

Seminar on Friedrich Nietzsche's *Genealogy of Morality*

Philosophy 418a/618a, Fall 2000

Monday, 3.30 - 5.20

Mathias Risse

SSS 902

Office Hour Wed 2-3 and by appointment

432-1689

mathias.risse@yale.edu

In this seminar, we will study the three treatises in Nietzsche's *Genealogy of Morality* (GM). First published in 1887, this book is arguably Nietzsche's most important work, and it certainly is one of the ten (or maybe five) most important books in the history of moral philosophy. Many of the most important themes from Nietzsche's philosophy will be discussed, including slaver/master morality, the development of the bad conscience, *ressentiment*, Nietzsche's views on Christianity and ascetic ideals, and perspectivism. Fortunately, over the last twenty years, a lot of insightful work on Nietzsche's moral philosophy has been done, and thus the secondary literature used in this seminar will be primarily from the last twenty years. In addition to GM, various other books by Nietzsche will be consulted as well, in particular *Beyond Good and Evil* (BGE), *Ecce Homo* (EH), the *Antichrist* (A), the fifth book of the *Gay Science*, and, to a lesser extent, *Human All too Human I* (HAH), *The Wanderer and his Shadow* (WHS, part of *Human All too Human II*), *Dawn* (D), the earlier books of the *Gay Science*, and the *Twilight of Idols* (TI).

Requirements

Prior exposure to philosophy is highly recommended. Students are expected to attend the seminar meetings regularly and to write a substantial, 20-25 pages paper. Moreover, seminar participants are expected to give one presentation, which will also involve writing a preliminary, short paper that ideally should be developed into the final paper (i.e., no second, independent paper is expected). Requirements for grad student papers will be higher than for undergraduates.

Please note that this syllabus includes a lot of readings that are *not required* for the class. In light of the sheer amount of bad literature that exists on Nietzsche, the recommended readings are meant to help seminar participants to design their own course of study, depending on their depth of interest in the material, without having to work their way through unhelpful readings.

Required books (available at BookHaven):

Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Genealogy of Morality*, edited by M. Clark and A. Swensen

Maudemarie Clark, *Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy*

Walter Kaufmann, *The Portable Nietzsche*

Alexander Nehamas, *Nietzsche. Life as Literature*
Aaron Ridley, *Nietzsche's Conscience*
Richard Schacht (ed.), *Nietzsche, Genealogy, Morality*

In addition, there will be a course reader available at Tyco. That course reader will contain all the readings listed below under (c) and (d) for each week. Also note that some of the excerpts from Nietzsche's works that are listed below as recommended readings under (b) are not included in the *Portable Nietzsche*. This is true in particular for the excerpts from *Beyond Good and Evil*. You may either want to purchase editions of these works (choose translations by Kaufmann or Hollingdale!), or to consult these works in the library.

Recommended introductory readings:

The following books are recommended introductions or background readings to Nietzsche's life and work. (For a brief version, the introduction to the Schacht collection will probably do.) Hayman and Hollingdale are straightforward and highly readable biographies, while Magnus/Higgins is a collection of survey articles, and Solomon/Higgins (2000) is an elementary systematic introduction to Nietzsche. Kaufmann and Danto wrote the two seminal works that introduced Nietzsche as a philosopher of some standing into the English-speaking world. Danto's book has a more introductory character than Kaufmann's. Schacht's book is a sophisticated systematic introduction to Nietzsche's thought. The most extensive biography of Nietzsche (which is considered the definitive biography by many) is C. P. Janz, *Friedrich Nietzsche: Biographie* (1978) which is available only in German. Aschheim presents a highly informative discussion of the Nietzsche reception in Germany. Solomon/Higgins (1988) is a useful collection of essays on specific works by Nietzsche.

Steven Aschheim (1992), *Nietzsche in Germany*
Arthur Danto (1965), *Nietzsche as Philosopher*
Ronald Hayman (1980), *Nietzsche. A Critical Life*
R. J. Hollingdale (1965), *Nietzsche. The Man and his Philosophy*
Walter Kaufmann (1974; fourth edition), *Nietzsche. Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*.
Bernd Magnus and Kathleen Higgins, eds. (1996), *The Cambridge Companion to Nietzsche* (interesting in particular the pieces by Magnus/Higgins and by Behler)
Richard Schacht (1983), *Nietzsche*
Robert Solomon and Kathleen Higgins (1988), *Reading Nietzsche*
Robert Solomon and Kathleen Higgins (2000), *What Nietzsche Really Said*

Weekly Schedule

- (a) = *required* Nietzsche reading for the week
- (b) = *recommended* additional reading; designed not only (and not even mostly) to supplement the primary reading for that specific week, but to make sure that by the middle of the term most of the relevant passages on concerns of moral philosophy have appeared on the syllabus for the benefit of those with deeper interests in the material
- (c) = *required* secondary literature

(d) = *recommended* additional literature, serving the same purpose as the readings under (b), *mutatis mutandis*

