1 Précis

What does Nietzsche have to say?

What do we have to say about what Nietzsche has to say?

These simple-minded questions motivate the book you're now reading. In it, I map the prevalence and interconnections among the main topics and theses of Nietzsche's philosophical writings as they develop over time. Along the way, I compare this map with the composite map produced by other scholars. If the last decade of titles in the *Journal of Nietzsche Studies* is any guide, my fellow commentators think that, to understand Nietzsche's philosophy, you need to pay attention primarily to what he has to say about affirmation, agency, the ascetic ideal, drives, embodiment, emotions, the eternal recurrence, friendship, genealogy, health, history, inquiry, justice, life, nihilism, perspectivism, the self, the sovereign individual, tragedy, value, virtue, and the will to power. Of these, the topic that garnered the most attention from commentators was the will to power.

How accurate and informative is this composite map? If every scrap and trace of Nietzsche's writings were to disappear instantaneously, could we reconstruct his philosophy from the secondary literature? Would that reconstruction better resemble a map of the London Tube or Jackson Pollack's *Autumn Rhythm*? Could novices effectively use it as a guide to the philosophical terrain of Nietzsche's thought, or would they bloody their noses on unforeseen obstacles, wander through barren deserts, and fall down rabbit holds? I argue below that, while a few coastlines of Nietzsche's philosophy have been adequately sketched, we cartographers have generally done a poor job. We have marked several spots with an 'X' even though little philosophical treasure lies buried there. At the same time, we have neglected whole El Dorados of insight.

Commentators have a penchant for making claims like, "Nietzsche often talks about W," "Nietzsche typically associates X and Y," and "In his middle works, Nietzsche seldom engages with Z"? When I read these claims, I ask flat-footed questions like, "How often?" "What do you mean, 'typically'?" And, "How seldom is seldom?" If these sorts of claims have any probative value, it should be possible to verify or falsify them. Or — to turn the conditional around — if it's not possible to verify or falsify them, then these sorts of claims have no probative value and commentators should stop making them. My flat-footed questions ask about *prevalence, association*, and *change*. If we label each passage in Nietzsche's corpus based on its semantic content (i.e., whether it contains an expression for concept W, X, Y, and/or Z), it becomes possible to answer these questions. A concept is prevalent to the extent that it shows up in a large proportion of passages. It's associated with another concept to the extent that it's more likely to be present in a passage when the second concept is present. A concept becomes more prevalent over a philosopher's career to the extent that it shows up in higher proportions of passages over time.

Chapter 2 demonstrates how to do this using a synoptic digital humanities approach, which makes it possible to both visualize and analyze his use of various constructs within a given work and over the course of his philosophical career. I begin by explaining how to select the core constructs of a distant-reading inquiry. Next, I demonstrate how to operationalize these constructs for querying the *Nietzsche Source*. I then walk through the methodology for conducting systematic queries that can be reproduced by other researchers. The main content of this chapter visualizes and lays the groundwork for interpreting the semantic networks captured by my methodology. Here, I show that the most central constructs in Nietzsche's philosophy are

life, value, virtue, fear, instinct, courage, emotion, conscience, contempt, and *laughter* respectively. While this list overlaps somewhat with the catalogue of topics in the secondary literature, there are significant differences. In addition, tracking changes in what Nietzsche emphasizes over the course of his philosophical career shows that he initially focused more on drives than instincts, but in the mid-1880s shifted strongly towards instincts. At the same time, he largely ceased engaging with deontological constructs such as *obligation* and *justice* while intensifying his engagement with aretaic and axiological constructs such as *virtue*, *value*, and various discrete virtues and values. These developments suggest that Nietzsche should be understood as an idiosyncratic philosopher of virtue who associates virtues less with rational dispositions acquired through habit and more with instinctual activity.

Subsequent chapters are divided into three groups. The first group (chapters 3, 4, and 5) establishes the general contours of Nietzsche's socio-moral framework by connecting the constructs of *drive, instinct, type, virtue,* and *value.* The second group, (chapters 6 through 10) is a series of case studies of distinctively Nietzschean virtues. These include *curiosity, courage,* the *pathos of distance,* the *sense of humor,* and *solitude.* The third and final group (chapters 11 and 12) shows how the Nietzschean virtues are held together by *conscience* and *integrity*, then points the way to future research in moral psychology, in Nietzsche studies, and in digital humanities approaches to the history of philosophy more broadly.

