Chapter 1

Interpretation as a Map

1.1 The Notion of an Interpretative Map

In recent times there has been a broadening and enrichment of the church of virtue ethics: Aristotle and neo-Aristotelianism are no longer seen as the sole inspiration for modern developments of a virtue ethical tradition.[1] Hume and Nietzsche are now important figures in this trend, but to fully justify this view we need to see how their philosophies can reasonably be seen as species of virtue ethics.

Placing philosophers within certain philosophical traditions is a fraught business, which requires some justification. To situate Hume and Nietzsche within a virtue ethical tradition in particular may raise eyebrows. Marcia Baron puts the problem this way:

> The history of ethics is not generally well served by asking whether Kant, or Rousseau or Hume counts as a –ist, where the relevant "ism" was developed in an entirely different era, responding to very different concerns from those that animated the work of the person in question.[2]

To classify Hume as a sentimentalist or as a moral sense theorist is acceptable. To classify him as a virtue ethicist, however, may fall foul of the worry: it may unhelpfully employ a category whose home in a modern context is a protagonist in modern debates about, for example, consequentialism versus deontology, conducted in books such as *Three Methods of Ethics*.[3] In Hume's day the central debates were between moral sense theorists and the Rationalists. In Nietzsche's times cultural critique within a historicist *Volkisch* tradition emphasizing concepts such as heritage and decadence held sway.

The Virtue Ethics of Hume and Nietzsche, First Edition. Christine Swanton.

As the hermeneutic tradition has taught us, however, interpreting texts is an ongoing process, characterized not only by a sensitivity to the historical conditions of the writer but also by a critique of patterns of interpretation that themselves have been conditioned by the then prevailing theoretical preconceptions and concerns. Such critique may transform earlier interpretation in the light of new possibilities opened up by new ways of understanding. For as Ricoeur argues, the process of interpretation is "ill represented by a personification of the text as a conversational partner," for with writing, the conditions of dialogue are no longer fulfilled.[4] So how can we conceptualize more precisely the requirements of both historical sensitivity and meaning relative to the world of the interpreter?

I address this problem by employing David Schmidtz's helpful notion of moral theory as a map.[5] A map offers an interpretation of a terrain or subject matter that is "stylized," "abstract," and "simplified."[6] A virtue ethical reading of Hume then, as a map of the terrain of Hume's texts, is a somewhat abstract simplified reading of that terrain. In essence, the idea of a map enables us to conceive of interpretation as satisfying the twin desiderata of accuracy, understood in terms of sensitivity to historical context and authorial intent, and meaningfulness within the world of the interpreter. For Schmidtz such meaningfulness is essentially helpfulness: indeed for a map to be a good map it must be, according to Schmidtz, both accurate and helpful.

How can the notion of moral theory as a map resolve the problems posed above? In response to any charge that a virtue ethical map is historically insensitive it may be claimed that not only is virtue ethics a well established and indeed ancient tradition, or set of traditions, but that it need not be constrained by the modern debates, which are even now developing an "old fashioned" feel. Virtue ethics has moved on from debates about virtue versus duty and rules for example. Nonetheless, the objection goes, even where use of a virtue ethical framework is not distorted by modern concerns of little relevance to Hume and Nietzsche, reading Nietzsche and Hume as virtue ethicists is untimely, for virtue ethics was not a category salient in their philosophical context. However that does not imply that the category is not applicable: the accuracy of that claim depends on one's conception of virtue ethics, discussed in the next chapter.

Whether or not the application of the category is appropriate depends on the second desideratum of interpretation: meaningfulness relative to the world of the interpreter. Interpretation is not only a creative critique of past patterns of interpretation of the text by deploying possibly new or neglected understandings and theoretical media (such as virtue ethics). It is also contextualized by implicit criticism of the manner in which those very media are currently understood. In particular I shall open up new understandings and developments of virtue ethics which are arguably more suitable for interpreting Nietzsche and Hume.

We have seen that for Schmidtz a good map is (a) accurate and (b) helpful. Let us consider each of these requirements in more detail. The requirement of accuracy implies that there is a definite terrain or subject matter of a map, and that it is therefore

possible for maps to be inaccurate. In arguing against subjectivist or irrationalist interpretations of Hume's ethics, then, one argues that these readings are inaccurate and should be discarded. However the requirement of accuracy allows for the possibility that several different maps may be good maps of the same terrain. For example I argue in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 that a virtue ethical map of Hume is not incompatible with a map that reads him as a sentimentalist or as a moral sense theorist. I shall also argue in Chapter 7 that a virtue ethical reading of Nietzsche is not incompatible with an existentialist reading. Indeed requirement (a) is the more satisfied *ceteris paribus* the richer and less simplified is the map. Integrating several different maps within the overall category of one map (such as virtue ethics) is *ceteris paribus* the way to make the overarching map more accurate. However requirement (a) is constrained by requirement (b): to maintain helpfulness a map must remain simplified and abstract. There will then be a creative tension between accuracy and helpfulness, precluding an extreme reading of the requirement of accuracy where there is a refusal to categorize at all.

