! That science, like almost every other inquiry, is not really disinterested has no bearing on the methodological virtues of science, about which Nietzsche is clear.

III. Culture, Causation, and Will to Power

Even if we agree that the Humean Nietzsche is an M-Naturalist, and that his M-Naturalism explains, in turn, why something like Janaway's Laundry List Naturalism seems a correct description of Nietzsche's expressed views, we are still left with three further obstacles to reading Nietzsche as a philosophical naturalist: first, though least importantly, whether there is a role for "culture" in the kinds of naturalistic explanations Nietzsche proffers; second, how to understand the notion of causation central to my M-Naturalist reading and whether Nietzsche is even entitled to help himself to such a concept; and third, and perhaps most worryingly, whether Nietzsche's doctrine of will to power is really compatible with the idea that the Humean Nietzsche takes himself to be working "in tandem with" the empirical sciences rather than displacing and transforming them. In this section, we shall take up each issue in turn.

A. *The Role of Culture in Naturalistic Explanations*

On my reading of the Humean Nietzsche, he aims to offer theories that explain various important human phenomena (especially the phenomenon of morality), and that do so in ways that both draw on, or are at least constrained by, actual scientific results, but are mainly *modelled* on science in the sense that they seek to reveal the causal determinants of these phenomena, typically in various physiological and psychological facts about persons. More precisely, I have argued that Nietzsche embraces a view I call the "Doctrine of Types," according to which:

Each person has a fixed psycho-physical constitution, which defines him as a particular *type* of person.

In sum, Janaway seems to confuse science, and the motives for engaging in science, with the *methods* of the sciences. One can *care deeply* about the subject of one's inquiry (as, e.g., N. does) and think causal explanation and naturalistically respectable causal mechanisms are the way to get things right.

I call the relevant psycho-physical facts "type-facts." It is type-facts, in turn, that figure in the explanation of human actions and beliefs (including beliefs about morality). One of Nietzsche's central undertakings, then, is to specify the type-facts--the psychological and physiological facts--that explain how and why an essentially ascetic or "life-denying" morality should have taken hold among so many people over the past two millennia.

One particular type-fact is of central importance for Nietzsche: what he calls "will to power." Its central explanatory role is articulated in the *Genealogy* as follows:

Every animal...instinctively [*instinktiv*] strives for an optimum of favourable conditions in which fully to release his power [or strength; *Kraft*] and achieve his maximum feeling of power; every animal abhors equally instinctively, with an acute sense of smell "higher than all reason," any kind of disturbance and hindrance which blocks or could block his path to the optimum.... (GM III:7)

If it is a natural fact about creatures like us that we "instinctively" maximize our strength or power, then this fact, together with other type-facts and facts about circumstances, must figure in any explanation of what we do and believe. So, for example, those who are essentially weak or impotent (e.g., the slaves of GM I) express their will to power by *creating* values that are favorable to their interests; those who are *strong*, by contrast, express their power through physical action, and so on.

Christopher Janaway has objected that, If Nietzsche's causal explanations of our moral values are naturalistic, they are so in a sense which includes within the "natural" not merely the psychophysical constitution of the individual whose values are up for explanation, but also many complex cultural phenomena and the psychophysical states of past individuals and projected types of individual (2007: 53).

More precisely, Janaway, relying on some passages from *Daybreak* (see Janaway 2007: 45-47), wants to emphasize Nietzsche's interest in the role of "inclinations and aversions" in an agent's moral judgments, where, as Janaway puts it, "my inclinations and aversions are acquired habits inculcated by means of the specific culture I find myself in" and "this culture inculcates just these habits because it has a guiding structure of value beliefs, and...this structure of value beliefs became dominant through answering to certain affective needs of individuals in earlier cultural stages" (2007: 47). As Janaway observes in a footnote (2007: 47 n. 24), my account of M-Naturalism has no reason to "deny" any of this. First, an important virtue of M-Naturalism is that it does not purport to settle *a priori* questions about ontology, deferring instead to whatever works in the explanatory practices of the sciences. It is striking, for example, that the best recent naturalistic work in moral psychology—I am thinking especially of Prinz's *The Emotional Construction of Morals* (2007), which tries to update the Nietzschean project of genealogy—explicitly incorporates cultural factors, via anthropology, as a central part of the relevant cognitive science that should figure in our understanding of morality. But second, an important theoretical desideratum for the naturalistic philosopher is, as Stroud puts it in explaining Hume's view, to explain via "general, perhaps universal, principles." The sciences explain not by emphasis on particulars, i.e., on tokens, but by subsuming the particulars under *types*. These *types* may, as Prinz shows, turn out to be cultural in character, but in Janaway's example, it is unclear whether it is cultural *types* that figure in explaining moral beliefs or whether cultural particulars simply fix the particular content of phenomena explained by psycho-physical types. In the end, I doubt very much turns on this. There is no reason to deny that

