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Knowledge (*Erkenntniss*) and Affect in Nietzsche

RESEARCH

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ABSTRACT

Nietzsche's "perspectivism" has often invited the charge of relativism. I give a reading of GM III 12 in order to show, on the contrary, that perspectivism is in part a claim about how best to seek knowledge. I argue that perspectivism consists of two claims, one descriptive and one prescriptive. The first claim describes the nature of enquiry; it is that enquiry is guided and shaped by the affects. The second is a prescriptive claim about how we ought to enquire given that the descriptive claim is true. It is that we can enquire better if we approach a subject-matter in a way that is affectively-engaged, rather than affectively-detached. I argue that affective-engagement can benefit enquiry in two ways. First, Nietzsche thinks that affective states cause us to adopt moral and philosophical views. By attending to our affects, we can gain knowledge of the states that give rise to those views. Second, we can gain knowledge of why we hold a given moral/philosophical view when, instead of ignoring our affects, or letting them guide us unconsciously, we attend to them directly. Thus, perspectivism involves an injunction to probe our intuitions about a given subject-matter for the sake of knowledge.

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In the preface to *On the Genealogy of Morality*, Nietzsche lays out some of the goals of the book. One goal is to present us with 'hypotheses on the origins of morality.' However, more importantly than hypotheses about its origins 'we need a critique of moral values, the value of these values should itself, for once, be examined' (*GM* preface 4, 7).[1] To assess the value of morality we need to know certain things. According to Nietzsche:

> We need to know about the conditions and circumstances under which the values grew up, developed and changed (morality as result, as symptom, as mask, as tartuffery, as sickness, as misunderstanding; but also morality as cause, remedy, stimulant, inhibition, poison), since we have neither had this knowledge up till now nor even desired it. (*GM* preface 6)

My main claim in this paper is that it is one of Nietzsche's concerns in the *Genealogy* to figure out the best way to acquire this kind of knowledge and I argue that the *Genealogy* itself embodies, and to some extent lays out, methods of enquiry that Nietzsche sees as appropriate or especially effective at engaging the topics above. Furthermore, I argue that the most important feature of this methodology is that it is affectively engaged. In sketching these methods of enquiry Nietzsche explicitly contrasts his approach with Schopenhauer's knowledge-ideal of the 'pure, will-less, painless, timeless subject of cognition,' and emphasises the importance of what he calls the 'affects' (*GM* III 12). One of Nietzsche's perennial goals is to alert the reader to the omnipresent, but largely unrecognized, role that feelings, emotions, and affects play in our attempts to understand ourselves and the world and to encourage us to use feelings, rather than extinguish them, in order to address problems like those mentioned above, namely 'the problems of morality' (*GM* preface 7).

Nietzsche's views on how we ought to enquire into morality so as to gain the kind of knowledge we have 'up to now' neither had nor desired are most clearly expressed in *GM* III 12. This passage is considered to be the definitive statement of Nietzsche's so-called 'perspectivism,' which is often taken to be his theory of knowledge. I begin by engaging with the literature on perspectivism. I situate my reading of the passage in between what I see as two more extreme readings. These are, on the one hand, Ken Gemes's reading, according to which the passage has no epistemological ambitions but rather presents a vision of greater health. And on the other hand, Lanier Anderson's, according to which Nietzsche means to offer an epistemological theory.[2] On my reading, *GM* III 12 sketches a methodology for enquiring into the problems introduced in the preface of the book. I argue that perspectivism consists of two claims, one descriptive and one prescriptive. The first claim describes the nature of enquiry. It is that enquiry is guided and shaped by the affects. The second is a prescriptive claim about how we ought to enquire given that the descriptive claim is true. It is that we can enquire better if we approach a matter, like morality, from a variety of 'affective interpretations,' which, I argue, are Nietzschean perspectives (*GM* III 12).[3]

1. READING *GM* III 12: GEMES AND ANDERSON

Commentators have tended to interpret the claims in *GM* III 12 as a set of theses about knowledge in general and have often attributed to Nietzsche a theory of knowledge on the basis of this and a few other passages. Gemes, reacting against this tendency, takes issue with the idea that Nietzsche has any 'grand timeless theses about the nature of knowledge, truth etc. …' and argues instead that *GM* III 12 is not about knowledge, but health, and that perspectivism is a vision of greater health in which repressed drives are freely expressed (Gemes 2009: 101). I stake out a position in

1 I refer to the following works by Nietzsche by abbreviation: *Beyond Good and Evil* (*BGE*); *On the Genealogy of Morality* (*GM*); *The Gay Science* (*GS*); *Human, All Too Human* (*HH*); *Twilight of the Idols* (*TI*). I refer to the following works by Schopenhauer by abbreviation: *On the Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason* (*FR*); *The World as Will and Representation Vol. 1* (*WWR I*); *The World as Will and Representation Vol. 2* (*WWR II*); *Prize Essay on the Freedom of the Will* (*FW*).

2 I focus on Anderson's 1998 paper, rather than Maudemarie Clark's seminal chapter in *Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy* (1990) for two reasons. First, both views are self-described 'neo-Kantian' theories of perspectivism, and I take Anderson's later account to be an updated version of Clark's earlier neo-Kantian view. Second, Anderson improves on Clark's account in one respect by giving a clearer and more specific statement of what he takes a Nietzschean 'perspective' to be, and this makes him a more useful target for my purposes.

3 I am largely in agreement with Janaway; the two main claims of perspectivism, as stated here, resemble those in Janaway (2007; 2017: 215).

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between these two extremes. I argue that while Nietzsche is not constructing an epistemological theory, he does make claims about the nature of knowledge. More specifically, he attempts to describe the best way to enquire into the problems introduced in the preface of the book, and the ones that occupy him most of all throughout all his work, namely the 'problems of morality.'

