

NIETZSCHE BEYOND METAPHYSICS: THE WILL TO POWER AS REALITY AND THE END OF METAPHYSICS

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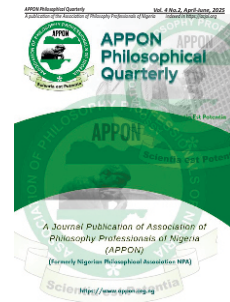
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ABSTRACT

This paper studies the doctrine of the *will to power* proposed by Nietzsche's and puts forward a distinct understanding of the positioning of this core concept: it should be interpreted as a Methodological Fiction at the methodological level, neither a metaphysical concept used to describe the ultimate essence of the world, nor a rhetorical device that only serves as textual embellishment. In simple terms, it is not an underlying essence that all things in the world cannot evade, nor is it flowery language used to polish texts; it is merely an artificially set practical analytical tool for research purposes. The argument is that Nietzsche's anti-essentialism does not account for the abandonment of its explanation. To elaborate on this viewpoint in detail, this paper employs two sets of analytical methods. The first is textual interpretation, which means sorting through all of Nietzsche's relevant writings word by word and sentence by sentence to first accurately grasp the logic and intention in his original texts. The second is a comparative analysis that places several mainstream interpretations of Nietzsche's will to power in academic circles. In addition, this paper uses South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation process as a case study. The paper ultimately concludes that what Nietzsche proposed is a connection-oriented, adjustable explanatory approach that by no means adheres to the idea of changing the form but not the substance, or of replacing an old metaphysical foundation with a new one.

Keywords: Nietzsche; will to power; metaphysics; Methodological Fiction; perspectivism; naturalism; genealogy

Introduction

Nietzsche's philosophy, from beginning to end, grapples with two things: metaphysics and humanity's obsession with seeking an ultimate, unchanging foundation for reality. The core focus of this struggle, which runs through all his thought, is the doctrine of the will to power he proposed. Anyone who has studied this doctrine cannot avoid a long-standing classic problem, which traps interpreters between two opposing directions. The contradiction in the first

direction is understandable to everyone: Nietzsche repeatedly criticizes substances, essences, the so-called *true world*, and all fixed, unchanging foundations—these absolute concepts that can be applied to all things, which he has denounced time and time again. However, why does he himself sometimes use a statement that appears applicable to everything to define the entire world as the will to power? Does this not collide with the very approach he himself condemned? Conversely, there is a second,

even more inexplicable direction: if the will to power is merely a metaphor, a rhetorical device to embellish his writing, with no substantial explanatory weight of its own, how can it shoulder the numerous explanatory tasks Nietzsche assigned to it? Nietzsche relied on it to dissect human instincts, values, morality, culture, and people's interpretations; each of these relies on solid explanatory power. A metaphor that serves only a rhetorical purpose cannot support so many concrete analyses.

Academic answers to this question have been sharply divided, to the point of direct opposition. Richardson interprets Nietzsche's line of thought as a complete, systematic theory in which the will to power has an extremely broad explanatory scope, capable of analysing all kinds of related problems.¹ Another analysis adopts a different line of thought from previous studies.² This work, completed by Clark and Dedrick in 2023, focuses on Nietzsche's naturalist position and firmly rejects labelling Nietzsche with traditional metaphysical tags. The same analysis also centres its core discussions on the anti-metaphysical, psychology-related content in Nietzsche's thought. Each of these interpretations has thoroughly grasped many key parts of Nietzsche's thought. Still, they all remain unable to avoid an unresolved contradiction: it has always been impossible to reconcile the two demands of assigning the will to power the grand role of explaining a multitude of phenomena, while upholding Nietzsche's core anti-metaphysical stance.

