Nietzsche's Metaethics: Against the Privilege Readings

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I. Framing the Issues

It is, of course, well-known that Nietzsche wanted to effect a revaluation of values: that is, a new assessment of the value of our 'moral' values.[1] On at least one plausible construal, Nietzsche held that moral values were not conducive to the flourishing of human excellence, and it was by reference to *this* fact that he proposed to assess their value.[2] Even if one rejects, however, this specific formulation of the grounds on which the revaluation proceeds, one may still agree that the enterprise of assessing the value of certain other values (call them the 'revalued values') invites the following metaethical question: what status – metaphysical, epistemological – do the values used to undertake this revaluation (the 'assessing values') enjoy? More specifically, one might want to ask questions like: Are the assessing valuations true and the revalued valuations false? Are the assessing valuations justified (in some sense to be specified) while the revalued valuations are not? Are there reasons for everyone to accept the assessing values rather than the revalued values?

What animates these sorts of questions is a worry about Nietzsche's revaluation that might be summed up more simply as follows: in offering a revaluation of morality is Nietzsche doing anything more than giving his idiosyncratic opinion from his idiosyncratic evaluative perspective? Is there anything about Nietzsche's evaluation that ought to command *our* attention and assent? In short, is there any sense in which Nietzsche's evaluative perspective can claim some epistemic *privilege* – being veridical, being better justified – over its target?

A number of writers – including Philippa Foot, Richard Schacht and John Wilcox – have offered an affirmative answer to this last question. Let us call these sorts of answers the 'Privilege Readings' of Nietzsche's metaethics. Writers who defend the Privilege Reading all hold that Nietzsche's evaluative standpoint in undertaking the revaluation enjoys some *privilege* over its target *in the sense that it is veridical or, at least, better justified*. Defenders of the Privilege Reading differ, however, on precisely what the source of the privilege is supposed to be. I shall discuss two possibilities. The first is what I will call the 'Naturalist Realist' reading of Nietzsche's metaethics, which locates the source of the privilege in there being objective facts about value. The second is Philippa Foot's nonrealist interpretation, which locates the source of the privilege in the interpersonal appeal of Nietzsche's evaluative perspective. In this paper, I will

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argue that neither interpretation succeeds. Such a conclusion suggests – even if it does not establish – a rather different reading of Nietzsche's metaethics: namely, that Nietzsche's own evaluative position is neither objectively true nor even better justified than its target.

Now this latter conclusion would not, in fact, be surprising to one influential strand in the Nietzsche literature. Writers like Arthur Danto and Jacques Derrida have construed Nietzsche, we might say, as a 'global anti-realist': according to this Nietzsche, there are no truths or facts about anything, let alone truths about value. It is part of the essential background and motivation for the present project that this global anti-realism is *not* Nietzsche's view and that, consequently, there may prove to be a *special* problem about the objectivity of value. I do not address directly here the reasons for rejecting the reading of Nietzsche as a global anti-realist, though the case against it has now been ably presented by many writers.[3]

Before turning, however, to the central interpretive questions, a word about what I mean by 'metaethics' is in order. While twentieth-century metaethics has advanced our ability to frame and debate metaethical issues, it has also often blurred the line between two questions that – for purposes of interpreting thinkers prior to the linguistic turn of the twentieth century – ought to be kept separate. One question, the 'metaphysical' question, might be put thus: Is there any fact of the matter about ethical issues? This loosely framed metaphysical question evokes a family of related questions as well: Are there absolute moral truths or are moral judgments always relative? Does the world contain objective moral properties or are moral properties simply human projections onto a morally neutral universe?[4] What unites these metaphysical questions is a concern about whether there are any objective facts about value.

In what follows, I should like to separate these 'metaphysical' questions from what we may call the 'semantic' question: what is the meaning of moral *language*? Is it, for example, primarily descriptive and fact-stating, or is it rather expressive of feelings or attitudes? Should moral language be interpreted truth-conditionally? In the twentieth century, philosophers have leaned toward answering both semantic *and* metaphysical questions, and, more significantly, toward framing the metaphysical questions in terms of the semantic one.[5] What has resulted is a shift in philosophical sensibility: to deal satisfactorily with metaethical problems has come to mean dealing with *both* the metaphysical and semantic issues. While this represents a philosophical development of some importance, as a guide to interpretive strategy for historical figures it invites contrivance and anachronism. For example, while it seems clear that Nietzsche has distinct views on the central metaphysical question about value, it seems equally apparent that there are inadequate textual resources for ascribing to him a satisfying answer to the semantic question. While elements of his view, for example, might suggest assimilation to what we would call non-cognitivism[6] and, in particular, expressivism, we will not, I think, find answers in Nietzsche to the full range of semantical problems an expressivist theory should encompass. The reason for this should be obvious: while Nietzsche was among the first to recognize the extent to which linguistic and grammatical practices generate metaphysical assumptions and problems, he

simply did not view metaphysical questions *themselves* as best framed as issues about the semantics of a given region of discourse (e.g., are the terms genuinely and successfully referential?).

All of this is prefatory to an important point about the strategy of this essay. While I shall frequently appropriate the language of twentieth-century metaethics in discussing Nietzsche's views, I ultimately interpret Nietzsche only as answering the *metaphysical* questions about value. Nietzsche, in my view, has no interesting *or* even precisely determinable semantics of ethical discourse: there are simply not adequate grounds for 'assigning' to Nietzsche a view on such subtle matters as whether ethical language is primarily cognitive or non-cognitive, when it clearly evinces aspects of both descriptive and prescriptive discourse.[7]

None of this makes Nietzsche unique: most philosophers prior to the twentieth century did not have an interesting or determinable semantics of ethical discourse either (though the secondary literature of recent pedigree may sometimes suggest otherwise). It is also not an inexcusable failing: for surely it was the metaphysical questions that have animated the debate from the Sophists onward. And surely it is because of their stand on the metaphysical questions that we typically group philosophers like A.J. Ayer and John Mackie together[8] – their differences on the semantics notwithstanding.[9]

I proceed, then, as follows: in Section II, I survey various types of Privilege Readings of Nietzsche's metaethics; in Section III, I argue at length against the Naturalist Realist variety defended by Schacht, Wilcox and others; in Section IV, I argue (more briefly) against Foot's version of a Privilege Reading. I leave to another occasion a sustained defense of the thesis that I take to follow from the negative argument of this paper: namely, that Nietzsche does not, in fact, believe his evaluative perspective is privileged along any epistemic dimension.

