

Research Article

Will to Power: The Utility of Friedrich Nietzsche's Moral Philosophy for Philosophical Counseling

Guy Du Plessis¹

1. Utah State University, United States

This article explores the utility of Nietzsche's ethical thought for philosophical counselling. Central to the philosophical counseling process is philosophical counsellors applying the work of philosophers to inspire, educate, and guide their counsees in dealing with life problems. For example, Logic-Based Therapy (LBT), a method of philosophical counselling developed by Elliot Cohen, provides a rational framework for confronting problems of living, where the counselor helps the counselee find an uplifting philosophy that promotes a guiding virtue that acts as an antidote to unrealistic and often self-defeating conclusions derived from irrational premises. I present the argument that Nietzsche's moral philosophy, and more specifically his analysis of suffering, is one such uplifting philosophy which can be of utility to philosophical counselors to help their counsees with confronting problems of living. According to Bernard Reginster, suffering forms the bedrock of Nietzsche's life-affirming concept of the will to power. Nietzsche's notion of the will to power radically alters our conception and significance of suffering – and that the will to power is best understood as man's desire for the activity of overcoming resistance. Nietzsche's analysis implies that the fundamental human impulse is not to avoid suffering, but instead to will nothing less than suffering itself. To find meaning in suffering is tantamount to affirming life itself.

And life itself, confided this secret to me: 'Behold,' it said, 'I am that which must always overcome itself.'

Friedrich Nietzsche – *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*¹

In ancient Greece, philosophy transcended mere academic study, embodying a mode of existence that aimed to transform the whole of the individual's life. Philosophy was not only a discipline but also “an

art of living, a method of spiritual progress,” – it was a way of life.² More recently, the French philosopher Pierre Hadot has contributed to a resurgence of interest in the Hellenistic philosophies as arts of living and reinvigorated the concept of *philosophy as a way of life* (PWL).³ PWL, according to Hadot, is based largely on the practice of “spiritual exercises,” intended to transform the practitioner’s way of perceiving the world, and mode of being, in order to enable them to lead a freer, more happy existence. PWL understands philosophy in its fullest sense as profoundly transformational.

Logic-based Therapy (LBT), derived from Rational-Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT),⁴ is a philosophical counseling modality developed by American philosopher Elliot Cohen and is a modern-day example of PWL.⁵ Like other cognitive-behavioral approaches, LBT focuses on the refutation of logical fallacies (it identifies eleven common ‘cardinal fallacies’), but it is differentiated from these approaches by its uniquely philosophical approach to “problems of living.”⁶ In LBT, each of the eleven cardinal fallacies has an associated guiding virtue that counteracts “self-defeating, unrealistic conclusions [derived] from irrational premises in practical reasoning.”⁷ This then points the way for choosing a philosophical perspective or uplifting philosophy for promoting the guiding virtue.⁸

This article explores the utility of the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche’s ethical thought for philosophical counselling. Central to the philosophical counseling process is philosophical counsellors applying the work of philosophers to inspire, educate, and guide their counsees in dealing with life problems. For example, LBT provides a rational framework for confronting problems of living, where the counselor helps the counselee find an uplifting philosophy that promotes a guiding virtue that acts as an antidote to unrealistic and often self-defeating conclusions derived from irrational premises. I present the argument that Nietzsche’s moral philosophy, and more specifically his analysis of suffering, is one such uplifting philosophy which can be of utility to philosophical counselors to help their counsees with confronting problems of living. According to Bernard Reginster, suffering forms the bedrock of Nietzsche’s life-affirming concept of the *will to power*. Nietzsche’s notion of the will to power radically alters our conception and significance of suffering – and that the will to power is best understood as man’s desire for the activity of overcoming resistance. Nietzsche’s analysis implies that the fundamental human impulse is not to avoid suffering, but instead to will nothing less than suffering itself. To find meaning in suffering is tantamount to affirming life itself.

To highlight the utility of Nietzsche's moral philosophy, in particular his analysis of suffering and notion of the *will to power*, as an uplifting philosophy, I will outline the six steps of LBT in the context of addiction treatment and recovery. I will highlight how some elements of the moral philosophy of Nietzsche, as per LBT methodology, can serve as an uplifting philosophy and philosophical antidote to counteract fallacious thinking that contributes to addiction.

I find Nietzsche's philosophy useful in the context of addiction recovery as his conceptualization of philosophy "as therapy," and as an ensemble of spiritual exercises and techniques of *askesis* (self-transformation), can inform an addiction recovery pathway. This is based on the premise that Nietzsche's philosophy "is a kind of eudaimonistic teaching that aims at a healing of individuals and the cultures they inhabit by way of self-perfection," and that he "believed that philosophy is something to be lived rather than to be stated and thought."⁹ Horst Hutter, who articulates Nietzsche's philosophy through the lens of Hadot's account of Hellenistic philosophies as arts of living in his book *Shaping the Future: Nietzsche's New Regime of the Soul and its Ascetic Practices*, argues that only by understanding Nietzsche's books as a means of self-transformation can we make sense of his philosophy; he remarks that

Nietzsche was steeped in ancient philosophy and that he derived his understanding of philosophy from the ancients. Thus, he never considered "doctrines" to be more than instruments of philosophy, and he thought writing to be subservient to speaking. His books hence do not contain his "philosophy" but point to a philosophy to be lived and experienced on the basis of specific ascetic practices.¹⁰

Moreover, according to Michael Ure, Foucault claimed that Nietzsche was part of a group of nineteenth-century German philosophers whose goal was to revive the Greco-Roman model of philosophy as an "art of living," in contrast to an enduring effort to purge it from philosophy.¹¹ Ure, in his book *Nietzsche's Therapy: Self-cultivation in the Middle Works*, succinctly articulates the Nietzschean view of philosophy's import and states that it "is a way of transforming one's life, and so it is how one lives and dies that is the measure of the value of philosophy."¹²

This article has the secondary purpose of also highlighting the utility of LBT for addiction recovery, as I have argued elsewhere.¹³ I explore how LBT can shape a philosophically oriented recovery pathway for individuals in addiction recovery.¹⁴ I have previously suggested that PWL can be a compelling, and legitimate recovery pathway for individuals in addiction recovery, as one of many recovery

pathways.¹⁵ Considering that there is an ostensibly low efficacy rate for the treatment of addiction, articulating the value of PWL as a recovery pathway provides a conceptual and methodological framework for the development of novel philosophically-based addiction treatment and recovery-oriented programs—thus expanding the treatment and recovery options available for those seeking recovery from addiction. There are few books that promote the value of philosophy in addiction recovery,¹⁶ and that fosters a conversation between philosophy and Twelve-step spirituality,¹⁷ and Stoic and Buddhist philosophies have been applied within the context of addiction recovery. Moreover, philosophical metatheories like integral metatheory have been applied as conceptual frameworks in developing recovery programs.¹⁸ But research that specifically argues for PWL (as articulated by Hadot) as a legitimate addiction recovery pathway has only recently been suggested.¹⁹

I also suggest that LBT may be a particularly suitable intervention when challenging the unrealistic conclusions derived from illogical premises in practical reasoning that contribute to addiction, because it can contest irrational beliefs in a way that could mitigate the fragmentation anxiety that often arises when individuals relinquish maladaptive selfobject organizations.