This paper proposes a third direction of interpretation. The most appropriate way to understand the will to power is to treat it as a Methodological Fiction: it is an explanatory model deliberately constructed to organize clear patterns from the laws scattered across drives, values, social relations, and all forms of life, yet it never claims to articulate any

ontological fundamental entity of the world. The term "fiction" used here is approached entirely from the perspective of research methodology, and in no way negates the value of this concept. This does not mean the concept is arbitrarily fabricated and useless; rather, its philosophical value lies in its ability to help us see and explain more previously intractable problems, not in it being the ultimate component that constitutes the real world.

This paper is discussed under four core theses. First, Nietzsche's Critique of Metaphysical Ontology fundamentally overturns the research approach that seeks a constant, unchanging entity behind all things that are in constant flux. Second, even with this premise, the will to power can still function as a unified explanatory model. Third, this model can connect Nietzsche's psychology, genealogy, and discussions of normativity into a coherent whole, without reducing the will to power to a universal metaphysical first cause. Fourth, interpreting the will to power as a Methodological Fiction can reasonably explain why Nietzsche uses expressions with universalizing tendencies, while fully preserving his perspectivism and anti-essentialism, completely resolving the tension between the two. The research methodology used in this paper draws on textual analysis and hermeneutic methods: it first rigorously distinguishes between the works that Nietzsche organized, finalized, and formally published during his lifetime and the manuscripts compiled after his death by others who collected his scattered notes.

Nietzsche's Critique of Metaphysical Ontology

Nietzsche's critique of metaphysics does not merely reject a few isolated, scattered specific theories. What he seeks to dismantle is a deep-rooted, inherent impulse that lies

¹ J. Richardson, *J. Nietzsche's System*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

² B. Leiter, *B. Nietzsche on Morality*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); B. Leiter, *Nietzsche and Naturalism: A New Look*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020).

behind all these theories—humans cannot resist positing a constant, unchanging true reality behind the ever-shifting, uncertain appearances before them, and treating this intangible reality as the source of all knowledge and the foundation of all values, as if this ultimate anchor could only allow people to feel at ease. His critique targets both Plato’s division of the “true world” and the world of appearances, the substantialist view of being that treats existence as a fixed entity, and even the unchallenged presupposition that “behind all changing activities stands a constant subject or essence”³

In *Twilight of the Idols*, Nietzsche presents the “true world,” which countless philosophers have discussed throughout the history of philosophy, as a history entirely constructed by humans, rather than as a process in which philosophers gradually uncover the world’s true nature across generations. In his view, the reason why people strive desperately to find an eternally unchanging realm is, in essence, that they cannot accept the world’s contingency and fluidity—they cannot accept that things change at a moment’s notice, that people leave when they will, that nothing can be held onto for a lifetime, which gives rise to this metaphysical obsession to grasp something solid. Therefore, this issue relates not only to ontology but also to the psychological needs of ordinary people: metaphysics forcibly projects constancy onto an inherently fluid reality, filling the gap in people’s hearts that fear change and crave stability, thereby satisfying their need for stability. Nietzsche’s critique of substance and essence also extends to the grammatical habits of the language we use every day—nouns in everyday language constantly imply that every noun that can be spoken must correspond to some fixed, unchanging entity; when we use the word “I,” we default to the existence of an “I” that

remains unchanged from beginning to end. He does not seek to deny the utility of language, to claim that language should not be used or is useless; rather, he reminds everyone that the everyday structure of language easily induces philosophers to mistake “concepts created only for the convenience of speaking and thinking” for real ontological entities, to treat tools of convenience as the very foundation of the world itself.

This critique also extends to discussions of causality and the agent of action. Nietzsche fundamentally questions a long-standing claim: behind every one of a person’s actions stands a single, complete, unified “I” from start to finish, that is, the subject that initiates all actions. We usually feel that we are a coherent and unified “self,” but this is not some innate fixed essence; it is merely an unstable order temporarily assembled from all kinds of conflicting drives and emotions. This dismantling completely overturns the classic portrait of the subject in traditional metaphysics—the agent that is fully in control of itself and freely determines all its own affairs—instead opening up space for a more flexible psychology that prioritizes change.⁴ Those single acts of will that we perceive as “I have made up my mind to do something” are often the result of a complex set of internal forces wrestling with one another and ultimately combining.