II. The Privilege Readings

According to the Privilege Readings of Nietzsche's metaethics, Nietzsche holds that his own evaluative standpoint is either veridical or better justified than its target. I will class Privilege Readings as coming in three varieties: Intuitionist Realist (I-Realist); Naturalist Realist (N-Realist); and Privilege Non-Realist (P-Non-Realist). The proponents of these views hold the following:

(i) According to the I-Realist, there are non-natural normative facts, which are sui generis, and which are apprehended by some appropriate act of normative 'perception.'[10]
(ii) According to the N-Realist, there are normative facts because normative facts are just constituted by certain natural facts (in some sense to be specified).
(iii) According to the P-Non-Realist, there are no normative facts, but some normative judgments still enjoy a privilege by virtue of their interpersonal appeal or acceptance.

To say that there *are* 'normative facts' is just to say that: (a) normative judgments are apt for evaluation in terms of truth and falsity;[11] (b) their truth-value is an objective matter; [12] and (c) some normative judgments are true. Much more could be said about each of these criteria, but it will suffice for purposes of interpreting Nietzsche to rely simply on these rough characterizations.

How, then, do these three broad metaethical views play out in readings of Nietzsche? Interestingly, no one has defended an I-Realist interpretation of Nietzsche, even though his rhetorical style often makes it an inviting construal. That leaves us, then, with the N-Realist reading (defended by Schacht, Wilcox and others) and the P-Non-Realist reading (defended by Foot). It is to these readings, and their difficulties, that I now turn.

III. Nietzsche as N-Realist

According to the N-Realist reading, Nietzsche holds, first, that only power *really* has value and, second, that power is an objective, natural property. Nietzsche's evaluative perspective is privileged, in turn, because it involves asssessing (i) prudential value (value *for* an agent) in terms of degree of power, and (ii) non-prudential value in terms of maximization of prudential value (i.e., maximization of power).

A cautionary note about terminology is in order at the start. By the conventions of twentieth-century Anglo-American usage, the position here described would not count as N-Realism (though it could count as *realism*). The N-Realist *proper* holds that value itself is a natural property, not simply that what has value is a natural property (a view palatable to the arch-anti-naturalist G.E. Moore). N-Realism proper is what we find in contemporary writers like Richard Boyd, Peter Railton and Nicholas Sturgeon (though they differ over the nature of the relationship between value and the relevant natural properties.) Unsurprisingly, there are no clear grounds for ascribing the usual N-Realist doctrine to Nietzsche.

There remain, however, good reasons for sticking with the N-Realist label. The Nietzsche literature defending this Privilege Reading conventionally presents Nietzsche's view as 'naturalistic', and it is in fact 'naturalistic' in one familiar sense. In the nineteenth century especially, naturalists were simply those who denied that there were any supernatural properties. In the theory of value, then, one might plausibly think of Nietzsche as being a kind of naturalist in the sense of resisting religious and quasi-religious theories that view goodness as supervening on non-natural or supernatural properties;[13] as against this, Nietzsche claims that goodness supervenes on a (putatively) natural property, namely power.

Let us now examine this N-Realist position in some greater detail.

Note, first, what is at issue in the N-Realist reading. One could agree that Nietzsche employs 'power' (in some sense) as an evaluative standard, but still disagree with the N-Realist that it is a *fact* that power is what is ('really') valuable – for example, power might just be what Nietzsche happens to think is valuable.

So too, one could agree that Nietzsche evaluates persons and states of affairs in terms of their degree of power but could still disagree that power is itself an objective natural property – for example, one might think that Nietzsche's evaluative use of 'power' is extremely plastic and subjective.

Although versions of the N-Realist construal of Nietzsche have been defended by many commentators who address Nietzsche's metaethics, I will concentrate on the (representative) version articulated in Richard Schacht's work.[14] On Schacht's account of the revaluation, Nietzsche:

> . . . is proposing to evaluate [moral values] by reference to a standard of valuation independent of them, from a perspective which transcends them. And the sort of 'value' of which he speaks when viewing them from this perspective is one which he considers, in contrast to them, to have a kind of validity which they lack. . . . For this perspective is a privileged one, which an understanding of the fundamental character of life and the world serves to define and establish.[15]

More precisely, Nietzsche's account of 'the fundamental character of life and the world' *as will to power* is supposed to 'ground' his own evaluative standpoint. As Nietzsche writes (in a passage Schacht quotes): 'assuming that life itself is the will to power', then 'there is nothing to life that has value, except the degree of power' (WP 55).[16] Nietzsche's revaluation of values, then, assesses moral values on the basis of their 'degree of power,' something which constitutes an 'objective measure of value' (WP 674). Hence the privilege of his view: it embraces as an evaluative standard the only thing in life that (in fact) has value (namely power), and employs this 'objective measure of value' in the revaluation (e.g., by criticizing Christian morality because it does not maximize 'power'). It is in this respect that Nietzsche's conception of value, according to Schacht, is supposed to be 'naturalistic.'[17]

There are two interrelated grounds for rejecting this N-Realist reading: philosophical and textual. Philosophically, it attributes to Nietzsche an argument of dubious merit. Textually, it depends on attributing to him both a view he does not seem to hold and an argument found only in texts of questionable canonical status. These considerations will constitute grounds for rejecting the N-Realist reading if we accept the following interpretive scruple: claims which are supported by implausible arguments, based on views that Nietzsche does not seem to hold, and that are found only in texts of questionable canonical status, should not be attributed to Nietzsche. As an interpretive principle, this ought to be uncontroversial. I now turn to the task of showing that the most influential construal of Nietzsche's metaethics – the N-Realist reading – violates this banal principle.

A. The Millian Model

Construing Nietzsche as an N-Realist about value commits him to an implausible philosophical view, moreover one that he does not even seem to hold. To see why

this is so, we require a more precise statement of the N-Realist argument. We may have such a statement if we construe Nietzsche on what I will call the 'Millian Model'. What I have in mind is John Stuart Mill's well-known and oft-criticized 'proof' of the principle of utility:

> The only proof capable of being given that an object is visible is that people actually see it. The only proof that a sound is audible is that people hear it; and so of the other sources of our experience. In like manner, I apprehend, the sole evidence it is possible to produce that anything is desirable is that people do actually desire it.[18]

Thus: to show that something is visible, show that it is seen; to show that something is audible, show that it is heard; analogously,

> (P) to show that something is desirable (i.e., valuable), show that it is desired.

Millian hedonism holds that only happiness or pleasure is intrinsically desirable or valuable ('Prescriptive Hedonism'). Let us call 'Value Nihilism' the view that there is nothing that has value or is valuable (or desirable). To get Prescriptive Hedonism from (P), then, plug in 'Descriptive Hedonism' – the thesis that people do in fact desire *only* pleasure as an end. If (P) is valid, Descriptive Hedonism true, and Value Nihilism false, then the truth of Prescriptive Hedonism follows.