The subsequent section offers an analysis of Nietzsche's ethical thought, underscoring its potential as an uplifting philosophy conducive to fostering specific guiding virtues. I will start my discussion with Nietzsche's rejection of traditional metaphysics, which he believed was based on a false distinction between the world of appearance and the world of reality. Believing the fictitious idea of the metaphysical beyond to have a greater reality than appearance results in using this superimposed fiction as a roadmap for how best to live one's life – and according to Nietzsche, will result in a negation of life, nihilism, and narcosis.

Nietzsche's Affirmation of Life

Nietzsche's philosophical discourse provides a comprehensive critique of the fundamental moral values inherent in modern Western society.²⁰ Nietzsche puts forward an alternative set of values or prescriptions as an antidote to the pervasive nihilism and life-negative values characterizing European history. According to him, this nihilism has its roots in Platonism and was further entrenched by Christianity.

Nietzsche's philosophical project focuses on exploring the potential to surmount nihilism, defined as the belief in life's meaninglessness or its unworthiness of being lived. The prevalent interpretation

posits nihilism as a perspective concerning our values, which become devalued due to their lack of objective substantiation. Contrasting with this common interpretation, Bernard Regnister proposes that Nietzsche perceives nihilism primarily as a statement about the *world* and our *existence* within it, rather than about our values. I will explain below why Nietzsche draws this conclusion.²¹

Nietzsche's philosophy is often characterized by his critique of traditional metaphysics. In the first chapter of *Human, All Too Human*, titled "Of First and Last Things," Nietzsche denounces the methodology employed in traditional metaphysical systems, labeling them as the very worst methods of knowledge.²² According to Nietzsche, Western philosophy can be viewed as a progression of ideas related to the relationship between the "true world" (metaphysical) and the apparent world. Nietzsche contends that the roots of the notion of the true world can be traced back to the ancient differentiation between 'appearance' and 'reality.' This is a plausible argument, particularly when examining the most quintessentially metaphysical doctrines that have been put forth throughout the history of Western philosophy.

For example, Plato finds the truth of Being in ideal "Forms," of which the sensible realm of becoming is merely a shadow or image. The eternal truth of these Forms or Ideas is only accessible through ratiocinative discourse or dialectics.²³ Rene Descartes, too, finds confidence and assurance in logical "clear and distinct ideas," rather than the data presented to him by his flawed senses. Ultimately, the clarity and distinctness of these ideas are guaranteed by a transcendent God.²⁴ Even Immanuel Kant, who seeks to abolish fanciful metaphysical speculation by establishing the boundaries of reason itself, ultimately succumbs to a form of transcendence when he posited the existence of "things in themselves," (*Ding an sich*) which are the ultimate objects of experience that cannot be known through representation or observation.²⁵

Nietzsche argued that there is no transcendent realm beyond the world of experience, and he did not want to reduce the problem of multiplicity and becoming to insubstantial appearance. According to Michel Haar, Nietzsche rejects the post-Socratic concept of being and aims to revive the pre-Socratic ideal of unity and totality, particularly that of Heraclitus.²⁶ Haar (1996) suggests that to understand Nietzsche's holism, it is crucial to consider the influence of Heraclitus. According to Haar (1996), Nietzsche contends that Heraclitus derived two related negations from his world-intuition about becoming. Firstly, Heraclitus rejected the dualism between the physical and metaphysical worlds, which entails the rejection of the idea of absolute opposites. Nietzsche regards this as a fundamental critique of both Plato and Kant's worldviews. Secondly, Heraclitus denied the existence of being and

asserted that all he perceives is becoming. Overall, Nietzsche, according to Haar, considers Heraclitus' views on becoming as crucial for the development of his own philosophy, as it helped him to break away from traditional metaphysical dualisms and embrace a more dynamic and fluid view of reality.

Nietzsche's pre-Socratic holism has a striking resemblance to South African statesman and philosopher Jan Smuts' theory of Holism.²⁷ Like Nietzsche, Smuts rejected the materialist conception and argued that a purely materialist view of the natural world constitutes "a mere collection of disjecta membra, drained of all union or mutual relations, dead, barren, inactive, unintelligible."²⁸ Even though Smuts, like Nietzsche, rejects a strictly materialist conception, he did not revert to idealism. Both argue for a more dynamic and fluid view of reality.²⁹ Similar to Nietzsche, Smuts writes, "We have to return to the fluidity and plasticity of nature and experience in order to find the concepts of reality."³⁰

According to Nietzsche, the moment one infers the existence of a 'world beyond' or 'true world,' one erroneously superimposes a completely fictitious idea of a reality beyond appearance upon appearance itself.³¹ The belief in and privileging of the true world carries significant implications for morality and for how to best live one's life. For example, Georg Hegel³² and other 'true world' philosophers hold the assumption that there is a destination and that to reach it is to enter (or re-enter) a state of bliss, a paradise, a heaven, or utopia. Nietzsche often referred to this other-worldly destination as a "true world," and true-world ideologies give meaning to our lives by representing it as a journey towards an arrival that will more than make up for the discomfort of our present lives. For Nietzsche, even secular true-world ideologies like Marxism, or 'socialism,' as he called it, are a perpetuation of the idea of God by other means.³³³⁴ Nietzsche would contend, correctly, that these utopian true-world ideologies often have disastrous consequences individually and collectively.³⁵

Ideology as a *pharmakon* – a word that in ancient Greek meant both 'cure' and 'poison' – can provide a sense of purpose, meaning, and direction to individuals and communities, offering a framework for understanding the world and a basis for action, and can also be a source of dogmatism, intolerance, and violence, leading to the oppression and suffering of those who do not adhere to its beliefs. For Nietzsche, true-world ideologies are a *pharmakon* that poisons – because they are inherently life-negating, as by positing a true world it leads to the belief that our highest values are unattainable in this world. When a *pharmakon* is poisonous, it can promote the development of an 'ideology addiction.' In previous publications, I argued that the exposure and adherence to an ideology can be

mood-altering or psychoactive, and consequently potentially addictive – in particular, the ‘intoxication’ when being transmogrified into a utopian fantasy world.³⁶³⁷

Additionally, utopic ideologies typically breed what Nietzsche called *ressentiment*. Nietzsche argues that people consumed by *ressentiment* are “cellar rats full of revenge and hatred,” concealing “a whole, vibrating realm of subterranean revenge.”³⁸ It is not hard to see why collectivist utopias, predicated on perfectionistic views of human nature and social relations, can lead to *ressentiment*, since utopia can never be actualized – and often there is an ‘other’ that hinders the actualization of the utopia, onto whom collective blame is projected.³⁹

Similarly, French philosopher Simone de Beauvoir highlights that those ethical systems offered by true-world philosophies, which claim to give final answers to our ethical dilemmas and provide objective and authoritarian justifications for our actions, offer dangerous consolations from the disquietude of existential ambiguity. Utopian visions of heaven, paradise, or classless society foster a mentality that emphasizes ends as justification for means, promoting the sacrifice of the present, and often the individual, for an anticipated future. Such utopic thinking has underpinned historical horrors like inquisitions, genocides, gulags, and Auschwitz.⁴⁰ Beauvoir posits that human freedom must be engaged in pursuits originating from a spontaneous act of choosing, with ends and objectives that are never viewed as independent absolutes. The significance of human actions is derived not from an exterior and absolutist authority, such as a deity, ideology, or institution, but from the deliberate act of choosing them. Ethical conduct arises only through this acknowledgement and not through an evasion into static absolutist goals or utopic fantasy.⁴¹