This genealogical research method further consolidates the shift in the research approach mentioned above. In *On the Genealogy of Morals*, when Nietzsche explains the origin of moral values, he does not invoke any set of eternally unchanging essences as the ultimate answer. He only sorts out, step by step, how the values that we take for granted today gradually took shape in concrete history through the intertwined influence of various practices, human emotions, social systems, and

³ Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*. Translated by Walter Kaufmann. (New York: Viking Press, 1968a).

⁴ Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*. Translated by Walter Kaufmann. (New York: Vintage Books, 1967); A. Huddleston, *Nietzsche and the Psychology of Drive*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020). P. Katsafanas, “Drives, Interpretation, and Nietzschean Action.” *Philosophy Compass* 17 (5): e12843, (2022).

different modes of evaluation.⁵ *Genealogy* thus confirms one thing: an anti-metaphysical philosophy need not abandon its explanatory power over the world; rejecting eternal essences does not mean one can only claim that nothing can be explained. It no longer needs to search for the eternal foundation that underpins the entire world; instead, it can explain things clearly using interpretations that combine historical perspective and psychological analysis. The ultimate question that this philosophy pursues is how various concepts function, where different values originate, and what forms of life these values sustain. Nietzsche's critique of metaphysics leaves enough methodological space—*The Will to Power* can be used as an explanatory model without being reduced to yet another ultimate metaphysical foundation.

This framing allowed Nietzsche to uphold two positions simultaneously. First, he could maintain his critique of rigid, one-sided essentialism, rejecting the existence of a unified, eternal underlying essence in the world; and secondly, while still putting forward a complete explanation that covers all life forms, avoiding the trap of descending into scattered, unsubstantiated claims that would come from rejecting essentialism outright. The Will to Power is not empty, fine rhetoric. It is also not an illusory entity in metaphysics; instead, it is a systematic analytical framework. Many people hold two common misunderstandings about this concept: they either regard it as flowery, empty talk with no practical use, meant only to embellish arguments, or treat it as a metaphysical entity that floats above reality and is untraceable.

The Will to Power as Explanatory Model

The *Will to Power* can be employed as a logically consistent explanatory framework. Even if it is not construed as a metaphysical

reality. When many people first encounter Nietzsche's Will to Power, they instinctively mistake it for some eternal, unchanging mysterious essence lurking behind the world. In fact, when Nietzsche put forward this concept, he never assigned it such a weighty identity. It functions more like a practical analytical tool: Nietzsche treated it as a key, using the logics of power comparison, confrontation, overcoming, and self-improvement to sort out the distinct developmental trajectories of instincts, organisms, human beings, and all forms of life. Whether it is the innate, instinctual responses of organisms, the functioning of a complete living being, or the various activities within human society, it can yield a coherent line of reasoning. In *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche proposes that if all the instinctual activities of life, as well as all functions of organisms, can be traced back to the same most fundamental form of will, then that form is the *Will to Power* itself. Through this unified fundamental will, those actively functioning forces can also be clearly understood.

The core of this account lies at the methodological level. It provides a shared framework for organizing scattered phenomena of all kinds, rather than insisting on the insertion of an unchanging metaphysical essence behind them. In other words, when Nietzsche proposed *the Will to Power*, he only offered a universal template for organizing one's thinking, with no requirement to force a single, eternal core onto all diverse phenomena. The coherence of this methodology runs throughout Nietzsche's psychological and genealogical research. This capacity to connect and explain disparate phenomena is not only reflected in analyses of vital activities, but also holds up entirely within Nietzsche's psychological studies and the genealogical work that traces the origins of morality and values. Through the Will to Power, Nietzsche can interpret events that appear

⁵ Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*. Translated by Walter Kaufmann. (New York: Vintage Books, 1967). R. Pippin, *Nietzsche and the Social Origins of Morality*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021).

completely unrelated. Ranging from human instincts of all kinds to the development of knowledge, the evolution of morality, the formation of values, and the emergence of social relations—as distinct combinations shaped by the same underlying logic: various powers competing with one another and gradually taking shape. It never demands that all explained phenomena be identical; instead, it identifies a shared relational structure that allows originally scattered events to become intelligible.