(P), of course, is not valid, and this has been the ground for much criticism of Mill's proof. But before seeing why this is so (and whether a modification cannot save the argument), note that the same type of argument seems to capture what the N-Realist construal of Nietzsche has in mind.[19] That is, to get the N-Realist Nietzschean conclusion that what is valuable is power, take (P) and plug in a strong form of Nietzsche's descriptive doctrine of the will to power – the doctrine, roughly, that all persons intrinsically 'desire' only power. If (P) is valid, Value Nihilism false, and the descriptive doctrine of the will to power is true, then the normative conclusion about power seems to follow.[20]

Note, however, that the Millian Model argument as formulated so far would show only that power is what is non-morally valuable or good for an agent – what I called earlier *prudential* value. But as we have already seen, it is part of Nietzsche's metaethic, on the N-Realist reading, that power (more precisely, maximization of power) is what is also non-prudentially valuable. Commentators are less clear (as is Mill himself) on what the argument is supposed to be for this conclusion about non-prudential value.

Take, for example, the following passage from the *Nachlass*, about which Schacht makes much: 'There is nothing to life that has value, except the degree of power – assuming that life itself is the will to power' (WP 55). On the Millian Model, this becomes an argument for what is *valuable for* persons. But Schacht wants to read it more broadly as follows:

> Human life, for Nietzsche, is ultimately a part of a kind of vast game . . . [which] is, so to speak, the only game in town. . . .The nature of the game, he holds, establishes a standard for the evaluation of everything falling within its compass. The availability of this standard places evaluation on footing that is as firm as that on which the comprehension of life and the world stands.[21]

It is not obvious what the *argument* here is supposed to be – though, again, the truth of the strong form of the descriptive doctrine of the will to power is supposed to do some work. We can, however, at least say this: if the Millian Model argument for prudential value or non-moral goodness does *not* work, then that provides a very strong (if defeasible) reason for supposing that there is no further argument for the related account of non-prudential value as consisting in maximization of power. I now propose to show that the Millian Model argument, in the precise form described above, fails, both philosophically and textually.

The first problem is that (P) is not valid. While from the fact that X is heard, it follows that X is audible, it does not follow from that fact that X is desired that X is desirable *in the sense necessary for the argument*. For while 'audible' can be fairly rendered as 'can be heard', 'desirable', in the context of Prescriptive Hedonism, means '*ought* to be desired' (not 'can' or 'is' desired). Thus, while it follows that:

> If X is heard, then X can be heard ('is audible'),

it does not follow that,

> If X is desired, then X ought to be desired ('is desirable').

Yet in claiming that pleasure or power are valuable, Mill and the N-Realist Nietzsche are advancing a normative thesis. The truth of this normative thesis, however, simply does not follow from the corresponding descriptive thesis.

Many, of course, have thought this too facile a response: surely a philosophical intelligence like Mill's could not fall prey to such a simple mistake. Supplement the argument, then, by adding an 'Internalist Constraint' (IC), one that many philosophers have found plausible in the theory of value:

> (IC) Something cannot be valuable for a person unless the person is capable of caring about (desiring) it.

The (IC) is motivated by the thought that it cannot be right to say that 'X is valuable' for someone when X is alien to anything a person cares about or *could* care about: any plausible notion of value, the (IC) supposes, must have some strong connection to a person's existing (or potential) motivational set.

How does the (IC) help? Recall (P):

> (P) To show that something is desirable (i.e., valuable) show that it is desired.

Now the (IC) puts a constraint on what things can, in fact, be desirable or valuable: namely, only those things that agents can, in fact, care about or desire. This suggests that we might reformulate (P) as follows:

> (P′) To show that something is desirable (i.e., valuable), it must be shown that it is or at least can be desired.

(P′) now is simply a different formulation of the (IC): if we accept the (IC) then we should accept (P′). But what happens, then, if we grant the truth of Descriptive Hedonism: namely, that only pleasure can, in fact, be desired. In that case, it would now follow that only pleasure is desirable (ought to be desired) (assuming, again, that Value Nihilism is false). That is, since something ought to be desired only if it can be desired (internalism), then if only X *can* be desired, then only X ought to be desired (assuming that Value Nihilism is false).

Will this argument rescue the N-Realist Nietzsche? Two obstacles remain. The first, and perhaps less serious one, is that we must have some reason for accepting the (IC) – or, more modestly, some reason for thinking Nietzsche accepts it. It is not clear, however, that there are adequate textual grounds for saying where Nietzsche stands on this question. Since the (IC) does, however, seem to be presupposed by the Nietzschean remarks from the *Nachlass* that support N-Realism – in the sense that such remarks do not constitute a good argument without the (IC) – let us grant that Nietzsche accepts the (IC), and let us simply put aside the contentious issue of whether we ought to accept the (IC) as a general philosophical matter.

A second difficulty will still remain: namely, that the argument for N-Realism still depends on the truth of the relevant descriptive thesis, in Nietzsche's case, the doctrine of the will to power. This presents two problems. First, in the works Nietzsche chose to publish, it seems clear that he did not, in fact, accept the doctrine in the strong form required for the N-Realist argument (namely, that it is only power that persons ever aim for or desire). Second, it is simply not a plausible doctrine in its strong form.

For the Millian Model argument for N-Realism to work in its new form (that is, supplemented with the (IC)) it must be the case that that which *ought* to be desired ('is valuable') is the only thing that in fact is or can be desired. Since the N-Realist Nietzschean conclusion is that only power is valuable, power must be the only thing that in fact is or can be desired (assuming, again, that *something* is valuable, i.e., that Value Nihilism is false). Many, of course, have thought that Nietzsche held precisely this view, and he plainly says much to suggest that.[22] However, he says other things which might suggest that the stronger remarks are misleading; for example:

> Life itself is to my mind the instinct for growth, for durability, for an accumulation of forces, for *power*: where the will to power is lacking there is decline. It is my contention that all the supreme values of mankind *lack* this will. . . . (A 6)

But if all actions manifested this *will*, then this *will* could never be found lacking. Yet Nietzsche thinks it can be lacking, which means he must countenance the possibility that not everyone aims for ('desires') power.[23]

This passage is not atypical. Later in the same work, he returns to the same theme concerning '[w]herever the will to power declines in any form' (A 17). In the immediately preceding work he claims that the 'effects' of liberal institutions are 'known well enough: they undermine the will to power' (TI IX:38). And in the immediately subsequent work (his last), Nietzsche refers to 'the terrible *aspects* of reality (in affects, in desires, in the will to power) . . .' (EH IV:4),[24] which certainly sounds as if will to power is simply one among various characteristics of reality – *alongside* affects and desires, rather than the essential core of them all.