The requirement of helpfulness addresses the worry that only categories current at the time of Hume and Nietzsche be applied to those figures. Helpfulness is a contextual notion. An extremely important context is the need to bring into salience features of Hume and Nietzsche which have been systematically ignored, neglected, or distorted as a result of interpretations reflecting previous (or indeed current) moral theoretic tendencies, such as forms of moral skepticism, emotivism, or subjectivism. The provision of objectivist moral theoretic maps of these thinkers has proved difficult in a climate where virtue ethics was relatively invisible as a moral tradition, but where non-objectivist readings have continued.

Another aspect of helpfulness is the ability of a map to provide a sufficiently rich understanding. As suggested, richer understanding is gained by showing how various maps (e.g., the sentimentalist and virtue ethical maps of Hume) can be seen as compatible with each other. This feature harmonizes with the requirement of accuracy, but as already noted, at some point going for richness may come into tension with the requirement of helpfulness. As Schmidtz says, maps are not comprehensive, and in two ways. They do not map everything: "they do not say how to reach all destinations."[7] Nor do they show all the fine details. A virtue ethical map for example makes virtue and vice salient, and in so doing will fail to highlight other aspects of thought which are of concern in other maps. For example, my virtue ethical map does not emphasize Nietzsche's relationship with Jonathan Ree and the progression of his thought from the "positivist" influence of Ree's thought and Darwinism, to the rejection of this thought in later writings.[8] Furthermore my virtue ethical map will concentrate on Nietzsche's mature ethical writings which are of greatest importance for elucidation of the virtue ethical nature of Nietzsche's ethics. Nor will my virtue ethical map emphasize or attempt to map in detail ongoing debates about differences between Hume's *Treatise* and *Enquiries* except insofar as aspects of that debate impinge on interesting features in a virtue ethical interpretation.

1.2 A Metaphysical Map

A complete map of Nietzsche and Hume, whether or not it involves a virtue ethical map of their ethics, ideally requires a thoroughly explicated conception of their metaphysical perspective. Alas the issues surrounding both philosophers would take us so far afield that it would be too cumbersome to provide this. In this section therefore I will offer instead a very abstract map of the main issues and my general position.

Nietzsche and Hume are remarkably similar in their debunking of traditional systematizing metaphysics that offer conceptions of absolute human independent perspectives on the world, an ego or self that is a "neutral" or "indifferent" "substratum" (Nietzsche), a conception of moral truth or obligation as "eternal" and "immutable" (Hume), a conception of free will that is a mental entity separated from the "deed" understood sufficiently richly to include motive and passion or emotion. For Nietzsche as for Hume, the drive to a pure, absolute, human perspective-free metaphysical view of the world is sourced in a theological ahistorical conception of purity, a failure to appreciate the limitations of scientific reason in fields such as ethics, and a basic fear of naturalistic messiness and plurality. Says Nietzsche:

> Against this theologians' instinct I wage war: I have found its traces everywhere … This faulty perspective on all things is elevated into a morality, a virtue, a holiness: … and no *other* perspective is conceded any further value once one's own has been made sacrosanct with the names of "God," "redemption," and "eternity." I have dug up the theologians' instinct everywhere: it is the most widespread, really *subterranean*, form of falsehood found on earth.[9]

Hume's attack on the "theological instincts" of the moral rationalists, notably Samuel Clarke, in Book III of the *Treatise*, can be seen in the same light. According to Paul Russell, the "riddle of the *Treatise*" which is the riddle of combining Hume's skepticism with his naturalism, can be resolved if we appreciate that "the direction and structure of Hume's thought in the *Treatise* is shaped on one side by his attack on the Christian metaphysics and morals and on the other by his efforts to construct in its place a secular, scientific account of morality."[10] We can read both Hume and Nietzsche as rescuing "morals" or conceptions of a good life from an underpinning in religious morality and associated theological doctrines, rather than as skeptics about morality. Such a reading requires new, possibly radical, theoretical orientations rather than wholesale rejection of morality. The foundation for such an account is the destruction of metaphysical postulates underlying natural religion such as certain conceptions of free will, "priestly dogmas" "invented on purpose to tame and subdue the rebellious reason of mankind" (E 156) such as the infinite divisibility of matter and "secret" cause; and in general an "overall skeptical objective to show the weakness and limits of human understanding as it relates to all arguments that aim to prove the existence of God."[11]

Controversy surrounds the issue of what exactly replaces false metaphysics for Hume and Nietzsche. Again at a highly abstract level we can speak of two broad options. We can read both Hume and Nietzsche as offering a commonsense metaphysics where the notion of a Cartesian self is replaced with a commonsense view of a human being conceived as a persisting but changing entity with more or less robust character traits,[12] but less robust than conceived by Aristotle. We can replace the Kantian noumenal "thing in itself" with a commonsense idea of a thing. We can replace the metaphysical notion of free will with commonsense conceptions of virtues of being responsible and taking responsibility. Alternatively we can conceive of both philosophers as rejecting a commonsense "thing-based" metaphysics, replacing it with various forms of "no-self" views, a metaphysics of "forces" (Nietzsche) where things are reduced to quanta of forces, and events replace things as metaphysically fundamental.