Nietzsche the naturalist is interested in culture, but that should not lead us to lose sight of the role that psycho-physical causes plays in the explanation of morality he proffers.

B. Problems of Causation

On my reading of M-Naturalism, the Humean Nietzsche emulates the methods of science by trying to construct causal explanations of the moral beliefs and practices of human beings. Even on Janaway's (weaker) account of Nietzsche's naturalism, causation is central. As he puts it: Nietzsche "is committed to a species of theorizing that explains *X* by locating *Y* and *Z* as its causes, where *Y* and *Z*'s being causes of *X* is not falsified by our best science" (2007: 38).

We do well to remember how important causal explanation is to Nietzsche's philosophical project. When he says in *Daybreak*, for example, that "[O]ur moral judgments and evaluations...are only images and fantasies based on a physiological process unknown to us" (D 119), so that "it is always necessary to draw forth...the *physiological* phenomenon behind the moral predispositions and prejudices" (D 542), he is making a causal claim, i.e., the claim that certain physiological processes *cause* moral judgments through some presumably complicated process that yields them as "images" and "fantasies" brought about by these causes. When he says in the *Genealogy* that *ressentiment*, and the morality that grows out of it, has an "actual physiological cause [*Ursache*]" (GM I:15) his meaning is, of course, unmistakable. When he devotes an entire chapter of *Twilight of the Idols* to what he calls "the four great errors," errors that almost entirely concern causation—"confusing cause and effect," the "error of false causation", the "error of imaginary causes" he calls them—it is clear that he wants to distinguish *genuine causal relations* from the mistaken ones that infect religious and

moral thinking. When he returns to the same theme in *The Anti-Christ*, he again denounces Christianity for trafficking in “imaginary causes” and for propounding “an imaginary *natural* science,” one that depends on anthropocentric concepts and lacks, as Nietzsche puts, “any concept of natural cause” (A 15; cf. A 25), science consisting, on his account, of “the healthy concepts of cause and effect” (A 49). Causation, and causal explanation, is central to Nietzsche’s naturalism, much as it has returned to a central place in philosophy of science over the past thirty years (cf. Cartwright 2004). Without belief in some notion of causation, it is hard to see how any of these passages from Nietzsche make any sense.

I want to consider two different kinds of objections to making causation central to Nietzsche’s M-Naturalism. The first kind of objection involves no skepticism about causation, but worries that “causation,” and the work it does in Nietzsche’s M-Naturalism as I describe it, is not adequate to define an interesting theoretical position. The second kind of objection takes issues with Nietzsche’s belief in causation itself. The second challenge is, needless to say, the more radical and least plausible, in light of the evidence we have rehearsed so far.

Ken Gemes and Christopher Janaway (2005) have pressed the first kind of objection in a critical study of my book. They make three key objections to my account of M-Naturalism: first, that “there is much in science that does not involve causal accounts, as for instance Kepler’s three laws of planetary motion” (2005: 731); second, that seeking causal explanations is not enough to establish methods continuity with the sciences—as they put it, “Just because astrology seeks to give causal explanations we would not say it shares a continuity of methods with the sciences” (2005: 731); and third,

the actual causal role I claim Nietzsche assigns “type-facts”—the essential psycho-physical facts about persons to which Nietzsche appeals in explaining moral beliefs and attitudes—is too weak to state an interesting naturalistic thesis.

