

# Nietzsche, Culture and Education

*Edited by*  
**Thomas E. Hart**



# NIETZSCHE, CULTURE AND EDUCATION

In the spring of 1872 Friedrich Nietzsche gave a series of public lectures titled 'On the Future of our Educational Institution' to an audience in Basel, Switzerland. In the lectures he made clear his attitude about what was wrong with education and how it had negatively affected the culture of his day.

More than one hundred years after the death of Nietzsche, his legacy remains one of the most pervasive in philosophical thought. While his influence on philosophical thought concerning culture is everywhere to be found, his influence on the philosophy of education has yet to find a place in mainstream thought on the subject, in spite of the inextricable connection between the two. This collection has been put together in an effort to redress this situation.

*Nietzsche, Culture and Education* brings together a collection of specially commissioned essays on the theme of Nietzsche's cultural critique and its use in and effect on educational theory. The international character of the contributors gives this work a polyvalent perspective on these areas of Nietzsche's philosophy.

This publication will be a valuable source book for both undergraduate and postgraduate students of philosophy, education and the social sciences as well as for Nietzsche specialists.



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# List of Abbreviations

A	<i>The Antichrist</i>
BGE	<i>Beyond Good and Evil</i>
BT	<i>The Birth of Tragedy</i>
D	<i>Daybreak: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality</i>
DS	<i>David Strauss, the Confessor and the Writer</i>
EH	<i>Ecce Homo</i>
GM	<i>On the Genealogy of Morals</i>
GS	<i>The Gay Science</i>
HAH	<i>Human, All Too Human</i>
KGB	<i>Kritische Gesamtausgabe: Briefwechsel</i>
KGW	<i>Kritische Gesamtausgabe: Werke</i>
KSA	<i>Kritische Studienausgabe</i>
PTA	<i>Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks</i>
SE	<i>Schopenhauer as Educator</i>
TI	<i>Twilight of the Idols</i>
TL	<i>On Truth and Lie in a Nonmoral Sense</i>
UD	<i>On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life</i>
UM	<i>Untimely Meditations</i>
WP	<i>Will to Power</i>
Z	<i>Thus Spoke Zarathustra</i>



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# Foreword

When people speak of Friedrich Nietzsche's 'educational philosophy', it is important to hear an ambiguity in the expression. It refers, on the one hand, to Nietzsche's philosophy *of* education, to his reflections on 'our educational institutions', on teaching, on 'breeding' and so on. But it also refers to his philosophical enterprise as a whole, whose over-arching aim was education, in the ancient sense of leading those human beings capable of it out of their present, limited condition to the 'higher' condition of those whom Nietzsche called 'free spirits'. For Nietzsche, as for his hero Goethe, a philosophy that merely informs and hence fails to transform life and action is something to despise.

These twin aspects of Nietzsche's educational philosophy are, to be sure, intimately related. His critical remarks on teaching, universities, 'old maid' scholarship and the like reflect, naturally, his wider transformative philosophy. At the same time, the restructuring of modern European education was, for Nietzsche, an important component in a battle against a 'negative' and corrosive 'nihilism' that stood in the path of human beings' potential emergence into a higher and freer style of existence.

In its two educational dimensions, and the intimate union between them, Nietzsche's writings recall an older philosophical tradition, that of the Greeks, for which Nietzsche, despite his criticisms of particular Greek thinkers, had much greater esteem than for any later traditions. For the Greeks, too, not only is philosophical attention to educational practice an imperative, but philosophy itself is an educational practice, an exercise in the service of 'life', a mode – *the* mode, perhaps – of self-cultivation and self-discipline. So it is both unsurprising and welcome to find that several contributors to the present volume emphasize Nietzsche's close relationship to the Greeks.