Three other general textual considerations count against attributing the strong doctrine of the will to power to Nietzsche. First, if, as the defenders of the strong doctrine believe, 'his fundamental principle is the "*will to power*" ',[25] then it is hard to understand why he says almost nothing about will to power – and nothing at all to suggest it is his 'fundamental principle' – in the two major self-reflective moments in the Nietzschean corpus: his last major work, *Ecce Homo*, where he reviews and assesses his life and writings, including specifically all his prior books (EH III); and the series of new prefaces he wrote for *The Birth of Tragedy*, *Human, All Too Human*, *Dawn*, and *The Gay Science* in 1886, in which he revisits his major themes. That this putative 'fundamental principle' merits no mention on either occasion strongly suggests that its role in Nietzsche's thought has been greatly overstated.

Second, the single most famous passage on will to power in the Nietzschean corpus is the concluding section (1067) of *The Will to Power*, where he affirms that, '*This world is the will to power – and nothing besides*! And you yourselves are also this will to power – and nothing besides!' Although a favourite of commentators for many years,[26] the passage has now been conclusively discredited by the leading scholar of the *Nachlass*, the late Mazzino Montinari. Montinari has shown that Nietzsche had, in fact, discarded the passage by the Spring of 1887.[27] It was, as Montinari notes, made part of the Köselitz-Forster compilation of *The Will to Power* (the basis for the English-language edition by Kaufmann and Hollingdale) notwithstanding 'Nietzsche's literary intentions'.[28]

Third, Maudemarie Clark has recently argued that Nietzsche could not have accepted the *strong* doctrine of the will to power given the putative argument he gives for it. Clark points out that the *only argument* for the strong doctrine of the will to power in Nietzsche's published works – in Section 36 of *Beyond Good and Evil* – is cast in the conditional form: if we accept certain initial hypotheses, then, Nietzsche thinks, the strong doctrine of the will to power follows. But one of the antecedents of this conditional is the 'causality of the will', and Clark argues that Nietzsche clearly *rejects* such causality elsewhere in his work. Therefore, this section cannot constitute an argument for the strong doctrine of the will to power that Nietzsche, himself, would actually accept. Rather than embracing the strong doctrine, Clark argues that Nietzsche is, somewhat ironically, illustrating the very flaw of philosophers he warns against in the surrounding passages: namely, their

tendency to propound theories of the essence of reality that are just projections of their own evaluative commitments.[29] (Note, too, that Montinari claims that the one surviving relic of 1067 of *The Will to Power* in the published works is precisely the ironic Section 36 of *Beyond Good and Evil*.[30]) Even if Clark's ingenious reconstruction is questionable at points, its central conclusion – that Nietzsche does not accept the strong doctrine of the will to power – wins support from the other considerations already adduced.

But what, then, does Nietzsche believe about will to power? As Kaufmann and Clark, among others, have noted, Nietzsche's doctrine of will to power in its original deployment and most of its later development is *psychological* in character: the will to power is posited as the best psychological explanation for a wide variety of human behaviors.[31] But as the preceding passages and considerations make clear, Nietzsche could not have believed that will to power was the exclusive explanation for all human behavior. To the extent that he sometimes seems to embrace this stronger claim,[32] we must simply take Nietzsche to have overstated his case – something which his penchant for hyperbolic rhetoric and polemics often leads him to do.[33]

If the preceding argument is correct, that would actually be quite fortunate: for it simply would not be plausible that will to power is the exclusive explanation for all human behavior, and any philosophical doctrine based on such a view would be of dubious merit. Do I manifest the will to power by showing up to teach my classes? By holding my office hours? Do I express a desire for power when I shop for groceries? Buy furniture for the house? Cook dinner? Surely the list of ordinary activities and actions that do not seem to be helpfully explained by reference to a fundamental drive for (or tendency towards) power could go on and on.

Someone might object, of course, that what the Nietzschean N-Realist claims – on the Millian Model – is that power is *the only end that could be intrinsically desirable*, so that the real question is what intrinsic ends are a person's various ordinary activities and actions means towards. I shop in order to eat; but why do I eat? In order to have energy and strength (might we say *power*?) to pursue my real interests and goals? What, then, moves me towards my real interests and goals? Could it be a desire for power of some sort?

Note, again, though, that the N-Realist must claim that it is *always* going to be the will to power that provides the unifying explanation for these particular desires and actions. But is that really plausible? Perhaps the best reason for being skeptical about the strong descriptive doctrine of the will to power is the attractiveness of a clear competitor doctrine: namely, descriptive hedonism, that is, the view that people only desire pleasure as an end-in-itself. From Mill to Freud to innumerable students in introductory ethics classes, this doctrine – or its variants – has had a strong intuitive appeal. While Nietzsche clearly thought pleasure was a mere epiphenomenon of the feeling of power,[34] it is hardly obvious that the issue should be decided in his favour. In any event, surely it is quite plausible that in at least *some* cases it is pleasure, not power, that we are after. But admitting that possibility undermines the strong descriptive doctrine of the will to power, for it means that things beside power can, in fact, be desired.

In sum: even if we grant internalism, the argument for Nietzschean N-Realism will still be a bad one because the descriptive thesis on which it depends is not a thesis Nietzsche accepts and is simply not plausible in the form required by the argument.[35] Since, as a matter of interpretive charity, we ought not to attribute bad arguments to philosophers unless we have to, the badness of the N-Realist argument constitutes the first (defeasible) reason for not construing Nietzsche as an N-Realist.

B. The Textual Pedigree of the Millian Model Argument

Nietzsche makes the remarks that seem to suggest the Millian Model argument only in passages from the *Nachlass*, work that Nietzsche never published during his lifetime.[36] Thus, even if one thought that Nietzsche really held the strong descriptive doctrine of the will to power in his published works, it is still the case that he uses this doctrine to argue for the normative conclusion only in *Nachlass* material.

In recent years, important doubts have been raised about the canonical status of this *Nachlass* material.[37] It appears that Nietzsche wanted this material destroyed, and it was only the intervention of others, independent of Nietzsche, that resulted in the material being saved for posterity. These sorts of considerations suggest that a view ought not to be attributed to Nietzsche *solely* on the basis of its articulation in these notebooks. But this is precisely what the defender of the N-Realist construal of Nietzsche must do. Instead of pursuing this textually suspect course, we might, in the spirit of interpretive charity, simply surmise that Nietzsche recognized the untenability of the Millian Model argument and that this is why the explicit textual support for the N-Realist construal of Nietzsche is found only in material Nietzsche never published.

In sum, the N-Realist construal of Nietzsche faces five hurdles: (i) internalism must be a justifiable constraint in the theory of value; (ii) Value Nihilism must be false; (iii) Nietzsche must hold the strong descriptive doctrine of the will to power; (iv) this descriptive doctrine must be a plausible doctrine; and (v) we must have reason for attributing an argument to Nietzsche that he only makes in texts of questionable canonical status. I have suggested that while the N-Realist may surmount (i) and (ii), (iii) through (v) will prove more intractable and, moreover, that they will mutually reinforce their intractability: that is, by reasonable interpretive scruples, it seems we ought not to attribute N-Realism to Nietzsche when it presupposes an implausible view (the strong doctrine of the will to power) that he does not seem to hold, and when his argument for it appears only in the *Nachlass*. I conclude, then, that we ought to reject the N-Realist construal as an adequate account of Nietzsche's metaethical position.