We may dispense with the first objection rather quickly. It is true enough that much that is characteristic of scientific practice and methodology does not concern causation at all, though even Kepler’s three laws of planetary motion—which are mathematical *descriptions* of the motion of the planets—are deducible from Newtonian laws of motion and gravitation, and so hold true because of the causally effective forces described by those laws. But the claim at stake, in both my characterization of Nietzsche’s naturalism or, for that matter, Stroud’s characterization of Hume’s, was *not* that science is exhausted by its interest in causal explanation, but rather that *a* characteristic feature of science is that it aims to provide general causal or deterministic explanations of phenomena by appeal to a few general principles or mechanisms. That is obviously consistent with the fact that parts of this scientific enterprise are purely descriptive.

Relatedly, however, Gemes and Janaway worry that trying “to give causal explanations” is not enough for methods continuity. After all, astrologists and (we might add) Intelligent Design theorists can claim to offer *causal* explanations, but that hardly makes them M-Naturalists. Of course, on my account, the search for deterministic causes was only one feature of M-Naturalism; Nietzsche, as I noted, accepts some S-Naturalist constraints on viable causal mechanisms, though, in my view, he takes those substantive constraints themselves to follow from scientific findings. The problem with astrologists and Intelligent Design theorists is that their concepts of what can cause what run afoul of

substantive findings of the sciences themselves (e.g., there is no empirical evidence in support of supernatural interventions in natural phenomena, or in the causal power of the planets on human affairs).

More interesting, I think, is the objection Gemes and Janaway lodge against the naturalist view I call “causal essentialism” which I attribute to Nietzsche. On this view, as Gemes and Janaway note (2005: 733), “for any individual substance...that substance has ‘essential’ properties that are causally primary with respect to the future history of that substance, i.e., non-trivially determine the space of possible trajectories for that substance” (Leiter 2002: 83). They then write:

The gloss [Leiter] gives on natural facts being causally primary with respect to some effect is that such facts are necessary but possibly not sufficient for the relevant effect. But this is an extraordinarily weak gloss; our having heads is a necessary but not sufficient condition for our becoming philosophers, but we would not want to say that our having heads is causally primary with respect to our becoming philosophers. And, while Leiter puts ‘essential’ in scare quotes, one worries that in as much as essential properties are typically taken to be unchangeable this saddles Nietzsche with a view that weights the causal role of nature rather heavily over that of nurture. (2005: 733)

In my book, I document the many places where Nietzsche, in fact, embraces the idea of an “unchangeable” or “essential” nature,⁹ but the important point here is that an M-

⁹ Nietzsche calls on us “to complete our de-deification of nature...[and] to ‘naturalize’ humanity in terms of a pure, newly discovered, newly redeemed nature” (GS 256). More strikingly, he makes claims about *essences* with frequency: for example, concerning “the *essence* [Wesen] of what lives” (BGE, 259), “the essence [Wesen] of life” (GM II:12), or “the weakness of the weak...---I mean [their] *essence* [Wesen]” (GM I:13). The mistake of most of anti-essentialist readings of Nietzsche is to conflate Nietzsche’s opposition to non-empirical or non-naturalistic claims (which he does, indeed, repudiate) with an opposition to any and all claims about a thing’s essence or nature. But the latter claims are quite colorable within a naturalistic framework (for example, Quine’s), as long as we understand them as *empirical* or *naturalistic* claims made from within our best-going theory of the world.

Naturalist, whether Nietzsche or Hume, *ought* to emphasize the causal role of nature over that of nurture, precisely in order to--as Stroud puts it in describing Hume's view-- "explain[] various and complicated...happenings in terms of relatively few extremely general, perhaps universal, principles" (Stroud 1977: 3). This is why Hume seeks "a completely general theory of human nature," since one of the features that marks it as aspiring to the scientific is precisely its *generality*, namely, its attempt to transcend real and vivid cultural particulars to see what all these disparate cultural artifacts have in common, namely, their genesis from tendencies rooted in the nature of the human.

