**The Covid-19 Debate, Wishful Thinking, and**

**Nietzsche’s Will to Truth**

***Abstract***

The public discourse on Covid-19 vaccinations has fuelled a proliferation of conflicting beliefs. My aim is to provide an insight into deep disagreements of this kind by backing up a bit and exploring the associated question of truthfulness. On the one hand, we have a basic commitment to truthfulness. Together with this reflex against deception, we are equally susceptible to being fooled, to wishful thinking. The paper draws on Bernard Williams’ account of an idealized society and what he terms “the virtues of Sincerity and Accuracy”, that is, what qualities of an individual are needed “in wanting to know the truth, finding it out, and telling it to other people.”[[1]](#footnote-1) It examines what kinds of forces are at work when we are truthful, and what weaknesses are disclosed when we are untruthful. In the final section of the paper, I argue that, while it manages to show something about what deceiving others and oneself means, it also does justice to the importance Nietzsche attaches to what I call the virtues of Courage and Self-Dissatisfaction.

1. TT: 7, 44... [↑](#footnote-ref-1)