

Renaturalisation and Revaluation: 'Postmoralism' in *On the Genealogy of Morality*

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... - all in all reason enough, isn't there, that we psychologists nowadays cannot get rid of considerable mistrust of ourselves? ... We, too, are probably still "too good" for our trade; we, too, are probably still the victims, the booty, the invalids of this moralized taste of the times, as much as we may feel ourselves to be ones who hold it in contempt – it probably infects *us* too (GM III: 20).

My aim here is to identify a productive fault line within the *Genealogy* and indicate its consequences for the possibility and nature of Nietzsche's 'postmoralism'. The tension in question is that between, on the one hand, the manner and extent to which Nietzsche's text carries forward the 'renaturalisation' of human culture and, on the other hand, its contribution to the task of 'revaluation' conceived as the identification and promotion of an alternative to the 'ascetic ideal'. More specifically, as regards renaturalisation, I foreground arguably the most radical feature of the *Genealogy*, namely, its emphasis on what I term the 'libidinal-affective' nature of the process of 'moralization' and its central role in Nietzsche's explanation of the appeal of the ascetic ideal. Turning to revaluation, I highlight two important features of Nietzsche's critique of 'morality'. Firstly, the strangely persistent role in Nietzsche's thinking and rhetoric of a hierarchical distinction between nature and culture (or 'man') and, secondly, the powerful narrative of historicity regarding the inexorable "self-overcoming" of morality driven by the "law of life" (GM III: 27). My conjecture is that there is a significant dissymmetry and dissonance between these strands of renaturalisation and revaluation respectively within the *Genealogy* and that the former (i.e., the insight into the libidinal-affective origin of all evaluation and interpretation) tends to interrupt and derail the latter (i.e., the 'revaluation of all values' and the possibility of a post-moral culture) undermining its plausibility and credibility.

I

The reasons supporting my formulation 'libidinal-affective' to characterise key features of Nietzsche's thought cannot be provided on this occasion. Suffice to say, the aim is to emphasise a dimension, broadly 'libidinal' in nature (without implying any particular view on the relationship of Nietzsche's thought to that of Freud, Jung *et al*) which it seems to me is particularly manifest in the argument and rhetoric of the *Genealogy* alongside the more familiar insistence on the primacy and significance of affectivity [cf. Klossowski, Staten; Janaway, Owen]. The register and rhetoric of renaturalisation in the *Genealogy* is markedly and insistently 'physiological' and 'biological' in tone and Nietzsche constantly pursues the thought that 'morality' is, without remainder, a product of the satisfaction (or otherwise) of primary instincts and drives and that these 'spiritualized' gratifications have a decidedly 'erotic' tinge and charge. This libidinal dimension to the pursuit of renaturalisation in the *Genealogy* significantly underscores, I shall suggest, the difficulties inherent to the fault line between the themes and strands of the text under discussion here as it reinforces still further the severe obstacles facing 'revaluation' suggesting as it does that the human species has eroticised the affects and values of moralisation. An 'incorporation' of moral values has occurred that has produced an animal congenitally addicted to the gratifications they provide for particular instinctual demands.

I cannot offer here the justification in terms of textual support for my claims concerning the 'libidinal' seam of Nietzsche's argument and rhetoric in the *Genealogy*. I have in mind the identification of a primary and ineliminable instinctual gratification, namely, "pleasure in cruelty" (*Lust an der Grausamkeit*, GM II: 7) as the concealed source of the "moral conceptual world" (GM II: 6) and the tone and emphasis of Nietzsche's account of it. Examples here include the description of the "logic...of compensation" (GM II: 5) of the creditor/debtor relation in which, "making-suffer felt good...seeing-suffer feels good, making-

suffer even more so” (GM II:6) and Nietzsche’s insistence that such quasi-erotic instinctual gratifications define the historical process of “humanization” with the emergence and development of civilisation to be understood as an,

...ever-growing spiritualization and “deification” of cruelty” (*die immer wachsende Vergeistigung und “Vergöttlichung” der Grausamkeit*)...a certain sublimation and subtilization...translated into the imaginative and inward (...*einer gewissen Sublimierung und Subtilisierung*) [GM II: 6, 7].