The other part of Gemes and Janaway's critique--concerning the "weakness" of the necessary, but not sufficient, characterization of what it is for an explanans to be "causally primary"--simply exploits a familiar problem about empiricist analyses of causation, from Hume to Mackie: namely, that they founder on the problem of picking out the regular "correlations" that count for purposes of causation or, in the case of Mackie, in specifying the conditions that are merely non-causal "background" conditions when we pick out the INUS cause of an event (where the INUS cause is "an insufficient but necessary part of an unnecessary but sufficient condition" for the event happening). Having a head does not cause anyone to be a philosopher (even if it is a necessary condition), but having the genetic make-up of a tomato is surely a key part of the best causal explanation of why a particular seed grows into a tomato plant. It would be astonishing--or simply gross anachronism--to think Nietzsche has a good explanation of how we mark this difference, especially when so many philosophers who have thought systematically about the problem do not. But that does not change the fact that ordinary and scientific practice recognizes the distinction. Indeed, Nietzsche gives every sign of

being a sensible M-Naturalist on this score, and not a disreputable metaphysician, when he describes “science” as simply “the healthy concepts of cause and effect” (A 49). Let science and the application of scientific methods decide what is a cause and what is not; we may then help ourselves to whatever kinds of causes work. We may, at least, be confident that no interesting theory will develop around an explanation of philosophers in terms of their having heads, while *every* sensible scientific explanation of plants growing tomatoes will appeal to the genetic make-up of tomato plant seeds. If Nietzsche is right (an issue to which we will return), then the same will be true about the correct naturalistic account of moral beliefs and attitudes.¹⁰

Gemes and Janaway, both in their critique of my book and in their individual scholarship, are comfortable with the idea that Nietzsche believes in causal relations, however they are to be understood. But some critics of my presentation of Nietzsche’s M-Naturalism purport to be skeptical on this score. I shall treat the recent critique by Christa Acampora (2006) as representative.

In my book (2002: 22-23), I noted Nietzsche’s flirtation in some earlier work with NeoKantian skepticism about causation, as in passages like this one from *Beyond Good and Evil*:

In the "in-itself" [*An-sich*] there is nothing of "causal connections," of "necessity," or of cause.... It is *we* alone who have devised cause, sequence, for-each-other, relativity, constraint, number, law, freedom, motive, and purpose; and when we

¹⁰Perhaps we can finesse the difficulty by emphasizing that type-facts are *explanatorily* primary, thus shifting the status of the claim from the metaphysical to the epistemic domain. The claim, in other words, would be that in order to *explain*, e.g., the slave revolt in morals, the causal role of the type-facts about slavish types—e.g., their propensity to *ressentiment*—is necessary, but not sufficient for explaining the event. That allows for the possibility that other causal factors—such as the social environment in which the slavish types find themselves—are important. But, on this account, no explanation of the slave revolt that failed to make reference to the psycho-physical type of “slaves” would be epistemically adequate. This might, however, weaken the claim beyond what Nietzsche seems to have in mind.

project and mix this symbol world into things as if it existed "in itself," we act once more as we have always acted--*mythologically*. (BGE __)

This kind of criticism would have been familiar to Nietzsche from the NeoKantian Lange, who had criticized scientists precisely for their false belief that science gives us knowledge of the noumenal world, when in fact science only concerns the phenomenal world. "Cause" and "effect" are "pure concepts" Nietzsche says in this same passage (obviously echoing Kantian language), imposed by the human mind upon a world that, in-itself, contains "nothing of 'causal connections'" and the like. Notice, of course, that even in the Kantian perspective, this point does *not* undermine the objectivity of claims about causes; it simply confines their objective truth to the world as it appears to us. But since, as Clark has argued most systematically (1990: 103-105), Nietzsche ultimately repudiates the intelligibility of the noumenal/phenomenal distinction, it is unsurprising that his mature works should show none of the NeoKantian skepticism about causation.

Acampora claims, however, that this is "simply mistaken" (2006: 329 n. 5), that skepticism about causation infects the mature works as well. Here, I take it, is the heart of her critique, which, it bears noting, includes an enormous concession to the reading of Nietzsche as an M-Naturalist that I have defended:

Nietzsche is clearly a naturalist in seeking a focus on natural, observable phenomena for garnering our understanding of the world and our place within it. Empirical science is admirable for Nietzsche because of its rigorous method and its concern to free itself of supernatural and mythological presuppositions. The latter motivation reflects a kind of mental hygiene that for a long time has been recognized as important in philosophy but is rarely achieved, namely to avoid the use of hidden or unjustified assumptions. The problem with science, for Nietzsche, is that it quite often sneaks in principles or articles of faith that smack of the very metaphysical and theological conceptions that it seeks to overcome. Two such ideas that were crucial to the science

of his day, and one of which remains the bedrock of scientific inquiry, are the teleological conception of nature and the concept of causation. (2006: 316-317)

We can bracket the first point, and not only because teleology dropped out of scientific practice with the scientific revolution's triumph over Aristotelianism several centuries before. The question is whether Nietzsche really thinks that causation involves "metaphysical and theological conceptions" that Nietzsche rejects.