However, even if these thinkers are interpreted as offering revisionary metaphysics, there is an issue about the implications of such metaphysics for their ethics. Consider for example Steven D. Hales and Rex Welshon's controversial account of Nietzsche's "ontological perspectivism" based centrally on texts not always taken seriously: Nietzsche's *Nachlass* and *Will to Power*.[13] Assume that their use of these texts is justified, and that they are correct in interpreting them as claiming that "the world is ephemeral, energetic, transient, and in motion, that it is composed of events, and that each member of the set of events is nothing more than 'a determination of degrees and relations of force' (WP 552) such that at the fundamental levels, there are nothing but logically atomic events of power, referred to by the terms 'quanta of power' and 'dynamic quanta.'"[14] It does not follow from this claim about "fundamental level" ontology that normal understandings of individuals, virtue, and vice are undermined. For just as particle physics does not undermine our understanding of tables as solid objects with flat surfaces suitable for working at and eating off, so "quanta of power" metaphysics does not necessarily vitiate our normal understating of virtue and vice as traits that last over time.

It is not my plan in this book to argue that at a theoretical level the debunking of traditional "theological" metaphysics is replaced by commonsense metaphysical views as opposed to revisionary metaphysics. What is clear is that from a practical perspective both philosophers have a deflationary view friendly to the evident virtue-centeredness of their moral philosophy. For Nietzsche metaphysics is "that science … which deals with the basic errors of man – but as if they were basic truths."[15] Rather, a "higher culture" values "the little, humble truths, those discovered by a strict method, rather than the gladdening and dazzling errors that originate in metaphysical and artistic ages and men."[16] Hume's "science" of morality and his experimental method generally can be seen in the same light. I shall show that Hume's and Nietzsche's attacks on "traditional" metaphysics, Nietzsche's perspectivism, and Hume's sentimentalism, are consistent both with kinds of pluralism whose parameters will be explicated, and with the kind of objectivity and non-relativism in ethics which is necessary for a virtue ethical interpretation.

1.3 A Naturalistic Map

For Nietzsche and Hume virtue is somehow sensitive to the nature of human beings as *human* beings. Most importantly human beings are creatures that grow, develop, and mature from a state of childhood dependency through to maturity and old age, having characteristic needs studied by biological, psychological, and social sciences, characteristic kinds of projects and relations that make their lives meaningful for them, and needing education and enculturation through which those needs and projects are understood and articulated. Virtues as *human* excellences reflect this nature of humans.

Accordingly I believe that both Hume and Nietzsche accept what I call *The Constraint on Virtue*:

> What counts as a virtue is constrained by an adequate theory of human growth and development.

The Constraint on Virtue is offered here at a very high level of abstraction, since it features in Hume and Nietzsche in different ways. For Hume, what counts as an "adequate theory" is interpreted through a "moral sense" itself expressive of a fundamental humanity and benevolence. The deliverances of such an outlook yield criteria of virtue discussed in Chapter 5. Nietzsche accepts the constraint because, as I shall argue in Chapter 6, what Nietzsche calls "the *development-theory of the will to power*" is for him the appropriate and non-superficial psychology through which human beings are to be understood,[17] and which uncovers the nature of their virtues and vices. Traits violating the constraint would exhibit distorted "will to power" (in various types of individual) and as such would not be virtues.

There is then a sense in which both Nietzsche and Hume are naturalists. To understand which sense we need to make a crucial distinction between what McDowell calls "bald naturalism" and "scientistic naturalism":

(1) *Bald Naturalism*: "Conceptualizations of things as natural" in the sense of being subsumable "under the laws of natural science" "exhaust the conceptualizations of things that stand a chance of truth."
(2) *Scientistic Naturalism*: Domains such as the ethical do "stand a chance of truth" since they are natural, where the natural is to be understood as subsumable under the laws of natural science.[18]

McDowell argues in *Mind and World*[19] that one can be a naturalist while rejecting both bald naturalism and scientistic naturalism. Bald naturalism is rejected because things standing a chance of truth, such as the ethical, are not to be conceptualized as subsumable under the laws of natural science. In that case scientistic naturalism is rejected because naturalism should not be understood in the scientistic way.

I wish to affirm that like McDowell, Hume and Nietzsche should be understood as naturalists but as neither bald nor scientistic naturalists. The question remains: what is their kind of naturalism? The Constraint on Virtue implies that they are naturalists in the "spare" sense defined by Huw Price:

(3) *Spare Naturalism*: "the view that natural science constrains philosophy … and that philosophy properly defers to science, where the concerns of the two disciplines coincide." [20]

This sense of naturalism Brian Leiter describes as "Results Continuity." Results Continuity "requires that philosophical theories … be supported or justified by the results of the sciences: philosophical theories that do not enjoy the support of our best science are simply *bad* theories."[21] That Hume believes that ethics is naturalistic in this sense is clear in the following passage: "the most abstruse speculations concerning human nature, however cold and uninteresting, become subservient to *practical morality*; and may render this latter science more correct in its precepts, and more persuasive in its exhortations" (T 3.3.6.6/621).

Where an ethical view is naturalistic in the "spare" sense, it is not necessarily the case that it is naturalistic in the scientistic sense. Nor need it be naturalistic in a sense which I call scientific naturalism.