IV. Nietzsche as P-Non-Realist

Although Philippa Foot is less explicit about the privilege issue than Schacht, the gist of her discussion is clearly to show that Nietzsche is doing something more

than simply expressing his idiosyncratic view, a view that admits of no interpersonal justification. While agreeing that Nietzsche's intention is, in part, 'to present us with a clash of interests – the good of the strong against that of the weak', Foot adds that 'this is not all he wants to suggest'.[38] Noting that Nietzsche 'seems to want to say that anyone who is strong, independent, and so on – anyone who fits his description of the higher type of man – is one who *has value* in himself',[39] Foot goes on to explicate this notion of 'value' as follows:

> [I]t does make sense to say that *we value* strong and exceptional individuals. . . . We do find patterns of reaction to exceptional men that would allow us to see here a valuing rather similar to valuing on aesthetic grounds. . . . I am thinking of the interest and admiration which is the common attitude to remarkable men of exceptional independence of mind and strength of will. . .. [Nietzsche] is appealing to our tendency to *admire* certain individuals whom we see as powerful and splendid. . . . [There is] a similarity between the way we attribute *value* (aesthetic value) to art objects and the *value* that Nietzsche attributes to a certain kind of man, both resting on a set of common reactions. . . .[40]

Foot is presupposing here a general picture of Nietzsche's critique similar to the one noted at the beginning of the essay: that is, Nietzsche's criticism of morality is that it thwarts the development of great individuals or (as Nietzsche calls them) 'higher men'. What is important, however, is that Foot's view is also an example of a non-realist Privilege Reading. Nietzsche, on this picture, does not claim that his evaluative perspective is veridical; he simply claims that it enjoys a certain sort of interpersonal appeal, owing to our 'common attitude to remarkable men', 'our tendency to *admire* certain individuals', to find them aesthetically appealing. There may be no fact-of-the-matter as to whether higher men are or are not *really* valuable, but Nietzsche's evaluative standpoint is privileged by virtue of its appeal to all of us. We're all interested, it seems, in the flourishing of higher men.

What is right about this picture is that Nietzsche sometimes seems to conceive of the appeal of higher men in 'aesthetic' terms. For example, Nietzsche does say that whether to prefer the cultivation of higher or lower men is 'at bottom a question of taste and aesthetics' (WP 353) and he suggests that evaluating a man in terms of 'how much he costs, or what harm he does' is as inappropriate as 'apprais[ing] a work of art according to the effects it produces' (WP 878).[41]

Yet, as an interpretive claim about Nietzsche, Foot's account is ultimately untenable. For Nietzsche could not hold that the flourishing of 'higher men' will appeal to '*our* tendency' to admire such men or to any sort of 'common'attitude: the aesthetic appeal of flourishing higher men, in short, is not for all.

This point follows from what we may call Nietzsche's 'Callicleanism', after Plato's Callicles in the *Gorgias*. It has now become something of a commonplace for commentators to note that Nietzsche did *not* accept one sort of Calliclean view: the view that 'anyone who is to live aright should suffer his appetites to grow to the greatest extent and not check them' (*Gorgias*, 419e).[42] On the contrary,

Nietzsche seems to have well-appreciated the value of self-restraint and self-denial, especially for productive creative work (e.g., BGE 188).

At the same time, the genuine need to correct this one (and at one time, widespread) misperception about Nietzsche's relation to Callicles has obscured a much more important respect in which Nietzsche's view *is* Calliclean: namely, in its embrace of the Calliclean doctrine that the inferior employ morality to make 'slaves of those who are naturally better' (*Gorgias*, 491e–492a), that 'the weaker folk, the majority . . . frame the laws [and, we might add, the morals] for their own advantage' in order to 'frighten [the strong] by saying that to overreach others is shameful and evil' (*Gorgias*, 483b–d). In short, Callicles' view is that morality is simply the prudence of the weak, who unable to do what the strong can do, opt instead to put the actions of the strong under the ban of morality. This, in fact, is Nietzsche's view as well.[43]

For example, in the *Genealogy*, Nietzsche describes slave morality as simply 'the prudence [*Klugheit*] of the lowest order' (GM I:13), and he comments that:

> When the oppressed, downtrodden, violated exhort one another with the vengeful cunning of impotence: 'let us be different from the evil, namely good! And he is good who does not do violence, who harms nobody, who does not attack, who does not requite. . . .' – this listened to coolly and impartially really amounts to no more than: 'we weak ones are, after all, weak; it would be good if we did nothing *for which we are not strong enough*. . . .'

We hear echoes of the same Calliclean view when Nietzsche observes that 'everything that elevates an individual above the herd and intimidates the neighbor is . . . called *evil*' (BGE 201); when he suggests that '[m]oral judgments and condemnations constitute the favorite revenge of the spiritually limited against those less limited' (BGE 219); finally, when he claims that the 'chief means' by which the 'weak and mediocre . . . weaken and pull down the stronger' is 'the moral judgment' (WP 345).[44]

What obstacle, then, does Nietzsche's Callicleanism present for the P-Non-Realist like Foot? Recall that Foot wanted to resist the view that in his revaluation Nietzsche simply 'present[s] us with a clash of interests – the good of the strong against that of the weak';[45] instead, Foot suggests that Nietzsche is appealing to a 'common' tendency to admire higher men, men who would otherwise be thwarted by the reign of moral values.

But Nietzsche's Callicleanism suggests something quite different: namely, that it is part of the very appeal of morality that it *does* thwart the flourishing of higher men. If that is right, then it would simply be bizarre for Nietzsche to think that the *flourishing* of 'higher men' would appeal to everyone. It is precisely because it doesn't that morality arises in the first place, as a means for the low and base to thwart the flourishing of the high. This is not to deny that higher men may still be admirable in the eyes of the base and low (hence their envy); it *is* to deny, however, that Nietzsche's evaluative perspective – that it is an *objection* to morality that it

thwarts the high – could enjoy a privilege in virtue of this shared admiration. On the Calliclean picture, there is a fundamental hostility between the high and low, the strong and the weak, one which will not be bridged by inviting the low to admire the high, or the weak, the strong. 'The well-being of the majority and the well-being of the few are opposite viewpoints of value', Nietzsche says in the 'Note' at the end of the first essay of the *Genealogy*. And in Nietzsche's revaluation, we might add, never the 'twain shall meet.[46]

V. Conclusion

In fairness, it must be said that Foot's aim is probably not purely exegetical: she wants to make sense of Nietzsche in a way that makes his position attractive. Nonetheless, we should – at least for exegetical purposes – separate the question 'What was Nietzsche's view?' from the question 'What view – with at least *some* textual pedigree – would we prefer that he held?' If I am right that neither the N-Realist nor Foot's non-realist Privilege Readings are plausible interpretations of Nietzsche's metaethical position, then we are left with two possibilities: either some plausible I-Realist interpretation of Nietzsche's metaethics has yet to be constructed on the basis of Nietzsche's texts or the Privilege Readings of Nietzsche's metaethics are simply wrong: Nietzsche's own evaluative perspective in undertaking the revaluation does not, in fact, enjoy any metaphysical or epistemic privilege over its target. This, as I plan to argue on another occasion, *is* Nietzsche's view: at bottom he has nothing to say to those readers who don't share his evaluative tastes.