For Nietzsche morality, and indeed the entire ‘inner life’ of the human animal, is the self-seeking development and expression of ineliminable libidinal-affective processes that, via renaturalisation, unmasks the idealist rhetoric and valorisation of ‘denial’, exposing it as a biological impossibility. As he states,

...this uncanny and horrifying-pleasurable work of a soul compliant-conflicted with itself, that makes itself suffer out of pleasure in making-suffer...we know...what kind of *pleasure* it is that the selfless, the self-denying, the self-sacrificing feel from the very start: this pleasure belongs to cruelty (GM II: 18).

A momentous order of priority is implicit here between the libidinal-affective (i.e., ‘pleasure in cruelty’) and the evaluative (i.e., the value of self-denial) in which the latter is regarded as merely a mode of the former, as Nietzsche states, “the will to self-maltreatment, first supplies the presupposition for the *value* of the unegoistic –” (GM II: 18).

For Nietzsche, ‘morality’ in the specific, ‘pejorative sense’ [cf. Leiter] at issue in the *Genealogy*, is the achievement of “*Christianity’s* stroke of genius” (GM II: 21), its “entanglement of *bad* conscience with the concept of god” (GM II: 21) that brings about the fateful, “moralisation of the concepts guilt and duty” (GM II: 21). For Nietzsche, “...the Christian god...brought a maximum of feelings of guilt into appearance on the earth” (GM II: 20) and he clearly underlines the primacy of libidinal-affective determinants in this regard,

...the animal-human...invented the bad conscience in order to cause himself pain...this man of bad conscience has taken over the religious presupposition in order to drive his self-torture to its most gruesome severity and sharpness...the *will* of man to find himself guilty and reprehensible to the point that it cannot be atoned for...his *will* to erect an ideal...in order, to be tangibly certain of his absolute unworthiness (GM II: 22).

In turning to the crucial moral appropriation of asceticism by the ‘ascetic priest’, Nietzsche again emphasises the priority of the libidinal-affective over the evaluative dimensions of morality. The inhabitants of the “true *ascetic star*” (GM III: 11) are described as,

...repulsive creatures...who caused themselves as much pain as possible out of pleasure in causing pain:- probably their only pleasure...pleasure is felt and *sought* in deformation, atrophy, in pain...in un-selfing, self-flagellation, self-sacrifice (*der Entselbstung, Selbstgeisselung, Selbstofferung*)...a conflict that *enjoys* itself in this suffering...(GM III: 11).

The ‘ascetic priest’, in Nietzsche’s view, deploys an “affect medication” (GM III: 16) to constitute an interior domain and subject of suffering - a virtuosic feat of libidinal-affective creativity through which, “people no longer protested *against* pain, they *thirsted* after pain; “*more* pain! *More* pain!” (GM III: 20). Nietzsche’s account of the ‘ascetic priest’s’ manipulation of the ‘ascetic ideal’ for the purposes of the attainment of certain libidinal-affective pleasures marks, in my view, the zenith of his naturalistic reclamation of ‘moralisation’ from the previously dominant proprietorial claims of idealism. His awareness of the critical consequences of such an audacious feat of renaturalisation and attempt to sustain its radicality is evident in the rejection of the superficial interpretation of the ‘ascetic priest’s’ asceticism in

terms of the formula “life *against* life” (GM III: 13). Such an interpretative schema would, of course, greatly simplify and facilitate the critical application to the phenomenon of the ‘ascetic priest’ of Nietzsche’s core evaluative yardstick - ‘denial *versus* affirmation’ that underpins the project of revaluation. Instead, and to his credit, Nietzsche rigorously sustains his commitment to the all-inclusive character of the task of renaturalisation and the primacy of the libidinal-affective order therein. Hence, his rejection of the ‘life *against* life’ interpretation of the ‘ascetic priest’ and the development of an alternative conception of it as, “an artifice for the *preservation* of life” (GM III: 13) through which, “life is wrestling with death and *against* death” (GM III: 13).

