

Within the popularization and inspiration genre, Hanley's main rival is *How Adam Smith Can Change Your Life* (Portfolio/Penguin, 2014), a delightful mass-market volume by Russ Roberts that likewise focuses on *TMS*. Although Roberts does much more to link Smith's two books, he too tends to neglect Smith's dark side: the grimmer atheistic world that the *Wealth of Nations* presents, but also the ways that the "invisible hand" chapter of *TMS* (IV.1) highlights human frailty. Despite the enormous things that our "industry" and ingenuity have done to transform "the whole face of the globe," we remain vulnerable to "the winter storm." COVID-19 is an obvious candidate.

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Jeffrey Metzger: *The Rise of Politics and Morality in Nietzsche's "Genealogy": From Chaos to Conscience*. (London: Lexington Books, 2020. Pp. xii, 179.)

doi:10.1017/S0034670520000790

In *The Rise of Politics and Morality in Nietzsche's "Genealogy,"* Jeffrey Metzger carves out a niche in the increasingly crowded field of scholarship on Nietzsche's *On the Genealogy of Morality* by focusing on the second essay, which he argues has received the least attention. Metzger succeeds on two fronts: first, he provides rigorous textual analysis of Nietzsche's tangle of arguments in this essay and, second, he offers a detailed defense of the idea that Nietzsche has a metaphysical conception of the will to power and uses this term more or less interchangeably with "life" and "nature." In doing so, Metzger opposes the prevailing tendency to restrict the will to power to a psychological thesis and generally minimize its role, a view he attributes to Maudemarie Clark and Brian Leiter (8). Against this interpretation, which emphasizes the relative scarcity of the term "will to power" in Nietzsche's published works, Metzger joins others, such as Nadeem J. Z. Hussain and Tom Stern, in arguing that Nietzsche's omnipresent references to "life" in his mature work should be construed as references to the will to power. This book should therefore have a broad appeal for scholars of Nietzsche.

Metzger tackles the main themes of book 2 of *The Genealogy* systematically, providing illuminating analyses of promising (chap. 1), justice (chap. 2), and the emergence of politics and the formation of bad conscience (chaps. 4–5). He attempts to weave Nietzsche's often haphazard train of thought into a

coherent narrative but is also willing to concede when this attempt breaks down. As a commentary on *The Genealogy*, this book deserves a place alongside the most elucidating and carefully argued works of the genre, such as Brian Leiter's *Nietzsche on Morality* (2nd ed., Routledge, 2015) and Christopher Janaway's *Beyond Selflessness: Reading Nietzsche's "Genealogy"* (Oxford University Press, 2007), though it offers a contrasting interpretation, especially from the former.

Throughout the book Metzger develops the overarching claim that we cannot understand Nietzsche's arguments in *The Genealogy* without taking seriously his claim that life *is* will to power. Metzger sticks diligently to *The Genealogy* for the most part, but this claim can plausibly be extended to cover Nietzsche's writings from *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* onwards. For Metzger, the will to power is metaphysical *and* teleological, where teleology does not imply a final goal but rather denotes the existence of tendencies within nature that drive and direct human behavior. Grappling with Nietzsche's varied descriptions of nature and life, Metzger offers a rich interpretation, centered on the claim that nature tends to create *forms*, to produce order from chaos. While Nietzsche sometimes chastises others for failing to appreciate the terrifying *indifference* of nature, he frequently anthropomorphizes nature, ascribing various intentions to it; Metzger's preferred formulation is Nietzsche's claim that nature aims to create "greater units of power" (14, quoting *GM II 11*). Nature utilizes human beings for this purpose: it "speaks to us," driving us towards greater power (14).

