

Nietzsche's Natschuralism: The Role of Critical Psychology in Philosophy

Charlie Huenemann

Utah State University



Many commentators now see Nietzsche as a naturalist in philosophical orientation. Huenemann argues that these broad accounts of Nietzsche's naturalism have missed a crucial feature, which is that his naturalism was oriented around his psychology. He believed that all cognitive agents are subject to psychological forces which can distort or prejudice their inquiries, and so psychology must be applied as a corrective to any scientific theory that is proposed. His critical psychological naturalism is further distinguished by the way in which he embedded psychology in social evolution, so that human psychology itself varies over time and place. The upshot of this approach is that, in order to understand reality (according to Nietzsche), one must first understand the way in which social evolution has shaped the psychological structure of the time, and the ways in which that structure may have warped the other natural sciences of the time.

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