(4) *Scientific Naturalism*: The claims of ethics can be *derived* from the findings of science alone.

Here science is not necessarily understood as the natural sciences in McDowell's sense of the paradigmatic natural sciences, where things are understood as subsumable under law-like generalizations. Results continuity does not entail scientific naturalism even where "science" is understood as disunified in the sense that there is no unitary scientific method, and/or there is no fundamental unity of content.[22] The German tradition recognized this with the distinction between two types of *Wissenschaften* (forms of knowledge): the *Geisteswissenschaften* and the *Naturwissenschaften*. Bruno Bettelheim, in a critique of the "scientistic" bad translations of Freud, describes the former (sciences of the spirit) as "idiographic" because they "seek to understand the objects of their study not as instances of universal laws but as singular events: their method is that of history" since they "deal with events that never recur in the same form – that can be neither replicated nor predicted."[23] The latter by contrast are "nomothetic" since they seek to explain and verify through the medium of universal law discovered through the method of experimental replication.

Admittedly with this distinction what counts as science becomes vague. However even if history counts as a "science of the spirit" the scientific stance alone is not sufficient for Hume to uncover the world of ethics, even though he makes plain (as we see in the next chapter) that ethics is beholden to the results of science. He is not

a scientific naturalist. Spare naturalism can be non-reductivist, exhibiting "results continuity" without it being reduced to the concepts and results of science.

But as we all know Hume is an "empiricist." How can Hume not be a scientific naturalist and yet be an empiricist? The challenge in understanding Hume's naturalism is to square his non-reductivist spare naturalism with his empiricism.

What is empiricism? Empiricism in "its most general sense … designates a philosophical emphasis on the relative importance of experience and processes grounded in experience, in contrast to reasoning and theorizing a priori."[24] In line with this general sense of empiricism, Don Garrett distinguishes no less than five kinds of empiricism, of which the most important for our purposes is Conceptual Empiricism:[25]

(5) *Conceptual Empiricism*: The content of all concepts can be traced to experience.

Conceptual Empiricism involves a "rejection of the Rationalists' common distinction between intellect and imagination as two distinct representational faculties of the mind," thus rejecting the idea that "nonimagistic ideas of intellect can serve as a fertile source of nonexperiential cognitive content."[26] Hume is not only a spare naturalist, he is a conceptual empiricist: as we shall see, metaphysical and religious postulates violating this form of empiricism are rejected. Hume then is not only a spare naturalist but a naturalist as opposed to a supernaturalist. We should note that even if a form of virtue ethics is naturalistic in Price's "spare" sense, it need not be naturalistic as opposed to "supernaturalistic"[27] in its metaphysics.[28]

Thus we have to reconcile the following features of Hume's philosophy:

(a) Spare naturalism
(b) Conceptual empiricism
(c) Rejection of scientific reductivism
(d) Rejection of supernaturalism.

He cannot reconcile (a) and (b) by affirming scientific reductivism, and he cannot reconcile (a) and (c) by affirming supernaturalism. So how can Hume hold all of (a)–(d)?

The key is to understand the nature of Hume's ethical empiricism. Chapters 2 and 3 will explicate Hume's ethical naturalism via his *ethical* empiricism. That empiricism is revealed by his response dependence virtue ethics, according to which the "experience" grounding ethical concepts is constituted by the passions, and that the imagination, central to the construction of all concepts for Hume including those of ethics, can be assessed as reasonable (or otherwise) by standards different from those applicable to what Hume calls "Reason" or intellect in a narrow sense.

It may be surprising to find that Hume subscribes to conceptual empiricism in ethics. For (conceptual) empiricism is normally thought to be the view that genuine concepts are derived from observation; observation is normally thought to involve the five senses alone (as opposed to dubious forms of "perception" such as a "moral

sense" understood as a special form of perception), and therefore moral concepts are derivable from those very types of observations that constitute the world of natural science. Thus according to Quine "the difference between science and ethics is that scientific claims, unlike moral claims are responsive to observation," hence a coherence theory is "evidently the lot of ethics."[29]

The way to reconcile Hume's non-reductivist spare naturalism and his empiricism is to claim that for Hume there is a form of genuine observation which is not reducible to the perception of the five senses. This form is yielded by those passions (emotions and feelings) constituting and conditioning the "moral sense." It is important to realize that the moral sense is not a special sense involving a "moral sense organ."[30] In line with Bernard Williams's claim that the materials of ethics should not be seen as constituted from "special" materials, Hume understands the "moral sense" as a complex but ordinary, characteristic, emotional capacity based on benevolence and sympathy, and constrained by self-love, as we explore in the next two chapters.