I'll now record the end of *GM* III 12 in full before looking at Gemes's and Anderson's interpretations of it, and then I'll give my own reading:

> Finally let us, particularly as knowers, not be ungrateful toward such resolute reversals of the familiar perspectives and valuations with which the spirit has raged against itself all too long now, apparently wantonly and futilely: to see differently in this way for once, to want to see differently, is no small discipline and preparation of the intellect for its future 'objectivity'—the latter understood not as 'disinterested contemplation [*interesselose Anschauung*]' (which is a non-concept and absurdity), but as the capacity to have one's pro and contra in one's power, and to shift them in and out: so that one knows how to make precisely the difference in perspectives and affective interpretations useful for knowledge. For let us guard ourselves better from now on, gentlemen philosophers, against the dangerous old conceptual fabrication that posited a 'pure, will-less, painless, timeless subject of knowledge [cognition]'; let us guard ourselves against the tentacles of such contradictory concepts as 'pure reason,' 'absolute spirituality,' 'knowledge in itself': here it is always demanded that we think an eye that that cannot possibly be thought, an eye that must not have any direction, in which the active and interpretive forces through which seeing first becomes seeing-something, are to be shut off, are to be absent; thus what is demanded here is always an absurdity and non-concept of an eye. There is only a perspectival seeing, only a perspectival 'knowing'; and the more affects we allow to speak about a matter, the more eyes, different eyes, we know how to bring to bear on one and the same matter, that much more complete will our 'concept' of this matter, our 'objectivity' be. But to eliminate the will altogether, to disconnect the affects one and all, supposing that we were capable of this—what? would that not be to castrate the intellect? … (*GM* III 12)

According to Gemes, the *Genealogy* is a therapeutic work that seeks to cure the reader from a sickness caused by repressed drives. Perspectivism, he argues, is Nietzsche's remedy to this malady. For Gemes, *GM* III 12 is not primarily about knowledge, but health, and perspectivism represents Nietzsche's vision of greater health in which repressed drives are freely expressed. Accordingly, he says that perspectivism is the 'injunction to let as many drives as possible be expressed' (Gemes 2009: 106, see also Gemes 2013). Why then, does Nietzsche talk about knowledge and objectivity at all in *GM* III 12? According to Gemes, Schopenhauer's account of will-less objectivity is representative of a more general cooling of the passions and Nietzsche is reacting against this general tendency to deny the will. Nietzsche targets knowledge and objectivity specifically in this passage because these are the things that his opponents (representatives of the ascetic ideal like Schopenhauer) value most of all. Thus, if Nietzsche can shake our confidence in the ascetic ideal's highest values then he has a greater chance of freeing the reader from the spell of that ideal altogether and achieving his therapeutic goal of greater health.

I agree with Gemes on a number of points. First, that Nietzsche does not have any 'grand timeless theses about the nature of knowledge' and that he has a strong preference for psychological questions over epistemological ones. I also agree that Nietzsche is primarily concerned with health over knowledge and that health is indeed the focus of *GM* III 12. Nevertheless, I disagree that *GM* III 12 has nothing positive to say about how we ought to seek knowledge and that the passage serves mainly as an 'injunction to let as many drives as possible be expressed.' In *GM* III 12 Nietzsche addresses his readers 'particularly as knowers' and the passage addresses the way in which philosophers pursue their characteristic activity, namely knowledge seeking. As Janaway notes in response to Gemes, an overriding preoccupation with the healthy expression of drives is not incompatible with a thesis about how to philosophize (Janaway 2017: 215). For Nietzsche, philosophizing is a way of expressing one's drives. He refers to the philosopher as a complex of drives and provides a list of some of them: 'his doubting drive, his negating drive, his wait-and-see ("ephectic") drive, his analytical drive, his exploring, searching, venturing drive, his comparing,

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balancing drive, his will to neutrality and objectivity' (*GM* III 9). For Nietzsche, the drives are in play when we do philosophy and there is a way of philosophizing that involves the drives' healthy expression. While I concur with Gemes that Nietzsche's overriding concerns are psychological rather than epistemological, it is important to note that he is nevertheless making a point about the importance of the psychological conditions under which knowledge is pursued. Additionally, in *GS* 333 Nietzsche chides Spinoza precisely for misunderstanding 'the nature of knowledge [*Erkennens*];' so while Nietzsche's theses on this score are not 'grand' or 'timeless' he is certainly interested in understanding and commenting upon the nature of knowledge.

While Gemes says that Nietzsche has no epistemological ambitions in *GM* III 12, in an earlier paper Lanier Anderson insists that Nietzsche is 'transforming and extending certain broadly Kantian ideas in epistemology' (Anderson 1998: 2). He argues that Nietzsche is putting forward a position called 'perspectivism' that, like Putnam's 'internal realism, attempts to carve out a middle way between strong realism and wholesale relativism' (Anderson 1998: 2). On this view, Nietzsche asserts that we always view the world through the lens of some cognitive perspective. Anderson interprets 'perspectives' along broadly Kantian lines as 'schemes' that 'organise our experience' and are 'composed out of our basic concepts' (Anderson 1998: 3). He says that 'Nietzsche understands perspectives … as schemes of concepts that give the world a certain appearance because of the way they organize experience' (Anderson 1998: 3).

On Anderson's reading, according to perspectivism, 'all knowledge is proper to some particular, partial perspective' (Anderson 1998: 8). This opens Anderson's reading up to the familiar problem of self-refutation, which plagues many readings of Nietzsche's perspectivism. That is, if all knowledge is proper only to a particular perspective, then perspectivism is also proper only to some particular perspective, and we have no reason to prefer it over metaphysical realism, transcendental idealism, or anything else. To respond to this Anderson appeals to Putnam style internal-reasons. He points out that different perspectives share epistemic values like simplicity, empirical adequacy, or internal coherence, and that we can appeal to these to generate arguments in one perspective that will be taken as reasons in another perspective. According to Anderson, Nietzsche can present an argument in favour of perspectivism by showing that the concept of the thing in itself is incoherent. Since this concept is integral to metaphysical realism and transcendental idealism, demonstrating its incoherence calls into question the coherence of the two larger views. Since the perspectives generated by realism and transcendental idealism have internal coherence as an epistemic value, this gives them reason to prefer perspectivism, which does not rely on the incoherent conception of the thing in itself, to realism or transcendental idealism, which do.

Anderson is right that Nietzsche takes issue with Kant in *GM* III 12. He disparages Kant's notion of 'intelligible character' and cautions the reader to guard themselves against contradictory concepts such as 'pure reason.' In this context, he also refers to the Hegelian notion of 'absolute spirituality." Nevertheless, despite expressing disagreement with Kant (and Hegel) I contend that the primary thrust of Nietzsche's argument in *GM* III 12 is directed against Schopenhauer and his conception of objectivity, rather than Kant's transcendental idealism. In section 2 I argue for this claim, and in section 3 I argue that it leads Anderson to downplay the affective dimension of Nietzschean perspectives. Anderson refers to 'metaphysical realism and Kant's transcendental idealism' as the 'chief alternatives' to Nietzsche's perspectivism; however, the second half of *GM* III 12 suggests a different alternative. Here Nietzsche directly contrasts his view with Schopenhauer's. He says that we 'should guard ourselves better … against the dangerous old conceptual fabrication that posited …'—and then he quotes *The World as Will and Representation*—'a pure, will-less, painless, timeless subject of knowledge [cognition]' (*GM* III 12). Schopenhauer makes clear that this state of pure cognition stands for his ideal of objectivity. He says:

> a purely objective, and therefore correct, apprehension of things is possible only when we consider them without any personal participation in them, and thus under the complete silence of the will. (*WWR* II 215)