Nietzsche hopes, of course, that he can pursue this account of the ‘ascetic priest’ as a purveyor, on behalf of life, of libidinal-affective techniques to the ‘sick’ without undermining the primacy of the ‘noble’s’ claim to ‘active force’ (cf. GM I: 12, GM II: 18) in its most vital and primary sense. He attempts to do this by circumscribing the activity of the ‘ascetic priest’, suggesting that it can be contained within a derivative zone of the ‘economy of life’ namely, that concerned with the mere self-preservation of the ‘weak’. It is to be conceived as (merely) “life’s healing-artist instinct” (GM III: 15) in relation to the ‘degeneracy’ of the “majority of mortals” (GM III: 1). Yet Nietzsche’s clear endeavour to raise his philosophical naturalism to an ontological level in which the processes in question are credited to and sourced in ‘life’ itself is noticeable and significant. On this basis Nietzsche offers his extraordinary evaluation of the ‘ascetic priest’ as an unwitting instrument of, and a strategy within the self-affirming essence of life. The ‘ascetic priest’ is to be ranked among, “the very great *conserving* and *yes-creating* forces of life” such that, “the “no” that he says to life brings to light an abundance of tender “yes’s”” (GM III: 13). Once thus fully reincorporated within the natural order and the incomplete renaturalisation that would depict them as being in an oppositional relation to life abandoned, the ‘ascetic priest’ can be inducted into Nietzsche’s bestiary and valorised as, “a new best of prey – a new animal terribleness...as attractive as it is fear-inspiring” (GM III: 15) and as the, “tamer of beasts of prey” (*ibid*) that can, nonetheless, Nietzsche insists, continue to claim some sort of ontological priority within life.

In a similarly radical and rigorous vein, Nietzsche insists on the full naturalistic embeddedness of the moralistic ‘*internalizing* of man’ (GM II: 16) conceiving it as a mere re-routing by life of the *self-same* ‘active force’ (GM II: 18) that it directs elsewhere in the guise of ‘nobility’. As Nietzsche acknowledges, “this entire *active* “bad conscience”...finally brought to light...a wealth of new disconcerting beauty and affirmation...perhaps for the first time beauty *itself*...” (GM II: 18). Again, Nietzsche elaborates arguments (cf. GM I: 10; II: 16 - 18) that attempt to sustain, in the face of such remarkable naturalistic repatriations of ‘moralization’, the claim to primacy of the ‘noble’ and ‘healthy’ within the overall ‘economy of life’ as those more grounded in, and attuned to, the primary processes of the ‘will to power’, as its (allegedly) preferred and unapologetic form of self-expression.

That such remarkable, completely realised, renaturalisations in which life’s fulsome investment in the processes and figures and ‘moralization’ (“...it must be a necessity of the first rank...*in the interest of life itself* ...”, GM III: 11) contain certain ‘hostages to fortune’ in relation to other features of Nietzsche’s project within the *Genealogy* is my suspicion here. Such naturalistic repatriations (from idealism) of these key elements of ‘morality’ impacts heavily on, indeed fundamentally undermines, the rhetoric of ‘denial’ and ‘anti-nature’ – rhetorical themes central to the critical armoury of revaluation. As renaturalised, ‘moralization’ can no longer be condemned as a ‘human’ shortcoming as it is a no less natural affective-libidinal investment of life itself than its other forms of self-expression in the human species. To condemn moralization therefore is, after renaturalisation, to criticise natural life itself which, of course, greatly complicates the task of revaluation which ironically, in effect, seeks to seek ‘to improve’ life itself, to challenge its investment in the, “diseased-lascivious conscience” (*eines...krankhaft-lüsternen Gewissens*) [GM III: 20].

According to the *Genealogy*’s narrative of “self-overcoming” a sea-change in the respective cultural status of the key competing libidinal-affective sensibilities and their derivative economies of value (‘good/evil’; ‘good/bad’) is on the horizon. A ‘second innocence’ is, given the “perfect and final victory of atheism” (GM II: 20) a distinct theoretical possibility and Nietzsche detects certain signs that life is preparing a rebalancing (to take place in Europe over the “next two centuries”, GM III: 27) between the libidinal-

affective economies that characterise the human species. The extent to which such biological forecasts are supported by the evidence of life's preference for 'health' over 'sickness' within the 'human species' – or even perhaps its own essence – as Nietzsche himself uncovers it is a key issue here.