Because of the life-negative values inherent in traditional metaphysics, Nietzsche diagnosed Western culture as being fundamentally narcotized. He referred to Christianity, alongside alcohol, as “two great European narcotics” that have produced in modernity what he repeatedly refers to as a “sleep.”⁴² Jason Ciaccio notes that “Nietzsche does not simply correlate Christianity and alcohol; he looks to understand the former in terms of the latter...Christianity anaesthetizes, and its physiological depression is the same as that of alcohol. Both are palliatives...both tend towards quiescence and resignation, or in other words: nihilism.”⁴³

Nietzsche’s enduring enmity toward Christianity was in part an attempt to overcome the anesthesia of traditional metaphysics. The ‘ascetic priest,’ a figure Nietzsche sketches in detail in the third essay of *The Genealogy of Morals*, is heavily implicated in Christian narcosis, which “comes to prominence only

in the presence of a waning of life, a physiological disturbance in need of medication. The sufferer, unable to act out against an external cause of suffering, experiences a discomfort in need of narcotic relief,” and “by locating the cause of suffering inwardly, as guilt and sin, the ascetic priest enables the sufferer to release tension” by identifying and therefore acting out “against the putative cause of suffering: one’s self.”⁴⁴ As a peddler of metaphysical narcotics, the ascetic priest provides a means of self-narcosis to alleviate the discomfort of those not capable of coping with suffering and offers what Nietzsche refers to as “a repose of deepest sleep.”⁴⁵

It must be noted that Nietzsche was not critical of religion *per se*, but only of certain types.⁴⁶ Similarly, in relation to ‘intoxication,’ he makes a distinction between that “which promotes narcosis, the banalizing and dulling effects of contemporary life, and that which promotes intoxication [*Rausch*], a state of the creation of values, style, and self” – which Nietzsche, as a cultural physician, prescribes for rousing from the narcotic slumber of modernity’s quiescence.⁴⁷

One could argue that Nietzsche’s declaration that “God is dead” in *The Gay Science* also heralded the moment Western society lost its principal metaphysical narcotic and “repose of deepest sleep” – and that it was not a statement, but a warning that “when we unchained the earth from its sun” what “water is there for us to clean ourselves?” and what “festivals of atonement, what sacred games shall we have to invent?” – a warning that we will now seek out, and invent perhaps even more terrifying narcotics (secular ideologies, techno-utopias, and psychoactive substances) that provide a “repose of deepest sleep.”⁴⁸ Nietzsche perceives the use of drugs (an escape into a narcotic true world) and true-world philosophies as similarly nihilistic (he equates “stimulants and brandy” to a “forgery in ideals”)⁴⁹ because both obscure the real world’s suffering and detach users, through fantasy, from inherent meaning.

Bernard Reginster interprets Nietzsche’s view of suffering as a crucial component of his concept of the “will to power,” in contrast to the German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer’s “will to life.”⁵⁰ Schopenhauer describes life as an ‘unquenchable thirst,’ a “lack that can never be fulfilled,”⁵¹ as an unending void of dissatisfaction, characterized by suffering, boredom, and perpetual wants. In *The World as Will and Representation*, Schopenhauer asserts, “so long as our consciousness is filled by our own will, so long as we are given up to the throng of desires with its constant hopes and fears, so long as we are the subject of willing, we never obtain lasting happiness or peace.”⁵² Reginster explains that Schopenhauer’s pessimistic approach remains entrenched in a Christian (true world) moral

framework, as it upholds the Christian notion of the ideal of a suffering-free life. Schopenhauer's solution, which involves negating life, is based on his belief that the fleeting satisfaction attained is not worth the suffering required. Nietzsche identifies this philosophy as a form of nihilism. Nietzsche encapsulates this nihilistic approach as when our "*highest values devalue themselves.*"⁵³ What he means by this is that if our paramount values necessitate the existence of a metaphysical reality, it implies that they are unattainable within the confines of our earthly existence – thereby warranting its rejection due to its inherent inability to foster these values. Such values are life-negating and nihilistic.

Nietzsche challenges Schopenhauer's nihilistic approach by reassessing the true nature of suffering. For Nietzsche, suffering transcends being merely a pathway to satisfy a desire or the absence of pain. He emphasizes the importance of valuing the difficult experiences we go through to achieve our objectives, as much as the objectives themselves. Reginster helps elucidate Nietzsche's perspective by describing suffering as a component of happiness. Embracing the idea that happiness and suffering are inextricably linked leads to a need for re-evaluating suffering. Nietzsche asserts, "How little you know of human happiness, you comfortable and benevolent people, for happiness and unhappiness are sisters and even twins that either grow up together or, as in your case, remain small together,"⁵⁴ and that "Peak and abyss—they are now joined together."⁵⁵

According to Reginster, suffering forms the bedrock of Nietzsche's life-affirming concept of the *will to power*. Nietzsche's notion of the will to power radically alters our conception and significance of suffering – and that the will to power is best understood as man's "desire for the *activity* of overcoming resistance."⁵⁶ Nietzsche's analysis implies that the fundamental human impulse is not to avoid suffering, but instead to will nothing less than suffering itself. To find meaning in suffering is tantamount to affirming life itself.

When discussing the guiding virtues, I will suggest that Nietzsche's *affirmation of life* and view of *suffering* provide a congenial philosophy that supports the virtue of unconditional life acceptance. More specifically, I will focus on his notion of the *will to power*, *amor fati*, and his view of the *tragic*.

Logic-Based Therapy

To elucidate the utility of Nietzsche's ethical thought as an uplifting philosophy, as per LBT methodology, I provide a brief overview of the six steps of LBT methodology in the context of

addiction recovery. Cohen sums up LBT by explaining that “the keynote of the theory is that counselees disturb themselves emotionally and behaviorally by deducing self-defeating, unrealistic conclusions from irrational premises in their practical reasoning.”⁵⁷ The methodology of LBT is defined in six steps: (1) identify the emotional reasoning; (2) check for fallacies in the premises; (3) refute any fallacy; (4) identify the guiding virtue for each fallacy; (5) find an uplifting philosophy that promotes the guiding virtue; and (6) apply the philosophy by implementing a plan of action for the client. According to Cohen, these “six steps provide a rational framework for confronting problems of living.”⁵⁸

In the context of addiction recovery, the guiding virtues and uplifting philosophies could also serve a psychodynamic function for recovering addicts. Many addicts have experienced narcissistic injury and suffer from various degrees of disorders of the self.⁵⁹ Once in recovery and in the absence of the previously idealized selfobject (drug of choice), such an individual may experience overwhelming anxiety, stemming from a fear of the fragmentation of the self and empty depression, which reflects the scantiness of psychic structure. The internalization of the guiding virtues taught in LBT (which share many similarities to the spiritual principles of Twelve-step programs) can help offset this anxiety and help build much-needed psychic structure and provide ‘psychic-scaffolding.’⁶⁰ I will discuss this in more detail later.

Step One: Identify the Emotional Reasoning

The first step of LBT can generally be described as Socratic and phenomenological. It is Socratic in the sense that it is a dialogue consisting of open-ended questions, and phenomenological because it focuses on the experiences and interpretations of the counselee. Cohen characterizes this step as an effort by the counselor to deeply understand and empathize with the counselee's subjective world and assist the counselee in effectively bringing important information to light.⁶¹

This first step consists of two sub-steps: (1) finding the elements of the counselee's emotional reasoning, and (2) constructing the practical syllogism comprising the counselee's emotional reasoning. Cohen identifies emotional reasoning as an emotion (E) that is defined by its rating (R) and its intentional object (O), thus obtaining the following formula: $E = (O + R)$. According to LBT, the arguments that underlie our emotions and behaviors are *practical syllogisms*, comprised of a major premise (rule), minor premise (report), and a conclusion, wherein the conclusion is a practical outcome (an emotion and/or behavior).

