



Nietzsche on Ethics and Politics

Maudemarie Clark

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To Connie
Again and Always

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{ ABBREVIATIONS }

Nietzsche's works are cited using the following abbreviations. "P" is used for "Preface." Works are cited by section number except where noted. Translations used and consulted are indicated in some notes and listed in the Bibliography. Works not listed below are cited by author and date and are listed in the Bibliography. Other works cited by abbreviation are in a second list below.

<i>A</i>	<i>The Antichrist</i>
<i>BGE</i>	<i>Beyond Good and Evil</i>
<i>BT</i>	<i>The Birth of Tragedy</i>
<i>D</i>	<i>Daybreak: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality</i>
<i>EH</i>	<i>Ecce Homo</i>
<i>GM</i>	<i>On the Genealogy of Morality</i>
<i>GS</i>	<i>The Gay Science</i>
<i>HA</i>	<i>Human, All Too Human</i>
<i>KSA</i>	<i>Sämtliche Werke. Kritische Studienausgabe</i>
<i>KSB</i>	<i>Sämtliche Briefe. Kritische Studienausgabe</i>
<i>OS</i>	"On Schopenhauer"
<i>TI</i>	<i>Twilight of the Idols</i>
<i>TL</i>	"Truth and Lies in the Non-Moral Sense"
<i>UM</i>	<i>Untimely Meditations</i>
<i>Z</i>	<i>Thus Spoke Zarathustra</i>

Other Works cited by Abbreviation

<i>CPR</i>	Kant, <i>Critique of Pure Reason</i>
<i>ELP</i>	Bernard Williams, <i>Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy</i>
<i>SN</i>	Bernard Williams, <i>Shame and Necessity</i>
<i>WWR</i>	Schopenhauer, <i>The World as Will and Representation</i>

Introduction

This book brings together fourteen of my papers, three of which are published here for the first time. The previously published papers are left in their original form, except for minor changes to fix typos and make citations more consistent throughout. In these introductory comments, I offer an overview of how the papers fit together and, in a few cases, remarks on their continuing relevance.

Although my two books on Nietzsche (Clark 1990 and Clark and Dudrick 2012) focus on truth, knowledge, and metaphysical claims, my work on Nietzsche actually began with a PhD thesis on Nietzsche's critique of morality. Since then I have published a considerable amount on Nietzsche's ethics and his related views on political matters, probably more than even most Nietzsche scholars are aware. The papers included here do not add up to an overall view of Nietzsche on ethics or politics, and I do not intend them to be my last word on either. Yet, published together, they not only exhibit important developments in my views on these topics but also fit together in a way that expresses a distinctive voice in the moral-political area of Nietzsche studies. A final section adds four essays on metaphysics. These reflect the development of my views on the metaphysical and epistemological issues to which my two books are devoted and allow readers to see connections between those issues and the normative claims that are the focus of this volume.

As one anonymous reviewer put it, the papers on ethics and politics published here "articulate, overall, a rather surprising combination of two positions each surprising in itself." The papers on politics read Nietzsche as "much less 'conservative' regarding equality, feminism, homosexuality, and other such social issues than he's generally taken to be," whereas the papers on ethics read him as "less comprehensively critical of 'morality' than is usually supposed: he's not hostile to the ideals of justice, the common good, and responsibility, for example, but only to the historically current interpretations of these." So Nietzsche is not as socially or politically conservative as he seems, yet he does aim to *conserve* more of morality than it may seem. My "large-scale tendency"

in these papers, according to the same referee, is the same as in my 1990 book *Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy*, which is “to rescue Nietzsche from the radical and alarming positions he sometimes seems to express: from extreme skepticism, extreme immoralism, and extreme conservatism.” I do not disagree with this characterization as long as the claim is not that my *aim* has been to “rescue” Nietzsche from anything. My aim has always been to make as much *sense* of his texts as possible. And, as will become clear when I discuss my papers on ethics, I actually started out attempting to attribute to Nietzsche as radical a position as I could concerning morality, namely, that he rejected morality itself. Although I still think that is an apt description of his position, as I tried to make sense of that position over the years, I came to realize that it could equally be described as a matter of rejecting the “historically current interpretation of morality.” That is because the interpretation has become part of the thing itself.

Nietzsche suggests that this is actually the usual course with things (at least things with a history; cf. *GM* II:12) by saying that “*what things are called*” (i.e., how they are interpreted) “is unspeakably more important than what they are.” He explains that the interpretation

originally almost always mistaken and arbitrary, thrown over things like a dress, and quite foreign to their nature and even their skin—has, through the belief in it and its growth from generation to generation, gradually grown onto and into the thing and become its very body. What at first was appearance becomes in the end, almost invariably, the essence and is effective as such. (*GS* 58)

So while there is truth in the idea that Nietzsche is only rejecting a particular conception of morality, this is because how morality was thought of or interpreted has entered into the very phenomenon of morality. To overcome that interpretation of morality, therefore, would ultimately or eventually be to change not merely a certain understanding of morality, but morality itself.

Ethics

My work on Nietzsche’s ethics began by attempting to understand the stance he takes in opposition to morality. Nietzsche repeatedly proclaims himself an immoralist (*D* P:4; *BGE* 32, 206; *HA* P 1; *GS* 381; *EH* IV:4, 6), indeed, the “first immoralist” (*EH* III, *UM*:2; *EH* IV:2). And he makes explicit that his philosophy involves a “campaign against morality” (*EH* III, *D*:1). His position is not the same as amoralism; immoralism claims not simply that morality has no right to our adherence, but that morality is of negative value, that it is something to be overcome. This is not an easy position to understand and take seriously. It makes sense only if morality is being judged from the viewpoint of some value standard. But if that standard is a nonmoral one, such as self-interest, it is