According to Schopenhauer, in order to mirror an object more perfectly, to see its 'clearest image,' one must reach a state in which one is not moved by any emotions, passions, or affects. One

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must be temporarily freed from 'servitude to the will' (*WWR* I 34). Nietzsche seems to sketch an alternative to the Schopenhauerian conception of objectivity, advocating instead a rich personal involvement with one's object of investigation, when he says at the end of *GM* III 12 that

> the more affects we allow to speak about a matter, the more eyes, different eyes, we know how to bring to bear on one and the same matter, that much more will our 'concept' of this matter, our 'objectivity' be. But to eliminate the will altogether, to disconnect the affects one and all, supposing that we were capable of this: what? Would that not be to castrate the intellect? (*GM* III 12)

Since Schopenhauer maintains that the affects always have a negative influence on cognition, it seems natural that Nietzsche is contrasting his view with Schopenhauer's in this passage. Thus, contra Anderson, Nietzsche's primary target in *GM* III 12 Schopenhauer's theory of objectivity. I expand on this claim in the following section.

2. NIETZSCHE'S TARGET IN *GM* III 12: SCHOPENHAUERIAN OBJECTIVITY

According to Schopenhauer, human beings are essentially what he calls the 'will to life.' Each individual human being/human body is an expression or 'objectification' of the will to life. Willing, for Schopenhauer, is a broad notion that encompasses all

> desiring, striving, wishing, longing, yearning, hoping, loving, rejoicing, exulting, and the like, as well as the feeling of unwillingness or repugnance, detesting, fleeing, fearing, being angry, hating, mourning, suffering, in short, all affects and passions. (*FW* 10)

All human activity, including cognition, can be explained by appealing to the fact that our essence consists in willing life. Ordinary cognition of the world is permeated by willing. Schopenhauer says that the intellect, like hands, feet, teeth, or any part of the body, is a 'tool in the service of the will' (*WWR* II 205). He describes it as:

> a mere mechanism, a means for the preservation of the individual and the species as much as any organ of the body. Originally in the service of the will and determined by the accomplishment of its aim, cognition remains entirely in its service throughout. (*WWR* I 177)

Although cognition exists in order to satisfy the needs of the will, Schopenhauer nevertheless sees willing as having a detrimental effect on the intellect's operations. He says:

> The intellect can fulfil its function quite properly and correctly only so long as the will is silent and pauses. On the other hand, the function of the intellect is disturbed by every observable excitement of the will, and its result is falsified by the will's interference. (*WWR* II 215)

Every feeling or emotion 'twists, colours, and distorts … the original perception of things,' and we need to suppress these in order to see things aright (*WWR* II 373). For example, he says that the affects

> love and hatred entirely falsify our judgement; in our enemies we see nothing but shortcomings, in our favourites nothing but merits and good points, and even their defects seem amiable to us. (*WWR* II 217)

In this way, even though the intellect is by nature 'aimed at truth,' the will's interests are better served if the intellect does not pursue its particular aim to the highest degree and the intellect functions better to the extent that it is not made to satisfy the interests of the will (*WWR* II 217).

This is why Schopenhauer's ideal of objectivity is a state in which the will is absent to the highest degree: that is, the 'pure, will-less, painless, timeless subject of knowledge [cognition]' (*GM* III 12). He says that 'genius is nothing other than the most perfect objectivity,' it is the ability 'temporarily to put one's interests, willing, and purposes entirely out of mind, and consequently, fully relinquish

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one's personality in order to remain as the pure cognitive subject, the clear eye of the world …' (*WWR* I 209). Commentators frequently refer to Nietzsche's 'optic metaphor' when he talks about bringing 'more eyes, different eyes' to bear on a matter; however, the metaphor's original source is Schopenhauer's 'clear eye of the world' (Anderson 1998: 4; Berry 2011: 115). Nietzsche is not breaking new poetic ground but merely responding to Schopenhauer on Schopenhauer's own terms. For Nietzsche, Schopenhauer's 'clear eye of the world' is

> an eye that cannot possibly be thought, an eye that must not have any direction, in which active and interpreting forces through which seeing first becomes seeing-something are to be shut off, are to be absent; thus, what is demanded here is always an absurdity and non-concept of an eye. (*GM* III 12)

By focusing his attention on Kant, Anderson misses Nietzsche's main target in *GM* III 12. Nietzsche's primary concern is not present a rival theory that transforms and extends certain ideas in Kant's epistemology, or for that matter, 'Cartesian foundationalism,' as Clark claims (Clark 1990: 130). Perspectivism is not a thesis about what we can and cannot know, rather it is a conception of objectivity set out in opposition to Schopenhauer's. It is tempting to conclude that Nietzsche's primary target in *GM* III 12 is the Kantian notion of the thing in itself because Nietzsche does indeed name Kant in the passage. However, when he does so, he parenthetically cites Kant's thing in itself as a sophisticated variation of the ascetic 'Vedânta' doctrine that 'there is a realm of truth and being, but reason is firmly excluded from it!' (*GM* III 12). In this instance, Nietzsche brings up Vedânta philosophy, and Kant, not as philosophical targets, but as examples of 'resolute reversals of familiar perspectives and valuations' that we 'as knowers' should not be ungrateful towards. Perspectivism is not an alternative to the Kantian thing in itself, rather the ascetic affective base that gives rise to the Kantian thing in itself is a perspective that can be made useful for knowledge. I elaborate on this point in §4.2. Later in the passage, when Nietzsche cautions the reader to guard themselves not only against Schopenhauer, but also against the 'contradictory' Kantian notion of 'pure reason' and the Hegelian notion of 'absolute spirituality,' he is cautioning the reader against notions of cognition on which cognition is improved by having no connection to affect.[4] Although Nietzsche is attacking a broad trend in the history of philosophy that includes Kant, Hegel, Schopenhauer, and others, given the larger context of book III of *GM*, Schopenhauer is a particularly apt focus. Book III tells a story about how the ascetic ideal developed in order to give meaning to suffering and stave off nihilistic despair. Schopenhauer is adamant that ascetic, will-less cognition is *the* route to salvation. Thus, it is in Schopenhauer, as it were, that the ascetic ideal shows its hand and is most clearly manifested.

When Nietzsche quotes Schopenhauer in *GM* III 12, he uses him as a foil for his own view. Schopenhauer says that we enhance cognition when we cut off the influence of the affects. Nietzsche says the opposite: cognition is guided by the affects and can be enhanced by using the affects. Many philosophers claim that the affects and passions are detrimental to cognition, and Nietzsche's criticisms apply equally to them, but the philosopher Nietzsche has foremost in his mind is Schopenhauer, who takes this claim to extreme conclusions. Anderson's emphasis on the importance of Kant in *GM* III 12 leads him to downplay the affective dimension of Nietzschean perspectives by interpreting them as Kantian-style conceptual schemes.