II

The tension I am suggesting exists between the themes of renaturalisation and revaluation within the *Genealogy* is perhaps most apparent in the role in the text of the 'man/nature', 'culture/nature' distinctions. Of course, the overcoming of such oppositions, and their idealist presuppositions, is a principal aim of Nietzsche's project of renaturalisation. Without being able to provide the supporting argument here it is my reading of Nietzsche that he undermines decisively the nature/culture dichotomy by simultaneously developing a naturalistic account of culture alongside a conception of nature as an inherently interpretative process. Both nature and culture occur within a continuum of mediation with the relevant naturalistic processes being variously described as 'spiritualisation', 'sublimation', 'subtilization', 'deification' etc. A consequence of this approach is that cultural mediations are no less 'natural' for Nietzsche than the 'raw' natural data they process – leaving aside Nietzsche's rejection of the ontological plausibility and coherence of the notion of the un-interpreted 'fact'. For Nietzsche the 'will to power' is first and foremost a force of interpretation (cf. GM II: 12; III: 24; WP 643) which entails an elevation of the process of 'interpretation' or mediation to primary ontological status – to be for Nietzsche is to be, as either subject or object, interpreted i.e., to be the product of a natural process of appropriative force. On this basis of such a bio-semiotics, the nature/culture distinction collapses irretrievably.

An implication of Nietzsche's naturalistic process ontology of interpretative force is that it denies his critique of a phenomenon such as 'moralization' the appeal to the nature/culture contrast in all its guises. If we recall the intimate connection in Nietzsche's thought between such a distinction and the central criterion of revaluation, the 'affirmation/denial' contrast, the critical complications escalate. Surely, once successfully 'translated back into nature' (cf. BGE 230 [...*zurück-übersetzen in die Natur*...]) there can be no place for the admonishment of cultural and psychological phenomena for an alleged lack of naturalistic rootedness? After renaturalisation no stage or instance of human cultural formation can be said to be 'closer' to nature than any other or 'more natural' than it. Nonetheless the rhetoric of Nietzsche's project of revaluation frequently valorises earlier phases of the natural evolution of human culture, residual instinctual atavisms etc., and condemns certain later 'spiritualisations'. Cultural phenomena and psychological types are often evaluated in terms that evoke implicitly a scale of 'proximity' to nature – or, at least, to its alleged inner or most basic character. Again, such criteria are rendered extremely tenuous from the perspective of Nietzsche's radical renaturalisation which is a programme of 'translation' rather than 'return' that foregrounds the historicity of all phenomena.

Hence, the more Nietzsche's renaturalisation of culture 'unmasks' the idealist's discourse of 'self-denial' then the more the underlying stance of his critique, in which 'affirmation' is counter-posed to 'denial', 'health' to 'sickness' etc., on the basis of a certain licensing of the nature/culture divide, becomes increasingly difficult to sustain. In short, the success and radicality of Nietzsche's renaturalisation agenda entails, strictly speaking, a serious undermining of the most often-deployed motifs of revaluation, namely, the charge of 'anti-nature'. Nietzsche's critique of various cultural phenomena often seems to momentarily and conveniently 'forget' the complete naturalistic repatriation of them he has undertaken, and to relicense and remain temporarily dependent upon idealism's conception of them! It seems that, for the purposes of revaluation 'moralization' has to remain a phenomenon of 'denial' as if the self-image of its advocates was, in fact, correct!

It is pre-eminently, I suggest, the libidinal-affective emphasis of Nietzsche's project of renaturalisation which generates the difficulty I am sketching here. Such a renaturalisation eradicates the notion of 'denial' from its discourse viewing all apparent instances of it as superficial descriptions concealing complex twists and turns within natural life's multi-faceted and uninterrupted 'self-affirmation'. Indeed, as Nietzsche often emphasises with acute psychological insight, such apparent phenomena of 'denial' are manifestly as libidinous (if not more so!) than those with which they are compared negatively.