Step Two: Check for Fallacies in the Premises

In this step, the counselor identifies the fallacies in the counselee's premises. The cardinal fallacy I will focus on is demanding perfection or, more specifically, *existential perfectionism*, a fallacy that often fuels addiction dynamics. Cohen states that existential perfectionism involves demanding that bad things *must* not happen in the world and that when the world fails to live up to one's idealized image of it, one perceives the world to be all bad.⁶²

The reasoning that underlies the fallacy of existential perfectionism can often lead to resentment. Twelve-step programs typically place a significant emphasis on the dangers and importance of resolving resentment. In the 'Big Book' of Alcoholics Anonymous, it reads, "resentment [is] the number one offender. It destroys more alcoholics than anything else."⁶³

Step Three: Refute Any Fallacy

For this step, a Socratic approach can be applied to help the counselee see why their premises are irrational. Here a counselee can be guided to recognize that their demand for existential perfection is unrealistic and that their refusal to accept reality and harbor resentment can fuel addictive dynamics.

A counsellor may highlight that the Twelve-step program, Buddhist, and Stoic philosophy all share a similar perspective: much suffering is caused by our unwillingness to accept the world as it is and our insistence on trying to make it fit our expected ideas or fantasies. This refusal to accept things as they are often leads to a disproportionate need for control – a central feature of addictive dynamics. In their book, *The Self Psychology of Addiction and its Treatment: Narcissus in Wonderland*, Richard Ulman and Harry Paul indicate how at the core of addiction dynamics, there is an addictive *fantasy* of having magical control of oneself, others, and things/events in the world:

In the case of addiction, such a narcissistic fantasy centers on a narcissistic illusion of a megalomaniacal being that possesses magical control over psychoactive agents (things and activities). These latter entities allow for the artificial alteration of the subjective reality of one's sense of one's self and one's personal world. Under the influence of these intoxicating fantasies, an addict imagines being like a sorcerer or wizard who controls a magic wand capable of manipulating the forces of nature—and particularly the forces of human nature. Eventually, a person becomes a captive of these addictive fantasies and then becomes an addict, lost in a wonderland.⁶⁴

From a Nietzschean perspective, this “wonderland” is a ‘true world,’ and addiction is, in essence, a refusal to accept things as they are and an attempt to avoid the reality of suffering—by escaping into the fantasy of a wonderland or true world. An important aspect of recovery is realizing the inevitability of suffering and learning how to cope with it in a healthy way and give up an attempt at God-like control (hence *Not-God* being the title of Ernie Kurtz’s book about the history of Alcoholics Anonymous).⁶⁵ Philip Flores highlights the existential predicament of the alcoholic and the need for an existential conversion to find a balance between freedom and facticity:

Many existential writers believe that in such a confrontation between the realistic acceptance of the world as it is and the self-centered demands for unlimited gratification, reason would prevail and the individual would choose more realistically between the alternatives—continued unhappy struggles with old patterns of expectations or authentic existence with expanded freedom of choice and responsible expression of drives and wishes. With Socrates, we argue to ‘know thyself.’ In this fashion, AA members are taught to believe that the authentic existence advocated by the AA program holds the key to self-examination, self-knowledge, emancipation, cure, and eventual salvation.⁶⁶

Step Four: Identify the Guiding Virtue for Each Fallacy

Even though a counselee on an intellectual level can see the fallacies in their emotional reasoning, this does not mean that they may still not be prone to acting out the deeply ingrained irrational arguments. At this stage of the process, the value of identifying a *guiding virtue* for each fallacy is to provide a counterpoint to achieve sustainable change in emotional reasoning and behaviour. LBT presents a collection of guiding virtues based on an Aristotelian analysis, systematically matching each one to corresponding cardinal fallacies.⁶⁷

For *existential perfectionism*, the corresponding guiding virtue is *unconditional life acceptance*, which is the ability to accept imperfections in reality inherent in everyday life. Practicing unconditional life acceptance can lead to an attitude of metaphysical security.⁶⁸ The metaphysically secure person accepts the imperfections of reality.

Faulty thinking and fallacies play a central role in maintaining addiction dynamics, and addictive thinking is sustained through various defense mechanisms like denial, projection, and self-deception.

The notion of self-deception and *akrasia* is often brought up in discussions or literature about addiction and its treatment.⁶⁹ From an addiction treatment and recovery perspective, the incorporation of guiding virtues can lessen the need for self-deception in maintaining psychic homeostasis because it can contest irrational beliefs in a way that could mitigate the fragmentation anxiety that often arises at crucial moments of psychic change. These guiding virtues can help counselees slowly change maladaptive beliefs for more adaptive beliefs without significant threat to the stability of the self. Consequently, the value of replacing faulty beliefs with guiding virtues cannot be overstated.

In the next section, I will briefly explore the value of replacing faulty thinking with guiding virtues from a psychodynamic perspective. I believe this is one of the central strengths of LBT in comparison with other cognitive behavioral approaches.

The Utility of the Guiding Virtues from a Psychodynamic Perspective

From a psychodynamic perspective, addiction could be understood as the result of a narcissistic disturbance of self-experience and deficits in self-capabilities and may provide a misguided solution to narcissistic injury and shame. More specifically, from a self psychology perspective, narcissistic injury can lead to a scant psychic structure and disorders of the self that are in constant threat of psychic fragmentation or annihilation. The individual with narcissistic injury often has a chronic, archaic 'hunger' for selfobject experiences that provide psychological homeostasis and is characterized by a continuing search for satisfaction of selfobject needs.⁷⁰ Substance use can be understood as a selfobject experience that serves as a structural prosthesis, providing much-needed psychic structure. It transports the user into a transmogrified fantasy world (a Nietzschean true world), where they are under the influence of "intoxicating fantasies."⁷¹

Denial and self-deception are fundamental aspects of addiction dynamics and in addiction treatment the dismantling of denial and self-deception is a challenging process. For the addict self-deception can be understood as a protective mechanism against 'narcissistic mortification' and psychic fragmentation or annihilation. When substance use serves the dynamic function of a 'psychic prostheses' for a feeble and unstable self, the addict must rely on self-deception to maintain his/her worldview. According to Heinz Kohut, fragmentation anxiety may emerge at crucial moments of psychic change, when an existing maladaptive selfobject organization is about to be given up.⁷² For addicts, irrational systems of belief may be tenaciously retained because a threat to the coherence of

their worldview is experienced as a direct attack on their sense of self and identity and conjures up powerful archaic fears of psychic fragmentation and annihilation. It must be noted that the fear of fragmentation is a universal human phenomenon, experienced unconsciously as a constant threat.⁷³ This fear is rooted in the need for a coherent and integrated sense of self, which is developed through selfobject functions provided by caregivers during early childhood. As individuals develop, they form selfobject systems with a wide range of human phenomena, including linguistic, cultural, imagistic, and behavioral routines and organizations. These systems serve to maintain a sense of coherence and continuity in the self, thereby reducing the threat of fragmentation. When these systems are threatened, such as by confrontation with competing belief systems, the resulting disintegration anxiety can be intense.⁷⁴

Therefore, to maintain psychic homeostasis the addict must do everything in their power to rebuff any ‘attacks of reality,’ and eliminate the threat, or face a profoundly disturbing and frightening emotional experience. The addict must insulate themselves against criticism and will often perform extreme mental gymnastics to counteract evidence that contradicts their beliefs. Consequently, addressing the self-deception and flawed logic that supports addiction would require an intervention that would also need to mitigate the dread of fragmentation anxiety.