3. WHAT IS A PERSPECTIVE?

Many commentators take perspectives to be things like philosophical positions or religious worldviews.[5] Although Anderson notes that Nietzsche's notion of a perspective is somewhat loose, he seems to

4 Kant, for example, claims in *The Critique of Pure Reason*: "Among a priori cognitions, however, those are called *pure* with which nothing empirical is intermixed" (B 3). And in the *Prolegomena*: "all cognition through the senses and experience is nothing but sheer illusion, and there is truth only in the ideas of pure understanding and reason" (4:374). The phrase "knowledge in itself (*Erkenntniss an sich*)" has no obvious reference; however, it may serve to paraphrase the earlier quotation from Schopenhauer.

5 Clark (1990) refers to 'cognitive perspectives' as our 'corpus of beliefs' or 'factors responsible for beliefs.' Clark's third option is closest to my view, on which affective interpretations give rise to philosophical positions and religious worldviews. Nehamas at times calls perspectives 'points of view on the world' (1985: 42–73). Welshon adopts a similar view and offers science, morality, and religion as examples of perspectives (2009: 32).

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accept a version of this kind of view. He treats perspectivism, transcendental idealism, relativism, and realism as competing perspectives, or 'conceptual systems,' that organize our experience. He also offers Christianity as an example of a perspective (Anderson 1998: 13). Construing perspectives in this way leads to the problem of self-refutation that Anderson notes. If 'all knowledge is proper to some particular, partial perspective' then we have no reason to adopt perspectivism over idealism or realism; or to accept Nietzsche's criticisms of Christian morality for that matter.

At the end of *GM* III 12 Nietzsche draws a tight connection between affects and perspectives:

> There is only a perspectival seeing, only a perspectival 'knowing;' and the more affects we allow to speak about a matter, the more eyes, different eyes, we know how to bring to bear on one and the same matter, that much more complete will our 'concept' of this matter, our 'objectivity' be. (*GM* III 12)

This fits with his remark earlier in the passage that 'perspectives and affective interpretations' can be made 'useful for knowledge' (*GM* III 12). I contend that affective interpretations are the 'eyes' or 'perspectives' that we must multiply in order for our concept of a 'matter' to be more complete. On this reading, Nietzsche's view is in stark contrast with Schopenhauer's. According to Schopenhauer, the affects are precisely what we need to eliminate in order for the intellect to achieve its aim of truth to the highest degree, for Nietzsche, they are what we must multiply.

Although Anderson downplays the affective dimension of Nietzschean perspectives, his Kantian-inspired reading does accurately capture some of their features. For example, in *GM* III 12 Nietzsche does indeed take for granted the Kantian thought that human beings are not passive receptors of data, but active interpreters that shape their experience. In *GM* III 12 he says that Schopenhauer's pure subject of cognition cuts off the 'active and interpretive forces through which seeing first becomes seeing something' (*GM* III 12). On my reading, however, what shapes our experience and gives it an interpretation are not conceptual schemes, but 'affective interpretations' (*GM* III 12). I understand affective interpretations along the lines of what Katsafanas calls an 'affective orientation,' which is a 'system of affectively charged perceptions and thoughts' (Katsafanas 2016: 109). Thus, while affective interpretations can incorporate thoughts or beliefs, what is crucial is the incorporation of some non-cognitive affective element. According to Katsafanas, drives generate affective orientations by structuring an agent's perceptions, affects, and thoughts in a certain way. The way in which an affective orientation is structured determines which features of the agent's environment will become salient (Katsafanas 2016: 110). I take Nietzsche's 'affective interpretations' to be equivalent to the notion of affective orientation in this sense. Our affective interpretations shape our experience by determining which features will become salient. Thus, although Anderson is right when he says that perspectives constitute a subjective contribution to experience, he downplays the crucial affective dimension of this contribution when he says that we make it via conceptual schemes rather than affective interpretations.

If we understand perspectives as affective interpretations, then we can deal with the problem of self-refutation in another way than Anderson does. Affective interpretations are not fully worked out worldviews like metaphysical realism, transcendental idealism, or Christianity that can be boiled down into a set of readily identifiable truth claims. Rather, affective orientations are less sophisticated systems of affectively charged perceptions, thoughts, or patterns of behaviour that cause individuals to elaborate these grander worldviews. Furthermore, since Nietzsche does not suggest that 'perspectivism' itself is an affective interpretation, it seems it is not a perspective in Nietzsche's sense, and would not count as merely 'one among many' subjectively valid perspectives.

4. WHAT IS 'PERSPECTIVISM'?

While this may solve one problem, it does raise a host of others. The affects are, admittedly, less obvious candidates for enhancing knowledge than conceptual schemes. What can Nietzsche mean when he says that to 'disconnect the affects' would be to 'castrate the intellect'? And when he says that the 'more affects' we bring to bear on a matter the more complete will our objectivity be?

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Nietzsche never gives a clear definition of perspectivism as a 'doctrine' or 'theory.' To the extent that we can define it at all, I argue that it consists of two main claims that he makes in *GM* III 12, one descriptive and one prescriptive. The first claim describes the nature of enquiry. Enquiry is guided and shaped by the affects. This is what Nietzsche means when he says that to 'disconnect the affects' would be to 'castrate the intellect' (*GM* III 12). The second is a prescriptive claim about how we ought to enquire given that the descriptive claim is true. It is that we become better enquirers when we are able to 'bring to bear' a variety of affective interpretations on a single 'matter,' say, for example, morality. The claims are separate; we can accept that the affects guide and shape cognition, but not that multiplying them will enhance it. Therefore, I will look at them separately.

Before I look at the two claims that constitute Nietzsche's perspectivism it is worth saying a few words about Schopenhauer and Nietzsche's conceptions of knowledge. In the passages we have been considering, neither Schopenhauer nor Nietzsche are primarily concerned with propositional knowledge. Thus, in these passages they are not concerned with problems to do with propositional knowledge, such as providing necessary and sufficient conditions for what counts as knowledge or giving an explanation of what counts as a justified belief. Nietzsche's perspectivism is implausible if we read him as making claims about the nature of propositional knowledge. For example, it is hard to see how the affects factor into an account of justified belief. If one focuses solely on propositional knowledge, it is easy to write off the affects as playing no role in knowledge acquisition. One must approach Schopenhauer and Nietzsche with a broad conception of epistemology in order to make sense of their claims.

