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SOCIETY AND SUPERIOR INDIVIDUALS:
ON THE SOCIAL CONCERNS IN NIETZSCHEAN VIRTUE ETHICS

By

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Thesis

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Society and Superior Individuals: On the Social Concerns in Nietzschean Virtue Ethics

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Friedrich Nietzsche presents clear attacks on deontological and utilitarian branches of ethical theory. His thoughts on virtue ethics, however, are less clear. Some ethicists argue that Nietzsche's ethical project is essentially virtue ethical, while others argue that Nietzsche fails to put forth an acceptable ethics. Sympathetic virtue ethicists typically focus on Nietzsche's virtues of individual character, whereas critics often highlight potential problems between the Nietzschean virtuous agent and his or her society. This thesis seeks to respond to the concerns of the latter group, in order to help make room for reading Nietzsche's ethical discussions in a more positive light. I pursue this line of thought by way of detailed responses to two prominent critics of Nietzsche's ethics, Alasdair MacIntyre and Philippa Foot. Chapter one responds to MacIntyre's claim that Nietzsche's ethical project is a creation of values *ex nihilo*, without respect to tradition or community, and is therefore relativistic. I argue that this is not the case, and show that Nietzsche's ethics is perhaps more capable of responding to the problems MacIntyre sees in modernity than MacIntyre allows. In chapter two I respond to Foot's claim that Nietzsche's ethics fails because it cannot categorically proscribe even the most egregious acts. In my view, even though Nietzsche rejects the notion of categorical proscriptions, he has a response to Foot's concern.

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Introduction:

Society and Nietzschean Ethics

Nietzsche presents clear attacks on deontological and utilitarian branches of ethical theory.* In regards to virtue ethics, on the other hand, Nietzsche's position is less transparent. While many agree that there is room to read Nietzsche as a virtue ethicist, there is less agreement as to whether or not Nietzsche's ethics is ultimately feasible or desirable. Some ethicists, such as Robert Solomon, Christine Swanton, and Michael Slote, argue that Nietzsche's project is essentially a virtue ethical project. While each thinker emphasizes different aspects of Nietzsche's work, they all think Nietzschean ethics makes a valuable contribution to modern ethical theory. Critics such as Alasdair MacIntyre and Philippa Foot also read Nietzsche as a virtue ethicist. However, they argue that Nietzsche, while concerned with moral issues, fails to put forth an acceptable ethics.

Sympathetic virtue-ethical readings of Nietzsche point out his focus on virtues of individual human excellence, and note that his particular take on excellence highlights virtuous character traits seldom considered in the canon of modern virtues. Solomon argues that these virtues can be read as

* All citations of Nietzsche appear in-text as an abbreviation, with appropriate section and sub-section numbers following. The abbreviations refer to the English translations listed below. All italics in quotations are original unless otherwise noted. Citations of all other works will appear as footnotes.

D: Friedrich Nietzsche, *Daybreak*, trans. R.J. Hollingdale (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

HAH: Friedrich Nietzsche, *Human, All too Human*, trans. Marion Faber (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986).

GS: Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, trans. Walter Kaufman (New York: Vintage Books, 1974).

GM: Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, trans. Maudemarie Clark and Alan J. Swensen (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1998).

BGE: Friedrich Nietzsche *Beyond Good and Evil*, in Walter Kaufman, trans., *Basic Writings of Nietzsche* (New York: Modern Library, 2000) 179-435.

T: Friedrich Nietzsche *Twilight of the Idols*, in Walter Kaufman, trans., *The Portable Nietzsche* (New York: Viking Penguin Inc., 1982) 463-563.

EH: Friedrich Nietzsche *Ecc Homo*, in Walter Kaufman, trans., *Basic Writings of Nietzsche* (New York: Modern Library, 2000) 673-791.

a modernist revival of Aristotelean concerns,¹ whereas Slote argues that Nietzsche's conception of excellence reflects a type of virtue ethics that differs completely from the standard Aristotelean model.² Meanwhile, virtue ethicists who criticize Nietzsche focus on his supposed rejection of morality and the problematic implications of his individualism. In their view, these two strains in Nietzsche's thought imply that the superior individual is all-important and the individual's society is either a mere instrument toward his or her ends, or else is simply beside the point.³ Given that virtue ethics is not only a study of character traits but also of how those traits inform an agent's actions in the (social) world, this is a serious challenge that deserves a response from those interested in reading Nietzsche sympathetically.

This thesis seeks to articulate the relationship between the Nietzschean superior individual and his or her society from the viewpoint of a sympathetic reading. I pursue this line of thought by responding to two critics who attack this social dimension of Nietzsche's thought, Alasdair MacIntyre and Philippa Foot.