Acampora briefly cites (2006: 319) one of the NeoKantian passages from *Beyond Good and Evil* dealt with already, so we may put that to one side. She also relies, alas, on a passage from *The Gay Science* (GS 112), which arguably reflects the same NeoKantian skepticism and is not, in any case, a passage from Nietzsche's "mature" works, the domain where she claims my view that Nietzsche is no longer a skeptic about causation is "simply mistaken." The really crucial passage—the only one from Nietzsche's mature works she adduces—is from "The Four Great Errors" chapter of *Twilight of the Idols*, the section on "the error of false causality," according to which we falsely believe that our conscious mental states *cause* our actions. But, for Acampora's purposes, the crucial part of this section is its conclusion (I quote more than she quotes):

There are no mental [*geistigen*] causes at all!...[W]e really botched this 'empiricism'—we used it to *create* the world as a world of causes, wills, and minds. The oldest and most enduring psychology was at work here, doing absolutely nothing but this: it considered all events to be deeds, all deeds to be the result of a will, the world became a multitude of doers, a doer ('subject') pushed its way under all events. People projected their three 'inner facts' out of themselves and onto the world—the facts they believed in most fervently, the will, the mind, and the I. They took the concept of being from the concept of the I, they posited 'things' as being in their own image, on the basis of their concept of I as cause. Is it any wonder that what they rediscovered in things later is only *what they had put in to them in the first place*?—Even the 'thing,' to say it again, the concept of a thing, is just a reflex of the belief in

the I as cause...and even your atom, my dear Mr. Mechanist and Mr. Physicist, how many errors, how much rudimentary psychology is left in your atom! Not to mention the ‘thing-in-itself’....! The error of thinking that mind caused reality! And to make it the measure of reality! And to call it *God*!

That we are mistaken in thinking the conscious will is *causal* in action—which is, as I have argued elsewhere, Nietzsche’s view (Leiter 2007)—clearly entails no skepticism about the reality of causation, which is what is supposed to be at issue in Acampora’s critique of my reading of Nietzsche’s M-Naturalism. What *is* supposed to motivate skepticism about causation from this passage is glossed by Acampora as follows: “the empirical world of the scientist is populated by a host of ‘spirit—subjects in the form of ‘doers’ or agents. This is the framework in which the concept of causation operates” (2006: 320). Suppose it is true that our belief in “atoms” resulted from our (false) belief that our wills are causal. How does this lead to skepticism about *causation*? It might warrant skepticism about the atomistic metaphysics of physics, but causation seems intact. Indeed, in the very next section of *Twilight*, he quickly returns to his confident distinguishing of *real* from *imaginary* causes, consistent with the entire tenor of this chapter.

Acampora, herself, apparently realizes there is a problem with her reading, because--buried in a footnote oddly--she acknowledges, “This is not to say Nietzsche rejects causation altogether, only that our current way of conceiving it is hampered by these other conceptual presuppositions or ‘errors’ as [Nietzsche] calls them” (2006: 330 n. 8), and she goes on to note that the passages in *Twilight* are concerned with critiquing “false” or “imaginary” notions of causality “suggest[] that Nietzsche endorses some kind

of causation,” but rejects the “framework organized around various metaphysical abstractions such as subjects and doers” (*id.*). I take it, then, by Acampora’s own admission, Nietzsche, in fact, believes in causation, but simply denies that some purported causes—for example, “subjects” or the conscious will—are, in fact, causal. But this was never at issue in my reading of Nietzsche’s naturalism, which spent considerable time examining precisely this critique of his (Leiter 2002: 87-101). What Acampora promised, but has failed to deliver, is any evidence that it is “simply mistaken” to point out that Nietzsche believes in causation in his mature works. Rather than being “mistaken,” Acampora, in her footnote, admits that it is correct!

Acampora’s confused critique nonetheless raises an important issue: namely, whether Nietzsche is not a skeptic about what he takes to be the underlying *metaphysics* of modern science? And, if that is true, how could he then be a naturalist who takes science seriously? It is to a version of that more worrisome critique that we now turn.