Chapter 3 begins by identifying the main questions and points of contention in the secondary literature concerning *instinct, drive,* and *type.* Next, I track Nietzsche's engagement with each construct over the course of his philosophical career and establish the further constructs most closely associated with them. I then offer an interpretation according to which drives are act-directed (rather than outcome-directed) motivational and evaluative dispositions. An agent's drives move her to engage in and positively evaluate a range of characteristic actions regardless of the consequences that may eventuate from those actions. Drives thus differ from preferences and desires in being associated primarily with the processes of agency rather than with teleologically-specified states of affairs. This feature of drives explains and unites a range of seemingly irrational behaviors in which an agent performs an action that is drive-expressive despite the fact that she knows or could easily come to know that the action will not produce a desired state of affairs — and may be outright counter-productive or even self-destructive. I also argue that instincts are an important sub-class of drives: they are innate, whereas drives can be either innate or acquired. In addition, instincts and other drives are mutable on several dimensions. Their intensity or ferocity can wax and wane. The objects on which they end up venting themselves are not predetermined and can take a wide range. And their structural interrelations can vary. One drive may dominate another drive now but be subordinated to it later. Nevertheless, which drives someone embodies at all is a largely stable feature of their psychology, and the intensity of a drive changes only slowly and within certain constraints. Finally, an agent's instincts and other drives constitute her psychological type.

Chapter 4 begins by reviewing the secondary literature on Nietzsche's engagement with the constructs of *virtue* and *value.* I then offer an interpretation according to which a Nietzschean virtue is a well-calibrated instinct or other drive. What it takes for a drive to be well-calibrated involves both internal and external (social) integration, or at least non-interference. In particular, a drive is a virtue to the extent that it is conducive to life, does not systematically or reliably induce negative self-directed emotions that respond to fixed aspects of the self, and does not systematically or reliably induce reactions from the agent's community that are liable to be internalized as negative self-directed emotions that respond to fixed aspects of the self. The first

and second constraints together are what I call "internal integration." One drive is integrated with another when expressing it typically also expresses the other (strong integration) or at least does not frustrate the expression of the other (weak integration). Since drives induce not only characteristic patterns of action but also characteristic patterns of evaluation, integrated drives will tend to result in actions that the agent approves of or at least is not disposed to disapprove. I call the third constraint "external integration." Like internal integration, external integration can be strong (the agent's community tends to approve of her actions and the drives that motivate them) or weak (the agent's community is not disposed to disapprove of her actions and the drives that motivate them). Since types are constellations of drives that differ from person to person, different virtues are fitting for people who belong to different types. In many cases, just a few virtues will best fit a given type. Those virtues then constitute cardinal virtues of the type. If this is right, then Nietzsche held a *type-relative unity of virtue thesis*. I also argue that Nietzsche was an exemplarist about virtue. In his framework, exemplars of different types elicit different discrete emotions in people with fine-tuned affective sensitivity. While some exemplars inspire admiration that leads to emulation, others incite envy and the motivation to agonistic one-upsmanship. Exemplars of bad or deplorable types provoke contempt and disgust, which serve as signposts of what to avoid. Negative exemplars are also the targets of Nietzsche's *ad hominem* arguments, which turn out not to be the simple-minded fallacies that he is sometimes accused of committing. If this is right, then Nietzschean exemplarism offers a richer, more evaluatively and motivationally nuanced moral psychology than the contemporary monochrome admire-and-emulate model.