In Chapter 1, I respond to MacIntyre's claim that Nietzsche's project of value creation is a creation *ex nihilo*, and therefore presents a grounding problem for shared ethical commitments. MacIntyre's claim is closely tied to his critique of modern morality as ungrounded and emotivist. In MacIntyre's view, Nietzsche's ethics and moral critique are the culmination of the Enlightenment breakdown which underlies the problem of emotivism in modern morality. I argue that, while Nietzsche's moral critique is parallel to MacIntyre's critique of modernity, there are important areas of divergence. Where MacIntyre sees modern morality as paralyzed by a plurality of values, Nietzsche

¹ Robert C. Solomon, *Living With Nietzsche* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003) especially pages 137-174.

² Michael Slote, "Agent-Based Virtue Ethics." In *Virtue Ethics*, ed. Roger Crisp and Michael Slote (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007) 239-262.

³ In this thesis, I use the term 'superior individual' to designate the ideal virtuous agent in Nietzsche's work. Nietzsche uses many terms throughout his corpus to refer to the ideal person such as the "sovereign individual" and the "free spirit." To circumvent this variety of terminology, I use the superior individual to signify Nietzsche's ideal virtuous agent. However, this term explicitly excludes the concept of the noble, which I argue identifies a group of individuals in history, rather than an ideal type. Where the term noble refers to particular individuals of the past, the superior individual is the ideal for today, or for the near future. Section 3 of each chapter elaborates on this distinction.

takes pluralism to be a fact (albeit an unfortunate one), and attempts to grapple with it. I argue that this does not result in a project of value creation *ex nihilo*, but instead in the uncovering of latent values which are immanent in modernity, though perhaps unthematized *as* values. Nietzsche can propose such a project in a way MacIntyre cannot because of his view that, while the social cohesion of ancient societies was centrally important to those societies, it is not a realistic possibility for modern society; and thus romanticizing premodern ways of life is nihilistic.

Chapter 2 responds to the criticism of Philippa Foot. Foot thinks that Nietzsche's ethics is inimical to justice because the freedoms it grants to superior individuals prevent us from holding those individuals to account for their actions. According to Foot, ethics must be able to clearly identify and universally condemn certain kinds of injustice, and Nietzsche's individualism cannot accomplish this goal. I agree that Nietzsche's ethics leaves no room for universal proscriptions against certain types of action. However, I argue that the idea that an ethics *must* do this is tied to the egalitarian presumptions of Foot's naturalism rather than the concept of ethics itself. I begin by comparing Foot's naturalist view with Nietzsche's. This comparison aims to make clear that, while Nietzsche rejects the idea that a naturalist ethics is necessarily egalitarian, his naturalism is still capable of providing a yardstick of sorts, just as Foot's does. I then critique Foot's understanding of Nietzsche's perspectivism, which plays a central role both in Nietzschean ethics and her critique of it. Finally, I draw on these insights, in order to show that, while Nietzsche will not categorically reject acts that we usually take to be unjust, it is a mistake to think that this is tantamount to his sanctioning or making allowances for such acts.

Finally, I conclude with a brief discussion of some similarities between these two responses, and what those similarities mean for Nietzschean virtue ethics. While I do not attempt to establish Nietzschean ethics as anything other than an individualistic ethics of personal excellence, I do aim to show that the superior individual's ethical project does not entail a creation of new values *ex nihilo*, nor does it give the individual license to act in any way they see fit.

Chapter 1:

MacIntyre, Emotivism, and the Creation of Values

In *After Virtue*, Alasdair MacIntyre declares that Nietzsche's moral philosophy is "one of two genuine theoretical alternatives confronting anyone trying to analyze the moral condition of our culture."⁴ According to MacIntyre, the other option—the one he endorses—is to adopt some form of Aristotelianism. Robert Solomon takes issue with this dichotomy and argues that, rather than taking Nietzsche to be an opponent of Aristotelian virtues, we should read him "as a modern-day Sophist versus Kant, a defender of the virtues against the categorical imperative."⁵ Although Solomon explicates the Nietzschean virtues, he recognizes the fact that Nietzsche—unlike Aristotle—has no *polis* which can provide a context for his virtues.⁶ Thus, while Solomon shows that MacIntyre's formulation "Nietzsche or Aristotle" is too extreme, this does not mean we have escaped the stark choice put forward by MacIntyre. In Solomon's words, "Without a presupposed *ethos*, no [moral] justification is possible. Within an *ethos*, none is necessary."⁷ As MacIntyre sees it, this is precisely why we should choose Aristotle over Nietzsche. He argues that Aristotle's account presupposes a *polis* which can ground our ethics, whereas Nietzsche's rejects a socially constituted ethics in favor of radical individualism.

I argue, alongside Solomon, that MacIntyre's reading of Nietzsche is too simplified. But rather than defending the Nietzschean virtues—one aim of Solomon's—I shall argue that Nietz-

⁴ Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 2007), 110.