Nietzsche consistently focused on the inherent tensions within instincts, and the struggles and contests between different instincts, which is why *the Will to Power* can clarify a great many things: how one instinct comes to dominate, how values emerge from specific configurations of power, and how all lifeforms complete their own transformations. In this way, the *Will to Power* acts as a conceptual thread that weaves Nietzsche's psychology, perspectivism, genealogy, and his critique of traditional morality into a coherent whole. Precisely for this reason, the unity of Nietzsche's *Will to Power* must be understood at the structural and methodological level, rather than misconstrued as an essence at the substantial or ontological level. When it explains various events, it does not reduce all things to a single essence. Still, it provides a shared set of interpretive vocabulary for analysing the relationships that shape all configurations of power.

Psychology, Subjectivity, and Normativity

Nietzsche's psychological theory is one of the scenarios where this methodological fictionalism is most useful. Nietzsche never treated the *self* as an irreducible, tangible metaphysical entity; instead, he argued that human psychology is never a complete, unified whole. Rather, it is assembled from a collection of competing forces: internal drives, fluctuating emotions, cultivated

habits, self-knowledge, and mechanisms that organize these elements. Huddleston's 2020 research on Nietzschean internal drives and Katsafanas's 2013 interpretation of subjectivity have helped clarify this dynamic psychological framework—it neither breaks humans down into simplistic mechanical parts, as if all behaviours operate according to fixed procedures, nor falls back into the old path of treating the soul as a metaphysical entity, reviving the outdated framework Nietzsche long criticized.

From this reading, the will to power is not another internal drive on par with hunger, fear, pleasure, or the will to survive—it is not that in addition to the desire to eat, to live, and to avoid pain, humans possess an extra instinct to *seize power*. It is a framework for sorting out the organizational logic and interaction patterns of these drives. With this concept, we can clarify a series of specific questions: which drives gain the upper hand in internal struggles, which are suppressed and unable to emerge, how tangled internal conflicts are reorganized and resolved, and how a person integrates their various innate traits into a more consistent way of life. In this way, this concept can bear the weight of explanation. It helps us clarify human psychological activities and behavioural choices, without requiring us to forcibly assume the existence of any mysterious, intangible internal entity.

An analytical framework can also be applied to discussions of value norms. Nietzsche never derived moral codes that ordinary people should follow from a moral law that transcends the real world. Instead, the questions he pursues using the genealogical method are completely different: how did these values, which people treat as unassailable, first emerge? Whose psychological needs do they hide? What kind of social relations do they stabilize? What lifestyles do they ultimately foster, and which do they suppress to the point of choking or even eliminating?⁶ In

⁶ Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*. Translated by Walter Kaufmann. (New York: Vintage Books, 1967); C. Janaway, *Beyond Selflessness: Reading Nietzsche's Genealogy*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

this way, we can still judge the merits of these values without invoking any metaphysical essence. All the questions we need to ask are grounded: what actual impacts do the lifestyles supported by these values produce? Can they justify themselves? Do they have sufficient vitality to sustain themselves? What new possibilities can they open up for the future?