This may seem a surprising posture, but in fact such a reading actually makes sense of a puzzling feature of his work, one worth remarking on here. The feature is this: Nietzsche is quite concerned to *circumscribe* his audience, to disinvite most readers from going further. As he puts it most simply at the beginning of *The Antichrist*: 'This book belongs to the very few'. In particular, Nietzsche's ideal reader is marked by 'Reverence for oneself' (A Pref) – one of the defining traits, he tells us elsewhere, of the 'noble' person (BGE 287). Similarly, in his autobiography Nietzsche says regarding 'the air of my writings' that '[o]ne must be made for it' (EH Pref:3). He claims, too, that, 'Ultimately, nobody can get more out of things, including books, than he already knows' (EH III:1; cf. BGE 87). And in a related vein, he says that, 'Nobody is free to have ears for Zarathustra' (EH Pref:4), presumably because 'Zarathustra experiences himself as the *supreme type of all beings*' (EH Z:6). Elsewhere he remarks that, 'Today's ears resist . . . our truths'(BGE 202). And he recognizes that, 'Our highest insights must – and should – sound like follies and sometimes like crimes when they are heard without permission by those who are not predisposed and predestined for them' (BGE 30). In another work, finally, he gives perhaps his fullest exposition of this theme:

> It is not by any means necessarily an objection to a book when anyone finds it impossible to understand: perhaps that was part of the author's

> intention – he did not want to be understood by just 'anybody'. All those of noble spirit and taste [*Geschmack*] select their audience when they wish to communicate; and choosing that, one at the same time erects barriers against 'the others'. All the more subtle laws of any style have their origin at this point: they at the same time keep away, create a distance, forbid 'entrance', understanding, as said above – while they open the ears of those whose ears are related to ours. (GS 381)

Now if we assume that Nietzsche does not believe his own evaluative perspective enjoys any privilege over the morality he revalues, then it would, indeed, make sense for Nietzsche to want to circumscribe his audience to those who share his evaluative taste: to those for whom no justification would be required, those who are simply 'made for it','those whose ears are related to ours', who are 'predisposed and predestined' for Nietzsche's insights. For such an audience, one's values require no epistemic privilege to nonetheless carry the weight they must carry for Nietzsche's critique of morality. It remains for another occasion to make the positive case that this is, indeed, Nietzsche's considered metaethical position.[47]

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NOTES

[1] For further discussion of how the distinction between 'values' and 'moral' values is supposed to be marked, see Leiter 1995. In what follows, I will cite to Nietzsche's texts using the standard English-language acronyms: *Human, All-too-Human* (HAH), *Dawn* (D), *The Gay Science* (GS), *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (Z), *Beyond Good and Evil* (BGE), *On the Genealogy of Morality* (GM), *Twilight of the Idols* (TI), *The Antichrist* (A), *Ecce Homo* (EH), *The Case of Wagner* (CW), and *The Will to Power* (WP). Translations, with occasional minor emendations, are by Walter Kaufmann and/or R.J. Hollingdale; in making emendations, I rely on the *Sämtliche Werke: Kritische Studienausgabe in 15 Bänden*, ed. G. Colli & M. Mozzinari (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1980) (cited hereafter as KSA). Roman numerals refer to major parts or chapters; Arabic numerals refer to sections, not pages.

[2] See, e.g., Foot 1973, esp. 162: 'It is, then, for the sake of "the higher" man that the values of Christian morality must be abandoned, and it is from this perspective that the revaluation of values takes place'. See also, Leiter 1995 and Leiter 1997: 268–71.

[3] The most interesting and powerful account is Clark 1990. Clark characterizes Nietzsche's view as being neo-Kantian, in the sense that it accepts that the truth is epistemically constrained, but rejects the idea of a thing-in-itself as unintelligible. See also, Leiter 1994 and Poellner 2001.

[4] The complexity of recent metaethical positions that philosophers have staked out has meant, of course, that these questions may be answered in a variety of ways: e.g., one can believe there is a 'fact of the matter' about ethical issues while also holding that morality is relative. See Harman 1977. My lumping together of all these questions as 'metaphysical' questions is not meant to imply that they are simply interchangeable, and that an answer to one settles the others. Nonetheless, they do seem to constitute a family of related questions that have interested philosophers through the ages, and which can be usefully separated from what I call below the semantic question. (Even in the contemporary literature, the distinction is sometimes explicitly marked: cf. Wiggins 1988: 149: 'The non-cognitive theory is first and foremost a theory not about the meaning but about the *status* of those remarks [ethical judgments]: that their assertibility is not plain truth and reflects no fact of the matter'.)

[5] This has not meant, of course, that one's semantics of ethical discourse had to track one's metaphysics of morality: consider an emotivist like A. J. Ayer as opposed to an error theorist like John Mackie. While the emotivist and the error theorist can answer many of the metaphysical questions in unison, they will disagree importantly over the semantics: while for the former the meaning of ethical terms is primarily expressive, for the latter ethical discourse is indeed declarative and assetoric (in keeping with its typical surface syntax), but is just systematically false. The twentieth-century innovation of framing metaphysical questions semantically has not, then, entailed a complete collapse of the distinction such that metaphysics *necessarily* dictates semantics or vice versa.

[6] Thus, for example, describing master and Christian morality as 'opposite forms in the optics of value [*Werthe*]', Nietzsche goes on to assert that, as opposite 'optical' forms, they 'are . . . immune to reasons and refutations. One cannot refute Christianity; one cannot refute a disease of the eye. . . . The concepts 'true' and 'untrue' have, as it seems to me, no meaning in optics' (CW Epilogue). This passage, however, is ambiguous. For the passage could mean that 'true' and 'false' are meaningless *not* because evaluative judgments are essentially non-cognitive, but rather because competing evaluative views are *immune* to the effects of reasoning. There may be rational grounds for thinking one view better than another, perhaps for thinking one true and the other false, but since reasoning has so little impact in this context, it is 'meaningless' (in the sense of pointless) to raise issues of truth and falsity.

[7] For an illuminating discussion of the difficulties, see Railton 1990. cf. Gibbard 1990: 9–22.