⁵ Solomon, *Living With Nietzsche*, 129.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 134.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 128.

sche's critical project parallels MacIntyre's own. Both Nietzsche and MacIntyre are concerned with how we can rebuild or reconceive ethics given that modern society lacks any coherent *ethos* for an ethics to express. For MacIntyre, this problem is encapsulated in his claim that "Emotivism has become embodied in our culture."⁸ In his view, all modern moral discourse is necessarily emotivist. Although in different terms, Nietzsche pursues a similar idea by way of his claim that "God is dead"(GS §125). As Nietzsche sees it, the steadily diminishing role of the Judeo-Christian tradition in modern Europe undermines the assumption that the universal morality of the Judeo-Christian tradition is grounded, with the result that the modern individual will increasingly feel free to express and pursue personal interests as he or she sees fit. In MacIntyre's view, Nietzsche sees this as a good thing and believes that morality as a whole ought to be cast aside by the superior individual.⁹

According to MacIntyre, Nietzsche celebrates modernity's loss of a *telos*, as is exemplified in *The Gay Science* section 335. MacIntyre summarizes Nietzsche's argument in that section as follows:

"In five swift, witty and cogent paragraphs [Nietzsche] disposes of both... the Enlightenment project to discover rational foundations for an objective morality and of the confidence of the everyday moral agent in post-Enlightenment culture that his moral practice and utterance are in good order."¹⁰

And a few lines later,

"The problem then is how to construct in an entirely original way, how to invent a new table of what is good and a law, a problem which arises for each individual. This problem would constitute the core of a Nietzschean moral philosophy."¹¹

MacIntyre later refers to these two summaries as "the Nietzschean diagnosis" and "the Nietzschean problematic" respectively.¹² According to MacIntyre, Nietzsche recognizes that modern morality presupposes a grounding it cannot make good, but his solution is to transition toward an honesty

⁸ MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 22.

⁹ In fact, Nietzsche is ambivalent about the decline of morality. It is both an opportunity for those who can do better, but also problematic, insofar as the sick need morality to keep them in check (cf. GM, III §14 & 27).

¹⁰ MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 113.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 114.

¹² *Ibid.*, 118.

about the ungrounded nature of morality rather than return to a moral system which would allow for moral objectivity.

MacIntyre and Nietzsche both recognize the significant role highly structured societies (such as the Greek *polis* or medieval Catholic Europe) played in grounding ethical systems in which individuals could frame life goals and debate values publicly. In the face of the decay of these social structures, MacIntyre claims that

“*either* one must follow through the aspirations and the collapse of the different versions of the Enlightenment project until there remains only the Nietzschean diagnosis and the Nietzschean problematic or one must hold that the Enlightenment project was not only mistaken, but should never have been commenced in the first place. There is no third alternative.”¹³

If this really is the choice we must make, between Nietzschean individualism and premodern ethics, it is troubling because neither option is desirable or feasible. For his part, MacIntyre sees the Nietzschean problematic as undesirable primarily because it offers no standpoint from which we could critique the actions and choices of others. In his view, this critical standpoint is only available to individuals within a society that has a cohesive *ethos* for their ethics to express. While Nietzsche’s ethics is highly individualistic, I claim his view does not reduce to moral relativism. Instead, the differences between Nietzsche and MacIntyre’s accounts of the collapse of modern morality allow Nietzsche to consider a modern virtue ethical project in a way that MacIntyre cannot.

Section one of this chapter examines the grounding problem of modern morality by way of MacIntyre’s claim that modern morality is emotivist and Nietzsche’s claim that God is dead. I argue that, while MacIntyre agrees with the sentiment of Nietzsche’s critique, he does not account for Nietzsche’s concern with the problem of nihilism, which is the primary motivation behind Nietzsche’s discussion of the breakdown of morality. Section two takes a closer look at MacIntyre’s understanding of the Nietzschean problematic in terms of a loss of *telos*. This examination makes clear that, despite similarities between MacIntyre’s and Nietzsche’s accounts, MacIntyre’s analysis of modernity can present no good response to the problems of pluralism, save a regression to premodern ways of

¹³ Ibid., 118.

life. Nietzsche, on the other hand, agrees with MacIntyre's assessment, but moves away from romanticizing the past in order to formulate a genuine ethics within modernity. In section three, I examine Nietzsche's ethical project—the creation of values—and argue that Nietzsche does not intend this to be a creation *ex nihilo* as MacIntyre's "Nietzschean problematic" implies. I aim to show instead that it is an attempt to revive what was admirable and valuable about ancient virtue-ethical society within the context of modernity.

1. The Grounding Problem in Modern Morality

MacIntyre and Nietzsche share a meta-ethical concern over the ability of modern morality to ground its principles. In this section, I claim that the problem of emotivism as described by MacIntyre and Nietzsche's discussion of the shadow of God are both attempts to articulate this grounding problem. In this sense, MacIntyre and Nietzsche agree with one another. However, the differences in their assessments of modern morality inform their different solutions.