This does not mean that Nietzsche's philosophy degenerates into simplistic relativism in which *anything goes*. The judgments he makes about various lifestyles are never arbitrary. He consistently uses only one set of standards to distinguish good from bad: whether they have the strength to create new things, whether they sincerely affirm the value of life, whether they can achieve self-transcendence, and whether they can turn the suffering and conflicts they endure into a driving force for new creation.⁷ To put it plainly, his value judgments emerge naturally from descriptions of real life, rather than being imposed on everyone from a detached metaphysical world outside of life. Take *The Overman* as an example: many people interpret it as a ruler who rides on others and imposes their will on everyone, which is completely untenable. This concept actually aligns with Nietzsche's two core ideals: first, to transcend one's past self, and second, to create one's own values with one's own hands. A person who can integrate their own conflicting internal drives into a more mature and complete subjectivity possesses a strength that is first and foremost the psychological strength to sustain themselves and the survival strength to keep living; political power, if it ever comes, is secondary. The methodological fictionalism proposed in this paper strings together all these scattered dimensions. The concept of *the will to power* provides a usable vocabulary for explaining how humans form complete subjectivity and how various

values are created, without reducing either to the unchanging entities of metaphysics. It can also clarify the basis we use to judge a person or a culture: their lifestyles, which they create, sustain, and transcend.

The Will to Power as Methodological Fiction

At the core of interpreting the will to power as a methodological fiction is first distinguishing between the two acts of "affirming that something exists in reality" and "borrowing a concept to conduct explanation." Simply put, one does not have to treat an explanatory concept as something that actually exists in the world itself. A concept can be used to organize various phenomena that cannot be untangled without it. However, it need not be treated as an independent entity existing apart from the phenomena it explains. Nietzsche's handling of the will to power can be entirely interpreted in this way.

A key piece of textual evidence appears in *Beyond Good and Evil*, where Nietzsche uses a hypothetical tone when introducing the will to power: "If Nietzsche is it were only a hypothesis... let us see how far we can get with this assumption."⁸ The core significance of this passage lies in its research methodology: Nietzsche does not ask readers to accept a dogmatic assertion about the ultimate structure of the world, but invites everyone to test the explanatory power of this hypothesis. You do not need to rush to treat it as a truth first; try using it to see how many things it can explain, and that is exactly what Nietzsche means.

In this way, the will to power can be treated as an interpretive framework for sorting out recurring patterns: expansion, resistance, absorption, domination, transformation, self-overcoming, and the reorganization of all kinds of forces. It can clarify the connections among

⁷ B. Reginster, *The Affirmation of Life: Nietzsche on Overcoming*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006).

⁸ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, trans. W. Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1966), 36.

psychological drives, cultural practices, and systems of values and norms. Its utility far exceeds its literal denotation. This methodological fiction is valuable precisely because it can organize the originally chaotic and scattered various phenomena into a set of mutually referenceable patterns. Things that were originally scattered across different places and seemed unrelated can be connected and compared through this framework, which is its greatest use.

This interpretation can explain why the concept of the will to power is applicable across several interrelated fields. Without forcing it to be the ultimate essence of the world, it can still connect problems at all levels to produce a coherent explanation: at the psychological level, it can dismantle the process by which different drives conflict and establish a hierarchy among them. Human drives are never a chaotic mass; some seek to gain the upper hand, others seek to overpower others, and all these struggles and orderings can be clarified through the perspective of the will to power. At the genealogical level, it can track how various values generate and change. This does not mean these values are fixed from birth; rather, this framework allows us to see clearly how they emerged in history and how they transformed over time. At the social level, it can sort out all the struggles surrounding authority, identity, interpretation, and institutional forms. Who gets to define right and wrong, who can hold power, how the past is interpreted, what rules are to be established—all these disputes and games can be clearly understood from this perspective. At the level of value norms, it can also classify different forms of life—based on the extent to which these forms can foster affirmation, growth, creativity, and self-overcoming. Some lifestyles leave people increasingly closed and withered, while others push them to break through their own limits continually; this concept can help clarify

these differences. This concept connects originally scattered research directions without forcing all phenomena into a single underlying ontological category. There is no need to shave off the edges of psychological struggles, value evolution, and social conflicts to force them into the same box of “world origin”; these things can still be explained clearly.