Consequently, LBT may be a suitable intervention when challenging the unrealistic conclusions derived from illogical premises in practical reasoning that contribute to addiction, because it can contest irrational beliefs in a way that could mitigate the fragmentation anxiety that often arises when individuals relinquish maladaptive selfobject organizations. The reason is that identifying guiding virtues and finding an uplifting philosophy can help individuals slowly change maladaptive beliefs for more adaptive beliefs without a significant threat to the stability of the self. When one considers the selfobject functions provided by addictive behaviour and the worldview that supports it, and the role it plays in maintaining homeostasis in the self, it becomes apparent that more is needed than merely dismantling the flawed logic of an individual’s belief system.

This perspective is reflected in a letter addressed from the Swiss psychiatrist and psychoanalyst Carl Jung to Bill Wilson (cofounder of Alcoholics Anonymous), where Jung wrote: “You see, alcohol in Latin is *spiritus* and you use the same word for the highest religious experience as well as for the most depraving poison. The helpful formula therefore is: *spiritus contra spiritum*.”⁷⁵ Jung was pointing out to Wilson that at the heart of a ‘cure’ for alcoholism there often is an *existential conversion*, because he

believed that the thirst for alcohol “was the equivalent, on a low level, of the spiritual thirst of our being for wholeness.”⁷⁶

The application of uplifting philosophies and guiding virtues, as suggested by LBT, can provide new ways to form selfobject systems beyond those provided by addiction. In short, the individual needs other sources of selfobject experiences to replace those provided by their substance use; otherwise, it may lead to excessive fragmentation anxiety. According to Ulman and Paul, psychotherapy can dispense functions that serve as “psychopharmacotherapeutic” relief, and the psychotherapist can replace the selfobject-like functioning of a client’s drug of choice, to help the client to reexperience “archaic moods of narcissistic bliss” in a therapeutic, rather than an addictive, fashion. They propose that such “an altered state of consciousness may eventually supersede and supplant an addicted patient’s dependence on an addictive state of mind.”⁷⁷ Similarly, the guiding virtues and uplifting philosophies of LBT can provide an antidote to addiction by offering an alternate and more adaptive source for selfobject experiences.

Step Five: Find a Congenial Philosophy for the Guiding Virtue

Once guiding virtues have been identified, they point the way for choosing philosophical perspectives that can provide antidotes to the fallacious beliefs, as well as a vehicle for promoting these guiding virtues. Cohen asserts that the suitability of a particular philosophy for a counselee is partly determined by whether it is congenial with the counselee's existing worldview. A congenial philosophy should support the guiding virtue that addresses and mitigates a specific fallacy.⁷⁸

I suggest that Nietzsche’s *affirmation of life* and *view of suffering* provide a congenial philosophy that supports the virtue of unconditional life acceptance. More specifically, I will focus on his notion of the *will to power*, *amor fati*, and his view of the *tragic*.

The Tragic

We previously highlighted that Nietzsche's philosophical discourse provides a comprehensive critique of the fundamental values inherent in modern Western society. Nietzsche puts forward an alternative set of values or prescriptions that supersede the pervasive nihilism and narcosis characterizing European history. In the midst of Nietzsche’s genealogical analysis and revaluation of values, the concept of the 'tragic' takes centre stage. The tragic is not to be confused with the dramatic. Nietzsche constructs a notion of the tragic that resists dialectical interpretation, a concept diametrically opposed

to the dramatic. The dramatic, according to Nietzsche, is characterized by grandeur, intense emotion, and is often mired in Hegelian dialectical reasonings. He views the tragic as a quality able to consider 'reality' in the way *that it is*, while simultaneously suggesting to us "that life and the world are beautiful in spite of all the suffering, cruelty, and terrors of existence."⁷⁹ Walter Kaufmann's interpretation of the tragic as something capable of demonstrating "that suffering is no insurmountable objection to life, that even the worst misfortunes are compatible with the greatest beauty" hints at a vibrant joy derived from the reunification of polar opposites.⁸⁰

According to Nietzsche, there is a *loss of the tragic* in modern culture, and this is highly problematic. It could be argued that this is an etiological factor that contributes towards addiction on a societal level. The loss of the tragic can lead to a superficial and narcotized culture.⁸¹ This view is echoed by the urbanist Mike Davis, who states that the "gilded dreamworlds" that are overtaking the planet in the form of Disneyfied suburbs are "narcissistic withdrawals from the tragedies" of real life.⁸² This Nietzschean view, the loss of the tragic as a critique against modern culture, is equally relevant as a guidepost for an analysis of various manifestations of the virtual. For example, the absence of the tragic in the virtual is clearly demonstrated through computer games. These games can portray dramatic elements, but they lack the tragic component in terms of emotional involvement or suffering triggered by the enactment. The 'virtual' tendency to eternalize or amass elements from the past, present, and future within a singular 'absolute present' contradicts the structure of tragic time as experienced in real life, where events bear tangible consequences.⁸³ Computer games epitomize the antithesis of the tragic in their pursuit of "immortality and transcendence," and endeavor to halt the mortal progression of real life and "ascend into a brilliant celestial realm."⁸⁴

I argue that Nietzsche's analysis of the tragic supports the virtue of unconditional life acceptance within the context of addiction recovery, especially when the loss of the tragic can be seen as a contributing factor towards addiction on an individual and societal level.

Will to Power

In our earlier discussion, we highlighted how Nietzsche emphasizes the importance of valuing the difficult experiences we go through to achieve our objectives, as much as the objectives themselves. Nietzsche's analysis implies that the fundamental human impulse is not to avoid suffering, but instead to will nothing less than suffering itself. To find meaning in suffering is tantamount to affirming life itself. According to Reginster, suffering forms the bedrock of Nietzsche's life-affirming

concept of the *will to power* and defines it as “a will to the very activity of overcoming resistance.”⁸⁵ According to Nietzsche, we experience power when we overcome resistance and refers to the “will to power” as this desire for the overcoming of resistance in the pursuit of determinate desires.

According to Reginster, in Nietzsche’s formulation of the will to power, he explicitly accentuates the idea of overcoming resistance, and that “all expansion, incorporation, growth is striving against something that resists...”⁸⁶ “Expansion, incorporation, growth,” Nietzsche argues, “is striving against something that resists.” And thus one can deduce that the will to power is therefore the will to “striving against something that resists.” Considering that “striving against” is an effort to overcome, it can be claimed that “the will to power is the will to overcoming resistance.”⁸⁷ This leads to Nietzsche’s paradoxical claim that the will to power desires displeasure or suffering. In our brief discussion of Schopenhauerian pessimism, it was highlighted that he equates happiness with the elimination of suffering, and here Nietzsche diametrically opposes Schopenhauer’s assumption. Nietzsche proposes that: “Human beings do not seek pleasure and avoid displeasure.... What human beings want, what every smallest organism wants, is an increase of power; driven by that will they seek resistance, they need something that opposes it—Displeasure, as an obstacle to their will to power, is therefore a normal fact ...; human beings do not avoid it, they are rather in continual need of it...”⁸⁸ Thus, Reginster asserts that the “will to power, insofar as it is a will to the overcoming of resistance, must necessarily also will the resistance to overcome. Since suffering is defined in terms of resistance, then the will to power indeed ‘desires displeasure.’”⁸⁹

Based on the brief analysis of Nietzsche’s notion of the will to power and the tragic, his Stoic-like suggestion of unconditional love of fate, or *amor fati*, seems like a logical conclusion and plausible suggestion.