MacIntyre describes the modern moral project in the West as essentially emotivist.¹⁴ As he puts it, "in moral argument the apparent assertion of principles functions as a mask of expressions of personal preference."¹⁵ For MacIntyre, the point is not that the different principles themselves are incoherent, but that, while they purport to work toward a rational moral agreement, they cannot successfully secure such a result. According to him, our moral arguments are valid (i.e., their conclusions follow from their premises), but because our pluralistic society does not provide a unified stock of premises from which we can argue, any moral proof is only convincing to those who share our starting assumptions. Therefore, either we are all preaching to the choir, or else we are simply cheering on our chosen premises—i.e., emoting.

¹⁴ Ibid., chapter 2.

¹⁵ Ibid., 19.

Because our moral arguments are valid but do not rule out the arguments of rival views, we have no rational way of disproving our rivals' claims. Instead, each side can only resort to reassertions of their own position *ad nauseam*. As a result, the differences between moral frameworks are incommensurable.¹⁶ We cannot move from this fragmented array of starting assumptions to a more unified set of premises from within the modern moral project. Thus, as MacIntyre sees it, even though an asserted moral principle may rest upon coherent arguments for that principle, in modern culture we can only make use of such assertions in order to express our own assumptions—assumptions which are not subject to critique by opposing moral viewpoints.

While Nietzsche's vocabulary varies considerably from MacIntyre's, his critique of morality is of like kind. Nietzsche also characterizes the modern moral landscape as assuming we can secure objective moral agreement when we, in truth, cannot. Nietzsche pursues this idea in *The Gay Science*, when he claims that "God is dead," but "we still have to vanquish his shadow"(GS §108). This is not meant to be a statement of faith, but rather is Nietzsche's description of a fundamental shift in our culture which precipitates a loss of moral objectivity. For at least 1,500 years, God has served as the overarching and unifying commitment of European society and culture. However, the Europe in which Nietzsche writes had largely renounced faith or simply moved on. Whether it is because new social roles place the church at the periphery of one's life, or because advances in technology and science seem to support a new religious skepticism, modern Europe has "killed" God. However, Nietzsche points out that the culture at large has not yet come to grips with the fact that to renounce God is not just a statement of belief (or lack thereof), but is a renunciation of all the functions and roles that God previously fulfilled as well. This includes the role God played as the universal ground for moral claims. In Nietzsche's time, therefore, morality continued (roughly speaking) along the same trajectory, and substantively it was still more or less the morality of the ten commandments. Modernity's reexamination of faith had not been accompanied by a reexamination of

¹⁶ Ibid., 8.

its morality. Where God once served as the *reason* to be moral, there was now nothing, despite the fact that most of Nietzsche's contemporaries behaved within the moral confines of their society. This social practice in the absence of the deity which is its ground is what Nietzsche meant by the "shadow of God."¹⁷

While this is certainly not the language of emotivism that MacIntyre employs, given the vastly different times in which MacIntyre and Nietzsche are writing, the two accounts still share a conclusion: we assume the principles of modern morality are grounded. However, not only are they not grounded, but they *cannot* be grounded within the context of modern moral discourse. We speak as if moral principles still had an ultimate grounding, despite the fact that we no longer presuppose the God who previously provided that grounding, and in this sense moral discourse takes place in the shadow of God.¹⁸ According to MacIntyre, modern moral arguments are no longer drawn from a unified set of assumptions and they are therefore arbitrary and ungrounded; yet the form of those arguments has not changed. Thus, insofar as we are talking only about modern morality as characterized by—and suffering from—a false pretense of objectivity, Nietzsche and MacIntyre are largely in agreement. However, there is an important difference between their characterizations of modern morality.

For MacIntyre, emotivism represents a breakdown in morality which is at its end stage. Things will not degenerate beyond emotivist discourse because any argument for or against cultural change presupposes the shared stock of premises which modern pluralism lacks. In a pluralist society, there is a question of how many incommensurable moral views are present or allowed. How-

¹⁷ This idea is addressed again in GS §125, 343.

¹⁸ To be clear, Nietzsche describes a period of chaos and war which follows the final collapse of the shadow of God (EH, *Why I Am a Destiny* §1). In many ways, this description reads like a prognostication of the wars of the 20th century, which implies that the shadow of God has been dispelled. However, it is important to separate the geopolitical consequences associated with dispelling the shadow of God from the meta-ethical grounding problem the shadow presents. For the sake of clarity, my focus is on the meta-ethical grounding problem, and it is only this that I refer to when I say that we are in the shadow of God. Whether we are, geopolitically speaking, still in the shadow or in the turmoil which follows from dispelling it should not affect my argument.

ever, be there two incommensurable moral views or two thousand, the problem MacIntyre sees derives from their incommensurability, not their number.¹⁹ This is the context of the choice MacIntyre presents between Aristotle and Nietzsche: we can either fight emotivist morality by attempting to reunify culture in some way (this would be the Aristotelian choice), or else we can not only embrace pluralism but take it to its logical extreme—complete individualism (this is MacIntyre’s idea of the Nietzschean choice).