[8] See, e.g., the organization of the selections in Sayre-McCord 1988.

[9] At times, though, the semantic questions have seemed to overshadow the metaphysical ones. Consider, for example, all the philosophical energy expended on the so-called Frege-Geach problems about giving an expressivist account of moral terms embedded in the antecedents of conditionals. Surely, though, anti-realism about value should not turn on such a fine-grained difficulty for non-cognitivist semantics; rather, if metaphysical considerations require anti-realism, then we should simply countenance some revision of ordinary linguistic practice. The point in this regard is well-made in Wright 1988: 31.

[10] I-Realists, in the ethics literature, include then not only the classic defenders like G.E. Moore and W.D. Ross, but also more recent proponents like Mark Platts.

Julia Annas has suggested to me that it is unfair to saddle 'intuitionism' with the perceptual metaphor favoured by Moore, since there may be less mysterious intuitionist positions that eschew it – like what Sidgwick calls 'philosophical intuitionism' (*The Methods of Ethics*, Book I, Chap. VIII; Book III, Chapters I & XIII) and (Annas suggests) what

Aristotle means by 'understanding' first principles. (On these points, see also Brink 1989: 107–113.) The perceptual metaphor has come to dominate the understanding of 'intuitionism', not just because of Moore's stature and influence, but also because later writers like Platts and Richard Werner have picked up upon it. In any event, I do not find anything in Nietzsche to suggest that he held any more 'sophisticated' intuitionism, like the sort propounded by Sidgwick.

[11] This is not to say, however, that bivalence holds for *all* normative judgments: that would be too strong a requirement. The existence of vague statements – statements which are not decidably true or false – should not preclude realism about a discourse, when the statements in the region of discourse are at least capable of truth and falsity. On this point, see again Wright 1988: 27; cf. Wright 1987: 4.

[12] The core idea of 'objectivity' is simple enough: the truth of some judgment is objective just in case whether it is true is *independent* of the states of mind of persons in some appropriate sense. What is controversial is how to characterize the relevant 'independence' requirement. Here there are two issues: first, what *kind* of 'independence' is at issue; and second, how *much* independence is required for objectivity. For two useful and representative discussions, see Sober 1982 and Brink 1989: 15–16.

[13] Another possible target for Nietzsche is Plato, who holds that value predicates supervene on the associated Form of the predicate. (Of course, on Plato's view, this is true of all predicates.)

[14] Schacht 1983: 348–9, 398–9. For related accounts, see Moragn 1941: 118 ff.; Kaufmann 1974: 199–200; Wilcox 1974: 194–9; Hunt 1991, Ch. 7. While some type of Privilege Reading has been the majority view in the Anglo-American Nietzsche literature, the 'popular' view of Nietzsche has actually been – at least on this issue – closer to the truth. For example, Alasdair MacIntyre's Nietzsche (1981), though at times crudely drawn and oversimplified, is essentially the real Nietzsche as far as his metaethics goes; see especially MacIntyre 1981: 107, 111 ('the power of Nietzsche's position depends upon the truth of one central thesis: that all rational vindications of morality manifestly fail and that *therefore* belief in the tenets of morality needs to be explained in terms of a set of rationalisations which conceal the fundamentally non-rational phenomena of the will').

[15] Schacht 1983: 348–9.

[16] *Id*. at 349.

[17] *Id*. at 398–9.

[18] Mill 1861: 34.

[19] cf. the remarks from Schacht and Nietzsche quoted above. Of course, it is possible there is another non-Millian reconstruction of the argument for N-Realism, but none has been offered in the literature. The Millian Model seems the most charitable reconstruction of what the commentators do say, and of Nietzsche's few scattered remarks on the subject.

[20] There is a vigorous and insightful attack on the analogy between Nietzsche's doctrine of will to power and psychological hedonism in Richardson 1996, Ch. 1. Richardson identifies three initially striking disanalogies between Nietzsche's notion of will to power and the hedonist's notion of pleasure. First, will to power, for Nietzsche, characterizes drives (e.g., the sex drive), and only applies to persons derivatively (insofar as persons are conglomerations of drives that stand in a certain hierarchial relation to one another); by contrast, pleasure for the hedonist describes a motive or drive *of persons*. Second, power, for Nietzsche, is not a state with a distinctive qualitative feel; rather power, claims Richardson, consists in 'growth' or 'enhancement' of a particular drive with its own preexisting ends. By contrast, the hedonist is supposed to be committed to the idea of pleasure or happiness as a distinct qualitative state, present on all occasions of pleasure (mental or

physical). Third, and relatedly, power is not a *static* end-state: if power consists in growth in a drive, then 'power' is not a state one aims to be in. By contrast, pleasure for the hedonist is a distinctive state one desires to be in, and that one aims for (hence the famous paradox of hedonism described by Sidgwick).

Does Richardson's perceptive analysis undermine the strategy of the argument in the text? I think not, and for two broad reasons.

First, as a purely textual matter (and as Richardson himself notes), Nietzsche explicitly invites the analogy with psychological hedonism, suggesting at times that power is a better explanation than pleasure for various phenomena, and describing will to power in terms evocative of psychological hedonism (cf. WP 434, 1023). Moreover, as Maudemarie Clark has observed, Nietzsche's earliest discussions of will to power, and even very late ones in GM, are psychological in character, concerned with the desire for a feeling of power as the best explanation of human behaviour. (Clark 1990: 208–12.) Richardson's analysis is really most applicable to some of the discussions of will to power in the *Nachlass* – though, admittedly, it at least resonates with *some* material in the published work as well.

Second, and more importantly, even if Richardson were right on all three points, this would not vitiate the point of pursuing the analogy. For all we need for purposes of the Millian analogy is the claim that there exists an essential and omnipresent tendency of human behaviour, whether that tendency is toward pleasure or power. Though Richardson argues – generally quite persuasively – that will to power characterizes 'drives' first-and-foremost, he himself notes that our and Nietzsche's primary interest is in persons as conglomerations of drives; thus will to power ultimately (or derivatively) explains human behaviour by identifying the end towards which it is directed. The character of that end will not matter for the course of the argument – it does not even matter, for example, that it is not a 'state' or static condition. All that matters is that human behaviour be *telic*, something Richardson claims is central to Nietzsche's notion of will to power.

[21] Schacht 1983: 398.

[22] Zarathustra states that, 'Where I found the living, there I found will to power' (Z II:12); Nietzsche refers to 'the will to power which is the will of life' (GS 349); he says 'the really fundamental instinct of life . . . aims at *the expansion of power*' (GS 349); 'life simply *is* will to power', meaning a striving 'to grow, spread, seize, become predominant' (BGE 259); he refers to his 'theory that in all events a *will to power* is operating' (GM II:12); he claims that '[a] living thing seeks above all to *discharge* its strength – life itself is *will to power*' (BGE 13).