Schopenhauer recognises propositional knowledge (*Wissen*) as a subset of cognition (*Erkenntnis*). For Schopenhauer, propositional knowledge is justified by reference to further propositions, concepts, or by direct perception (*FR* §26). The kind of affect-less cognition that we are concerned with, and that Nietzsche criticises in *GM* III 12, is distinct from *Wissen*. This special kind of cognition does not involve concepts and has its paradigm expression in certain aesthetic experiences or in cases of extreme ascetic resignation. For example, we can achieve this state when contemplating beautiful natural objects

> if we do not allow our consciousness to become engrossed by abstract thinking, concepts of reason; but … Instead of all this, we devote the entire power of our mind to intuition and immerse ourselves in this entirely, letting the whole of consciousness be filled with peaceful contemplation of the natural object … (*WWR* I 200)

If we do this then 'we lose ourselves in this object completely, that is, we forget our individuality, our will, and continue to exist only as pure subject, the clear mirror of the object' (*WWR* I 201). Thus, the kind of knowledge Schopenhauer is most interested in does not involve propositions or concepts at all, but an intuitive engagement with a fundamental, timelessly existing reality.

Although Nietzsche rejects Schopenhauer's account of affect-less engagement with objective reality, he is also concerned with something other than propositional knowledge. While it is not always clear what he means by knowledge, or knowing (*Erkennen*), here are two suggestive passages from *The Gay Science*:

> Through immense periods of time, the intellect produced nothing but errors; some of them turned out to be useful and species-preserving; those who hit upon or inherited them fought their fight for themselves and their progeny with greater luck. … Gradually the human brain filled itself with such judgements and convictions; and ferment, struggle, and lust for power developed in this tangle. Not only utility and delight, but also every kind of drive took part in the fight about the 'truths'; the intellectual fight became an occupation, attraction, profession, duty, dignity—knowledge and the striving for the true finally took their place as a need among the other needs. (*GS* 110)

And in *GS* 324:

> No, life has not disappointed me. Rather, I find it truer, more desirable and mysterious every year—ever since the day the great liberator overcame me: the thought that life could be an experiment for the knowledge-seeker—not a duty, not a disaster, not a

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> deception! And knowledge [*Erkenntniss*] itself: let it be something else to others, like a bed to rest on or the way to one, or a diversion or a form of idleness; to me it is a world of dangers and victories in which heroic feelings also have their dance—and playgrounds. (*GS* 324)

It is clear from these passages that Nietzsche is not primarily concerned with propositional knowledge. One thing they pick out is that 'knowledge' or 'knowing' (*Erkenntniss*/ *Erkennen*), often also translated as 'cognition,' is for Nietzsche, not a static state. Whatever it may be to others, for Nietzsche it seems, knowledge is not a 'bed to rest on,' or an end point, but a 'world' of victory and struggle. One thing Nietzsche seems to mean by this is that *Erkennen* is motivated by drives and that it is a kind of 'striving' or struggling. It is the kind of thing that can be an 'occupation' or 'profession.' Additionally, *GS* 110 suggests that knowing is something that has a history and that has changed and developed over time. Perhaps he means that depending on the drives motivating our knowing, the activity can take different shapes and involve different kinds of behaviour. Whether or not the activity generates true or false beliefs, it seems it can still be a case of knowing if it aims at the truth and exhibits characteristic patterns of behaviour. This helps us get a rough sketch of what Nietzsche means when he talks about knowing (*Erkennen*). It is an activity and a kind of striving, rather than a static end-state, that involves a protracted project of enquiry and doing things like interpreting, experimenting, and hypothesizing. When Nietzsche says that disconnecting the affects inhibits knowing and that multiplying them can enhance it, he is talking about this activity. On my reading, perspectivism is a thesis about how to do this activity in the best way possible.

It is also worth noting that Schopenhauer would concur that the affects guide and even aid scientific and other forms of empirical enquiry. Ordinary cognition is in the service of the will, which induces us to learn things about the empirical world that allow us to satisfy the will more easily. Nevertheless, Schopenhauer would certainly disagree that the affects can be useful for learning things about *morality*, the truths of which are timeless and discoverable only in a heightened state of compassionate resignation in which willing and affect are absent. However, enquiry into morality is what Nietzsche is chiefly concerned with when he says that the affects can enhance enquiry. I will now look at the two main claims of perspectivism in more detail.

4.1. DESCRIPTIVE CLAIM: NO AFFECT-LESS COGNITION

For Schopenhauer, ordinary cognition is always in the service of the will. Nietzsche seems to accept a similar claim. He says that knowing is a kind of 'striving' that is motivated by drive processes. He also notes in *GS* 110, like Schopenhauer, that the intellect originally operated as a tool to satisfy the needs of the species. In this way, the two agree that when it comes to ordinary cognition, the intellect operates in the service of the will. In *GM* III 12 Nietzsche uses this point of agreement to turn Schopenhauer against himself (Janaway 2017: 214). He does this by diagnosing Schopenhauer's positing of the concept of the pure subject of cognition as a symptom of underlying affective states. Schopenhauer fabricated the concept to satisfy a desire to escape the pain of 'physicality,' out of 'ascetic self-contempt,' 'anti-nature,' or a desire for redemption from the ordinary world (*GM* III 12).

Nietzsche begins *GM* III 12 by asking the reader: 'Supposing that an incarnate will to contradiction and anti-nature is prevailed upon to "philosophize": on what will he vent his most capricious will?' Although he does not name Schopenhauer here, the phrase 'incarnate will to contradiction and anti-nature' is a fitting description. In *Twilight of the Idols* Nietzsche disparages Schopenhauer's account of will-less aesthetic experience in similar terms when he says, 'someone is contradicting you, and I am afraid that it is nature' (*TI* Skirmishes 22). Schopenhauer's pure subject of cognition can be explained by his 'will to contradiction and anti-nature,' as these and others are the drives that motivate Schopenhauer's project of enquiry. In this way, Nietzsche uses Schopenhauer's own theory about how ordinary cognition works to explain why he fabricates the concept of a pure subject of cognition.

Nietzsche seems think that not only Schopenhauer's concept of objectivity, but all philosophy can be similarly diagnosed as a symptom of underlying affective states. In *BGE* he famously states that

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'every great philosophy' has been 'the personal confession of its author and a kind of involuntary and unconscious memoir' (*BGE* 6). He goes on to say:

> Anyone who considers the basic drives of man to see what extent they may have been at play just here as inspiring spirits (or demons and kobolds) will find that all of them have done philosophy at some time … For every drive wants to be master— and it attempts to philosophize in that spirit. (*BGE* 6)

Just as Schopenhauer's ascetic self-contempt and anti-nature were the inspiring spirits that led him to posit the pure subject of cognition, behind other philosophical systems or worldviews lie other affective states. In this way, the claims that we make about ourselves and the world are often guided or shaped by the affects. This is even more so the case when it comes to great philosophical worldviews like those of the Stoics, Epicureans, or Spinoza, for example (*BGE* 7, 9). Thus, Nietzsche says, 'in the philosopher … there is nothing whatever that is impersonal …' and to 'eliminate the will,' as Nietzsche says in *GM* III 12, is to eliminate the 'inspiring spirits' of every great philosophy and bring the activity to a standstill (*BGE* 6, *GM* III 12).