The lesson of Nietzsche's renaturalisation of moralised asceticism is that it is, to borrow a phrase from

Eliade, a ‘technique of ecstasy’, indeed (to pursue a suggestion made by Foucault) it asceticism is the West’s predominant ‘*ars erotica*’, the way in which it has indulged and pursued the pleasures that best reflect its distinctive libidinal-affective genius (i.e., those of ‘denial’, pain, suffering etc). Yet Nietzsche’s critique of the ‘ascetic ideal’ often seems to presuppose the plausibility of the very categories of ‘denial’ and ‘repression’ which, on his own analysis, are the products of its religious-moral *mis*interpretation! Surely it is Nietzsche who enables us to appreciate (as, again Foucault, appreciated and brilliantly articulated in his profoundly Nietzsche-inspired *History of Sexuality: Vol. I*) that there is no ‘repression’ within Christianity – rather it is simply the means through which a particular libidinal-affective type pursues – without restraint – the pleasures peculiar to it and that, furthermore, these are to be acknowledged as a creative product of natural life.

This reliance of the revaluation strand of the *Genealogy*, at least rhetorically, on various resonances of the nature/culture opposition even as it is rendered theoretically redundant by the text’s remarkable achievements as regards renaturalisation, is apparent throughout the text. Recall the following features of the work’s argument and rhetoric:

- (i) the implicit valorisations of the ‘beast-of-prey’, ‘blond beast’ and ‘blond beasts of prey’ (cf. GM I: 11; II: 17) and the evaluative contrast made between them and the, “tame and civilized ... *domestic animal*” of culture (GM I: 11)
- (ii) nostalgia in relation to the “joy and innocence of the animal” (GM II: 7) and implicit assumption of a trajectory of de-libidinisatio inherent in references to a, “diseased softening and moralization by virtue of which the creature “man” finally learns to be ashamed of all his instincts” (GM II: 7)
- (iii) the criticism of the ‘sick’ for their ‘anti-nature’ and the evocation of the “*more natural outlet*” (GM II: 22), available to previous generations, for the “*desire to cause pain*” (GM II: 22)
- (iv) the condemnation of morality in terms of its “*unnatural inclinations...aspirations to the beyond, to that which is contrary to the senses, contrary to the instincts, contrary to nature, contrary to the animal...*” (GM II: 24)
- (v) the pathologising of ‘inward’ gratifications of an instinct, (e.g., “this...madness of the will in psychic cruelty”, GM II: 22) and valorisation of ‘outward’ expressions of the same instinct (cf. GM II: 16); e.g. the criticism of the ‘*bestiality of idea*’ that occurs when it is not possible to be a ‘*beast of deed*’ (GM II: 22)
- (vi) the implicit basis of the critical contrast between types, for example, on the one hand, the “country parson” Kant and Schopenhauer the “tortured one” (GM III: 6) and, on the other hand, Stendhal (a “more happily-formed nature”, GM III: 6)

The claim made here is that these traits of Nietzsche’s critique of moralisation contain key elements rendered redundant by the critique of idealism inherent in his simultaneous renaturalisation of the same phenomena. Processes such as ‘taming’ and ‘domesticating’ cannot be regarded as nature *manqué*, nor can ‘shame’ be considered to be less libidinally and affectively invested than the instincts to which it responds. After renaturalisation, ‘culture’ is no less a ‘natural outlet’ for instinctual gratification than ‘nature’, the ‘morality of mores’ no ‘nearer’ to nature than its ‘moralised’ successor. For Nietzsche surely there are, strictly speaking, no ‘unnatural inclinations’? Nietzsche’s non-reductive form of philosophical naturalism rejects, I suggest, the entire ‘renunciation of instinct’ hypothesis concerning the origins of civilization and, at its most rigorous avoids privileging any particular type of libidinal gratification. However, it seems that, when in revaluation mode, he struggles to sustain such insights.

III

At the heart of the dissymmetry I have been sketching within the *Genealogy*, lies the question of the relative priority within Nietzsche’s thought of, the one hand, what I have termed the libidinal- affective dimension of renaturalisation agenda and, on the other hand, ‘hermeneutic’ notions such as value and

meaning. This interpretative question is particularly pertinent in relation to arguably *the* key topic in the *Genealogy* - the 'problem of suffering'. Initially it seems that priority is accorded to the 'hermeneutic' order as Nietzsche states, "what actually arouses indignation against suffering is not suffering in itself, but rather the senselessness of suffering" (GM II: 7) and, returning to the issue in the closing section of the text, Nietzsche claims, "the meaninglessness of suffering, not the suffering itself, was the curse" (GM III: 28). It is, of course, the historic achievement of the 'ascetic ideal' to solve this 'meaning of life' problem such that, on its basis, willing becomes possible, is thereby 'saved' (cf. GM III: 28). The implication here seems clear - willing requires, as a necessary enabling condition, a meaning transcendent to it a, "...*to-this-end* of suffering" (GM III: 28).