Drawing a comparison with contemporary model-based research approaches can also help people understand this, as long as one does not misinterpret it as Nietzsche having already engaged in today’s philosophy of science. Models in modern science often undergo idealization, simplification, or abstraction solely to explain complex phenomena.⁹ For example, a model used to study weather will not account for the sway of every single leaf; it only captures core changes in air currents and temperature; otherwise, it would be impossible to conduct any analysis. The core commonality between the two lies in their research methodology: an analytical framework need not perfectly reproduce all the details of its research object to produce solid, usable explanations. There is no requirement for this framework to be the way the world itself is; as long as it can help you clarify the problem you are studying, it is sufficiently useful. Nietzsche’s will to power can be viewed in the same way: it is a structured analytical lens, and its value lies entirely in its ability to help us focus on the dynamic patterns and tensions in relationships. Just like a pair of correctly prescribed glasses can make an originally blurry scene clear, the lens itself is not the scene, but it can help you see all the details in it.

Claiming that everything from changes in human emotions to the dynastic shifts of societies must be derived from this single “origin” is exactly the old path that Nietzsche himself opposed most. The second is to dismiss it excessively: treating it

⁹ M. Weisberg, *Simulation and Similarity: Using Models to Understand the World*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

as useless decorative rhetoric and discarding it. Believing that this concept is just a literary trick Nietzsche used in his writing, with no actual explanatory power, completely wastes the value of this concept. Interpreting the will to power as a methodological fiction, by contrast, carves out a middle path. It retains the concept's original explanatory ambition, while rejecting its solidification into some fixed ontological entity—a solidification that would only turn it into a rigid dogma. It neither elevates it to the ultimate answer to the world, nor demotes it to a useless word game, striking exactly the position that allows it to give full play to its function.

Conclusion

This paper proposes that Nietzsche's will to power is best understood as a fictional concept at the methodological level. It is not an empty fantasy fabricated out of thin air. However, merely an analytical model used to interpret and organize Nietzsche's thoughts—treating it as a tool can not only sort out Nietzsche's scattered discourses, but also preserve the original pursuit of Nietzsche's philosophy to construct a complete system, and avoid tearing apart the coherent philosophical framework he originally intended to build into fragmented pieces. This approach to interpreting the will to power as a *methodological fiction* carves out a middle path between the two dominant interpretations of Nietzsche's will to power, evading the pitfalls of both extreme frameworks. The first is the strong metaphysical interpretation, whose flaw lies in reducing Nietzsche's anti-essentialist philosophy to yet another doctrine positing an "ultimate reality," thereby erasing the core critical stance underpinning his entire body of work. Nietzsche spent his entire career opposing the reification of any concept into a detached, ultimate form of existence. If this interpretation were to frame the will to power as the fundamental essence of all things in the world, it would directly turn Nietzsche into the exact type of traditional metaphysician he held in the lowest contempt, a complete betrayal of his

original intentions. The second is the pure deflationary interpretation, which shrinks the scope of the will to power's application so severely that the concept can no longer sustain the systematic connections among Nietzsche's psychology, genealogy, and value theory, rendering it incapable of stringing these contents into a coherent whole. All of Nietzsche's cross-disciplinary studies are fundamentally interconnected; they are not scattered, disconnected contents belonging to separate fields and operating in isolation from one another. His psychological research specifically deconstructs and analyses human instincts—the innate reactions and thoughts that all humans are born with—as the subjects of examination in this body of research. Immediately following this, his genealogy traces back step by step, ultimately unearthing the original origins of the moral values we uphold today. Further along, his theory of values explicitly lays out the criteria for judging what is good and bad, clearly teaching people how to define the goodness or badness of any event or object. If the role of the will to power is weakened excessively, this core thread that binds all these contents together would snap, and Nietzsche's philosophy would degenerate into a collection of fragmented views that can never again form a complete system. The analytical framework proposed in this paper retains the explanatory depth of this concept. It rejects its reification as an ontological ultimate entity—this aligns perfectly with the critical stance Nietzsche upheld throughout his life, avoiding both extremes.