Love of Fate: Amor Fati

Amor fati is a Latin phrase that may be translated as "love of fate" or "love of one's fate." It is used to describe an attitude, similar to metaphysical security, in which one accepts everything that happens in one's life, including suffering and loss. This resonates with the notion of “Just for Today” advocated in Twelve Step fellowships. This refusal to regret and retouch the past is heralded as a virtue at many points in Nietzsche's work. In his book, *The Gay Science*, written during a period of great personal hardship for the philosopher, Nietzsche writes:

I want to learn more and more to see as beautiful what is necessary in things; then I shall be one of those who make things beautiful. *Amor fati*: let that be my love henceforth! I do not want to wage war against what is ugly. I do not want to accuse; I do not even want to accuse those who accuse. Looking away shall be my only negation. And all in all and on the whole: some day I wish to be only a Yes-sayer.⁹⁰

And, a few years later, in *Ecce Homo*, Nietzsche writes: “My formula for greatness in a human being is *amor fati*: that one wants nothing to be different, not forward, not backward, not in all eternity. Not merely bear what is necessary, still less conceal it... but love it.”⁹¹

Amor fati provides a powerful antidote to existential perfectionism, and especially resentment (or what Nietzsche called *ressentiment*), when considering that in the ‘*Big Book*’ of Alcoholics Anonymous it states, “resentment [is] the number one offender. It destroys more alcoholics than anything else.”⁹²

Step Six: Apply the Philosophy

In the previous stages, the counselee developed the philosophical and conceptual foundation to make positive changes in their behavioral and emotional responses. However, there may be a cognitive dissonance between the counselee's new rational way of thinking and ingrained irrational beliefs. Cohen (1) explains that step six of LBT consists of three further sub-steps: (1) identifying the counselee's behavioral reasoning, (2) building a plan of action, and (3) implementing the plan of action.

This state of cognitive dissonance between the first two rational syllogisms and the third irrational one can be resolved by building and exercising willpower. Cohen's view on willpower shares similarities with existential philosophy and Twelve-step philosophy. He states that LBT “maintains that people have the capacity to exercise willpower in order to make constructive changes in their lives....This includes, within limits, the ability to overcome tendencies to overreact behaviorally and emotionally to external events; as well as the ability to suspend, or change, primary emotional responses to situations that may be creating problems for clients.”⁹³

It is important to note the emphasis that LBT places on willpower, considering that socially deterministic approaches to addiction and harm reduction have increasingly gained traction. I would ascribe this unfortunate phenomenon to the rising influence of activists and ‘true believers’ who adhere to a social justice worldview.⁹⁴ This view, or rather political ideology, promotes a radically

reductionistic and deterministic view of addiction (and human nature), based on the premise that social pathologies are addiction's root cause.⁹⁵ The pitfall here is when social factors, which of course contribute to patterns of drug use, are considered determinate and prioritized over the multitude of other etiological factors.⁹⁶ Social justice proponents misguidedly conceptualize society through a lens of power and status that creates false dichotomies, which oversimplify complex social realities, and epistemologically prioritize social inequality, in which the individual drug user is the hapless victim of an unfair, deficient, or exploitative world. However, as some researchers note, “such a [social] deficit model must be considered against the fact that the fastest growth in drug use arose in the affluent 60s and 70s.”⁹⁷

Nobody would deny that there are socio-economic factors that influence an individual's behavior. But when we adopt a grossly reductionistic and deterministic view of human existence, we risk conceptualizing individuals as being without agency, without resilience to overcome obstacles, and reach absurd conclusions, and do grave injustice to the individuals we purport to help. A socially deterministic view of addiction implies that individuals have little or no free will, are psychologically homogenous, and are at the mercy of their environment, and provides little emancipatory value. A socially deterministic view of recovery or harm reduction has obvious appeal to various organizations. Personal responsibility and agency have no market value, but victims can be sold many ‘external solutions’ to their ‘problem,’ whether through social engineering or pharmaceutical interventions. Moreover, social justice philosophy is not a congenial philosophy for addicts in recovery, but toxic, and more specifically, it is deadly, as it breeds victimhood and resentment—especially when considering how, according to AA, deleterious resentment is for recovering addicts. Why would one want to promote a philosophy or worldview that has resentment at its core, when according to AA it is the number one killer of addicts?

Conversely, a non-deterministic and resilience-oriented perspective of recovery implies that we possess the ability to surmount challenges and exercise willpower to enact constructive changes. The latter position is congruent with the experience of millions of individuals in recovery from addiction.

As part of an LBT behavioral protocol, a counselor can suggest bibliotherapy related to the uplifting philosophy. A recommendation can be made to read and contemplate certain curated passages from two of Nietzsche’s books: (1) *On the Genealogy of Morality*,⁹⁸ and *Human, All Too Human: A Book for Free Spirits*.⁹⁹ These readings can assist the client in reinforcing their behavioral prescription developed earlier in this step. The counselor could also recommend incorporating philosophical contemplation

as part of the client's Step Eleven meditation practice, if they are in a Twelve-step program. The British philosopher Bertrand Russell provides an eloquent description of philosophical contemplation that highlights the value it can have for a recovery process:

The mind which has become accustomed to the freedom and impartiality of philosophic contemplation will preserve something of the same freedom and impartiality in the world of action and emotion. It will view its purposes and desires as parts of the whole, with the absence of insistence that results from seeing them as infinitesimal fragments in a world of which all the rest is unaffected by any one man's deeds. The impartiality which, in contemplation, is the unalloyed desire for truth, is the very same quality of mind which, in action, is justice, and in emotion is that universal love which can be given to all, and not only to those who are judged useful or admirable. Thus, contemplation enlarges not only the objects of our thoughts, but also the objects of our actions and our affections: it makes us citizens of the universe, not only of one walled city at war with all the rest. In this citizenship of the universe consists man's true freedom, and his liberation from the thralldom of narrow hopes and fears.¹⁰⁰

Conclusion

This article explored the utility of Nietzsche's ethical thought for philosophical counselling. I presented the argument that Nietzsche's moral philosophy, and more specifically his analysis of suffering, is one such uplifting philosophy that can be of utility to philosophical counselors in helping their counselees confront problems of living. I highlighted that suffering forms the bedrock of Nietzsche's life-affirming concept of the *will to power*, which can be understood as man's desire for the activity of overcoming resistance. Nietzsche's analysis implies that the fundamental human impulse is not to avoid suffering, but instead to will nothing less than suffering itself. To find meaning in suffering is tantamount to affirming life itself.

When one considers that addiction can be understood as an escape to the fantasy of a utopian 'true world,' where there is less or no suffering, Nietzsche's conceptualization of suffering and the will to power can be a powerful antidote to addiction. In Nietzsche's formulation of the will to power, he explicitly accentuates the idea of overcoming resistance, and the will to power is therefore the will to striving against something that resists. Considering that striving against is an effort to overcome, it can be claimed that the will to power is the will to overcoming resistance. In addiction recovery, it

requires great effort to overcome the resistance posed by addiction, and thus the successful overcoming of addiction can be seen as a manifestation of the will to power. And the suffering implied in the overcoming of the resistance of addiction is then the bedrock for the recovering addict's will to power.