However, if Nietzsche's renaturalisation of 'morality' in libidinal-affective terms is successful this order of priority is reversed and the 'ascetic ideal' is to be conceived as the product of a particular type or quality of will, a means through which such a will affirms itself. Many of the passages cited earlier (e.g., "'...*more* pain! *more* pain!'" [GM III: 20]) recognise this alternative understanding of the will/value relation within which the 'ascetic ideal' is explained in terms of the libidinal-affective preferences of the type of will in question. Hence when Nietzsche notes (cf. GM III: 28) that the 'ascetic ideal' is an interpretation of suffering that in fact increases it he seems to be acknowledging the primacy of the will as an explanation as to the appeal of the 'ascetic ideal' to a type of will that craves suffering and derives pleasure from it. However, Nietzsche falters at this point, stating that the 'ascetic ideal' succeeds in making willing possible "...in spite of..." (GM III: 28) the increase in suffering ("more inward, more poisonous..." [GM III: 28]) it generates. On the basis of his renaturalisation of morality, we might expect Nietzsche to state that it is *because* (rather than 'despite') the 'ascetic ideal' intensifies suffering, and, in particular gives it an 'inward' orientation, that it is adopted (indeed created for the purpose) by the type of will in question.

Hence, surely it is Nietzsche's most rigorous view that, the problem of the 'meaning of suffering' is not of a fundamentally hermeneutic or evaluative nature but rather libidinal-affective in character and, furthermore, that the solution offered by the 'ascetic ideal' was adopted due to the investment thereby made possible in suffering *for its own sake*? The evaluative 'meaning' provides perhaps, merely the veneer of respectability protecting the modesty of this type's instinctual investments. On this reading any 'meaning' subsequently given to suffering, (e.g. "an entire secret salvation machinery", GM II: 7) is to be conceived as simply a further technique of libidinal-affective intensification rather than its enabling condition.

In a similar vein, Nietzsche's condemnation of the 'ascetic priest's' qualities as a 'physician' to the effect that they only opportunistically manipulate symptoms for their own self-interest rather than identifying and tackling the 'true cause' (GM III: 15) [by offering a course of mineral supplements, addressing abdominal or gynaecological problems etc] again suppresses the insights of his renaturalisation of the phenomena in question. The 'ascetic priest', following the trajectory of life's self-affirmation, does not pursue a "true healing...in the physiological sense" (GM III: 16) as this would not satisfy the specific libidinal-affective demands of the 'sick' and thus the 'ascetic priest' would hold no appeal for them. Again, Nietzsche's formulation of his critique of a phenomenon of moralisation seems to suppress the insights of his renaturalisation of it.

IV

By the point Nietzsche formulates in relation to the 'ascetic ideal', the key question - "what does the very *power* of this ideal mean, the *enormity* of its power? ...why has there not been better resistance?" (GM III: 23) his project of renaturalisation has arguably already provided the answers. Quite simply, moralised asceticism is *the* quasi-erotic pleasure of 'spiritualization' for the "majority of mortals" (GM III: 1) and will, presumably, remain so until their libidinal-affective economy (i.e., ultimately 'life' itself) demands otherwise. Hence Nietzsche, whose spiritual eroticism is differently configured, is compelled to ask, "the ascetic ideal expresses a will: *where* is the opposing will in which an *opposing ideal* expresses itself...?" (GM III: 23). The starkness of the answer I think Nietzsche has, by this stage, already provided to this question, and what it reveals about the limited extent to which 'life' seems to share his concerns with the 'health' of the human animal, may explain his occasional tendency to invert the order of priority between

the will and meaning. Certain passages suggest that life's investment in the pleasures of moralised suffering is conditional upon and licensed by meaning and value whereas, I suggest, Nietzsche is already aware that the will invests and expresses itself regardless, and independently, of the 'ideals' it originates, shapes and sustains in its meandering pursuit of self-affirmation and the pleasures intrinsic to it.