Nietzsche's importance never lay in simply replacing traditional metaphysics with the will to power, in swapping out the ultimate concepts of "idea" and "substance" proposed by past philosophers with the four words of *will to power* to complete his work—this would be a far too superficial reading of his contribution. His truly profound contribution lies at the methodological level. He paved the way for all subsequent philosophers: one can still pursue rigorous philosophy without seeking

an ultimate foundation. He issued a challenge to the entire philosophical community: to explain the constant flux of the world, one must stop pretending to have found an ultimate, unchanging foundation underlying that flux. The world is inherently constantly changing; nothing is fixed and unchanging, and we must stop deceiving ourselves that we have unearthed an eternally immovable “root” beneath all change. The value of the will to power lies precisely in its status as a well-regulated interpretive tool: its scope is broad enough to string together a wide range of disparate phenomena, from individual psychological conflicts to social-historical transformations; all can be logically organized through it while retaining space for revision. It never hardens into a new dogma, and always aligns with Nietzsche’s critique of the absolute certainty of metaphysics. In this sense, Nietzsche can be regarded as a critical pioneer of post-metaphysical philosophical practice—not because he predicted all contemporary theories of today, not because he conceived of all the views philosophers would put forward centuries later, but because he proved that after traditional ultimate foundations collapse, philosophy’s work of explanation, critique, and interpretation can still retain its own rigor. Without relying on that outdated metaphysical framework to buttress it up, philosophy can still be solid and rigorous and fulfil its proper function.

An African example can clearly illustrate the normative significance and core political issues of this analytical framework. South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation process can be fully deconstructed as a national-scale historical game: all parties involved had completely different interpretations of responsibility, legitimacy, how history should be remembered, true justice, and how to repair social trauma. This process never advanced by applying a single, eternal, metaphysical definition of justice. To achieve its goal of reconciliation, it did not operate through an abstract, fixed framework; instead, it advanced step by step relying on various

institutions, the narratives told by all parties, the testimonies of victims, the political interests of different factions, historical conflicts that remained unresolved after decades, and all people’s different conceptions of how society should understand the past and build the future. Viewing this period of history through Nietzsche’s analytical lens does not presuppose that all these discussed values are merely excuses for the strong to oppress others. Instead, it pushes us to sort out step by step how different value judgments emerged from concrete historical relationships. Especially how they gradually gained public recognition, and what kind of collective life they could ultimately support.

This case also breaks one of the most common misinterpretations of Nietzsche: we must not reduce his concept of *the will to power* to mere oppression and control. Power is not only about suppression and coercion; it can also generate new things—it can foster new institutions, shape collective identity, create unifying narratives, and even enable people to act together. At the same time, the genealogical method Nietzsche always emphasized also requires us to engage in continuous critical reflection: which groups actually benefited from the mainstream interpretations that ultimately emerged, and which marginalized groups’ lifestyles were quietly pushed into invisible corners? This position, which holds both ends at once—focusing on the productive capacity of power to create new possibilities while criticizing the harm caused by its exclusivity—is far more rigorous and effective than the simplistic analysis that equates power directly with coercion. Nietzsche’s framework helps us deconstruct these contradictions without presupposing that any perspective possesses inherent, unassailable metaphysical authority. However, this framework also requires everyone who uses it to be sufficiently cautious and reflective, because the concept of *the will to power* itself could be used as a weapon to justify oppressive behaviour. That is why Nietzsche’s philosophy consistently requires us to conduct detailed

value differentiation in combination with specific contexts, rather than mindlessly celebrating power itself.

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