unclear why morality should be expected to live up to it; and if the standard is a moral one, then Nietzsche's immoralism is not a challenge to morality itself, but can only be an attack on one morality from the viewpoint of another one. The latter position is the one interpreters tended to assume when I began writing a dissertation on Nietzsche and morality at the University of Wisconsin. For instance, both Walter Kaufmann and Robert Solomon thought that Nietzsche was rejecting only a particular morality (Christian morality) or a kind of morality (altruistic morality), but not morality itself. To me, their views did not capture the radical nature of the position Nietzsche appeared to be endorsing when he put himself forward as an immoralist. In my dissertation I therefore attempted to make sense of his position as an attack on morality itself. By the time I was ready to publish something on this topic (I had in the meantime written my 1990 book on Nietzsche on truth and epistemological issues), there were a number of interpreters who shared my view that Nietzsche rejects morality itself. But their way of making sense of this position differed from mine. I therefore devoted my first paper on the topic, "Nietzsche's Immoralism and the Concept of Morality"—paper 1 in the present book—to arguing for my own way of making sense of his rejection of morality in opposition to the ones being offered by these other interpreters: Alexander Nehamas, Frithjof Bergmann, and Philippa Foot.

My approach was to begin with Nietzsche's own analysis of the concept of morality. After all, to understand his "campaign against morality," we need to identify the object against which it is directed, the phenomenon against which he is campaigning. And his own analysis of the concept of morality, should he offer one, would tell us what he takes that object to be. The three interpreters discussed in paper 1 either fail to consider the possibility that Nietzsche offered such an analysis or deny that he did. They base their accounts of the object of Nietzsche's immoralism on their own understanding of morality. Foot interprets Nietzsche's immoralism as a rejection of a concern for justice and the common good because this is what she takes to be essential to morality. Nehamas takes the essential ingredient of morality to be universal values and therefore interprets Nietzsche's immoralism as a rejection of such values. Bergmann holds that Nietzsche's immoralism amounts to rejecting the assumption that human beings have free will because he takes that assumption to be the essential or defining feature of morality.

The approach shared by these interpreters is understandable and even necessary if Nietzsche does not supply his own analysis of the concept of morality. But I argue that he does. I argue that his *Genealogy of Morality* (*GM*) is not only a unified account of the origin and development of morality—the dominant view now but not one that was accepted or even articulated when I wrote this essay—but is at the same time an analysis of the concept of morality. The point of this analysis is to understand not the use of the word "morality," but the object picked out by the use of that word. According to *GM*'s account, both

morality and the corresponding concept are products of a complicated history that has woven various elements together in a way that makes them very difficult to disentangle. *GM* aims to disentangle these elements so that we can see how they are synthesized in the phenomenon and concept of morality, which is why I called it an “analysis” of the latter.

The main point of paper 1, then, is to show that *GM* is plausibly and helpfully seen as an account not only of the history of morality, but also of what morality is. And when we pay attention to the latter account, it becomes plausible that Nietzsche’s immoralism is not directed against a concern for justice and the common good or universal values or various other elements that we may associate with morality, but only against a particular historically conditioned understanding of these elements, one that is due to their mutual entanglement in what we now call “morality.” In other words, “nonmoral” versions of justice, universal values, freedom, guilt, duty, and obligation, are possible, and a major point of Nietzsche’s *GM* is to bring such possibilities to light. When I refer to a “nonmoral” version of justice, for instance, I am making use of Nietzsche’s own distinction between a wider and a narrower sense of morality (*BGE* 30). It is only in the narrower sense of “moral” that Nietzsche’s conception of justice can be considered “nonmoral,” and only in this sense that Nietzsche seeks to overcome morality. And it is precisely the nature and development of morality in that narrower sense of which *GM* offers an account.

Paper 2, “On the Rejection of Morality: Bernard Williams’s Debt to Nietzsche,” develops the account of Nietzsche’s immoralism offered in paper 1. It employs Williams’s distinction between “ethics” and “morality” as a clearer and less confusing way of capturing Nietzsche’s distinction between a wider and a narrower sense of morality. What Nietzsche and Williams reject as “morality,” I argue, is indeed what we call “morality,” and not merely one kind of morality. Yet morality is not the only possible form of ethical life. I think it is largely because they did not recognize this point that Foot and Nehamas were driven to suppose that Nietzsche rejects moral values in favor of aesthetic ones. I claim instead that Nietzsche rejects morality in favor of a different form (or forms) of ethical life, and indeed, does so at least in part because morality undermines other possibilities for such life. To put Nietzsche’s claim about morality into Williams’s terminology, morality is a particular form of ethical life that has managed to pass itself off as the only possible form. Nietzsche’s *GM* offers an idealized history of how this form of ethical life came to be and to hide from view other possibilities for ethical life. It did so through a process whereby various components of ethical life, in particular, practices of judging virtue, on the one hand, and right and wrong, on the other, become linked together and synthesized by means of a certain interpretation of value. Nietzsche calls this interpretation the “ascetic ideal,” whereas Williams calls it an “insistence on purity,” but it amounts to the same thing. According to Nietzsche and Williams, then, morality is not simply a set of practices, but a set of practices

informed by and developed by means of an ascetic interpretation of ethical life, according to which everything of true (“moral”) value must be “pure,” “separated out from the normal ‘muck’ of human life,” as I put it in this essay. This is how we get, for instance, the idea that the virtuous must be altruistic and that the source of right and wrong must be something pure, like the categorical imperative or the voice of God, and why there can be no “moral luck.”

But what is wrong with the ascetic demand for “purity”? What is Nietzsche’s objection to the moralized version of ethical life informed by it? One point on which Nietzsche and Williams agree is that morality is bound up with a set of illusions, for instance, the idea of free will in what Nietzsche calls “the superlative metaphysical sense” (*BGE* 21) as well as a necessary lack of transparency. Yet Nietzsche claims that even if morality were based on an error (such as free will), it would not “touch the problem of its value” (*GS* 345). So we must look elsewhere for his ultimate objection to morality. In paper 2, I argue that we find it in Nietzsche’s claim that morality brings about its own demise through the will to truth that it encourages. The naturalistic worldview that Nietzsche claims eventually emerges under morality’s influence deprives of authority the one form of ethical life we recognize. And because this form of ethical life has been taken to be the only one, it also undermines possibilities for developing new forms. Accordingly, the suggestion offered in paper 2 is that Nietzsche’s objection to morality is that it is “nihilistic”: in the way just described, it threatens to undermine commitment to any form of ethical value.