For Metzger, the one strand of argument in *The Genealogy* in which Nietzsche forgoes this metaphysical account is in his incoherent description of the origins of political states. For Metzger, Nietzsche stresses the existence of a *prepolitical* state of nature, characterized by instinctive and antisocial aggression. Nietzsche claims that, in an abrupt rupture, the first political state is established, which forces aggressive instincts, suddenly lacking outlets for expression, to turn inwards, forming the bad conscience and the morality and culture which are its legacy. This account is incoherent because Nietzsche resorts to a *deus ex machina* to explain how this transition occurs, in the form of a group of *organized* artist-legislators who appear without explanation and hammer the shapeless population into a living organization: a political structure. Metzger recognizes that Nietzsche's account of an intrinsically creative nature *appears* to resolve this problem, since it would imbue humans with a form-creating tendency which would rapidly produce political structures, but this solution would force Nietzsche to give up the idea of an individualistic state of nature altogether, which would also invalidate the notion of a rupture between prepolitical and political life.

There is a flaw in Metzger's analysis here, which lies in his interpreting Nietzsche as claiming that early human life is *prepolitical* (although, to be fair, he does muse that Nietzsche *might* be rhetorically exaggerating the anti-political dimension). As I have argued elsewhere (*Review of Politics* 82, no. 1 [2020]), passages from other texts, especially *Beyond Good and Evil*, suggest

that the abrupt rupture described in *GM II 16* refers to the creation of a slave-owning aristocratic state, not the political state per se. In this alternative narrative, early human life was *not* an asocial state of nature but was populated by political communities. These became unequally strong because they created values that enabled them to flourish in environments characterized by varying levels of threat; the domineering nobles existed because they were *forced* to sharpen their aggressive drives—their will to power was *intensified*. The rupture occurs when strong communities conquered and enslaved weaker and peaceful communities. This version of events can likely be reconciled with Nietzsche's metaphysics as Metzger interprets it, and while it means jettisoning the idea of an individualistic state of nature, it does retain the notion that a sudden event forced aggressive instincts to turn inwards, carving out an interiority where deliberation, promising, and responsibility became possible.

One challenge facing metaphysical readings of the will to power (aside from their philosophical plausibility) is whether they can account for and support Nietzsche's normative judgments. Tom Stern argues that equating will to power with nature/life creates a problem: if the will to power drives *all* human actions, then all actions are "natural," and we lack any criteria to judge them desirable or undesirable. Metzger is adamant that Nietzsche *does* think the will to power provides a basis for normative judgment, and fleshes this out by arguing that Nietzsche only praises the activity of the will to power as natural when it is "building and establishing new forms." While creative activity might involve violence and cruelty, manifestations of the will to power that are *merely* destructive should be condemned. Human beings should serve nature's aim of creating greater units of power (127).

This interpretation raises numerous questions. Although Nietzsche's remark that nature seeks "greater units of power" takes on immense importance in Metzger's interpretation, he dedicates very little space to unpacking this idea. What counts as a greater unit of power? For something to qualify, it must surely have a minimum degree of organization, a minimum intensity of will to power, or some other quality. Moreover, it is not clear how this idea can function as a normative standard, given that Nietzsche repeatedly emphasizes the difficulty of discerning what nature is attempting to achieve through humans. Metzger conveys vividly the complexity of the process through which nature overcomes and destroys its own creations, restricting and even mutilating itself to eventually produce growth (104). Even the apparently "anti-life" ascetic priest actually performs the valuable task of redirecting the *ressentiment* of the slaves away from their masters. It is demanding to interpret nature's intentions retrospectively, let alone decipher how to act according to them. More discussion of these ideas would have been welcome, especially since I suspect that Metzger is on the right track in linking creative activity with the *highest* forms of the will to power.

Overall, this book is a valuable addition to Nietzsche scholarship. Metzger exhibits an admirable willingness to follow Nietzsche's line of thought, even where this risks yielding unpalatable or incoherent conclusions, and his central thesis—that Nietzsche's arguments are underpinned by the idea of a creative, expansionist nature—opens up numerous fertile lines for future inquiry.

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