What about Nietzsche? Leiter believes that Nietzsche too is a naturalist in the sense of "Results Continuity", citing Nietzsche's claim that we must "translate man back into nature … hardened in the discipline of science" where man is understood as "*homo natura*."[31] However Janaway questions this, claiming that what scientific results justify or support in Nietzsche is obscure, citing as an example Nietzsche's claim that the origin of bad conscience is "instincts whose outward expression against others is blocked turn themselves inwards and give rise to the infliction of pain on the self."[32] He ascribes to Nietzsche a weaker "Results Continuity" which requires simply that "explanations in philosophy be compatible with our best science, or not be falsified by appeal to our best science."[33] However on my view this is too weak. It is true that the will to power hypothesis for example is not meant to be "results continuous" with the scientific biology of the time believed by Ree, and the "English psychologists," a target of attack in the *Genealogy of Morals*. But that does not invalidate results continuity in Leiter's sense: one just has to pick the right domain. That domain is the depth psychology which *explains* the passage cited by Janaway as "obscure," and which I discuss in Chapter 7 (see section 7.4). That domain in turn arguably requires the sensitivities proper to understanding psychology as a discipline essentially involving (but not wholly involving) the *Geisteswissenschaften* – the particular idiographic, intuitive, and indeed empathetic methods of the "sciences of the spirit."

On my view then the ethics of both Nietzsche and Hume conform to "spare naturalism", rejects bald naturalism, and both scientistic and scientific naturalism. Their spare naturalism is empirical, in the broad sense of an approach based on experience as opposed to theological dogma or doctrine. It essentially includes emotional experience of meanings which may be theorized through what might be broadly called the *Geisteswissenschaften* including history and psychology. This feature allows them to be naturalist without being scientific or scientistic naturalists. As we see in the next chapter I interpret both as response dependent virtue ethicists, according to which certain responses, interpretations, or perspectives are nonetheless necessary for a world of ethics to exist.

1.4 A Psychological Map

Of great importance for a virtue ethical map of Hume and Nietzsche is their emphasis on psychology. There are two major uses of Hume's psychology in my virtue ethical interpretation of him. The first concerns the metaphysics of ethics. For Hume, what John McDowell calls the *logos* of the practical world[34] is furnished by a certain emotional orientation to it. The world of ethics does not exist as such a world if we do not possess in human nature a passion of benevolence and some sympathy based on that passion. This is made clear in many passages in Hume, including the discussion of the "fancied monster" in the *Enquiries*:

> Let us suppose, if the prosperity of nations were laid on the one hand, and their ruin on the other, and he were desired to choose; that he would stand like the schoolman's ass, irresolute and undetermined, between equal motives … (E 235)

For such a being the world of ethics is unintelligible, whereas a selfish person possessing a modicum of benevolence has at least a glimmer of an emotional orientation that allows him to make a distinction between "what is useful and what is pernicious"(E 235). As a result, Hume on my view is opposed not to the existence of moral facts, propositions about which are made true by factors outside the agent (as well as within the agent), but only to a certain construal of moral facts. In particular Hume's targets are the following beliefs:

(a) Moral facts are facts about the "eternal immutable fitnesses" of things.
(b) Recognition of such facts by the reason of the understanding putatively capable of ascertaining truths about such fitnesses, is sufficient to motivate.
(c) Moral facts (construed as above) can even directly motivate without the intermediary of belief or other psychological states of the agent.[35]

On my account of Hume, he holds the following:

(a) There are moral facts which are constituted not by eternal immutable fitnesses but by "natural fitnesses."
(b) Such facts cannot be recognized by theoretical reason as such, by the understanding, but they can be recognized by an emotionally constituted "moral sense."
(c) Given this, such recognition can motivate, since the moral sense is inherently practical, and as such makes the world of ethics as a practical orientation to the world, intelligible.

Indeed to possess a virtue is not simply to possess a faculty or skill in knowing moral facts, but to be disposed to be motivated by such knowledge.

The second important feature of Hume's psychology is basic to his understanding of the criteria of virtue. Hume's discussion of the passions in Book II of the *Treatise* lays the foundations of my pluralistic, non-consequentialist, and non-hedonistic account of Hume's criteria of virtue. Consequently my view of Hume is opposed to Kemp Smith's view that in Book II of the *Treatise*, the passions "play … no really distinctive part in his system."[36] In Chapter 5 I show on my virtue ethical interpretation just how central are the passions to Hume's conception of virtue.

In Hume passions are a species of "impressions" which, unlike "ideas," do not "represent" the world. Impressions are divided into impressions of sensation and impressions of reflection. The former are divided into sense impressions such as color or sound, and pleasure and pain. The latter are divided into the passions and sentiments. Though they do not represent, they may or may not be "naturally fitted" to the world. Anger may be excessive, joy may exhibit "disordered enthusiasm," hope may be misplaced, pride overweening, and so on. At the core of virtue are the passions: indeed as we shall explore in Chapter 4, one of Hume's theses about virtue (which gives him problems in relation to the artificial virtues) is that virtue proper involves a characteristic natural passion, such as affection. Given that passions are at the heart of virtue, and that Hume's account of the various passions, such as love and pride, is complex and varied, a rich virtue-pluralism characterizes his moral philosophy. Or so I shall argue in Chapter 5.

Turn now to Nietzsche. It is well known that Nietzsche considered himself a psychologist, indeed "one without equal" or even the "first." Yet Jacob Golomb complains that despite the passing of a century most Nietzsche interpreters "have failed to come to grips with the *essential* psychological aspects of his thought."[37] A virtue ethical interpretation of Nietzsche is in a good position to redress this deficiency. Since virtues as character traits constitute motivational and emotional dispositions, theorizing about virtue is considerably enriched if background psychological theory is provided. Indeed in my own interpretation of Nietzsche "the *essential* psychological aspects of his thought" are central.