The extent to which Nietzsche may, strangely, underestimate the status of the very libidinal-affective dimension of human life which he so perceptively uncovers, lies at the heart of the central issue in his narrative of cultural transformation – the possibility of the emergence of a 'counter-ideal' to the 'ascetic ideal', the vision of an emergent post-moral humanity. Any optimism Nietzsche can muster concerning the 'overcoming of morality' seems to presuppose the primacy of a 'hermeneutic' interpretation of the 'problem of suffering'. If it is simply a matter of the 'radicalisation of critique', then Nietzsche's impressive historical narrative of 'self-overcoming' (atheism, 'second innocence', 'self-overcoming' of the 'will to truth' etc, cf. GM II: 20, 24: GM III: 28) may seem plausible. This powerful narrative of the historicity of value is supported by a bold claim concerning a "necessary" process of "self-overcoming" or "self-cancellation" within the "essence of life" (GM III: 27). However, the 'problem of not inferring' (cf. Owen) arises here, pointing to the issue of the ingrained libidinal-affective investments of the human will and life's apparent indifference to, and non-alignment with, 'health'.

If the conclusions I have suggested follow from Nietzsche's remarkable libidinal-affective interpretation of the 'problem of suffering' and account of the source of the appeal of the moralised ascetic ideal then the despair that often resonates in the *Genealogy* concerning the credibility of its historical grand narrative and the post-moral future it envisages is well-founded. A telling section of the text in this regard is the ideal narrative Nietzsche proposes for a "reverse movement" (GM II: 20) of moralisation. Here, Nietzsche seems to make a "decline...in consciousness of guilt" an effect (rather than cause) of atheism and he remains oddly silent about the libidinal-affective investments that, on his view, generated God and which he now suggests migrate to the natural sciences through a shared "will to truth" (cf. GM III: 24 - 27) a libidinal-affective complicity masked by a form of atheism (scientific - mechanistic) from which Nietzsche is keen to dissociate himself (cf. GM III: 27). Nietzsche clearly identifies his 'nightmare scenario', the symbol of the Cross, as that which threatens to "close-off once and for all" (GM II: 21) the "prospect of a conclusive redemption" (GM II: 21) and leaves the "redeeming human" (GM II: 24) and their glad-tidings of "great health" (GM II: 24) bereft of an audience. Perhaps Nietzsche is all too aware that if the pleasures of moralization have become congenital within the human species then his oddly 'teleological' narrative of inexorable "self-overcoming" will be derailed and the possibility of a post-moral future postponed.

V

The internal resistance to the consequences of the libidinal-affective aspect of the renaturalisation of morality found within the *Genealogy* exposes certain fundamental assumptions underpinning Nietzsche's critical project. These include a quasi-teleological assumption about the relationship between 'life' and 'health' as Nietzsche understands it and his related view of the ultimate primacy of 'health' over 'sickness' within the essence of life. On the basis of these assumptions Nietzsche often seems to resist certain discernible features of the libidinal creativity of life. Yet Nietzsche persistently uncovers phenomena of moralisation which, in their libidinal-affective character, exceed the functional, merely self-preservative role (in relation to the 'weak') he has reserved for them (in order to apportion 'life-enhancement' to the 'strong'). In this regard we can identify Nietzsche's discussion of the 'guilty' methods employed by the 'ascetic priest' (cf. GM III: 19 - 21) in which we see the "ascetic ideal serving...to produce emotional excess" (GM III: 20). Nietzsche's negative evaluation of the effects these processes on those involved (" - it makes the sick sicker - " [*ibid*]) presupposes an alignment of instinctual gratification and 'health' for which he struggles to provide evidence. Nietzsche occasionally glimpses this a-symmetry between 'health' and life noting its apparently 'self-defeating' perversity. Recall that Nietzsche notes how the 'ascetic priest's' enjoyment of suffering becomes, "self-assured and triumphant to the extent that is own presupposition, physiological viability, decreases" (GM III: 11) or, a further example, in the realisation that, in the 'ascetic priest's' treatment of the 'sick', "one could not even claim that the instinct of life in any way has healing in mind or in intention" (GM III: 16). Yet such insights seem to