In chapter 5, I argue that one's community and the language used by that community play a constitutive role in the cultivation of virtue. This chapter begins by arguing that, for Nietzsche, part of what it means for a person to be of a certain type is that she is susceptible to social determination of her character. Some types are *meta-types*. They're not dispositions to *act* in certain ways, but dispositions to *become the sort of person who acts* in particular to-be-specified ways through the shaping power of social factors. I then distinguish two Nietzschean styles of becoming what one is called: the social and the reflexive. Someone whose character is built according to the social plan becomes what others consider and call him — good, bad, or mixed. Nietzsche associates this blueprint for the construction of character with slavishness. By contrast, someone whose personality is built according to the reflexive plan becomes what she considers and calls herself. Nietzsche associates this method of personality construction with masterliness. More specifically, I advance the following interpretation of the relation between virtues (and vices) and the terms that designate them: Nietzsche thinks there is a *looping effect* between the psychological disposition named by a character trait-term and the practice of using that term. While he affirms that people are differentially disposed to certain patterns of behavior (because of differences in the strength and configuration of their instincts and other drives), he conceives of these dispositions as fluid both in their objects and, to a lesser degree, in their strength and aim. The valence and content of the labels applied to an agent, together with the power-relation between the labeler and labeled, interact with her preexisting psychological dispositions to produce the kind of person she eventually becomes. Moreover, as people's dispositions shift under the impress of labels, Nietzsche's exemplarism implies that the meaning of the labels themselves evolves. If nobility is whatever noble people are disposed to think, feel, and do, then when noble people's psychological dispositions change, so too does the meaning of nobility (and of 'nobility'). Pre-existing psychological drives and other dispositions are shaped by the activity of labeling, which in turn modulates the meaning of the label, which further shapes the

psychological disposition, and so on in a dynamic feedback loop. In addition, I discuss Nietzsche's frequent references to eponymous types, which represent new values. And I argue that by praising an ambiguously-defined type of person, one can induce type-relevant actions and dispositions in one's audience.

Chapter 6, on curiosity, is the first of five case studies of the virtues of a specific type-in-context: Nietzsche's own. If we want to discern Nietzsche's virtue theory, we need to look not (or at least not only) at his praise of ancient aristocracies, of Napoleon, and of Cesare Borgia, but (also) at his self-attributions. This allows us to pick out the set of traits he considers virtues *for his type* — a modern type — and therefore perhaps a set of virtues that would be attainable by and appropriate to some other modern individuals. Thus, chapters 6 through 10 are not a universal account of "the virtues." It's impossible to give such an account within the Nietzschean socio-moral framework. Instead, the most general account possible catalogues the drives that constitute virtues for a particular type of person in a particular social and cultural context. Since Nietzsche celebrated the virtues of his own type so frequently in his writings, the most promising case study is his own type in his own context.

Chapter 6 shows how Nietzsche uses perspectives to support inquiry. For him, a perspective is emotional and evaluative. The perspective someone inhabits leads them to see some things as good, right, noble, admirable, desirable, or enviable, while also leading them to see other things as bad, wrong, base, contemptible, disgusting, aversive, or pitiable. One's perspective reveals and emphasizes (sometimes overemphasizes) some of the evaluative properties of the things in one's ambit. But the world is a complex place. Inhabiting only one perspective is liable to make complex evaluative phenomena difficult or impossible to appreciate. Since perspective-free inquiry is impossible, Nietzsche recommends combatting these unavoidable distortions by taking up different perspectives over time. But you can't simply decide to feel contempt, anger, disgust, sadness, fear, joy, or surprise at something. Emotions need to be induced and cultivated in more distal and indirect ways. This leads me to Nietzsche's repeated injunctions to get control over one's emotions, which I argue is an epistemic methodology. Perspectivism is meant to reveal, through the controlled cycling-through of various emotional and evaluative points of view, properties that would otherwise be invisible and to rectify inquiry by pitting biases of perspectives against each other. Next, I argue that the reason Nietzsche developed this methodology was to express the virtue of curiosity. Nietzschean curiosity is a drive to engage in inquiry, especially when that inquiry is into interesting subjects and is both intellectually and morally challenging. Someone with Nietzschean curiosity doesn't concern herself with the acquisition of true but trivial beliefs because her "great *passion*" forces her to "live continually in the thundercloud of the highest problems and the heaviest responsibilities" (GS 351). And Nietzschean curiosity does not stop when it arrives at an answer; it always finds a new question, a new investigation, a new inquiry. The curious person is concerned with the product of investigation; she would not be satisfied with false beliefs, unsupported beliefs, or the withholding of judgment. But she is even more concerned with the process of investigation; she can't stop thinking, inferring, refuting, synthesizing, and so on. This makes sense if the virtue of curiosity is a drive, since drives impel their bearers to act. Nietzschean curiosity is a matter of struggling with difficult, interesting questions.