Golomb distinguishes two aspects of Nietzsche's psychology. First, his "unique psychological genealogical method" "freezes our will to believe life-nihilating values."[38] In this process, Nietzsche recognizes the important psychological fact that entrenched, fundamental, and emotionally laden beliefs are not done away with simply by a putatively decisive refutation through argument. There is too much resistance:

> Do not deride and befoul that which you want to do away with for good but respectfully *lay it on ice*, and, in as much as ideas are very tenacious of life, do so again and again. Here it is necessary to act according to the maxim: "One refutation is no refutation."[39]

Rather for Nietzsche such beliefs need to be unmasked and their dubious cultural heritage displayed and exposed. They can then be seen as less enticing, less like "sacred cows."

Second, intertwined with and reinforcing the therapeutic process of psychological genealogy is Nietzsche's positive psychology which so influenced the psychoanalytic movement in Germany and thereby depth psychology in general. Included here, is at least Freud himself[40] and those who deployed Nietzsche's rejection of hedonistic principles in justifying their schisms with Freud over libido theory. Prominent among these are Alfred Adler who used Nietzsche's notion of will to power as a developmental concept (Nietzsche himself described his psychology as "the developmental theory of will to power"),[41] and Otto Rank who was influenced from earliest days by Nietzsche in his emphasis on the will to creativity and strivings to affirm one's difference and individuality.[42]

Several features common to particularly Freudian/Adlerian analysis and Nietzsche influence my own interpretation of the latter, and are summarized here. All will occupy a place in my virtue ethical reading.

(1) For Nietzsche, psychology should be reinstated as the "Queen of the Sciences"[43] if moral philosophy is to "venture into the depths" and escape the superficial "timidities" of traditional moral theorizing.

(2) According to Nietzsche "man is more sick, more uncertain, more mutable, less defined, than any other animal … he is *the* sick animal"; he "is the most chronically and deeply sick of all sick animals."[44] Because of this, insights into human nature (as with Freud) are best achieved for Nietzsche through investigation into a variety of sicknesses, rather than by a detailed account of a perfected human being with a definite *telos*. A detailed account of human perfection is replaced by a philosophy for the "convalescent," with emphasis on "overcoming." It is not suggested that sickness is the only thing to be overcome: various human weaknesses are perpetual issues for us. As Nietzsche claims in *Zarathustra*, "And life itself confided this secret to me: … I am *that which must always overcome itself*." "I must be struggle and a becoming and an end and an opposition of ends – ah, whoever guesses what is my will should also guess on what *crooked* paths it must proceed."[45] The nature of the "crooked paths" is explored in Chapter 10, where I outline Nietzsche's "virtue ethics of becoming."

(3) Conscious psychological states are only a fraction of our psychological states in general. Like the proverbial iceberg, most are below the water line: unconscious. "For the longest time, conscious thought was considered thought itself. Only now does the truth dawn on us that by far the greatest part of our spirit's activity remains unconscious and unfelt."[46]

(4) Furthermore these "unthought" and "unfelt" states can be causally efficacious: "instincts which are here contending against one another" can cause "hurt" to self and other, "violent exhaustion" in thinkers.[47]

(5) Hence, in order to investigate "surface" phenomena, the results of the "contending instincts," we have to venture into the depths: the unconscious phenomena. Once we do venture into the depths we will find that a large number of our conscious states are pathological (sourced as they are in pathological depth states). Citing an insight of Leibniz, Nietzsche claims "what we call consciousness constitutes

only one state of our spiritual and psychic world (*perhaps a pathological state*) and *not by any means the whole of it*."[48] This insight is by now acknowledged by neuroscience in its discussion of for example what has been called "dark energy"; the brain's default mode network (DMN), whose role in preparing the brain for conscious activity is under study:

> As most neuroscientists acknowledge, our conscious interactions with the world are just a small part of the brain's activity. What goes on below the level of awareness – the brain's dark energy for one – is critical in providing the context for what we experience in the small window of conscious awareness.[49]

Furthermore it is now believed that depression (where "patients exhibit decreased connections between one area of the DMN and regions involving emotion")[50] and other disorders are caused by damage to the DMN.

(6) Hence for Nietzsche venturing into the depths is central to a normative analysis of depth psychological states as they feature in virtue and vice. For Nietzsche what has "decisive value" in action lies in its depths rather than in its surface intention,[51] as we shall explore in Chapters 6 and 7. Indeed a section in *The Gay Science* is headed "Unconscious Virtues." These are virtues described by Nietzsche as qualities "which we know either badly or not at all and which also conceal themselves by means of their subtlety even from very subtle observers."[52]

(7) Amongst the pathological states are regression to more primitive states (as in "noble" morality), repression (as in "slave" morality and the "ascetic ideal"), resignation (the classic philosophers' pathology), and the controlling, self-controlled, pseudo-ideal of autonomy in an extreme form (represented on my view by the "sovereign individual"). All of these pathologies are discussed below.