Given the inseparability of Nietzsche's educational concerns from his philosophy as a whole, it is also unsurprising, but once again welcome, to find contributors addressing issues that are central within that larger philosophy, yet especially intimate with the idea of education. The educated Nietzschean individual is someone who, in Nietzsche's enigmatic words, has obeyed the command to 'become the one you are'. He or she is also someone able to lend authentic 'measure' to their life, having seen through the false or partial measures that prevail in their culture. This educated person is also one capable of striking an appropriate balance between the conflicting concerns for truth and the enhancement of life. These various themes – *Bildung* and 'measure', authenticity, self-overcoming and self-cultivation, truth, science and 'life' – are duly addressed by contributors to the book.

It is a sign of maturity in the examination of a great thinker's treatment of a subject when this goes beyond exegesis and interpretation to the *use* of the thinker's insights in the task of critical assessment of current, 'timely' issues different in some respects from those obtaining when he or she addressed the subject. Two edited

collections appeared in 2000 – *Education in the Age of Nihilism* and *Nietzsche's Legacy for Education* – which applied Nietzsche's educational philosophy to the state of education obtained at the turn of our present century. It is good to see some contributors to the present volume continuing this promising strategy of appraising 'our educational institutions' of today through a Nietzschean prism.

Thomas E. Hart has assembled a distinguished team of contributors for this interesting volume. While each of them writes on a different component of Nietzsche's philosophy – ranging from the role of 'solitude' in self-cultivation to his acidic remarks on a schooling that attempts to make people 'current' and 'timely' – the chapters are united in their sense that Nietzsche's is indeed an educational philosophy, one that retains the power to address, with vigour and originality, the cultural condition of the modern world.

David E. Cooper  
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# Introduction

During the summer of 2000 I had the happy task of helping host the annual Nietzsche Society Conference in Durham, England. The theme for that year's conference was '100 Years of Nietzsche: Society, Culture and Education'. I was quite pleased with the choice of theme since I was busy, at the time, writing my PhD thesis on Nietzsche's philosophy of education; more specifically, the ancient Greek influences thereon, and I saw the conference as a unique opportunity to gauge international academic opinion on the matter. The conference was particularly well attended that year, being a centenary of sorts, and many excellent discussions arose from the incredible variety of papers given during the three-day conference. It dawned on me, shortly after the conference had ended, that while there are many good articles on Nietzsche's philosophy with regard to culture and education, fewer good books, there was room for a collection, a gathering of some of the many perspectives and ideas on how Nietzsche could be used, or abused (to borrow from Foucault) in the service of culture and education in today's world. Of course, Nietzsche himself might have had a hard time stomaching the application of the terms 'culture' and 'education' for the activities they are used to describe these days, but nevertheless it seemed to me that in spite of the domination of education by self-serving politicians and culture by the Barnums and Baileys of the world, many people still hold the hope that future generations will be better educated than we were, and culture will revive itself, perhaps against all odds. When reading Nietzsche in the context of these now darkened ideas, it is easy to fall into the melancholy that seems to creep in whenever we think too much or pay too close attention to the world around us. It is easy to believe that solitude is the only viable option in a world that has gone blind and deaf to its own demise. Then again, solitude would not arise as an option if one did not care at all; the nihilism of the herd would provide all the comfort anyone needed. Solitude, then, is the beginning of the realization that things need not be the way they are, appear or happen to be, and that improvement is always an option, if we are willing to put in the effort. In probing the idea of a collection of articles centered on the complimentary themes of culture and education, Babette Babich of Fordham University suggested that the title, *Solicitude and Solitude* would be a fitting one, and while, for various reasons, this is not the title of this volume they are the two concepts which bind these articles. Some of the chapters in this volume come from or were adapted from, papers given at the 2000 UK Friedrich Nietzsche Society conference, while others were invited after the fact for their authors' insight into solitude or solicitude in Nietzsche's works. Most of the authors will be familiar to the adept Nietzsche scholar, while others, myself included, will not. I wanted to gather a broad range of perspectives for this collection and I believe I have collected points of view that will give some cause to those of us who think about these things, to think more seriously about doing these things. The authors in this collection come from Canada, the US, Australia, Holland, England and Belgium and while this is,