Perspectivism, Nietzsche's preferred mode of cognition, like all cognition, is guided and shaped by the affects. What sets Nietzsche apart is his attempt to *use* his affects rather than futilely attempt to expire them or let them guide his thinking unconsciously. He praises the capacity

> to freely have or not have your affects, your pros and cons, to condescend to them for a few hours; to seat yourself on them like you would on a horse or often like you would on an ass. (*BGE* 284)

Addressing the free spirit in the preface to *HH* he claims: 'You shall become master over yourself … You shall get control over your For and Against and learn how to display first one and then the other in accordance with your higher goal' (*HH* preface 6). Nietzsche decries the example Socrates set for later philosophers by establishing reason as a 'tyrant' over the instincts and prescribing 'a permanent state of daylight against all dark desires—the daylight of reason … any concession to the instincts, to the unconscious, leads *downwards* …' (*TI* Socrates 10). Nietzsche recognises that previous philosophers have generally attempted to control their affects in the pursuit of knowledge, but for him they have all exercised the wrong kind of control. We ought not attempt to expire the passions, or supress them, but *use* them somehow. This is the second aspect of Nietzsche's perspectivism, the claim that the affects can enhance cognition.

4.2. PRESCRIPTIVE CLAIM: AFFECTS ENHANCE COGNITION

In this section, I argue that there are two related ways in which the affects can enhance cognition or make us better enquirers. First, Nietzsche thinks that philosophers have been ignorant of the affects that give rise to morality because they endorse a conception of enquiry on which these affects are suppressed. By attending to these feelings, Nietzsche thinks we can identify morality's affective base and call it into question. Second, attending to our affects allows us to probe our intuitions about a problem. Nietzsche thinks that when we do philosophy, we need to take into account the role of the drives and affects that are working in us. He calls this developing an 'intellectual conscience' or a 'conscience behind your "conscience"' whose job is to call into question why 'you feel something to be right' (*GS* 2, 335).

In *GM* III 12, Nietzsche contrasts a 'future "objectivity"' with the contradictory notion of objectivity as 'disinterested contemplation.' He says that this future objectivity consists in 'the capacity to have one's pro and contra in one's power, and to shift them in and out: so that one knows how to make precisely the difference in perspectives and affective interpretations useful for knowledge.' He goes on to say:

> there is only a perspectival seeing, only a perspectival 'knowing'; and the more affects we allow to speak about a matter, the more eyes, different eyes, we know how to bring to bear on one and the same matter, that much more complete will our 'concept' of this matter, our 'objectivity' be. (*GM* III 12)

These passages suggest that Nietzsche is putting forward a positive alternative to the Schopenhauerian conception of will-less, affect-less objectivity, one on which cognition can be enhanced by using the affects in a certain way.

As noted earlier, this claim seems implausible if we attend to narrower epistemological concerns that focus on propositional knowledge. Katsafanas highlights these concerns in an example:

> I am serving on a jury and must assess the case against an individual charged with murder. … I attempt to cultivate feelings of rage, indignation, sympathy, desire for revenge, desire for forgiveness, and so forth. Is this emotional tangle really going to help me to adjudicate the merits of the case, weigh the evidence, and achieve 'better' knowledge of the arguments on each side? That seems incredible. (Katsafanas 2013: 557)

Katsafanas's concern can be addressed by noting that Nietzsche is not concerned with propositional knowledge. When Nietzsche says 'the more affects … we know how to bring to bear on one and the same matter [*Sache*],' it is implausible that he means 'one and the same proposition.'[6] In *GM* III 12 Nietzsche does not mean to offer a methodology for answering questions like, 'how do we know that X murdered Y,' rather, he means to tell us something about how we ought to enquire into a subject matter. Given the aims of the book outlined in the preface, one particular subject matter that he is likely to have in mind is morality, or 'moral values,' and the 'conditions and circumstances out of which they have grown' (*GM* preface 6).

Even with this clarification we are still left with a similar problem. How does the 'emotional tangle' in the passage from Katsafanas help us gain knowledge about moral values? Multiplying the affects in this way still seems more liable to obscure rather than shed light on truths about morality. This is a significant challenge, and I think the best way to answer it is to appeal to Katsafanas's own Nietzschean notion of an 'affective orientation.' Affective orientations are complex structures of affectively charged thoughts and perceptions that alter our experience by determining which features of it will become salient. I want to suggest that when Nietzsche says that the affects can be made useful for knowledge, he has these complex affective states in mind. Nietzsche is not encouraging the reader to enquire into a matter by cultivating discrete affective states like 'rage, indignation, sympathy, desire for revenge' ad nauseam, but instead to strategically engage with a matter from various complex affective orientations, or 'affective interpretations' in the words of *GM* III 12.

In the preface to *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche stresses the relation between a philosopher's ideas and his physiological constitution. The passage echoes the one in *BGE* mentioned earlier in which Nietzsche says that the claims of great philosophers can be explained by underlying affective states. Here Nietzsche suggests how bringing more affects to bear on a matter can aid our enquiry into it. He says:

> Only great pain … forces us philosophers to descend into our ultimate depths and put aside all trust … I doubt that such pain makes us 'better'—but I know that it makes us deeper. Whether we learn to pit our pride, our scorn, our willpower against it, like the savage who, however badly tormented, repays his tormentor with the malice of his tongue; or whether we withdraw before pain into Oriental nothingness—called Nirvana—into mute, rigid, deaf self-surrender, self-forgetting, self-extinction: one emerges from such dangerous exercises in self-mastery as a different person, with a few more question marks, above all with the will henceforth to question further, more deeply, severely, harshly, evilly, and quietly than one had previously questioned. (*GS* preface 3)

In this passage, Nietzsche describes how undergoing a 'great pain' can make us into better enquirers, willing to question 'more deeply' than before. The process seems to involve 'self-mastery' in which one can 'withdraw before pain into Oriental nothingness' as a kind of 'dangerous exercise' and then emerge from that withdrawal at will. This Oriental nothingness is itself a complex affective

6 Or, for that matter, one and the same 'object' as Leiter says in 'Perspectivism in Nietzsche's *Genealogy of Morals*' (1994). Some take the optic metaphor too literally and seem to assume that Nietzsche is talking about physical objects in *GM* III 12. See also: Clark (1990: 137), Welshon (2009: 31), Berry (2011: 118–120).