In conclusion, successful addiction recovery, in Nietzschean terms, can then be understood as relinquishing the fantasy of the utopian 'true world' of active addiction, embracing suffering and the overcoming of the resistance posed by addiction—and thus as a manifestation of the recovering addict's will to power.

Endnotes

¹ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Penguin Books, 1978), 12.

² Pierre Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life: Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault*, trans. Michael Chase (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), 265.

³ Pierre Hadot, "Reflections on the Notion of the 'Cultivation of the Self,'" in *Michel Foucault, Philosopher*, trans. Timothy Armstrong (London: Harvester, 1992), 225–33.

⁴ Albert Ellis, *New Directions for Rational-Emotive Behavior Therapy: Overcoming Destructive Beliefs, Feelings, and Behaviors* (New York: Prometheus Books, 2001).

⁵ Elliot Cohen, *Theory and Practice of Logic-Based Therapy: Integrating Critical Thinking and Philosophy into Psychotherapy* (London: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013).

⁶ Cohen, *Theory and Practice of Logic-Based Therapy*, xix.

⁷ Cohen, *Theory and Practice of Logic-Based Therapy*, ix.

⁸ Elliot Cohen, *Cognitive-behavioral Interventions for Self-defeating Thoughts: Helping Clients to Overcome the Tyranny of "I Can't"* (London: Routledge, 2021).

⁹ Horst Hutter, *Shaping the Future: Nietzsche's New Regime of the Soul and Its Ascetic Practices* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2006), 16.

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ Michael Ure, *Nietzsche's Therapy* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2008).

¹² Ure, Nietzsche's Therapy, 4.

¹³ See Guy du Plessis, "An Existential Perspective on Addiction Treatment: A Logic-based Therapy Case Study," *International Journal of Philosophical Practice* 5, 1 (2019): 1-32

¹⁴ Parts of this chapter are adapted from Guy du Plessis, "Philosophy as a Way of Life for Addiction Recovery: A Logic-based Therapy Case Study," *International Journal of Applied Philosophy* 35, 1 (2022): 68-87; and Guy du Plessis, "Simone De Beauvoir's Existential Ethics as an Antidote for Ideology Addiction," *International Journal of Philosophical Practice* 9, 1 (2023): 141-157.

¹⁵ See Guy du Plessis, "Philosophy as a Way of Life for Addiction Recovery: A Logic-based Therapy Case Study."

¹⁶ See Peggy O'Conner, *Life on the Rocks: Finding Meaning in Addiction and Recovery* (Las Vegas, NV: Central Recovery, 2016).

¹⁷ See Jerome Miller, *Sobering Wisdom: Philosophical Explorations of Twelve Step Spirituality* (London: University of Virginia Press, 2014).

¹⁸ See Guy du Plessis, *An Integral Foundation for Addiction and its Treatment: Beyond the Biopsychosocial Model* (Tucson, AR: Integral Publishers, 2018); Guy du Plessis, "Integrated Recovery Therapy: Toward an Integrally Informed Individual Psychotherapy for Addicted Populations," *Journal of Integral Theory and Practice* 7, 1 (2012): 124-148; Guy du Plessis, "The Integrated Recovery Model for Addiction Treatment and Recovery," *Journal of Integral Theory and Practice* 5, 3 (2010): 68-87; Guy du Plessis, "The Integrated Metatheoretical Model of Addiction," in E. Ermagan (Ed.), *Current Trends in Addiction Psychology*, (London: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2023).

¹⁹ See Du Plessis, "Philosophy as a Way of Life for Addiction Recovery."

²⁰ Richard Schacht, *Nietzsche* (London: Routledge, 1995).

²¹ Bernard Reginster, *The Affirmation of Life: Nietzsche on Overcoming Nihilism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006).

²² Friedrich Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human: A Book for Free Spirits*, trans. Reginald Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

²³ Michel Haar, *Nietzsche and Metaphysics*, trans. Michael Gendre (New York: SUNY Press, 1996).

²⁴ René Descartes, "Meditations on First Philosophy," in *Key Philosophical Writings*, trans. Elizabeth S. Haldane and G.R.T. Ross, edited by Enrique Chávez-Arviso (Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions Limited, 1997), 140.

²⁵ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998/1781).

²⁶ Haar, Nietzsche and Metaphysics.

²⁷ Smuts (1927) defined Holism as "the ultimate synthetic, ordering, organising, regulative activity in the universe which accounts for all the structural groupings and syntheses in it, from the atom and the physico-chemical structures, through the cell and organisms, through Mind in animals, to Personality in man" (326).

²⁸ Smuts in Hancock, W. K. *Smuts: The Sanguine Years* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962), 180.

²⁹ Smuts (1926) asserts that there existed an "inner driving force" and "creative principle" as an intrinsic part of the progress of evolution and referred to this creative and active force as Holism (101). Holism was the creative factor responsible for the progressive evolution from matter to life, to mind and finally the human personality. "Holism constitutes them all, connects them all, and so far as explanations are at all possible, explains and accounts for them all" (Smuts, 1926, 329).

³⁰ Jan Smuts, *Holism and Evolution* (New York: Macmillan, 1926), 17

³¹ Haar, Nietzsche and Metaphysics.

³² Georg Hegel, *The Philosophy of Mind*, translated from the 1830 Edition, together with the *Zusätze* by William Wallace and A.V. Miller, with Revisions and Commentary by M. J Inwood (London: Clarendon Press, 2007).

³³ This may help explain why even more 'moderate' true-world ideologies, like social justice, is often evangelically promoted with a religious fervor. It must be noted that the zealotry and activism of the ideology addict and 'true believer' is fundamentally a narcissistic project, a misguided attempt at self-repair and satisfaction of archaic narcissistic needs - and not principally motivated by the selfless 'holy duty' of the ideology.

³⁴ Julian Young, *The Death of God and the Meaning of Life* (2nd ed.) (New York: Routledge, 2014).

³⁵ In the 20th Century, secular true-world ideologies led to largescale destruction in the forms of communism and fascism. Although communism and fascism represent opposites on the political

spectrum, they have more commonalities than differences – viz. collectivism, historicism, and utopianism, and to think otherwise is to contradict even the most superficial understanding of recent history.

³⁶ See Guy du Plessis, *An Integral Foundation for Addiction and its Treatment: Beyond the Biopsychosocial Model* (Tucson: AR, Integral Publishers, 2018); Guy du Plessis, “An Existential Perspective on Addiction Treatment: A Logic-based Therapy Case Study,” *International Journal of Philosophical Practice* 5, 1 (2019): 1–32; Guy du Plessis, “Simone de Beauvoir’s Existential Ethics as an Antidote for Ideology Addiction,” *International Journal of Philosophical Practice* 9, 1 (2023): 141–157.

³⁷ Richard Ulman and Harry Paul, *The Self Psychology of Addiction and its Treatment: Narcissus in Wonderland* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 396.

³⁸ In Brian Leiter, *Nietzsche on Morality* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 203.

³⁹ Additionally, I would add that not only do utopian ideologies breed *ressentiment*, but also seems to act like a powerful magnet for certain types of individuals as it provides an intoxicating psychological brew of *a priori* meaning, sense of belonging, self-aggrandization, and abdication of personal responsibility through victimhood and blame – moreover, it offers an alluring worldview that resonates with the mechanistic and partisan worldview typically observed with Cluster B personality disorders, in particular Borderline Personality Disorder, that splits others and the world into all good or all bad, and experiences all social relations through the lens of victim/perpetrator/savoir.

⁴⁰ Simone de Beauvoir, *The Ethics of Ambiguity*, trans. Bernard Frechtman (New York: Philosophical Library, 1948).