(8) Like Freud's dynamic theory of human psychology, Nietzsche's psychological theory is one that postulates drives as energetic psychological forces which conflict with each other: "every single one of them [drives] would be only too pleased to present *itself* as the ultimate goal of existence and as the legitimate *master* of all the other drives. For every drive is tyrannical."[53]

(9) Hence psychological conflict ("the contending instincts") is endemic to the human condition: what creates neurosis however is not psychic conflict as such but certain problematic "resolutions" of that conflict.

(10) In a psychoanalytic understanding of Nietzsche, the libido theory of Freud must be rejected in favor of Adler's emphasis on power and the inferiority complex. This is anticipated by Nietzsche's attack on "the pleasure principle," and his notion of will to power and its distortions in forms of self-contempt and escape from self.[54]

(11) As in Freud, individual psychology is interpreted through cultural analysis and critique, since the specific manifestations of individuals' sickness are in large part, at least, a product of cultural sickness. This claim is of paramount importance

for Nietzsche. Psychological interpretation must not be confused with an "individualistic" interpretation, according to which persons are viewed as if they were not shaped by their cultures. Indeed Nietzsche frequently draws our attention to the virtues of different ages which may be embryonic in earlier ages.[55]

By the same token, for Nietzsche cultural sickness causes individual sickness, which in turn reinforces cultural sickness. As Christopher Janaway rightly points out, for Nietzsche "the natural and cultural realms seem to interpenetrate."[56] Our expressions of a need to "vent our strength," expand, incorporate, and so on, are interpreted through, and have meaning within, our cultural practices and language.

The need for interpretation within psychology and culture is of cardinal importance for Nietzsche's understanding of a human being as "*homo natura*," though we need to have a critical perspective on those interpretations which are "varnish" and expressive of human vanity.[57] In his *Nietzsche on Morality*, Brian Leiter makes a sharp contrast between the naturalism of Freud and Hume and the postmodernism of Foucault, claiming that Nietzsche belongs in the company of the former. In this I completely agree. However we must be careful to note that the contrast Leiter draws between the ideas that there are deep facts about human nature and that "all such putative facts are *mere* interpretations"[58] may mislead. As is well known Nietzsche claims that there are no moral facts, only interpretations of such facts.[59] What Nietzsche means by this claim is that there are no *facta bruta*, and we cannot escape interpretation. Challenging situations for example do not simply *cause* drives to "overcome"; they are *interpreted* as challenging in various sorts of ways, and the interpretations of the weak will differ from those of the strong. This is compatible not only with the view that some interpretations are "varnish," but also with the view that some are serious misinterpretations. As we have already seen, he claims for example that the "theological instinct" is a form of interpretation (a "perspective") that is faulty and distorted; indeed the most "widespread falsehood" on earth. Moral facts *properly* interpreted are deep, and free from fundamental distortions. We need to have a critical perspective on those interpretations which are shallow, expressive of human vanity, or are downright pernicious.[60]

This chapter has provided background for a virtue ethical map of Hume and Nietzsche. Describing the basic nature of that map is the task of the next chapter. Parts II and III provide the map itself.

Notes

1 A recent collection focused on this theme is *Aristotelian Ethics in Contemporary Perspective*, ed. Julia Peters (New York: Routledge, 2013).

2 Marcia Baron, "Virtue Ethics in Relation to Kantian Ethics: An Opinionated Overview and Commentary," in *Perfecting Virtue: New Essays on Kantian Ethics and Virtue Ethics*, ed. L. Jost and J. Wuerth (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 8–37, 33.