C. The Metaphysics of the Will to Power

Once again, Janaway poses a sharp version of the pertinent challenge. He writes: Nietzsche’s commitment to continuity of results with the sciences is put in some doubt by some of his statements about the fundamental explanatory notion of will to power, which may essentially import notions of overpowering and interpretation into the biological realm. (2007: 52)

Indeed, some of Nietzsche’s discussions of will to power—especially in GM II:12--raise doubts even about ascribing M-Naturalism to Nietzsche. As Janaway writes:

The problem is that Nietzsche presents will to power as a *counter* to what he sees as the dominant paradigm in science, the “democratic idiosyncrasy against everything

that rules and desires to rule,” a prejudice about method which has “become lord over the whole of physiology and the doctrine of life—to its detriment[...] by removing through sleight of hand one of its basic concepts, that of true *activity*” (GM II:12).

Nietzsche says that the scientific explanation of organisms’ behavior in terms of reactive adaptation to the environment must be rejected in favor of the view that at all levels of the organic world there is spontaneity, active appropriation, interpretation, and the imposition of form and meaning.... (2007: 38)

Section 12 of the Second Essay of the *Genealogy* does, indeed, seem like a very strange passage for a philosophical naturalist to write, for the reasons to which Janaway calls attention. How can it be squared with the reading of Nietzsche as an M-Naturalist that is otherwise so well-supported by the texts?

Maudemarie Clark has made a powerful case, partly following Walter Kaufmann, that “the theory of will to power originated in attempts to account for various human behaviors” (1990: 210), and certainly its most prominent role in the *Genealogy* is through the psychological principle articulated in GM III:7, according to which “every animal...instinctively strives for...its maximum feelings of power,” which then figures, as I have argued, in Nietzsche’s explanation of the appeal of ascetic ideals (Leiter 2002: 255-263).¹¹ As Clark has also shown (1990: 212-218), the published arguments for the more ambitious and metaphysical versions of the doctrine of will to power—according to which all matter, or at least all organic matter, is “will to power”—depend on premises (e.g., the causality of the will) that Nietzsche rather explicitly rejects, so he can not mean them to be serious or persuasive arguments. Indeed, the bad arguments Nietzsche gives

¹¹ I disagree with Clark’s critique of will to power as an empirical hypothesis on a par with psychological hedonism (Clark 1990: 210-211) [add discussion]

for the metaphysical doctrine of will to power are, Clark argues (drawing on BGE 5, 6 and 9), an ironic illustration of a tendency of philosophers Nietzsche so often critiques, namely, that they present their metaphysical doctrines as rational discoveries, rather than “attempts to construct the world, or an image of the world, in terms of the philosopher’s values” (1990: 221).

Against that backdrop, we should recall that GM II:12—the passage on which Janaway focuses—has as its real focus the correct way to do a *genealogy*, for example, of punishment. Nietzsche argues (cf. Leiter 2002 Ch. 5) that a genealogy must distinguish between “the cause of the genesis of a thing and its final usefulness,” since the former does not warrant any reliable inference about the latter. Nietzsche writes that he,

emphasize[s] this key point about historical methodology all the more because it basically goes against the currently ruling instincts and taste of the times, which would rather learn to live with the absolute randomness, indeed the mechanistic senselessness of all happening than with the theory of a *power-will* playing itself out in all happening.

This reflects, says Nietzsche, “the democratic idiosyncrasy against everything that rules and desires to rule” (GM II:12), and this is followed by the short polemic against that idiosyncrasy which concludes with him affirming that “the essence of life” is “its *will to power*” which involves essentially “spontaneous, attacking, infringing, reinterpreting, reordering, and formative forces” (GM II:12). The next section begins, “To return to our topic”—namely the practice of genealogy as illustrated through the case study of punishment—and not a further word is said about the metaphysics of the will to power in the book, as opposed to will to power as a psychological hypothesis.

Notice, then, that Nietzsche's apparent metaphysics of the will to power enters *only* in order to hammer home a point about correct historical methodology, one that stands quite independent of the truth of the metaphysics: it looks, in other words, precisely like an attempt to utilize metaphysical claims for rhetorical ends, i.e., to persuade his readers of the correctness of his approach to genealogy by associating it with a different, more "noble" value system. And having served its rhetorical purpose here, the metaphysics then vanishes from the book, in favor of the psychological version of the doctrine made explicit in GM III:7. It is tempting to conclude, given this context and given what Clark has demonstrated about the role of will to power in the published works, that GM II:12 should not be taken too seriously at all.