⁴¹ De Beauvoir, *The Ethics of Ambiguity*, 10.

⁴² Friedrich Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols and the Anti-Christ*, trans. Reginald Hollingdale (London: Penguin, 1889/1990), 72.

⁴³ Jason Ciaccio, “Between Intoxication and Narcosis: Nietzsche’s Pharmacology of Modernity,” *Modernism/modernity* 25, 1 (2018): 115–133, 121.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Genealogy of Morals*, in *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, (Ed.) Walter Kaufman (New York: Modern Library, 1887/2000), 437–600, 570.

⁴⁶ For example, in *Beyond Good and Evil* (1882/1974, 91), he highlights that religion, as a *pharmakon*, can either cure or poison: “Religion, as a fundamental conviction that the world is admirable and inestimable...has hitherto belonged to the basic requirements of a strong and robust soul: it is only since man has been afflicted with acute miseries and spiritual and physical plagues that he has been in need of anesthetics and narcotics in the form of religious beliefs.”

⁴⁷ Ciaccio, “Between Intoxication and Narcosis,” 123.

⁴⁸ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*, trans. Walter Kaufmann. (New York: Vintage Books. 1882/1974), 181.

⁴⁹ Friedrich Nietzsche, The Genealogy of Morals, in *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, 159.

⁵⁰ Reginster, *The Affirmation of Life*.

⁵¹ Reginster, *The Affirmation of Life*, 170.

⁵² In Reginster, *The Affirmation of Life*, 170.

⁵³ Reginster, *The Affirmation of Life*, 25.

⁵⁴ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1974), 270.

⁵⁵ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, in *The Portable Nietzsche*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Viking Penguin, 1982), 264.

⁵⁶ Reginster, *The Affirmation of Life*, 132.

⁵⁷ Cohen, *Theory and Practice of Logic-Based Therapy*.

⁵⁸ Cohen, *Theory and Practice of Logic-Based Therapy*, xix

⁵⁹ Phillip Flores, *Group Psychotherapy with Addicted Populations* (Philadelphia, PA: The Haworth Press, 1997).

⁶⁰ Du Plessis, *An Integral Foundation for Addiction and its Treatment*.

⁶¹ Cohen, *Cognitive-behavioral Interventions for Self-defeating Thoughts*.

⁶² Cohen, *Theory and Practice of Logic-Based Therapy*, ix

⁶³ Alcoholics Anonymous, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* (New York: NY, Alcoholics Anonymous. World Services, 1987), 64.

⁶⁴ Ulman and Paul, *The Self Psychology of Addiction and its Treatment*, 6

- ⁶⁵ Ernest Kurtz, *Not-God: A History of Alcoholics Anonymous* (Center City, MN: Hazelden, 1979).
- ⁶⁶ Flores, *Group Psychotherapy with Addicted Populations*, 280.
- ⁶⁷ Cohen, *Cognitive-behavioral Interventions for Self-defeating Thoughts*.
- ⁶⁸ Cohen, *Theory and Practice of Logic-Based Therapy*.
- ⁶⁹ See Nick Heather, "Addiction as a Form of Akrasia," in Heather N, Segal G, editors, *Addiction and Choice: Rethinking the Relationship* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press; 2017), 133–50.
- ⁷⁰ Heinz Kohut, *The Analysis of the Self: A Systematic Approach to the Psychoanalytic Treatment of Narcissistic Personality Disorders* (New York: International University Press, 1971); Heinz Kohut, *The Restoration of Self* (New York: International University Press, 1977).
- ⁷¹ Ulman and Paul, *The Self Psychology of Addiction and its Treatment*, 396.
- ⁷² Kohut, *The Analysis of the Self*.
- ⁷³ Kohut, *The Restoration of Self*.
- ⁷⁴ Kohut, *The Restoration of Self*.
- ⁷⁵ Ernie Kurtz and Kathrine Ketcham, *The Spirituality of Imperfection: Storytelling and the Search for Meaning* (New York, NY: Bantam Books, 2002), 118.
- ⁷⁶ Kurtz and Ketcham, *The Spirituality of Imperfection*, 113
- ⁷⁷ Ulman and Paul, *The Self Psychology of Addiction and its Treatment*, 63.
- ⁷⁸ Cohen. *Cognitive-behavioral Interventions for Self-defeating Thoughts*, 2021.
- ⁷⁹ Walter Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1974), 347
- ⁸⁰ Ibid
- ⁸¹ T. Botz-Bornstein, "What would Nietzsche have said about virtual reality? Dionysus and cyberpunk," *Continuum*, 25:1, (2011), 99–109.
- ⁸² M. Davis, Introduction, In *Dreamworlds of Neoliberalism: Evil Paradises*, ed. Mike Davis and Monk Bertrand, ix–xvi. (New York: New Press, 2007).
- ⁸³ Botz-Bornstein, "What would Nietzsche have said about virtual reality? Dionysus and cyberpunk."

⁸⁴ G. Graham, *G. Philosophy of Mind: An Introduction* (Blackwell, 2002), 159.

⁸⁵ Reginster, *The Affirmation of Life*, 127.

⁸⁶ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, trans Walter. Kaufmann and Reginald Hollingdale (New York: Random House, 1968), 704.

⁸⁷ Reginster, *The Affirmation of Life*, 126.

⁸⁸ Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, 702.

⁸⁹ Reginster, *The Affirmation of Life*, 126.

⁹⁰ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science: With a Prelude and German Rhymes and Appendix of Songs*, ed. Bernard Williams (London: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 157.

⁹¹ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Echo Homo*, trans. Reginald Hollingdale (New York: NY, Penguin Books, 1992), 37-38.

⁹² Alcoholics Anonymous, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* (New York: NY, Alcoholics Anonymous. World Services, 1987), 64.

⁹³ Cohen, *Theory and Practice of Logic-Based Therapy*, 176.

⁹⁴ Bruce Alexander (2008) presents a 'social deficiency model' in his dislocation theory of addiction, where he posits the globalisation of free-market capitalism as the primary etiological factor of addiction on a population level. This is a very misguided argument. While he pushes hard against the physiologically reductionist 'brain disease model' of addiction, he proves himself equally reductionistic, reducing the numerous etiological factors of addiction to primarily socioeconomic factors.

⁹⁵ The largely uncritical acceptance of a social justice ideology by harm reduction proponents and the influence of social justice activists who choose harm reduction as a platform to promote their ideological aims will continue to have a deleterious effect. Social justice activism is a political project, and harm reduction approaches should not be driven by political agendas. Instead, we require the perspectives of people who identify as addicts, empirical research, clinical experience, concern for drug users as individuals, and pragmatic health aims.

⁹⁶ Guy du Plessis, "Incompatible Knots in Harm Reduction: A Philosophical Analysis", in eds. Thembisa. Waetjen), *Opioids in South Africa: Towards a Policy of Harm Reduction* (Pretoria: Human

Sciences Research Council Press, 2019), 137-148.

⁹⁷ Stephen Mugford and Pat O'Malley (1991) "Heroin Policy and Deficit Models: The Limits of Left Realism," *Crime, Law and Social Change* 15, 1 (1991): 19–36, 24

⁹⁸ Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, trans. Maudemarie Clark and Alan Swenson (Indianapolis: IN, Hackett, 1998).

⁹⁹ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human: A Book for Free Spirits*, trans. Reginald Hollingdale. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

¹⁰⁰ Bertrand Russell, *A History of Western Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 2004), 248-249.

Declarations

Funding: No specific funding was received for this work.

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.