3 Marcia W. Baron, Philip Pettit, and Michael Slote (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997).

4 James J. DiCenso, *Hermeneutics and the Disclosure of Truth: A Study in the Work of Heidegger, Gadamer, and Ricoeur* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1990), 114. See Paul Ricoeur, *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences*, ed. and trans. John B. Thomson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 45.
5 See his *Elements of Justice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).
6 Schmidtz, 21.
7 Schmidtz, 22.
8 Nonetheless this is interesting: see Robin Small, *Nietzsche and Ree: A Star Friendship* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005).
9 *The Antichrist*, in *The Portable Nietzsche*, ed. and trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Penguin, 1976), sect. 9, 575–576.
10 Paul Russell, *The Riddle of Hume's Treatise: Skepticism, Naturalism, and Irreligion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), viii.
11 Russell, 185.
12 On this issue, see Annette C. Baier, *Death and Character: Further Reflections on Hume* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008).
13 Hales and Welshon, *Nietzsche's Perspectivism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000).
14 Hales and Welshon, 63.
15 "On First and Last Things," in *Human, All Too Human: A Book for Free Spirits*, trans. Marion Faber with Stephen Lehmann (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), sect. 18, 26.
16 "On First and Last Things," sect. 3, 15.
17 "On the Prejudices of Philosophers," in *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*, trans. R.J. Hollingdale (London: Penguin, 1973), sect. 23, 53.
18 "Response to J.M. Bernstein," in *Reading McDowell: On* Mind and World, ed. Nicholas H. Smith (London: Routledge, 2002), 297–300, 297.
19 Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994.
20 "Naturalism Without Representationalism," in *Naturalism in Question*, ed. Mario De Caro and David MacArthur (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 71–88, 71.
21 *Nietzsche on Morality* (London: Routledge, 2002), 4. Leiter's italics.
22 See further John Dupré, *The Disorder of Things: Metaphysical Foundations of the Disunity of Science* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993).
23 *Freud and Man's Soul* (London: Fontana, 1985), 41–42.
24 *Encyclopaedia of Empiricism*, ed. Don Garrett and Edward Barbanell (London: Fitzroy Dearborn, 1997).
25 Don Garrett, *Cognition and Commitment in Hume's Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).
26 *Encyclopaedia of Empiricism*.
27 This is a term of Barry Stroud. By "supernaturalism" he means "the invocation of an agent or force that somehow stands outside the familiar natural world and whose doings cannot be understood as part of it": "The Charm of Naturalism," *Naturalism in Question*, 21–35, 23.
28 This point is made by Julia Annas in her "Virtue Ethics: What Kind of Naturalism," in *Virtue Ethics, Old and New*, ed. Stephen M. Gardiner (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), 11–29.
29 "On the Nature of Moral Values," in *Theories and Things* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981), 55–66, 63. For an examination of this argument, see Folke Tersman, "Quine on Ethics," *Theoria* 64 (1998), 84–98.
30 Christopher Hookway, "Fallibilism and Objectivity: Science and Ethics," in *World, Mind and Ethics: Essays on the Ethical Philosophy of Bernard Williams*, ed. J.E.J. Altham and Ross Harrison (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 46–67, 66.
31 *Beyond Good and Evil*, sect. 230, cited in Brian Leiter, *Nietzsche on Morality*, 6.
32 Christopher Janaway, *Beyond Selflessness: Reading Nietzsche's Genealogy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 37.
33 Ibid.
34 See his "Two Sorts of Naturalism," in *Virtues and Reasons*, ed. Rosalind Hursthouse, Gavin Lawrence, and Warren Quinn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 149–179.

35 See further Sophie Botros, *Hume, Reason and Morality: A Legacy of Contradiction* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2006), 69.
36 Norman Kemp Smith, *The Philosophy of David Hume* [1941] (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 160.
37 "Introductory Essay: Nietzsche's New Psychology," in *Nietzsche and Depth Psychology*, ed. Jacob Golomb, Weaver Santaniello, and Ronald Lehrer (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1999), 1–19, 1. See also Graham Parkes, *Composing the Soul: Reaches of Nietzsche's Psychology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).
38 "Introductory Essay," 1.
39 Friedrich Nietzsche, "The Wanderer and His Shadow," in *Human, All too Human*, trans. R.J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 311.
40 See Ronald Lehrer, "Freud and Nietzsche, 1892–1895," in *Nietzsche and Depth Psychology*, 181–203. Freudian ideas anticipated by Nietzsche according to Lehrer include dynamic unconscious mental functioning, catharsis, repression in relation to incompatible ideas/desires.
41 See Ronald Lehrer, "Adler and Nietzsche," in *Nietzsche and Depth Psychology*, 229–245.
42 See Claude Barbre, "Reversing the Crease: Nietzsche's Influence on Otto Rank's Concept of Creative Will and the Birth of Individuality," in *Nietzsche and Depth Psychology*, 247–267.
43 *Beyond Good and Evil*, sect. 23.
44 *On the Genealogy of Morals*, trans. Douglas Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), Third Essay, 13, 100.
45 *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, in *The Portable Nietzsche*, ed. and trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Penguin, 1976), Part II, "On Self Overcoming," 227.
46 *The Gay Science*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1974), Book 4, sect. 333, 262.
47 Ibid.
48 *Gay Science*, Book 5, sect. 357, 305. My italics.
49 Marcus E. Raichle, "The Brain's Dark Energy," *Scientific American* 302.3, 44–49, 49.
50 Ibid., 49
51 "The Free Spirit," *Beyond Good and Evil*, sect. 32, 63.
52 Book 1, sect. 8, 82–83.
53 "On the Prejudices of Philosophers," *Beyond Good and Evil*, sect. 6, 37.
54 I agree however with those commentators, notably Bernard Reginster in *The Affirmation of Life: Nietzsche on Overcoming Nihilism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), who place the doctrine of will to power historically "in the context of a response to Schopenhauerian pessimism" and as a "substitute for the Schopenhauerian concept of the will to live" (105–106).
55 See *Gay Science*, Book 1, sect. 9, 83; *Zarathustra*, Part II, "On the Tarantulas."
56 Janaway, *Beyond Selflessness*, 149.
57 "Our Virtues," *Beyond Good and Evil*, sect. 230, 162.
58 *Nietzsche on Morality*, 2. Note that Leiter reports here that Freud claims to have stopped reading Nietzsche for fear that he had anticipated too many of his ideas about human nature and the unconscious forces. Indeed I show how Nietzsche anticipates Freud in Chapter 8, especially in connection with Nietzsche's views on cruelty.
59 To make this point he claims: "There are no moral phenomena at all, only a moral interpretation of phenomena." "Maxims and Interludes," *Beyond Good and Evil*, sect. 108, 96.
60 "Our Virtues," *Beyond Good and Evil*, sect. 230, 162.