Paper 3, “Nietzsche’s Contribution to Ethics,” is my most complete and succinct account of Nietzsche’s naturalistic account of the origins and development of morality. It also adds importantly to the argument of paper 2, which may seem to suggest that Nietzsche’s ultimate objection to morality is that it did not last long enough. But surely Nietzsche has a problem with morality such that it is a good thing that it did not last longer (ignoring here the question as to when it died)! Paper 2 therefore gives at best an incomplete account of Nietzsche’s objection to morality, and paper 3 can be seen as supplementing it. It argues that his ultimate objection to morality is that it is not adequate medicine for the sickness it was meant to cure. The sickness at issue is the depression and lethargy that resulted when some group of our nomadic ancestors found themselves all of a sudden in a situation in which they were unable to act on the instincts, especially the aggressive ones, that had served them well in the wilderness. They needed a way to re-channel these impulses and the ascetic priest provided one. By reinterpreting ethical life in terms of the ascetic ideal, the priest provided a basis for redirecting aggressive impulses against the self in the form of guilt, various forms of self-torture, and attempts to purify the self of its natural impulses. Nietzsche believes that the redirection of aggressive impulses against the self led to many of the great achievements of human life. But his claim, as I present it in paper 3, is that morality (the ascetic interpretation of ethical life) is a hopeless project because it ultimately fails to provide a helpful

or nondestructive way of dealing with aggressive impulses: every success at internalization produces more aggression, resulting in more need for internalization. Nietzsche appears to think that this burden can be borne only with the help of various externalizations of aggression, either the various crude forms we find (increasingly it would seem) in ordinary life or the more spiritualized versions that he claims to find among more spiritual types. The latter were able to externalize their aggression by creating religious and philosophical doctrines and sometimes works of art that devalued nature and existence itself (*GM* II:21). At one time, some of these creations also served less spiritual types, helping them to release their aggression against themselves in various forms of self-discipline (*GM* III:16–21). But at this point in the history of the internalization/externalization of aggression and cruelty, the creations of more spiritual types are increasingly directed against the very possibility of a higher type of human being, thereby undermining respect for higher culture and ultimately its very possibility. So the objection to morality, as discussed in paper 2 (that it ultimately undermines all forms of ethical life) is related to the objection discussed in paper 3 (that morality is not good medicine for the disease that prompts its use). The former problem is a sign and symptom of the latter.

Another noteworthy aspect of paper 3 is its brief discussion of Brian Leiter's 2002 *Nietzsche on Morality*. Leiter's account is complicated, and I do not pretend to do it justice here or in the paper, or to provide any argument against it. But I will say a few words about it because, starting from the same questions from which I had started, Leiter offers an influential alternative to the account of morality presented in the three papers I have been discussing, and this raises the question as to whether my approach is still relevant and worth considering. I want to sketch a few reasons for thinking that it most definitely is.

Leiter agrees with me that Nietzsche is not simply rejecting a particular kind of morality and that he sometimes uses the word "morality" for what he praises—for example, "higher" moralities that "ought to be possible" (*BGE* 202). What then is the "scope" of Nietzsche's rejection of morality? Leiter's answer, like my own, involves distinguishing two senses of "morality" and saying that Nietzsche rejects morality in only one of these senses. He dubs that sense "morality in the pejorative sense" or "MPS," an acronym that has proven very useful for referring to morality in the sense in which Nietzsche rejects it. Here is where Leiter's approach differs from my own: MPS is a heuristic category, as he makes clear, not an historical one. Leiter's approach, unlike mine, is not concerned with how Nietzsche understands the actual historical object that he calls "morality." MPS is a construct, one formed on the basis of Nietzsche's criticisms of various things that we associate with morality, for example, his "disparate critical remarks—about altruism, happiness, pity, equality, Kantian respect for persons, utilitarianism" (Leiter 2002: 129). To oversimplify a bit, an MPS is an ethical system that, in addition to certain metaphysical commitments (e.g., to free will), takes a pro-attitude toward happiness, altruism, and

equality, and a con-attitude toward suffering, selfishness, and inequality. Leiter justifies taking MPS to be the “unified target” of Nietzsche’s attack on morality (Leiter 2002: 77) on the grounds that the norms just mentioned (and a few others I am ignoring) have something in common, namely, that a culture in which they “prevail as morality” is “harmful to higher men” because “it eliminates the conditions for the realization of human excellence” (Leiter 2002: 126, 129). But even if all of this is correct, it leaves unclear how MPS is related to morality, that is, why *morality* should be blamed for undermining human excellence. Leiter’s most plausible example of a cultural norm working this way is the pro-happiness norm. It does seem plausible that a culture holding out individual happiness as all-important will make it more difficult for higher or more creative types (evidently the only ones capable of excellence, according to Leiter’s reading of Nietzsche) to even endure, much less welcome, the suffering necessary for the realization of the excellence of which they are capable. And contemporary western culture may well fit this description. But if our culture embraces the norm of individual happiness, this is surely not due to morality, but to the secularized and (one is tempted to say) “post-moral” character of our culture. Indeed a culture emphasizing individual happiness seems to be the antithesis of a moral culture, which would presumably promote duty and striving to be a good person, not striving for one’s own happiness.

So a disadvantage of Leiter’s nonhistorical account of MPS is that it does not explain why Nietzsche takes the features of contemporary western culture that he finds objectionable to be due to morality, to the actual historical phenomenon he analyzes in *GM*. One advantage of my approach, which focuses on Nietzsche’s own account of what morality is, is that it does suggest an explanation. In paper 3, I argue that it is the demise of the ascetic ideal—so the breakdown of morality in the narrow sense—that leads to the culture of herd happiness and the “last man,” which Nietzsche finds objectionable to the point of near despair. And morality is to blame for its own demise (as I argue in paper 2) because, in obedience to the ascetic ideal, it both set itself up as the only possible form of ethical life and then led to the undermining of its own authority. If this is correct, focusing on Nietzsche’s own account of what morality is also has the advantage of allowing us to recognize the resources he thinks we have—the pre-moralized resources—for developing a new form (or forms) of ethical life. And, finally, I consider it another advantage of my account (though Leiter obviously would not) that Nietzsche’s objection to morality is not simply that it is not good for higher types, but that it is ultimately not good for anyone.