In chapter 7, I argue that Nietzschean courage, since it is a drive, is a disposition to engage in characteristic patterns of activity and evaluation. Unlike courage as we might intuitively conceive it, his version of courage is more a matter of intellectual confrontation than of martial or physical contest. It's a matter of managing one's fears in the midst of inquiry and of

approaching epistemic phenomena with aplomb and self-assurance. It's also a matter of doubting where others are certain, of exercising one's conscience about questions, and of laughing contemptuously at the sacred values and sacred cows of one's community. While it may be uncontroversial to say that courage is the virtue most relevant to responding to threats, Nietzsche has an idiosyncratic take on which threats are most worth finding and facing. What dangers really confront the insatiable investigator? Nietzsche sees curiosity and thinking well of people (both others and oneself) as implacable enemies. If one seeks the truth only to do the good, he says, one "finds nothing" (BGE 35). The curiosity of the moral psychologist must be ruthless. If Nietzschean curiosity is a matter of investigating difficult problems, of overcoming great intellectual resistances, then one of its purest expressions is in the investigation precisely of the most nauseating facts about ourselves. The soul of the intellectually courageous investigator is the battleground on which curiosity contends with "life-preserving errors," where the question "To what extent can truth endure incorporation?" is put to the torture (GS 110). Someone possessed of Nietzschean courage is impelled to seek out and overcome fearsome intellectual challenges. Someone possessed of Nietzschean courage is impelled to appreciate uncertainty and ignorance, to be attracted to inquiry, and to feel contempt for epistemic laziness, overconfidence, and faith.

In chapter 8, I argue that the pathos of distance is the Nietzschean virtue distinctively associated with the emotions of contempt and disgust, which tend to motivate people in their own characteristic ways and lead them to adopt a characteristic pattern of evaluative perspectives. I begin by examining the state of the art in contemporary moral psychology on contempt and disgust. Then I explore the semantic network of *contempt, disgust,* and the *pathos of distance* in Nietzsche's corpus. I argue that Nietzsche appropriated and modified a medieval taxonomy of *spernere mundum* (contempt for the world), *spernere neminem* (contempt for no one), *spernere se ipsum* (contempt for oneself), and *spernere se sperni* (contempt for being contemned). Each of these, though especially the last two, serve epistemic functions by making it possible to investigate contemptible aspects of oneself and one's community. Next, I turn from contempt to disgust. While these emotions are sometimes put to the same use, disgust in particular is Nietzsche's favored tool for detaching from an ideal. Such detachment is essential for those who wish to investigate ideals with clear eyes and thus serves an epistemic function. If this is right, then contempt and disgust support the intellectually courageous inquiry that Nietzsche associates with the virtues discussed in the previous two chapters. Next, I turn from the emotions characteristic of the pathos of distance to the pathos of distance itself. Nietzsche uses this phrase in only six passages, but each is highly informative. Finally, I discuss the bleak prospects for a Nietzschean democratic ethos. Several commentators have argued that, though it might not seem so at first blush, such an ethos is consistent with Nietzsche's overall philosophy and his celebration of the pathos of distance in particular. I show that these arguments are unsound. I do, however, also offer a very different argument — founded in Nietzsche's own recognition of the difficulty of acquiring knowledge about other's drives and one's own drives — for the (merely-instrumental) value of democracy.

In chapter 9, I turn to the fourth characteristically Nietzschean virtue: having a sense of humor. A sense of humor, which often expresses contempt, is allied most closely with the pathos of distance, but it also integrates with both curiosity and intellectual courage. Moreover, a sense of humor can be elicited, shaped, and sharped through social processes — especially the laughter of others who share the agent's type. As with the pathos of distance, when it comes to having a sense of humor, the emphasis is more on evaluations than actions. However, action is not entirely

absent from the picture. For Nietzsche, a sense of humor is essential to opening up the path to inquiry into the laughable and contemptible. Someone with this kind of sense of humor doesn't just wait for risible moments and encounters; they hunt down the laughable things in life. Some of their inquiries terminate in laughing affirmation of truths that would be hard to take without a mirthful buffer. Some of their inquiries terminate in laughing negation of cherished illusions. And some of the most important inquiries that having a sense of humor fosters are into oneself and one's own character. Nietzsche thinks that the ability to laugh at oneself supports *spernere se ipsum*, which in turn makes possible both self-knowledge and self-overcoming. Someone who is able to laugh at their own imperfections is also, sometimes, able to see those imperfections as unimportant. This makes it possible to abandon them, to change, to become a different and perhaps more worthy and interesting person.