have minimal impact on Nietzsche's pursuit of revaluation which doggedly insists on a vision of the continuity of life and 'health' that his renaturalisation of moralisation seems to undermine. Perhaps the desperate tone of Nietzsche's plea (cf. GM III: 14) for a policy of segregation given his anti-Darwinian vision of the 'survival of the weakest' in the case of the human species is an implicit acknowledgement of faltering confidence as regards life's investment in the project of revaluation as Nietzsche conceives it. On what basis does or can Nietzsche prioritise 'health' over 'sickness' within life when, as he admits, it does not, in the case of the human species, seem particularly concerned ("the rare cases of powerfulness...the *strokes of luck* among humans", GM III: 14)? Whilst Nietzsche notes these tendencies and investments of life as manifest in the human species he is reluctant to draw and affirm the conclusions concerning the level of life's 'perversity' that the phenomena of the moralized animal reveal.

That the 'ascetic ideal' might persist and even predominate albeit as a self-aware form of eroticism is, crucially, a post-moral future which Nietzsche suppresses. On the basis of his renaturalisation of human culture it would seem that revaluation as Nietzsche 'officially' conceives it, requires that life implant a 'will' within the human animal that is no longer 'turned on' by the pleasures of moralisation. Without such an alternative 'cathexis' of libidinal-affective energy on the part of life itself then the trajectory of the "law of life", as Nietzsche reads it, will be perennially deferred and a 'counter-ideal' will never materialise except in theory. Nietzsche seems unsatisfied with the more modest prospect his thought opens up, of a post-moral humanity alive to its libidinal-affective investments and at ease with them. A type that, rather than investing in an alternative ideal (simply impossible given its constitution), *knowingly* affirms the 'ascetic ideal' as one of its 'erogenous zones' as it were. Such self-recognition, based exclusively on the renaturalisation aspect of Nietzsche's thought, would temper the imperialism and paranoia associated with this type on the basis of its ancestors (cf. GM III: 14) and thereby improve cultural conditions for the 'healthy', granting them more breathing space. Nietzsche leaves unresolved I suggest the balance between the immanent critique of the 'ascetic ideal' inherent to life's "self-overcoming" - and the post-moral age it seemingly inexorably delivers - and its naturalistic condition of possibility - the evolution of a new will. That the two may never coincide is a possibility Nietzsche chooses not to consider seriously and his vision of their 'dovetailing' in a post-moral future remains residually teleological and his convictions concerning the relationship between 'health' and 'life', unexamined.

VI

In the concluding section of the *Genealogy* Nietzsche abruptly suppresses the implications and insights of his libidinal-affective renaturalisation of morality and reiterates motifs that it has made deeply problematic, namely, the basic critical components of revaluation. Here asceticism is seemingly returned to 'denial' when it is described as, "the hatred of the human, still more of the animal, still more of the material, this abhorrence to the senses" (GM III: 28). Indeed, Nietzsche writes here of "...a rebellion against the most fundamental presuppositions of life" (GM III: 28), as if life were not itself the source of the type of instinctual will in question, as if it hadn't revealed a profound 'interest' in asceticism as a form of 'perverse' gratification. Nietzsche's emphasis on the libidinal-affective dimension of moralisation, attuned as it is to life's manifestly reckless investment in human perversity, seems to indicate a somewhat different (if nonetheless also post-moral) trajectory than that of the 'official' revaluation narrative. This alternative is characterised more by the immanent recuperation of the transcendent - 'nothingness' naturalised and thereby affirmatively restored to life, reclaimed from idealism. On this view, a future is announced in which 'moralization' is not abandoned but merely reconceived in libidinal-affective terms and, crucially, affirmed as such, celebrated as the hallmark of the libidinal-affective creativity of life's internalised animal. An ambiguity remains implicit in Nietzsche's conception of 'self-overcoming' and the realignment of life and 'health' it suggests between, on the one hand, the advent of a species no longer invested in willing 'nothingness' *period* and, on the other hand, one in which an awareness of its constitutive libidinal-affective proclivity for 'moralisation' is re-affirmed explicitly *as* a libidinal-affective economy, a non-moral willing of 'nothingness' no longer blind or hostile to its convoluted pleasures.