In this connection, it probably bears remembering how unimportant Nietzsche himself ultimately views the idea of will to power. In the two major self-reflective moments in the Nietzschean corpus--*Ecce Homo*, where Nietzsche reviews and assesses his life and work, including specifically all his prior books, and the series of new, synoptic prefaces he wrote in 1886 for all his books pre-dating *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*--Nietzsche says *not a word* about "will to power." In light of Nietzsche's own appraisal of his philosophy, it seems particularly misleading to read passages like GM II:12 too literally.

A concluding reflection on questions of interpretive method, however, may be in order here. My own interest in Nietzsche is not simply antiquarian, and continued interest in any philosophical naturalist, like Nietzsche, should be, at least in part, a function of the extent to which he gets nature and the facts right, and thus teaches us important things. If it turns out that Nietzsche, the man, really is committed to what

seems entailed by the most flat-footed literalism about a bare handful of published “will to power” passages (such as GM II:12), then so much the worse for Nietzsche we might say. We may do Nietzsche *the philosopher* a favor, however, if we reconstruct his Humean project in terms that are both recognizably his in significant part, and yet, at the same time, far more plausible once the crackpot metaphysics of the will to power (that all organic matter “is will to power”) is expunged. I am inclined to Clark’s hopeful view that the crackpot metaphysics is really presented in an ironic spirit, and that Nietzsche, the otherwise sound naturalist, knew better. The fact that none of his actual moral psychology depends on the crackpot metaphysics, and that he assigns the crackpot metaphysics no significance in his own appraisal of his corpus, is additional reason to be hopeful on this score. But Nietzsche was a mere mortal like the rest of us, and even being a genius can not compensate for the dangers of being self-taught about so much. Perhaps Nietzsche really did believe he had some deep insight into the correct metaphysics of nature, one missed by the empirical sciences. If he had that thought—one wholly inconsistent with the rest of his naturalism—so much the worse for him. Those of us reading him more than a century later should concentrate on his fruitful ideas, not the silly ones, especially when they are not central to his important work in moral psychology.

IV. Is Nietzsche a Successful Naturalist...and How Could He Be?

Philosophical naturalists incur an evidential burden that most philosophers do not: their claims must answer to the facts as they unfold in the course of systematic empirical inquiry. Kantians can make up their moral psychology from their sanctimonious

armchairs, invoking an interest only in the “concept” or “possibility” of moral motivation, but naturalists actually care about how human beings *really* work. Hume, of course, does not fare that well by this more demanding evidential standard, since some of his speculation about human nature seems to involve wishful thinking about human moral propensities. Nietzsche is certainly not prone to wishful thinking, but does he actually fare any better? How does his speculative M-Naturalism look more than a century later?

As I have argued in recent work (Leiter 2007; Knobe & Leiter 2007), one important reason that philosophers should take Nietzsche seriously is because he seems to have gotten, at least in broad contours, many points about human moral psychology *right*. Consider:

- (1) Nietzsche holds that heritable type-facts, as I call them, are central determinants of personality and morally significant behaviors, a claim well-supported by extensive empirical findings in behavioral genetics (Knobe & Leiter 2007).
- (2) Nietzsche claims that consciousness is a “surface,” that “the greatest part of conscious thought must still be attributed to [non-conscious] instinctive activity” (BGE 3) claims overwhelmingly vindicated by recent work by psychologists on the role of the unconscious (e.g., Wilson 2002) and by philosophers who have produced synthetic meta-analyses of work on consciousness in psychology and neuroscience (e.g., Rosenthal 2008)
- (3) Nietzsche claims that moral judgments are post-hoc rationalizations of feelings that have an antecedent source, and thus are not the outcome of rational reflection or

discursiveness, a conclusion in sync with the findings of the ascendant “social intuitionism” in the empirical moral psychology of Jonathan Haidt (2001) and others.

