

Nietzsche, GM I
PHIL 449, Spring 2014

Start with a few things from last week...

Owen, chapter 2

A. N's historical account of morality is "naturalistic"—relies on what is known about humans and nature through disciplines such as psychology, biology, history, philology

B. N concerned to show how and why we haven't accepted deep implications of death of God (28-30)

-- how is it that we haven't faced this death, acc to Owen's view of N?

class discussion

- haven't rejected Christian morality; still have core values of equality, compassion
- replaced God with science or despaired in nihilism; try to look to something else instead of to self; explain why we should do things based on something else other than ourselves, not being accountable for what we do ourselves
- atheists at the time believe in science the same way that theists believe in God
- have lost very reason for Christian morality, missing the whole genealogical project
- people still deify objective truth; truth is our new god; still focus on idea of transcendent realm

C. Also wants to critique moral values we still accept from religious viewpoint, and for this need criterion for evaluating them—"will to power" (33)

-- "The criterion of evaluation that Nietzsche proposes is whether the feeling of power expresses and tracks power" (35)

-- see argument on p. 36 (also below): is #4 necessary for #3?

1. *if* one accepts the principle of will to power as a principle of explanation, then
2. one has accepted that human beings are characterized by an architectonic interest in the self-reflexive experience of power, and
3. since it is a necessary condition of the self-reflexive experience of power that the feeling of power is taken to express power, then
4. one must also accept that moral perspectives and the valuations of which they are composed can be evaluated in terms of whether (the degree) of the feeling of power that human beings experience under a given moral perspective expresses and tracks (their degree of) power.

D. For N's critique to be convincing to audience, needs to use "internal reasons": reasons valid both in his perspective and that of his audience

(the following are all from Owen 41)

-- a perspective is "a system of judgments [that] denotes the space of reasons 'which constitutes an agent's *deliberative* viewpoint i.e., the viewpoint from which he forms his all-things-considered judgments about what to do'" (quoting from Reginster 2000, 43)

-- Nietzsche needs to show those with a different perspective “that they should endorse his perspective in the light of reasons internal to their current perspective”

-- further, in order for the change to be “reflectively stable,” the reasons given must also be internally valid in the new perspective to which people are to change (Nietzsche’s)

What then is Nietzschean genealogy/what does it do, according to Owen?

Genealogy generally

Provides a history of currently-accepted beliefs and values, in order to loosen their grip on us so we can evaluate them; provides reasons for their critique that are valid both in audience’s perspective and in a new one the author is asking them to take on.

GM, specifically

Provides a historical account of beliefs and values that are holdovers from belief in God:

- values of compassion, selflessness, and more
- beliefs in and value of unconditional truth, idea of a perspective that is not a perspective, a source of truth that doesn’t come from us
- evaluating these as problematic through the criterion of will to power

Owen Chpt. 3: “The Madman” (*Gay Science* Sect. 125)

Owen p. 58: “to understand the pointfulness of the madman’s speech would require that his audience are free from just that perspective from which it is the point of the madman’s speech to free them.”

Need somehow to get audience to see the consequences of their own views, what the rejection of God entails—including that they need to reject the moral values they have as a holder from the belief in God.

Preface to GM

1. Section 1: “We are unknown to ourselves, we knowers”—what does this mean, and why does it matter?

- we may have bad faith, are not authentic
- we don’t actually know how powerful or powerless we may be
- can we still affirm our own lives as N seems to want if we don’t know ourselves?
- we only know ourselves in relation to Christian values; to really know ourselves need to accept loss of Christian values along with God
- we are not taking responsibility for ourselves b/c we don’t even know ourselves
- trying to unite subject and what we know; have to turn inward and distance selves from larger forces of culture and morality to see things differently

2. Sections 3 and 6: main subject of this genealogy

-- Sect. 3: “under what conditions did man invent those value judgments good and evil? *and what value do they themselves have?*”

-- how evaluate such moral judgments? Owen: according to will to power—does the feeling of power we get from having them track the actual power we have?

-- Sect. 6: “we need a *critique* of moral values, *for once the value of these values must itself be called into question*—and for this we need a knowledge of the conditions and circumstances out of which they have grown, under which they have developed and shifted”

-- why need to look at history to do this critique?

Owen Chpt. 4

Three things genealogy must do (65)

1. distance audience from their moral values so can reflect on & evaluate

-- could giving a historical narrative of their genesis do this?

2. provide arguments to encourage evaluation of moral values based on one or more values that the audience already holds, and ones that are also valid in a perspective N is asking them to take up (see Owen 41-42)

-- on p. 70 Owen says this value is “truthfulness”

3. appeal to the affects of the audience in order to encourage them to re-evaluate their moral values (see Owen 49)

Groups: How might one say Nietzsche is doing (2) and (3) in GM Preface & Treatise I? Or, discuss any question/concern you have about what we’ve read from Nietzsche so far.