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state involving 'mute, rigid, deaf self-surrender, self-forgetting, self-extinction.' It seems to be the philosopher's ability to inhabit affective states like this one and then move out of them that makes them better at asking questions. But in what way does bringing more affects to bear on a matter enable us to ask better questions? *GM* III 12 can help address this question.

The beginning of *GM* III 12 (which is not contained in the original long quotation) is strikingly similar to the passage from *The Gay Science* quoted above. Here he talks about: 'The ascetics of the Vedânta philosophy' whose denial of the self was a

> Triumph! … no longer merely over the senses, over appearance, but a much higher kind of triumph, a violence and cruelty to reason: this reaches its peak when the ascetic self-contempt, self-derision or reason decrees: 'there is a realm of truth and being, but precisely reason is excluded from it!' (*GM* III 12)

After describing the ascetic philosophy in such terms, Nietzsche declares that 'as knowers' we should 'not be ungrateful toward such resolute reversals' of 'familiar perspectives and valuations' (*GM* III 12). And then he goes into the now familiar part of the passage that lays out what I have argued are the two main claims of perspectivism.

When Nietzsche goes on to describe the 'intellect's … future "objectivity"' as 'the capacity to have pro and contra in one's power, and to shift them in and out' he seems to be describing something analogous to the 'self-mastery' required for the 'dangerous exercise' of withdrawing into 'Oriental nothingness' and emerging with a 'will … to question further' (*GM* III 12, *GS* preface 3). In this way, when Nietzsche talks about having 'pro and contra in one's power' he seems to be talking about the power to feel from the affective interpretation that gives rise to a philosophical position like Buddhistic 'Nirvana' or Vedic asceticism. In this way, having the ability to switch in and out of different affective interpretations is useful for acquiring the kind of knowledge Nietzsche is after, namely knowledge of 'the conditions and circumstances out of which' moral values have grown, because the affects largely constitute these conditions.

This reading seems close to the traditional reading that I was trying to avoid, on which Nietzschean perspectives are philosophical positions, however my reading is crucially different. On my reading, perspectives are the affective states that give rise to philosophical claims and claims about value. The closeness of these two views explains why commentators are tempted to describe perspectives as philosophical or religious positions; however, my reading avoids problems of self-refutation and better captures the way in which perspectives can be made useful for knowledge.[7] That is, given Nietzsche's descriptive claim that *Erkenntniss* is guided and shaped by affects, and that affects serve as the 'inspiring spirits' of philosophical claims and claims about value, the ability to feel from the affective interpretations that give rise to those claims gets us in touch with the conditions and circumstances out of which they have grown. Furthermore, the capacity to step outside of one's ordinary affective, evaluative standpoint and scrutinise it from an alternative perspective enables us to ask new questions about one's values. For example, we can 'call them into question' by asking what is the 'value of these values'? or by asking whether 'a symptom of regression also lay in the 'good,' likewise a danger, a temptation, a poison, a narcotic through which perhaps the present were living at the expense of the future?' (*GM* III 12). If the affective root of our values involves *ressentiment*, for example, then they might be dangerous in the way Nietzsche insists they are.

My claim is not that bringing one's affects to bear on a matter is a necessary condition for acquiring knowledge about it, or for that matter, understanding certain truths about it.[8] It is rather that bringing one's affects to bear on a matter can be useful in the pursuit of certain kinds of knowledge and that it is a particularly important tool for Nietzsche's investigation into morality given the way he takes morality to have entrenched itself in the modern psyche. Antony Aumann draws an analogy between affects or emotions and scientific instruments like the telescope. He

7 It also better captures the affective dimension of Nietzschean perspectives, as rightly emphasized in Leiter (2002), Janaway (2007), Katsafanas (2016).

8 Janaway (2007: 3–5) defends the strong claim that engaging one's affects is necessary for understanding certain truths about morality.

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claims that emotions, like telescopes, can function as 'tools of discovery' (Aumann 2014: 187). Engaging emotionally with a subject matter may be necessary for arriving at certain truths *on one's own*; however, that is not the only way one might arrive at them. One can also acquire them via testimony. For example, we could acquire purported Nietzschean truths about morality via the dispassionate products of 21st century analytic Nietzsche scholarship. Nevertheless, if it were the case that we only had access to Nietzschean truths in dispassionate form, then it is likely that we would be reluctant to believe them.

For Nietzsche, traditional morality is motivated by affects and emotions. The kind of enquiry that Nietzsche decries attempts to push emotion into the background; thus, its proponents will not attend to the feelings that he insists are there. For Nietzsche, these feelings are either supressed or reinterpreted and given a positive and exculpating gloss. Nietzsche sees his critique as especially urgent because Western philosophy has been dominated by this dispassionate mode of enquiry since its Platonic/Socratic inception and this dominance has led previous philosophers to seriously misunderstand morality. So long as we remain beholden to traditional morality, Nietzsche's various claims about it, for example, his claim that it is rooted in *ressentiment*, will clash violently with our intuitions and ring false. Accepting Nietzsche's criticisms would involve taking him at his word, something his readers, for good reason, would be reluctant to do. Thus, Nietzsche tries to encourage the reader to look and see for themselves; engaging one's affects provides a kind of first-hand evidence one would otherwise lack. In order for Nietzsche's claims to not ring false, one must have control over one's affects so that one can scrutinise one's values from the emotional distance of an alternative point of view.

One methodological implication of Nietzsche's perspectivism is that we need to call our intuitions into question and not take them for granted when philosophizing. In one respect, this is not a radical implication. Questioning one's common-sense intuitions is standard practice in Western philosophy. I take this to be a welcome result. Nietzsche's perspectivism has perennially invited the charge of relativism. I argue, on the contrary, that perspectivism is in part an injunction to question one's intuitions in the pursuit of knowledge. In another respect, Nietzsche's perspectivism is radical. Historical and contemporary philosophers often appeal to their intuitions to support and develop their moral views. For Nietzsche, this demonstrates an unacceptable lack of intellectual conscience. When doing moral philosophy, one must always look behind one's intuitions and ask why one feels the way one does about a given moral issue.

This interpretation is borne out by Nietzsche's characterisations of having an 'intellectual conscience.' In these passages Nietzsche champions 'honesty' and 'reason,' indeed in *GS* 319 he calls for 'we reason-thirsty ones … to face our experience as sternly as we would a scientific experiment, hour by hour, day by day' (*GS* 2, 319, 335). Far from relativism, Nietzsche encourages his readers to face up to their experiences honestly and to hold their views on the basis of good reasons. If perspectivism is a set of claims about how we ought to go about seeking knowledge, it would make sense for perspectivism to be bound up with Nietzsche's notion of 'intellectual conscience.'