(4) Nietzsche argues (Leiter 2007) that free will is an “illusion,” that our conscious experience of willing is itself the causal product of non-conscious forces, a view recently defended by the psychologist Daniel Wegner (2002), who, in turn, synthesizes a large body of empirical literature, including the famous neurophysical data about “willing” collected by Benjamin Libet

If Nietzsche were more widely read by academic psychologists—too many years of Heideggerian and Derridean misreadings appear, alas, to have put them off Nietzsche—then he would be recognized as a truly prescient figure in the history of empirical psychology.

Naturalists, to be sure, are hostages to empirical fortune, and Nietzsche’s remarkable track record may turn out to be less impressive in fifty or a hundred years. But prophecy about the empirical sciences is not my interest here. For Nietzsche’s remarkable psychological insight raises a new, and different kind of puzzle, about the M-Naturalism I have ascribed to him and which I have defended here against various critics. To put it simply: Nietzsche seems to have been *right* about much of human moral psychology notwithstanding his failure to employ any of the *methods* of the empirical psychology that has confirmed much of his work. What kind of *methodological* naturalism is that?

Scott Jenkins poses a succinct version of this objection in commenting on the empirical evidence that Joshua Knobe and I adduce in support of Nietzsche’s moral psychology. Jenkins writes (2008):

Knobe and Leiter examine a wide range of psychological studies (including studies of twins' behavior, the effects of child-rearing practices on personality, and the relation between moral behavior and reports of moral attitudes) and argue that a person's behavior in moral contexts can be explained primarily through appeal to heritable "type-facts," while moral upbringing (the Aristotelian view) and conscious decision-making (the Kantian view) quite surprisingly play almost no role in such explanations. This empirical evidence, they argue, demonstrates that Nietzsche's theory of different psychological types, with their characteristic moral and theoretical commitments, at the very least deserves serious attention from philosophers interested in moral psychology. Knobe and Leiter do a very good job of making their case, and their work suggests an interesting question concerning Nietzsche's work -- How, exactly, did he arrive at a theory that is confirmed by recent empirical investigations if not by way of considering the data that support the theory?

We need to distinguish, in this context, between what counts as *confirmation* of a theory from what might lead a genius like Nietzsche to have perceived a possible truth about human moral psychology. Empirical psychology has evolved methods for testing and confirming hypotheses that were not in use in the 19th-century—hence the need for a naturalistically-minded philosopher like Nietzsche to *speculate*. But, by the same token, it is not as though Nietzsche lacked *evidence* on which to base his speculative moral psychology. His evidence appears to have been of three primary kinds: first, his own observations, both introspective and of the behavior of others; second, the personal observations recorded by others, in a wide array of historical, literary and philosophical texts over long periods of time, observations which, in some respects, tended to reinforce

each other (consider, e.g., the realism about human motivations detailed by Thucydides in antiquity and, in the modern era, in the aphorisms of La Rochefoucauld, both authors whom Nietzsche admired); and third, his reading about contemporaneous scientific developments, most of which--even if amateurish or simply wrong by today's standards--did represent systematic attempts to bring scientific methods to bear on the study of human beings and which, in some of their broad outlines, have been vindicated by subsequent developments. By the standards of contemporary methods in the human sciences, we would not deem insights arrived at based on this evidence to be well-confirmed, but that certainly does not mean it is not, in the hands of a genius like Nietzsche, adequate for insights that survive scrutiny by our contemporary methods. This is precisely one of the reasons why Nietzsche is a great *speculative* M-Naturalist in the history of philosophy: with unsystematic data and methods he could nonetheless arrive at hypotheses that turn out to be supported by more systematic data and methods. Of course, unlike our contemporary social scientists, Nietzsche is not just a Humean, but a Therapist, and so weaves these hypotheses into a powerful critical project that aims to transform consciousness about morality. Some of our contemporary naturalists in moral psychology (e.g., Prinz [2007] and Haidt [2001]) have perhaps similar aims, but nothing like Nietzsche's rhetorical talent, or his fearless readiness to abandon conventional wisdom about morality. Contemporary cognitive science should lead us to have a renewed appreciation for the penetrating insight of Nietzsche's Speculative M-Naturalism, but cognitive science is no match for the rhetorical power of the Therapeutic Nietzsche, who sees not only how human beings actually work but also how to exploit these facts in a way that upsets the complacent moral consciousness of some of his readers.

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