Paper 4, “Nietzsche on ‘Free Will,’ Causality, and Responsibility,” published here for the first time, provides an example of what I have in mind regarding resources for new forms of ethical life that Nietzsche attempts to bring into view. I argue against the now common view that Nietzsche is an incompatibilist concerning ethical responsibility (that he denies that responsibility in this sense is compatible with determinism or, as Leiter would have it, fatalism).

He certainly rejects the claim that we are responsible in what he calls the “metaphysical superlative sense” (*BGE* 21), which I argue is precisely the libertarian-incompatibilist sense. But in *GM* II he sketches the early development of something that seems very close to the compatibilist idea of responsibility defended by Peter Strawson in “Freedom and Resentment.” The loss of the incompatibilist idea of responsibility therefore does not leave us bereft of any justifiable concept of responsibility. *GM* II provides an account of an idea of responsibility that precedes its moralization, that most of us still share, and that is not undermined by the factors that many, including Williams and Nietzsche, see as undermining responsibility in the metaphysical sense of concern to incompatibilists. It is due to the ascetic ideal that this older notion of responsibility has receded from view and that only its moralized, purified form, the incompatibilist notion, seems to remain. So one aim of Nietzsche’s immoralism, understood as his rejection of the ascetic interpretation of ethical life, is to allow a compatibilist notion of responsibility to emerge as a resource for a “post-moral” ethics.

According to my interpretation, then, Nietzsche’s immoralism involves not only the rejection of a moralized or ascetic interpretation of ethics, but is also an attempt to lay the groundwork for a “post-moral” form of ethics. And, presumably, the evaluative viewpoint from which he rejects morality already belongs to that post-moral ethics. But does Nietzsche believe that his own values, the values of such a “post-moral” ethics, are objective, or at least more objective than the moral values he rejects? This is a question I take up in paper 5, “Nietzsche and Moral Objectivity,” coauthored with David Dudrick. We argue against Brian Leiter’s claim that Nietzsche does not believe in the objectivity of any values, and that he therefore does not consider his own values any more objective than the moral values against which he campaigns.

Leiter treats the questions concerning the objectivity of Nietzsche’s values as “broadly speaking, metaethical in nature,” as questions concerning the metaphysical or epistemological status of those values (Leiter 2002: 136–7). We argue against his answers to these questions by offering an account of the development of Nietzsche’s metaethics from *Human, All-Too-Human* through his later works. Nietzsche is often taken to be an error theorist about morality, holding that in making moral claims, we are making false claims that certain properties exist in the world (e.g., rightness, goodness). We argue that this is plausible in the case of *HA*. In fact, because in *HA* Nietzsche was not yet distinguishing between morality in the wide and narrow sense, between ethics and morality, his position was really an error theory with regard to ethics in general and not just morality. Ethical properties do not exist in the world according to the naturalist understanding of the world that Nietzsche begins developing in *HA*. But to derive an error theory of morality from this, Nietzsche would also have to hold a cognitivist account of moral discourse, interpreting claims such as “murder is wrong” as assertions about such properties. Leiter notes that Nietzsche offers

no semantics of moral discourse and denies that we have good enough evidence as to the semantics he would have embraced if faced with the options available today. And this may very well be correct. And, yet, surely Nietzsche had to have a view as to how ethics (including morality, of course) fits into nature. If there are no normative facts or properties in the world for people to talk about or respond to, what is going on when people engage in ethical practices, including ethical discourse?

It seems plausible that when he wrote *HA*, Nietzsche considered involvement in ethical practices, including proneness to ethical attitudes and to making ethical judgments, to be guided by false beliefs, beliefs in entities that do not exist. He makes very explicit in *HA* 34 that the person who had overcome all false beliefs would live without such involvement. So, whether or not he had any semantics of moral discourse, it seems hard to deny that he held something close to an error-theoretic view of ethics and morality. Yet, by the time he wrote *The Gay Science*, his position had clearly changed. In understanding how ethics fits into nature, his emphasis is no longer on false beliefs about nonexistent entities, but on the interests and affects that color the world for us, making it into a value-laden world. Dudrick and I argue for interpreting Nietzsche, from *GS* on, as a metaethical non-cognitivist. But our concern is not with the semantics for ethical discourse to which Nietzsche may be committed, but rather with how his view had changed concerning how ethics fits into the natural world, a world that does not contain any ethical facts or properties. Our answer is in terms of the role he now sees ethics as playing in the expression of affective states, above all, of commitments. Of course, Nietzsche still thinks that some ethical practices are deeply involved in error and lack of transparency, as paper 2 argues he thinks is true of morality in the narrow sense. And the exposure of the errors and of what is actually going on in morality is likely to undermine it precisely by weakening the affective basis for morality's particular commitments. But, if my interpretation is correct, Nietzsche does not think that this would undermine all ethical commitment. Or, if it would, it is only because the ascetic ideal's demand for purity has led us to feel that values cannot be "objective" unless they reflect something like a god's eye point of view. Dudrick and I argue against this assumption. We take Nietzsche to have recognized that the error theory in *HA* was itself a product of the ascetic ideal, and we interpret his perspectivism as a way of understanding how he can take his values to be more objective than those he criticizes while also recognizing that when viewed from a naturalistic perspective, both are simply expressions of affect.