[23] That is, he countenances the possibility that in some acts of valuation, agents are not aiming for power.

[24] In German, Nietzsche speaks of the '*furchtbarkeiten*' of reality, for which there is no ordinary English equivalent (literally it would be 'terriblenesses'); Kaufmann's rendering – 'terrible aspects' – seems fair.

[25] Jaspers 1965: 287. For similar views, see Müller-Lauter 1971 and Heidegger 1982.

[26] We even find John Richardson invoking the passage early on in his 1996: see p. 8.

[27] Montinari 1982: 103–4.

[28] *Id*. at 104.

[29] Clark 1990: 212–27.

[30] Montinari 1982: 104.

[31] cf. Kaufmann 1974, Ch. 6; Clark 1990: 209–12. Even Richardson concedes (1996, Ch. 1) that the primary interest of the will to power doctrine – for Niezsche and for us – is in its application to human beings.

[32] See some of the passages quoted, above, n. 22.

[33] The other explanation for these passages is, of course, Clark's: namely, that in these passages he is not making a descriptive claim, but rather being ironic, alerting us to the fact that he is really just affirming his evaluative perspective, according to which power is a good thing.

[34] The topic is usefully discussed in Kaufmann 1974, Ch. 9.

[35] There is an additional hurdle for the N-Realist which I have not touched upon here: namely, the claim that 'degree of power' is somehow an 'objective measure of value' (WP 674). Here, again, I think there is considerable room for skepticism about what this could possibly mean (should we think power quantifiable?); but since there are other substantial reasons for rejecting the N-Realist construal, I shall not labour this point here.

[36] There are also some remarks in books he published (or intended to publish) that might be misconstrued as N-Realism. For example, Nietzsche writes: 'What is good? Everything that heightens the feeling of power in man, the will to power, power itself' (A 2). But in the context, it is clear that this is not a proposal for a definition (reforming or otherwise) of 'good' but rather simply an endorsement: power is what is good, while, as he says in the next sentence, '[e]verything that is born of weakness' is 'bad' (A, 2).

Similarly, John Wilcox points to the 'Note' at the end of GM, I – where Nietzsche calls for 'physiologists and doctors' to get involved in the study 'of the *value* of existing valuations' – as evidence that Nietzsche recognized the need for scientific help in his N-Realist construal of value as power. (Wilcox 1974: 200–201.) Yet this passage concludes, '*All* the sciences have from now on to prepare the way for the future task of the philosopher: this task understood as the solution of the *problem of value*, the determination of the *order of rank among values*'. Now as Wilcox himself earlier notes (1974: 41), the *philosophers* are precisely the ones who '*create values*', who '*are commanders and legislators*' (BGE 211). Thus, what Nietzsche must be calling for is for scientific illumination of the effect of particular values on different types of persons (do they contribute, as Nietzsche puts it in the Note, to 'the preservation of the greatest number' or to 'producing a stronger type'), as an aid to the philosopher's creative work. But the values themselves are creations; the 'physiologists and doctors' simply help the philosopher understand the effects of different sorts of values.

[37] See Hollingdale 1985: 166–72, 182–6 (esp. 186); Montinari 1982; Magnus 1988: 222–32, 234 n. 18. Although Hollingdale and Montinari are responsible for the most original research on this topic, Magnus is probably most responsible for bringing these issues to the attention of the Anglo-American scholarly community.

[38] Foot (1973), 162.

[39] *Id*. at 163.

[40] *Id*.

[41] Note, of course, that these are both *Nachlass* passages; I do not know of any comparably explicit passage in the published work.

[42] See, e.g., Nehamas 1985: 202–3; Foot 1991: 19. The mistaken view of Nietzsche's relation to Callicles is usually attributed to E.R. Dodds (1959). This is actually unfair, since Dodds' treatment is much better than that. For example, Dodds only remarks in passing on a possible affinity between Nietzsche and Calliclean hedonism (1959: 390); the bulk of Dodds' discussion focuses on the very affinities I emphasize in the text (1959: 389–90). Dodds even concludes by saying – again quite rightly – that, 'Callicles . . . would certainly not have understood [Nietzschean] concepts like "sublimation" and "self-transcendence", while Nietzsche would have rejected with contempt the crude hedonism' of Callicles (*Gorgias*, 494a) (1959: 391). A much better example of the crude misreading of Nietzsche's relation to Callicles is W. K. C. Guthrie's account of Callicles as holding that 'the strong

man should live to the utmost of his powers and give free play to his desires' and his abrupt conclusion that Nietzsche 'was blood-brother to Callicles'. (Guthrie 1971: 106, 107.) Guthrie's dismissive reference to Nietzsche here is a fine example of how otherwise impeccable scholarly standards collapse in the vicinity of Nietzsche. Here again, though, Dodds strikes the right note, when he suggests that what Nietzsche admired was Callicles' 'realism', his 'saying plainly what others think but do not care to say'. (Dodds 1959: 389.) That suggests that in Guthrie's tripartite division of 'Sophistic' themes – upholders of human convention (e.g., Protagoras), realists (e.g., Thucydides), upholders of nature (e.g., Callicles [not a Sophist], Antiphon) – Nietzsche is closer to the second group rather than the third. Indeed, as a more careful review of Nietzsche's texts would demonstrate, Thucydides and Sophistic realism figure centrally in Nietzsche's picture of the Sophistic culture that he admires (see D 168; TI X:2; WP 429). See Leiter 2001, Ch. 2.

[43] See Leiter 1997: 279.

[44] I should add that this similarity between Nietzsche's view and Callicles' is surely not mere coincidence. Nietzsche was trained in classical philology, knew the texts of the Presocratics and the Sophists thoroughly, and unquestionably thought better of them than he did of Socrates and Plato. The full extent of the Sophistic influence on Nietzsche, and how it is tempered by other intellectual influences (like those of Schopenhauer and Friedrich Lange), is a complex topic that will have to await examination elsewhere. See Leiter 2001, Ch. 2.

[45] Foot 1973: 162.

[46] This is not to deny, however, that, as Nietzsche puts it, 'in all the higher and more mixed cultures there also appear attempts at mediation between these two moralities [master and slave moralities], and yet more often the interpenetration and mutual misunderstanding of both, and at times they occur directly alongside each other – even in the same human being, within a *single* soul' (BGE 260). That there are (clearly failed) *attempts* [*Versuche*] at mediation or that both viewpoints can exist in one soul does not, of course, show that there is an evaluative standpoint from which one could successfully mediate and reconcile the normative claims of the opposing moralities.

[47] I am grateful to Peter Railton for comments on earlier versions of this material; to the audience at the Department of Philosophy at Rice University in April 1998 for useful discussion; and to the editor and referees for the *European Journal of Philosophy* for helpful comments on the penultimate draft.

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