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*Nietzsche and the Pathologies of Meaning*

Dissertation Abstract

My dissertation details what Nietzsche sees as a normative and philosophical crisis that arises in modern society. This crisis involves a growing sense of malaise that leads to large-scale questions about whether life in the modern world can be seen as meaningful and good. I claim that confronting this problem is a central concern throughout Nietzsche's philosophical career, but that his understanding of this problem and its solution shifts throughout different phases of his thinking. Part of what is unique to Nietzsche's treatment of this problem is his understanding that modern attempts to imbue existence with meaning are self-undermining, becoming pathological and only further entrenching the problem. Nietzsche's solution to this problem ultimately resides in treating meaning as a spiritual need that can only be fulfilled through a creative interpretive process.