Politics

His rejection of morality notwithstanding, Nietzsche's normative perspective is often taken to be highly conservative, based on such evidence as his negative comments about democracy, equality, feminism, modernity, and liberalism, especially in *BGE*, arguably the most important statement of his mature

philosophy. Admittedly *Human-All-Too-Human* seems to lean more to the left, to be inspired above all by the Enlightenment. Dedicated to the memory of Voltaire on the occasion of his 100th anniversary, it clearly stands behind much of what Voltaire and the Enlightenment stood for, in particular, the importance of science and democracy. Yet Nietzsche later came to reject much of this book, and this seems to include his political views—which apparently moved quite rightward thereafter. Nothing I have said in discussing the papers in the previous section gives reason to deny this. In fact, it may seem that I add to the reasons that support it. After all, if Nietzsche wants to reform ethical life by exploiting pre-moral resources, it makes sense that he would want to go back to a more traditional organization of society. The papers in this section, written over a period of twenty-five years, examine different aspects of the assumption concerning Nietzsche's rightward trend and constitute different aspects of the case that Nietzsche's later political views lean further left, being more in tune with the Enlightenment, than it appears.¹

If Nietzsche is often taken to be politically conservative, he is also often used as a whipping boy by conservatives, who defend their own values by pointing to Nietzsche as an example of the danger of diverging from conservative political views. Nietzsche played both of these roles in a prominent neoconservative book of 1987, Allan Bloom's *The Closing of the American Mind*, the subject of paper 6, "Bloom and Nietzsche." Bloom was a follower of Leo Strauss and his esotericism, the view that philosophers do, and should, write in such a way that they will be understood differently by the people and by the philosophically minded.² Although I do not mention Strauss in this essay, I do in effect interpret Bloom's treatment of Nietzsche as exhibiting his influence. At first Nietzsche's role seems to be simply that of the villain of the piece, the major intellectual voice behind the 1960s rebellion against traditional culture in the United States and therefore the one ultimately responsible for the degradation of culture that Bloom thinks resulted. One upshot of this process, according to Bloom, was the movement toward liberalization of the college curriculum by the inclusion of minority voices and a greater openness to cultures other than that of the United States. This movement is what Bloom's book was particularly concerned to combat, which it does, at least in part, by associating the movement

¹ See Abbey for an analysis of Nietzsche's middle-period works, according to which these are "rich and fruitful works, deserving of close attention" (xii). Indeed, Abbey claims that these works, which constitute the "genealogist's apprenticeship" (xvii), present us with a more attractive Nietzsche than do the later works with which we associate Nietzsche because they show him as more willing to engage with the western philosophical tradition and appreciative of liberal institutions. If my account of Nietzsche's political views is correct, then Nietzsche's later thought continues to embody these characteristics that Abbey finds attractive, but they are more hidden from view.

² Strauss's followers are perhaps best known these days for their apparent role in leading the United States into the war in Iraq in the wake of 9/11.

with Nietzsche. To oversimplify: Nietzsche attacked reason, leaving no source for values, and relativism therefore ensued, as exhibited by the “anything goes” attitude of the 1960s as well as the attacks on the traditional curriculum. College students and their teachers sympathized with attacks on cultural imperialism because relativism had destroyed their faith in their own culture’s values.

But Nietzsche as archrival of conservatism (or the “neo” version thereof) is only half of Bloom’s story. The other side, I argue, is that Bloom sees in Nietzsche someone who actually agrees with his views: the “nihilistic” views of which he accuses Nietzsche are actually his own. The “esoteric” message of Bloom’s book is that Nietzsche made the mistake of imparting to the people the content of the philosopher’s point of view (when he should have kept it to himself), unlike Strauss’s neoconservative followers, who think that the future of thought depends on lying to the people about what philosophers really think. It is because Nietzsche was so honest about, for instance, the nonexistence of God and the inability of reason to provide a basis for values that he can be held responsible for the breakdown of traditional culture in the United States (maybe not single-handedly, but with the help of other all-too-honest European intellectuals).

Although I think Nietzsche would have sympathized with Bloom’s worries about what has and will become of intellectual culture (see papers 3, 6, and 9 for what I have to say about Nietzsche’s diagnosis of the problem), I was clearly offended by his book and argue strongly against his neoconservative view of Nietzsche in this short paper. It is not Bloom’s commitment to writing esoterically that offended me. Indeed, as later papers in Part II and my 2012 book show, I interpret Nietzsche himself as an esoteric writer (Clark and Dudrick 2012). What offended me was Bloom’s elitism and disdain for ordinary human life. Some may think that Nietzsche shares these attitudes with Bloom. I do not.³ I argue that the philosophical life, as Bloom describes it, has no positive content, no content beyond a negation of what he takes ordinary humans to believe, that there are gods that provide cosmic support for what humans care about. Given this structure, I interpreted Bloom’s position as just another reflection of the ascetic ideal.⁴ The same can be said about his claim that Nietzsche (and other honest intellectuals) drove culture to nihilism and relativism by convincing people that reason cannot provide support for values. It is the ascetic ideal, I claim, that leads one to think that only reason is “pure” enough to provide support for values, that desire and affect cannot provide such a foundation

³ Here it is important to be clear that there are, of course, some ways of understanding “elitist” such that Nietzsche would count as one. Paper 9 suggests one sense in which he is, even though I do not use the word there.

⁴ In retrospect, it seems too self-indulgent to be simply an expression of the ascetic ideal and is certainly not the expression of the ascetic ideal for which Nietzsche has the greatest respect (*GM* III:24–5). But, in fact, until that ultimate expression of the ascetic ideal that Nietzsche finds in the will to truth is reached, all versions of the ascetic ideal mix asceticism and self-indulgence.

(contrary to the Nietzschean position set out in paper 5). And, finally, much of what Bloom accuses Nietzsche of being too honest about is not what Nietzsche actually believes. This includes his immoralism, as Bloom understands it, which he in effect interprets as a denial of all ethical constraints, all obligations or duties. As my papers in the previous part should make clear, Nietzsche's rejection of morality is not aimed at liberation from all bonds of obligation and duty; it is rather a protest against the degradation of human life and culture (the nihilism) that "had to grow out of" morality, understood as the ascetic interpretation of ethical life (*GM* II:24). Like responsibility (see paper 4), duty and obligation are notions that have roots much older than the ascetic interpretation of them, and Nietzsche aims to strengthen these, not to undermine them. But this is not going to happen by having philosophers spout the same old doctrines while keeping quiet about they really believe.