  In chapter 10, I address the fifth characteristically Nietzschean virtue: solitude. At first blush, it might seem odd to call solitude a virtue. Virtues are traits (drives) of agents, whereas solitude is a relation between an agent and the community from which he withdraws or is excluded. However, I show that solitude, just like courage, must be understood in Nietzsche's own idiosyncratic way. When he talks about solitude, he has in mind emotional rather than physical distance. Solitude is the drive to get away from (and often above) one's in-group or local community and view it critically. Because Nietzschean virtues are constitutively social, this motion tends to be associated with pangs of loneliness, alienation, self-doubt, and even despair. However, just as the ability to laugh at oneself is an important part of self-criticism and self-improvement, so the ability to look from a distance down on one's community is an important part of cultural critique. Solitude is thus the virtue that opposes vices like chauvinism, narrow-mindedness, and cozy cultural smugness. In addition, solitude is connected to the perspectivist methodology outlined in chapter 6 because it is essentially restless. The person who embodies Nietzschean solitude does not simply wander off into the wilderness never to be seen or heard from again. Instead, he sojourns in solitude then returns with cultural critique. He is forever adopting new perspectives on his own community.

  In chapter 11, I show how conscience ties the Nietzschean virtues together — in other words, how it helps the agent to achieve what I earlier called internal integration. Nietzsche distinguishes several types of conscience. First, there is conscience *simpliciter*, which he identifies with the herd instinct. This conscience dictates some actions as obligatory and forbids others as impermissible. Second, there is the good conscience, which someone enjoys to the extent that expressing their drives neither induces negative self-directed emotions that respond to fixed aspects of the self nor provokes reactions from the agent's community that are liable to be internalized as negative self-directed emotions that respond to fixed aspects of the self. In other words, the good conscience names some of the components of internal and external integration that transmute a drive into a virtue. Third, there is the bad conscience, which Nietzsche construes as the instinct of cruelty turned upon oneself or some aspect of oneself. It might at first seem that Nietzsche thinks the bad conscience is to be done away with. However, I show that he actually associates it with *spernere se ipsum*. The bad conscience thus has work to do in the cultivation of virtue. But it can only do that work if it is directed or aimed at aspects of the self that are not fixed. Moreover, it can only do that work if it does not, as a side-effect, undermine or destroy the embodied and psychological conditions conducive to the life of the agent. Thus, Nietzsche aims to harness even the bad conscience in the service of virtue. This is especially the case when it comes to the intellectual conscience, which turns out to be a manifestation of the bad conscience in the epistemic domain.

In the concluding prospectus, I point to three directions for future research that draws on or is inspired by this book. First, empirical moral psychology may benefit from systematic inquiry into the traits Nietzsche identifies as virtues. I've made one step in this direction when it comes to curiosity, but much more could be done to assess the empirical credentials of this construct, as well as to examine its causes and consequences. Likewise, recent research on disgust-sensitivity has produced promising results that relate to the pathos of distance. However, the constructs of intellectual courage, the contemptuous aspect of the pathos of distance, the nature and potential functions and benefits (and risks) of having a sense of humor, and the nature and potential functions and benefits (and risks) of Nietzschean solitude have yet to be investigated. Naturally, I do not expect his entire framework to stand up to critical empirical scrutiny. But it is an attractive framework in which to explore promising hypotheses. Second, I point to both gluts and gaps in the philosophical commentary on Nietzsche. As should be clear already, I think that various constructs have received far more attention than they deserve. These include the sovereign individual, resentment and — perhaps most of all — the will to power. Of course, it's easy to throw stones. So what I mainly aim to do here is show that there are exciting prospects for Nietzsche scholars to examine, such as admiration, trust, and shame. Finally, I lay out an agenda for large-scale collaborative effort to apply digital humanities methods to the history of philosophy. The same methods used in this book to examine Nietzsche's corpus could be turned, with relatively little retooling, to any other philosopher whose writings are digitized. This would make it possible to engage in more systematic, reproducible, criticizable, and corrigible research in the history of philosophy. In addition, if interoperable tools are used to approach different philosophers, it will become possible to visualize, analyze, and connect the sweep of philosophy across the centuries