Nietzsche, on the other hand, does not take the grounding problem in morality to be the end of the story. Nietzsche thinks the Europe of his time is still in the shadow of God, but that gradually people will see that shadow for what it is.²⁰ As more and more people realize that morality is groundless, he thinks “morality will gradually *perish*”(GM, III §27). Here Nietzsche does not mean morality as such, but the moral practices of our culture. Nietzsche’s fear is that the death of modern morality, which follows from dispelling the shadow of God, is the death of the only thing which has kept society together for two millennia. Even though Nietzsche sees the shadow of God as a grounding problem similar to the one described by MacIntyre, it is not *the* problem for Nietzsche. Instead, Nietzsche is concerned that, as a result of the collapse of the ascetic ideal, there is nothing left standing between us and “suicidal nihilism”(GM, III §28). Nothing, that is, unless we can construct new ideals to direct society.

It is clear that MacIntyre and Nietzsche have parallel concerns about the grounding of modern moral thought. However, for Nietzsche, this concern is part of a larger story, which both begins earlier than MacIntyre’s concern (with the slave revolt in morality) and ends later (in suicidal nihilism or a reorganization of moral practice under new ideals). MacIntyre claims emotivism is the logical

¹⁹ One might be inclined to think that a pluralism with two incommensurable moral views is less degenerate than one with two thousand, but this would require some objective standpoint for judgment—which, according to MacIntyre, is precisely what is lacking in pluralist society.

²⁰ This realization is motivated by the will to truth, which, ironically, Nietzsche sees as a core feature of the ascetic ideal that is at the heart of the Judeo-Christian tradition (GM, III §25). This is the sense in which, for Nietzsche, modern morality is collapsing under its own weight.

fallout of the Enlightenment project. While Nietzsche and MacIntyre agree that this project collapses as a result of its own principles, only MacIntyre sees the collapse itself as the problem. For Nietzsche, the collapse is problematic, but also an opportunity (GM, III §27). The ultimate problem we must deal with, he believes, is the question of what will replace the gradually dying morality once it is finally dead.

MacIntyre neither denies nor takes explicit account of this difference, yet he obscures its ramifications by placing Nietzsche at the pinnacle of his own historical account of the Enlightenment collapse. While MacIntyre sees the Nietzschean problematic as the logical end of the Enlightenment project, I claim Nietzsche's project is instead an attempt to respond to and go beyond the problems both he and MacIntyre find inherent in that project. In the following sections of this chapter I argue that, because Nietzsche is looking beyond the grounding problem of modern morality, MacIntyre's "Nietzschean problematic" is not actually a fair characterization of Nietzsche's view.

2. The Loss of *Telos* and the Nietzschean Problematic

While examining MacIntyre's understanding of modern moral problems is not the primary aim of this chapter, in this section I want to briefly emphasize the importance MacIntyre places on the concept of a *telos*. The central role a *telos* plays in MacIntyre's conception of ethics is the basis for the criticism he levels at Nietzsche. I then examine his understanding of "the Nietzschean problematic." Finally, I point out two problems with the way MacIntyre frames Nietzsche's moral project.

According to MacIntyre, a fully functioning ethics has three main parts, which he describes as "untutored human nature, man-as-he-could-be-if-he-realized-his-*telos* and the moral precepts which enable him to pass from one state to the other."²¹ In other words, the basic function of morality is to allow a person to move from some natural starting point toward an ideal endpoint. A de-

²¹ MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 54—MacIntyre sees the ethical frameworks of both Aristotle and Aquinas as examples of this model.

fining characteristic of this model is that “Each of the three elements... requires reference to the other two if its status and function are to be intelligible.”²² For example, in this model, human nature is untutored, but the term ‘untutored’ is only meaningful in light of the possibility of moral education by way of moral precepts that work towards an ideal “tutored” human nature, which reflects some account of the human *telos*. MacIntyre claims that “the whole point of ethics... is to enable man to pass from his present state to his true end.”²³ For MacIntyre, a functional virtue ethics (such as Aristotle’s) depends on having a clearly understood *telos* in order to establish its conception of the virtuous person. Virtues are only intelligible insofar as their presence within a person is an aid to achieving the “good life for man.”²⁴ MacIntyre’s critique of modern morality follows from the role teleology plays—must play—in his eyes.

According to MacIntyre, the Enlightenment’s rejection of both Christian theology and Aristoteleanism was tantamount to a rejection of the role of the *telos* in ethics.²⁵ However, Enlightenment thinkers did not throw out their inherited moral system altogether. Instead, they attempted to link the two remaining pieces (human nature and a collection of moral precepts) without the third (a human ideal informed by a *telos*). MacIntyre’s claim is that modernity’s attempt to reinterpret morality without a *telos* and without radical changes to the other two parts of the inherited moral scheme is incoherent, and therefore destined to fail.²⁶ The modern problem he characterizes as emotivism is the direct result of that failure. The loss of a unifying *telos* towards which our moral principles can aim is fundamental to MacIntyre because it effectively removes the grounding which morality needs in order for moral precepts to have authority. His accusations of emotivism are in many ways a la-

²² Ibid., 53.