In "Nietzsche's Misogyny" (paper 7), I argue against an interpretation of Nietzsche that is not only dear to conservatives but is accepted by most on the Left as well, that Nietzsche is against the liberation of women. Progressives tend to regard Nietzsche's thoughts on women as sexist, anti-feminist, and even misogynistic. Conservatives do not disagree with them about the content of his views, but often deny that they show Nietzsche to have prejudiced views of women, much less to be a misogynist. He does not hate women, I have heard some say (these were political scientists, not philosophers), he "loves women," but just does not want them to embarrass or devalue themselves by trying to act like men, trying to be the equals of men. In this paper, I look at Nietzsche's most extended piece of writing on woman or women, the second half of Part Seven of *BGE* (*BGE* VII). I argue that if we read it carefully, we can see that Nietzsche is not making the claims he seems to be making about women. This starts to become clear if we distinguish what he says about women (*die Frauen*) from what he says about woman (*das Weib*). Unfortunately, translations do not always make the distinction clear. It is even more obvious that we should distinguish what he says about women from what he says about "woman as such," or, perhaps more accurately, "the female in itself" (*das Weib an sich*). Given the similarity to the "thing in itself" (*das Ding an sich*), which Nietzsche dismisses in *BGE* 16 as a contradiction in terms, I argue that his talk of *das Weib an sich* refers to the social construction of the female or feminine (which the "sage" of *GS* 73 claims is the work of men) and is not about individual women who may or may not exemplify it. Indeed, a major point of these sections may be to point to the contradictions in our idea of the feminine—which, Nietzsche shows us here, includes being both more natural hence more animal-like and more spiritual than the male—which makes it impossible for any individual woman to exemplify it (Clark 2002).

I do not deny that there is evidence of misogyny or at least of resentment of women in *BGE* VII. But I claim that it is on the level of feeling or affect, and that Nietzsche uses his expression of it to show us how such feelings can be

overcome without the kind of moralizing he rejects. From the viewpoint of my 2012 book with David Dudrick, it seems clear that I already viewed Nietzsche as writing esoterically when I wrote this paper, and the upshot of my esoteric reading of *BGE* VII is that Nietzsche is much more sympathetic than it seems to feminism and the liberation of women.

That this paper remains quite relevant today can be seen by considering the article “Nietzsche and Women” in the very recent *Oxford Handbook on Nietzsche*, which aims to give us the state of the art view on each of its topics. Julian Young begins this piece with Nietzsche’s 1874 vote in favor of admitting women to the University, while acting as Dean of Humanities at the University of Basel. Nietzsche voted to admit women (and lost 6–4), Young notes, even though one of his heroes, Jacob Burckhardt, voted on the other side (Young 2013: 46). Adding to this event Nietzsche’s friendship with several feminists and an analysis of his writings and letters, Young concludes that “up until 1882 . . . Nietzsche can reasonably be described—certainly by nineteenth century standards—as not only an admirer of feminists but as himself an at least cautious feminist” (Young 2013: 48). But things changed radically after that, he claims: “by 1883 and even more strongly by 1886, Nietzsche has moved from a position of general support for emancipationist demands to violent, total, and abusive hostility” (Young 2013: 49). His evidence for this accusation comes, first of all, from the remarks of Nietzsche’s characters in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, most notoriously the suggestion from an “old woman” that one going to woman should not forget “the whip.” If we ignore these—and I think we should because it is more than a little tricky to decide what an author believes on the basis of what he has fictional characters say, especially without an analysis of the work as a piece of fiction—Young’s textual evidence comes down almost exclusively to the section of *Beyond Good and Evil* analyzed in my paper. What is Young’s response to my analysis? Well, strangely, he does not say⁵—although he does pay attention to what I stress as the contextualizing passage for Nietzsche’s remarks about women (which no one else not influenced by my paper has done), and provides an alternative to my reading of it, which he would clearly classify as a “creative misreading” (Young 2013: 58).

I begin with Young’s explanation for Nietzsche’s “turn” away from women and feminism. It is precisely the one I say in my paper I had always assumed for

⁵ This is strange because he sent me an email in 2008 (when working on his biography) asking for a copy of the paper and I sent him one (though not electronically, so I cannot be sure that it arrived). Further, much that he says suggests that he did read it. It is also strange that a male positioning himself as the defender of women and feminism against Nietzsche’s “pathology” would find, as far as I can tell, no contemporary women worth citing for this article or for his 2010 biography of Nietzsche. Among works not cited are Carol Diethe’s *Nietzsche’s Women: Beyond the Whip* (1996) and, in the case of the biography, Clark (1990), despite the fact that Young’s own claims regarding truth and the will to power seem variations on its influential accounts of the same.

Nietzsche's apparent misogyny (until I worked through his remarks in *BGE* VII): his resentment toward Lou Salomé. Young certainly provides evidence from Nietzsche's correspondence of the nasty and resentful things he said about Salomé after she dumped him to run off with his best friend, Paul Ree. But is it likely that Nietzsche, of all people—the same Nietzsche whom Freud credited with a greater self-knowledge than any man who had ever lived or was likely to live—would allow himself to turn his resentment into not only hatred of women but also a view of women that was quite at odds with his view only a few years earlier? In the midst of the rancor and self-pity that beset him after his relationship with Salomé collapsed, he wrote: “If I don't turn this muck into gold, I am lost.” He did turn it into “gold,” it seems to me, specifically into *GM*'s analysis of *ressentiment*, including its emphasis on the way in which this affect “falsifies the image” of its object (*GM* I:10). Could he really not have known that this is what he was doing in the case of women?