Nietzsche describes the intellectual conscience as a 'conscience behind your "conscience"' and says that the great majority of individuals lack one. He claims that most people confidently go about 'handling their scales, calling this "good" and that "evil"' without calling into question whether the scales themselves are properly balanced. The intellectual conscience enjoins us to ask ourselves:

> 'What did I really experience? What was going on inside and around me? Was my reason bright enough? Was my will turned against all deceptions of the senses and stalwart in warding off the fantastic?' (*GS* 319)

It is again worth noting Nietzsche's endorsement of a kind of orthodoxy, he champions a 'bright reason' capable of warding off fantastic deceptions.[9] Again in *GS* 335, Nietzsche characterises the intellectual conscience as a capacity for 'self-observation,' particularly, observation of one's feelings. He claims:

> Your judgment, 'that is right' has a prehistory in your drives, inclinations, aversions, experience, and what you have failed to experience; you have to ask, 'how did it

9 For an eloquent defence of Nietzsche as Enlightenment figure, see: Ridley (1998: 160).

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> emerge there?' and then also, 'what is really impelling me to listen to it?' … that you feel something to be right may have its cause in your never having thought much about yourself and in your blindly having accepted what has been labelled right since your childhood. (*GS* 335)

In all of Nietzsche's passages on the intellectual conscience he advises us to attend to our feelings and to question them, to examine the feelings that underlie our attachments to certain views, philosophical or otherwise.[10]

In the same vein, Nietzsche remarks later in *BGE* that future philosophers will have to be in part critics who:

> Smile … if somebody should say in front of them: 'This thought elevates me; how could it fail to be true?' Or: 'This work delights me; how could it fail to be beautiful?' Or: 'This artist makes me greater; how could he fail to be great?' (*BGE* 210)

In other words, the philosopher's feelings of 'delight' or 'elevation' should be treated as objects of suspicion and investigated rather than used as further support for their claims.

Nietzsche's talk in *GM* III 12 about allowing affects to speak about or bringing affects to bear on a problem are vague. One thing he could mean here is that we simply need to attend or reflect on the affects we feel when we approach a subject matter. Given that my judgment 'this is right' can have its prehistory in affects I 'have failed to experience,' Nietzsche may be encouraging his reader to not let affects slip by their conscious radar. We get a better sense of why we hold a given philosophical position when, instead of ignoring our affects, or letting them guide us unconsciously, we attend to them directly, 'as sternly as we would a scientific experiment,' and 'bring them to bear' on the matter at hand (*GS* 319, *GM* III 12). For Nietzsche, we become better, more careful, enquirers when we understand the 'prehistory' of our judgments, and we can do this by bringing our affects to bear on a matter.

Nietzsche seems to offer a specific example of why it is important to bring one's affects to bear on a matter in the preface to the *Genealogy*. Here he criticises Paul Rée's genealogical account of morality. Rée is a case-study in failing to bring one's affects to bear on one's particular matter of investigation. He rejects Christian explanations of value, but accepts what Nietzsche sees as the core of the Christian account of what is morally valuable, namely selflessness, compassion, or 'the unegoistic' (*GM* preface 5). Rée begins by accepting what Nietzsche sees as a modern prejudice or '*Idée fixe*,' that the unegoistic has positive value, before he enquires into the history of morality (*GM* I 2). For Nietzsche this is a methodological error. It also betrays a lack of intellectual conscience. Rée accepted the voice of his conscience, that the unegoistic has positive value, without questioning that voice. He lacks a 'conscience behind his conscience.' If Rée had pressed his intuitions in the way that Nietzsche presses his readers' in the *Genealogy*, then he would have found that he was not working on solid foundations. In this way, bringing more affects to bear on a matter can be a way of challenging one's intuitions about it.

One of the most important upshots of bringing one's affects to bear on a matter is that the process can reveal important ambiguities in one's moral feelings. Rée blinded himself to these ambiguities by neglecting to allow more of his affects to speak. In *GM* I 13, Nietzsche offers a short parable about lambs and birds of prey that is engineered precisely to draw out such ambiguities. Here he offers a picture of the kind of 'good' posited by a person in a state of *ressentiment* that is, 'the lamb':

> —That the lambs feel anger toward the great birds of prey does not strike us as odd: but that is no reason for holding it against the great birds of prey that they snatch up little lambs for themselves. And when the lambs say among themselves 'these birds of prey are evil; and whoever is as little as possible a bird of prey but rather its opposite, a lamb,—isn't he good?' there is nothing to criticise in this setting up of an ideal, even if

10 Having a conscience behind one's conscience can also help us ask better questions. In another passage on the intellectual conscience, *GS* 2, Nietzsche eloquently prioritizes the activity of *questioning* over finding answers.

> the birds of prey should look on this a little mockingly and perhaps say to themselves: 'we do not feel any anger towards them, these good lambs, as a matter of fact, we love them: nothing is more tasty than a tender lamb.'— (*GM* I 13)

Here, Nietzsche sheds a different light on what we tend to think of as our 'virtues': he recasts abstention from violence and retaliation, avoidance of evil, patience and humility, as the prudence of the weak, a kind of 'playing dead' dressed up as something meritorious. Nietzsche's parable is meant to show us that what the virtues of the powerless really are, without their clothing, is simply weakness expressing itself, the lamb expressing 'his essence' (*GM* I 13). By ending this parable with a joke, Nietzsche encourages the reader to join in the birds' light-hearted mockery at the expense of the lambs. In other words, he gets us to step outside of our ordinary set of values and feel from the point of view of the bird of prey.

Nietzsche plays with the fact that we can identify with both the lambs' and the birds' perspectives to some extent. We sympathize with the lambs' unfortunate plight, but we also admire the birds' magnanimous appreciation of the lambs and their lack of anger toward them. Ordinarily, the birds' cruelty might simply revolt us, but the humour of Nietzsche's parable tempts us into a position from which the lambs' struggle seems rather pathetic and the birds' cruelty a natural and inevitable consequence of who they are. It primes us for the thought that 'to demand of strength that it not express itself as strength … is just as nonsensical as to demand of weakness that it express itself as strength' (*GM* I 13).

Nietzsche's story is designed to reveal ambiguities in our feelings about morality. While we may unreflectively feel that abstention from violence and retaliation are valuable, the parable urges us to question the strength of our commitment. It also makes us aware of affects that were operating beneath the level of conscious reflection. Again, this can put us in a position to ask new questions about the values generated by *ressentiment*. When we have identified their affective root, we can begin a 'critique of moral values,' we can ask what the 'value of these values' is. We can ask ourselves whether we want to remain beholden to values that have their root in reactive feelings of resentment and self-denial. The ability to step outside of one's ordinary affective orientation, to have 'pro and contra in one's power, and to shift them in and out,' in other words, to embrace perspectivism, helps answer that question.[11]

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The author has no competing interests to declare.

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