²³ Ibid., 54.

²⁴ Ibid., 184. Here, MacIntyre argues that Aquinas is able to “synthesize Aristotle and the New Testament” largely because Christianity posits a clear conception of “*the good life for man*” which can inform the content of the virtues.

²⁵ Ibid., 54-55.

²⁶ This is the central argument of MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, chapter 5, “Why the Enlightenment Project of Justifying Morality Had to Fail.”

ment over the loss of such a unity in modern culture. At one point, MacIntyre even goes so far as to say that pluralism “threatens to submerge us all.”²⁷ This criticism of the Enlightenment project is essentially the same criticism MacIntyre aims at Nietzsche, whom MacIntyre views as the final embodiment of the inevitable collapse of the Enlightenment moral project.²⁸ The radical individualism MacIntyre takes Nietzsche to be promoting is essentially an extreme form of pluralism, in which not only do we allow different conceptions of the Good to exist within one culture, but each individual subscribes to their own unique conception.

MacIntyre summarizes his take on Nietzsche’s argument with the two terms I outlined briefly in the introduction to this chapter, the “Nietzschean diagnosis” and the “Nietzschean problematic.”²⁹ The “Nietzschean diagnosis” is MacIntyre’s account of Nietzsche’s identification of the grounding problem in modern morality.³⁰ As discussed in the previous section, MacIntyre largely agrees with the Nietzschean diagnosis, although there are important differences between MacIntyre’s story and Nietzsche’s which MacIntyre fails to address. According to MacIntyre, the Nietzschean diagnosis is no more than the claim that all attempts at rationally grounding morality fail because those rationalizations are actually grounded in expressions of a non-rational will. Following from this, MacIntyre characterizes the Nietzschean problematic as a creation *ex nihilo* of new values based on individual conceptions of the Good. This approach to the problem, according to MacIntyre, reflects the logical extreme of emotivism in morality because it abandons any attempt to use rationality to persuade others in favor of bare, unconcealed expressions of non-rational will. In his eyes,

²⁷ Ibid., 226.

²⁸ Ibid., 118.

²⁹ Ibid., 118.

³⁰ Where I have presented Nietzsche’s understanding of the grounding problem in morality in terms of Nietzsche’s claim that God is dead (GS §108, 125), MacIntyre presents it in terms of Nietzsche’s attack on a rational basis for morality (GS §335). However, I hold that the attack on modern morality (Kant in particular) which Nietzsche puts forth in GS §335 is subsumable as one particular example of philosophizing from within the “shadow of God” as described above. That MacIntyre focuses on this narrow example rather than the larger issue might be part of why he does not recognize the differences between his assessment of the grounding problem in modern morality and Nietzsche’s own (cf. §1 of this chapter).

such a radical revolution in morality should not be championed, but treated only as the ultimate consequence of failure. If we cannot regain a unified conception of a *telos* which can reestablish the three-part functionality of ethics, then the Nietzschean problematic is all we will have left. This is why he claims that “if Nietzsche wins, he wins by default.”³¹ In the next section of this chapter, I argue that this is not the revolution in morality which Nietzsche champions. First, however, I want to address two interpretive problems with MacIntyre’s framing of the Nietzschean problematic.

My first criticism of MacIntyre’s treatment of Nietzsche is his sparse presentation of textual evidence from Nietzsche’s writings. In *After Virtue*, we find only two of Nietzsche’s works explicitly quoted. The first is section 335 of *The Gay Science*, from which MacIntyre draws the “Nietzschean diagnosis” and the “Nietzschean problematic.” The second is a single quotation taken from *The Will to Power*—a book of Nietzsche’s notes, posthumously cobbled together by his sister for what can only be described as dubious purposes.³² Conspicuously absent from MacIntyre’s discussion of Nietzschean ethics is evidence from the two volumes of Nietzsche’s corpus which deal most directly with his moral concerns, *Beyond Good and Evil* and *On the Genealogy of Morality*.³³ The problem with this sparsity is not that it is dishonest or a sleight-of-hand so much as it is an oversimplification of Nietzsche’s thought. It is a mistake to think that any single Nietzsche quotation, taken in isolation, is a suitable expression of Nietzsche’s philosophy.³⁴ Given the small amount of support provided for his reading, any objections, such as my rejection of the Nietzschean problematic, will deal extensively with content that MacIntyre leaves untouched.

³¹ MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 257.

³² *Ibid.*, 257-258. Cf. Walter Kaufman, *Nietzsche* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974) 5-8.

³³ The *Genealogy* is mentioned in passing, *After Virtue*, 117.