Actually, even Young does not think so. After asserting, on the basis of no evidence whatsoever, that “one of Nietzsche's weaknesses as a philosopher was his occasional inability to distinguish between the philosophical and the pathological,”⁶ he suggests that he nevertheless had, in the case of *BGE*'s remarks on women, “a shrewd suspicion that a personal pathology had invaded his philosophy.” Citing *BGE* 231—the passage that I analyze as contextualizing Nietzsche's remarks about women as “only [his] truths” and an expression of the “great stupidity” he is, and therefore as “steps to self-knowledge” (*BGE* 231) rather than as informative about women—Young offers an interpretation that comes close to mine: “Because this most self-aware of men knows that he has not recovered from the Salomé affair, he warns readers that his view on women may well be infected by pathology and prejudice” (Young 2013: 56). This leaves Young with two questions: why didn't Nietzsche “excise” the suspect remarks from his work, and given that he did not, why did he leave in the warning of *BGE* 231? To the first, Young answers that Nietzsche wrote his books “not for a timeless audience located somewhere in outer space but for ‘the very few,’ five or six contemporaries, five or six actual or potential ‘friends’ (*GS* 381) he hopes to attract to his cause of cultural regeneration.” And since these “friends,” after all, “may literally have to live with him in a monastery for free spirits . . . it is important that they should know who he is, warts and all.” To the second, Young explains that by the time he wrote *BGE*, most of Nietzsche's good friends were women, and indeed feminists. So because he realized that he had given them a problem of consistency, “of explaining how a Nietzschean feminist could be anything other than a self-contradiction” (a strange echo of the first paragraph of my paper), he invited them to “scrutinize his views on women

⁶ Note that this seems to contradict the final line of Young's biography regarding Nietzsche's philosophy: that “there is nothing ‘pathological’ about it—apart from the views on women” (Young 2010: 562).

with an eye to separating the philosophical from the pathological” (Young 2013: 56–7).

Young’s answer to the first question seems sheer speculation and based on a false dichotomy. Of course, he was not writing for those in “outer space,” but there is little reason to think that the “friends” referred to in *GS* 381 are confined to, or even include, contemporaries, as opposed to future readers, and good reason to think that Nietzsche did not expect *BGE* to find understanding readers for over a hundred years.⁷ That the poem at the end of *BGE* makes use of a poem he originally sent to Heinrich von Stein, perhaps in the hopes of getting him to “join him in the high mountains of Sils Marie,” provides no evidence that *BGE* “is written for, above all, Heinrich von Stein” (Young 2013: 56). Given the kind of careful reading that *BGE* requires and repays (Clark and Dudrick 2012), it is hardly surprising that Nietzsche thought that it might take a long time before it could be understood. Further, contrary to what Young clearly assumes, the fact that Nietzsche told his feminist friends that he meant the sexist and misogynistic things he said does not give much support to Young’s reading. Yes, he meant them. The question is what they mean. And if, as Clark and Dudrick (2012) argue, he wrote *BGE* to teach “to read well . . . to read slowly, deeply, looking cautiously before and aft, with reservations, with doors left open, with delicate eyes and fingers” (*D* P:5), and to reward with insights those who learned what he was trying to teach, there is no reason to think he would have thought he was doing his feminist friends a favor by offering them a shortcut.

Even more implausible is Young’s answer to his second question. It seems completely implausible that Nietzsche had enough self-knowledge to strategize in the way Young claims about revealing his warts and helping his feminist friends to see through his misogynistic remarks if he had not seen through them himself. It surely would have been reasonable for Young to raise a third question, which is whether there is a way of reading what Nietzsche actually says in *BGE* VII such that it reflects the fact that Nietzsche actually did see through his *ressentiment*. This is the question to which my paper responds. And given Young’s evidence that Nietzsche was very close to being a feminist before the fiasco with Salomé, his agreement with me that Nietzsche invites us to figure out the perspective from which his comments about women are coming, and his recognition of Nietzsche’s superior self-knowledge, it is difficult to understand why Young did not even bother to try to follow out Nietzsche’s own thinking in *BGE* VII. Perhaps he was having too much fun organizing Nietzsche’s comments in a way that most fully brings out their apparent sexism and misogyny (Young 2013: 49). In any case, it is difficult for me to consider my careful

⁷ See Nietzsche’s letter to Malwida von Meysenbug, 24 September 1886, which suggests (in jest, presumably) that reading *BGE* not be allowed until the year 2000.

esoteric reading of Nietzsche's text less plausible than what appears to me to be Young's tortured psychological explanation.

In addition to being more sympathetic to feminism than he appears, Nietzsche is also more sympathetic to gay liberation than is assumed by conservatives. This is my claim in "On Queering Nietzsche" (paper 11), an unpublished paper I wrote for a meeting of the Society for Gay and Lesbian Philosophy in 1997. It is a response to two other papers given at that meeting, and therefore would not work well as a self-standing journal article. But it seemed to me to make sense to publish it as part of this collection because what I have to say here about Nietzsche and sex combines well with the previous paper on Nietzsche's attitudes toward women and it contributes to the case made in this part that Nietzsche leans much more left in his social and political sympathies than appearances and the secondary literature often suggest.

One of the papers to which I am responding is by Kevin Hill, who argues that Nietzsche was a closeted gay, hidden even from himself, and that his closeted status led him to many of his philosophical doctrines that can seem problematic. I look at Nietzsche's views concerning sex and homosexuality, arguing that his writings reveal him to be much more sympathetic to homosexuality than we would expect from someone who was hiding his own tendencies from himself. Further, although being in the closet is a plausible explanation for some of the views that Hill attributes to him, the problem is that, on my reading, Nietzsche did not hold such views. These are mainly views concerning the impossibility of communication and the uncleanness or "filth" of common culture. To my mind, Nietzsche's writings indicate that he attaches great import to culture and to a common culture. In particular, I claim that the basic practices concerning right and wrong must emerge from a common culture. If the philosopher is to "create values," it is not *ex nihilo*, but only by transforming existing practices through *interpretation* (see my discussion of *GS* 58 above).