Introduction

Mon, Sep 11: Overview; Nietzsche until 1887

- (a) Nietzsche remarks on GM in *Ecce Homo*, Nietzsche's Preface to GM
- (b) /
- (c) Clark, chapter 1; editors' introduction to Clark/Swensen
- (d) Magnus/Higgins, "Nietzsche's Works and Their Themes", in Reader; Solomon, "Reading Nietzsche", in Reader; Strong, "On Approaching Nietzsche", in Reader

The First Essay: "Good and Evil", 'Good and Bad'"

Mon, Sep 18: The First Essay – Content and Structure

- (a) GM I
- (b) HAH 2, 39, 40, 45, 53, 96-107, TI, Morality as Anti-Nature; BGE 32, 46, 186, 188, 195, 197, 199, 201, 202, 257, 258, 260-262; WHS 44
- (c) /
- (d) White, "The Return of the Master" in Schacht

Mon, Sep 25: The Antichrist

- (a) A, sections 2, 5-9, 11, 12, 15-18, 20-28, 30, 31, 33-47, 51, 57, 58
- (b) HAH 113, 114, 116, 119, 124, D 68, 70, 71, 84-93; EH, Why I am a Destiny; TI, The Improvers of Mankind
- (c) remaining sections of A
- (d) Shapiro, "The Writing on the Wall", in Reader

Mon, Oct 2: Ressentiment

- (a) /
- (b) D 102, GS 122, 149, 268-275, 335, 347, 352, 359
- (c) Solomon, "A Hundred Years of 'Ressentiment'", in Schacht; Bittner, "Ressentiment", in Schacht; Scheler, "Ressentiment", in Reader; Reginster, "Nietzsche on Ressentiment and Valuation", in Reader
- (d) /

The Second Essay: "Guilt', 'Bad Conscience', and the Like"

Mon, Oct 9: The Second Essay – Content and Structure

- (a) GM II

(b) D 9, 18, 72, 76, 78, 112, 140; BGE 229, TI, Skirmishes of an Untimely Man, 5; WHS 34, 37 -51 22, 26, 27, 28, 31, 33, 39, 40, 44, 52

(c) /

(d) /

Mon, Oct 16: The Bad Conscience

(a) /

(b) HAH 43, 44, 57, 92, 132, 133GS 116, 117, 130-141, 250, 305, 326, 354

(c) Ridley, chapters 1 and 2; Risse, "The Second Treatise in 'On the Genealogy of Morality'", in Reader

(d) /

Mon, Oct 23: Nietzsche's Critique of Morality – First Approaches

(a) /

(b) /

(c) Foot, "Nietzsche's Immoralism", in Schacht; Clark, "Nietzsche's Immoralism and the Concept of Morality", in Schacht; Nehamas, chapter 7

(d) /

The Third Essay: "What Do Ascetic Ideals Mean?"

Mon, Oct 30: The Third Essay – Content and Structure

(a) GM III

(b) /

(c) Wilcox, "That Exegesis of an Aphorism in 'Genealogy' III: Reflections on the Scholarship", in Reader

(d) Kofman, "Wagner's Ascetic Ideal According to Nietzsche", in Schacht; Magnus, Mileur, Stewart, "Reading Ascetic Reading: 'Towards the Genealogy of Morals' and the Path Back to the World", in Schacht; Clark, "From the Nietzsche Archive: Concerning an Aphorism Explicated in 'Genealogy' III", in Reader; Janaway, "Nietzsche's Illustration of the Art of Exegesis", in Reader

Mon, Nov 6: Perspectivism I

(a) /

(b) The new 1886 prefaces to HAH, D, and GS; BGE, in particular Book I, on the lack of importance of truth; GS 121, 162, 260, 265, 343, 344, 345, 372- 374

(c) Clark, chapters 2 and 3; Danto, *Nietzsche as Philosopher*, chapter 3, in Reader; Nehamas, chapter 2

(d) /

Mon, Nov 13: Perspectivism II

- (a) /
- (b) /
- (c) Clark, chapters 4 and 5; Leiter, "Perspectivism in Nietzsche's 'Genealogy of Morals'", in Schacht
- (d) /

Mon, Nov 27: Asceticism

- (a) /
- (b) HAH 76, 136-140; D 30, GS 351, 357, 358; for special interest in Wagner, *The Case of Wagner* and *Nietzsche contra Wagner*
- (c) Kaufmann, "Editor's Introduction [to GM]"; Clark, chapters 6 and 7; Nehamas, chapter 4
- (d) Staten, *Nietzsche's Voice*, chapter 2, in Reader

Concluding Discussion

Mon, Dec. 4: Nietzsche's Critique of Morality – Continued

- (a) /
- (b) /
- (c) Williams, "Nietzsche's Minimalist Moral Psychology", in Schacht; Geuss, "Nietzsche and Morality", in Reader; Leiter, "Nietzsche and the Morality Critics", in Reader
- (d) Nehamas, "Nietzsche and 'Hitler'", in Reader