³⁴ Nietzsche himself complains that people are too quick to take small bits of his thought as theses in GM, P §8. Here he states that the entirety of the third essay of the *Genealogy* is an explanation of only one aphorism.

Walter Kaufman’s reputation as the original sympathetic Nietzsche scholar in the United States is largely derived from his rejection of Nietzsche scholarship which takes individual statements of Nietzsche’s out of context and presents them as fully developed theses. In Kaufman’s *Nietzsche*, this type of critique is consistently leveled at Nietzsche commentators throughout, although the prologue entitled “The Nietzsche Legend” is a focused examination of the poor scholarship and misguided popular opinion that has plagued Nietzsche’s legacy. Cf. §1 of Kaufman’s intro to GM in Walter Kaufman, trans., *Basic Writings of Nietzsche* (New York: Modern Library, 2000).

Second, as Solomon notes, MacIntyre takes Nietzsche's attack on morality to be an attack on *all* morality—on the concept of morality itself—rather than on one variety (or some varieties) of moral thought.³⁵ This is a common conception, no doubt fueled by Nietzsche's frequent claim that he is an "immoralist." Despite this name, Nietzsche is far from condemning morals *in toto*. Nietzsche rarely talks about moral valuation in general. Instead, he usually talks about particular *types* of morality, or modes of moral thought. For instance, in the first treatise of the *Genealogy*, Nietzsche speaks explicitly about two modes of moral valuation. He refers to one variously as noble, master or knightly-aristocratic morality and to the other as priestly or slave morality.³⁶ In the *Genealogy*, it is relatively easy to keep his references straight. However, outside of the *Genealogy*, the distinction is much less obvious—or in the case of earlier works, such as *The Gay Science*, the distinction may not yet be formulated in terms of two opposing value systems. Suffice it to say, when Nietzsche talks about morality, it's not always clear *which* morality he means.

Taking the *Genealogy* as a primary example of Nietzsche's critique of morality, it seems clear that Nietzsche means to attack a particular form of moral reasoning rather than morals as such. Recent Nietzsche scholarship embraces this view. For example, in her translation, Maudemarie Clark translates the German title *Zur Genealogie der Moral* as *On the Genealogy of Morality* rather than the traditional *On the Genealogy of Morals*. She states "*Moral* is used in German to designate either the entirety of moral norms, principles, values, or the quality of being moral, moral behavior," which is closer to "morality" in scope.³⁷ Moreover, elsewhere in the *Genealogy*, the same word is consistently translated as "morality" rather than "morals." Clark's translation, in seeking to preserve the character of Nietzsche's original language, also makes clear that Nietzsche is not attacking moral conduct in its entirety, but only one particular morality which has become dominant. Further, Nietzsche says in the *Geneal-*

³⁵ Solomon, *Living With Nietzsche*, 129. Solomon also notes that Philippa Foot makes this same error.

³⁶ While the distinction between these two modes of moral valuation carries on throughout GM, see especially GM, I §6-11. Cf. BGE §195 & 260.

³⁷ Maudemarie Clark and Alan J. Swensen, trans. *On the Genealogy of Morality* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1998), 119, en.

ogy that he assumes “it has long since been abundantly clear what my *aim is*, what the aim of that dangerous slogan is that is inscribed at the head of my last book *Beyond Good and Evil*. — At least this does *not* mean ‘Beyond Good and Bad.’”(GM, I §17) The distinction Nietzsche is making, between ‘good and evil’ on one hand and ‘good and bad’ on the other, is the distinction between the priestly and knightly-aristocratic modes of valuation, respectively. While going beyond good and evil is certainly meant to be an attack on the priestly mode of moral valuation, here Nietzsche suggests that this does not rule out moral valuation writ large.³⁸

Although MacIntyre assumes Nietzsche to be attacking morality as such, rather than the norms, principles, values, and behaviors that had come to constitute “morality,” he provides no arguments in support of this. The robust thesis he derives from section 335 of *The Gay Science* does not necessarily follow from his sparse textual support and his assumption that Nietzsche attacks morality writ large. In section 335, Nietzsche certainly rejects at least one type of morality, and suggests that we replace it with something that has a heavy focus on individual character. However, if the replacement is to careen into moral relativism, as presented in the Nietzschean problematic, this conclusion needs to be defended; preferably with some indication of how we should make sense of the Nietzschean problematic in relation to other ideas in the Nietzschean corpus. MacIntyre does not defend his reading and, in my view, his reading is indefensible.

In the next section, I argue that the Nietzschean project of value creation is not creation *ex nihilo*, as MacIntyre’s “Nietzschean problematic” suggests. I claim instead that value creation is an attempt to realize modern human excellences which take pluralism itself as their cultural starting point. This project aims to allow the superior individual to transfigure the cultural material which constitutes contemporary values into a new ethics without being forced to choose between a romanticized historical ethics or a culturally ungrounded “moral solipsism.”