In "Nietzsche's Antidemocratic Rhetoric" (paper 9), I piece together the evidence for the widely shared view that Nietzsche supports an antidemocratic, in fact aristocratic, political system. I argue that, as in the case of the previous two papers, careful reading of what Nietzsche actually says shows that he is not committed to the position attributed to him. I argue that his philosophical concerns are compatible with the existence and/or endorsement of a democratic political system. They would not be compatible if Nietzsche were opposed to political equality. I argue that he is not. When he complains about the modern "doctrine of equality," he is referring to the doctrine that all human beings are of equal worth, not to the claim that they have or deserve equal political rights and representation. At the end of this paper, I offer an account of his objection to egalitarianism, understood as the doctrine that human beings are of equal worth.

More important about paper 9 is that it fills in the story as to how Nietzsche thinks the denigration of culture that Bloom (paper 6) was attempting to

diagnose follows from the collapse of the ascetic interpretation of ethical life. The moral doctrine of the equality of persons—originally established out of *ressentiment* against those who hold themselves up as superior human beings and translated into the idea that we are all equally children of God—was, after all, coupled with the idea that there are higher states of soul and that only some of us, the best among us, can really achieve them.

“The Good of Community” (paper 10), coauthored with Monique Wonderly, makes two contributions to the argument of the papers on politics in this collection. First, it argues against a new and perhaps more benign way of classifying Nietzsche as a political conservative. Second, it adds to the argument of the previous paper that even though I interpret Nietzsche as more leftist than he appears, he is not an egalitarian. It does so by making an extended and detailed case against Julian Young’s claim (which he defends at length in two recent books, Young 2006 and 2010) that the flourishing of the community is Nietzsche’s highest value. According to the more traditional view, which we defend here, Nietzsche values the exceptional individual above all. Young attributes to Nietzsche the more politically conservative view that exceptional individuals have value only insofar as they contribute to the flourishing of the community. I take this to be politically conservative because it holds that the interest of the community takes precedence over that of individuals, even that of the exceptional individual. The argument of paper 10 in opposition is that Nietzsche regards communities as valuable *most obviously* because of the goods they make available, and that the greatest of these, for Nietzsche, is individuality and, above all, exceptional individuality. The community is thus instrumentally valuable, whereas the individual is intrinsically valuable. In the final section, however, we suggest that Nietzsche holds that the community, as well as the individual, is intrinsically valuable, and not merely valuable *as a means* to the flourishing of the other. This emphasis on the value of the *exceptional* individual complements the conclusion of paper 9, in addition to making clear that I am not attributing to Nietzsche a liberal position, according to which individual personhood is itself (i.e., apart from the excellence it achieves) the source of value.

Metaphysical Background

A final part adds four essays on metaphysics. The point of including them is to suggest connections between the metaphysical issues with which I deal, especially in my two books, and the normative claims I have been discussing here. In paper 11, “Deconstructing *The Birth of Tragedy*,” the earliest paper of those in this collection, my aim was to put my finger on the problem with Nietzsche’s first book, the problem that led him to call it an “impossible book” by the time he wrote the new preface to it fifteen years later (*BTP*). I claim that

this problem was a contradiction in his understanding and evaluation of the Dionysian. Simply put, in *BT* Dionysus functions as the god of both truth and the affirmation of life. Given Nietzsche's understanding of truth in *BT*, however, life is not really affirmable: appreciation of truth cannot coexist with the affirmation of life; we need illusion in order to affirm life. I still think the detailed analysis offered in paper 11 for this point about the contradiction in *BT*'s position is basically right. Further, my 2012 book with Dudrick provides resources for understanding Nietzsche's ultimate interpretation of how he got himself into this contradiction, a much deeper understanding than the paper itself was able to provide. This recent book allows us to recognize that the contradiction in Nietzsche's early idea of the Dionysian expresses a tension between the will to truth, on the one hand, and the will to value (the will to understand the world in a way that gives support to one's values), on the other—a tension that becomes a contradiction when value is understood from the perspective of the ascetic ideal. In Clark and Dudrick (2012), we argue that Nietzsche understood his middle period work as expressive of this contradiction. Republishing this early paper should help to make clear that this analysis can be extended to Nietzsche's early work.

One aspect of paper 11 that I now reject is its claim that when he was writing *BT* Nietzsche still accepted Schopenhauer's metaphysical claim that the thing in itself is will. Paper 12 rectifies that error, arguing that at this early point in his career, Nietzsche had already rejected the possibility of gaining knowledge of the thing in itself in favor of a more Kantian position. I argue that as Nietzsche overcame the influence of Schopenhauer's metaphysics, he became a Humean empiricist and non-cognitivist on moral issues. Paper 12 is thus a forerunner to paper 5, on Nietzsche's metaethics. It is also an extensive exploration of one side of what *BGE* calls the "magnificent tension of the spirit," which Nietzsche hopes will give rise to the "philosophy of the future" of the book's subtitle. According to Clark and Dudrick (2012), that tension is between the will to truth, the will to represent reality in terms of what is actually there, and the will to value, the will to represent reality in a way that supports one's values (other than truth). And the will to truth side of the tension, we argue, leads to an empiricist-naturalistic picture of reality. That is what Nietzsche developed in his middle-period works (*HA*, *D*, and *GS*) as he broke away from Schopenhauer, and it is the development of that picture that I explore in paper 12.

But it turned out that I only had half of the story when I wrote paper 12. I was not yet clued into Nietzsche's claim in *BGE*, to which Clark and Dudrick (2012) is devoted, that the will to truth and the will to value have existed in tension in his philosophy (and in all of the important philosophy with which he is concerned). Whereas paper 12 denies that Nietzsche has a metaphysics once he abandons the thing in itself, paper 13 indicates that a metaphysics, or at least something analogous to one, emerges in Nietzsche's thought once he takes the will to value into account and finds a way to satisfy it. This is a metaphysics

from a first (and second) person point of view and one based on normative premises. Finally, paper 14, coauthored with David Dudrick, lays out the philosophical psychology that Clark and Dudrick (2012) claim emerges from this normative point of view and defends attributing it to Nietzsche against an alternative interpretation of Nietzsche's psychology offered by Paul Katsafanas.

{ PART I }

Ethics