³⁸ While it certainly enjoys the most attention from scholars, one could argue that the *Genealogy* is only one of a couple major attacks Nietzsche makes on morality. The other which immediately springs to mind is *The Antichrist*. However, *The Antichrist*, like the *Genealogy*, is an attack on one particular type of morality.

3. The Creation of Values

For MacIntyre, the fundamental problem of modernity is the inability to ground morality in the face of pluralism. MacIntyre takes Nietzsche not only to recognize that modern morality is ungrounded, but to embrace this lack of grounding as well. In line with this, MacIntyre outlines the “Nietzschean problematic” as an attempt to create values *ex nihilo*—without regard to tradition or community. I have argued that Nietzsche largely shares MacIntyre’s concerns over grounding morality and claimed that MacIntyre is mistaken insofar as he takes Nietzsche to embrace our inability to ground morality in the context of modern pluralism. In this section, I shall argue that, like MacIntyre, Nietzsche was no fan of pluralism. However, unlike MacIntyre, Nietzsche rejects a regression to premodern society as an acceptable solution to the challenges posed by pluralism. Instead, Nietzsche’s ethical project attempts to embrace modernity as the condition of possibility for a revival of human excellences within a pluralist society, thereby moving beyond the stalemate of emotivism. Because MacIntyre sees ethics fundamentally as an expression of human excellence as conceived by a unified *ethos* (rather than a description of human flourishing more generally), he would not find my reading of Nietzsche to be an acceptable solution to his complaints. However, the reading I put forward shows that Nietzsche’s ethical project does not lead to the relativism MacIntyre describes in the “Nietzschean problematic.”

To develop my view, I make two claims. First, drawing on Robert Solomon, I argue that Nietzsche’s writing is, in fact, an expression of an *ethos*, understood in a particular manner. As Solomon argues, Nietzsche was writing for a particular community, and in this sense, embarking on an Aristotelean project of trying to encapsulate the virtues of his *ethos*, which is that of the nineteenth century artist and intellectual. Unlike the Aristotelean *polis*, this *ethos* is certainly not unified in the sense MacIntyre requires. However, it opens the door for an ethics which is grounded in relation to the ethical individual’s society. Second, I argue that, while this does not solve the problematic fragmenta-

tion of modern society, Nietzsche's project is still able to find the impetus for reviving an ethics centered on human excellences within modern culture. As Nietzsche sees it, the inability to unify culture follows, not from a loss of *telos* to which all members of a society conform, but from a loss of sociopolitical influence which allows for one group to require conformity.

Before dealing with these two claims, I want to argue for a more nuanced understanding of Nietzsche's relation to pluralism, which follows from the Enlightenment. Nietzsche, like MacIntyre, was no fan of pluralism. However, Nietzsche's call to individual integrity seems to presuppose pluralism. MacIntyre takes this individualism to support his reading that Nietzsche's work is the epitome of modern pluralism. However, I think this is too simplistic an interpretation of Nietzsche's view, which is more intricate than a straightforward 'for or against' attitude. I claim that Nietzsche dislikes pluralism insofar as it fractures social cohesion. However, while Nietzsche agrees with MacIntyre that, historically, a unified *ethos* played a central role in human flourishing, he rejects MacIntyre's claim that this unity is a necessary condition for a viable ethics. In support of this claim, I want to show that, while Nietzsche is critical of pluralism, he also engages with it in order to grapple with its problems rather than avoid them.

Nietzsche's dislike of pluralism is clear in his early writings, where he laments the onset of democracy. While Nietzsche's disdain for democracy is closely linked with his critique of herd mentality, in *Human, All too Human* he also points out that, as monarchies and centralized religion decline, the social cohesion which follows from the reverence of such institutions is lost (HAH, §472). What Nietzsche describes is a shift in the role of governing institutions (the state and religion). As democracy takes hold, the people lose their reverence for those institutions. They no longer legislate life as thoroughly, and "private persons" develop.³⁹ Earlier in *Human, All too Human*, Nietzsche argues that the role of government in modernity is changing, it is becoming a compromise rather than a top-down legislation (HAH, §450). These remarks are written in a tone meant to emphasize the histori-

³⁹ Nietzsche says he deliberately uses the term "private person" as opposed to "individual."

cal fact of the matter, but it is clear that Nietzsche sees that a certain way of life is coming to an end, because the social cohesion which was its underpinning is coming apart. In this sense, Nietzsche views the coming of pluralism, the increasing weight given to the opinions of the “private person,” in much the same way MacIntyre sees it.

However, Nietzsche’s critique of pluralism diverges from MacIntyre’s in two important respects. First, by associating pluralism and democracy, Nietzsche points to a fundamental difference between his and MacIntyre’s understanding of unity within an *ethos*. Unlike MacIntyre, Nietzsche sees any unity in an *ethos* as legislated by the powerful in society, be they the Athenian nobility or the Medieval Papacy and monarchies. Whereas MacIntyre views all people in these societies as sharing an understanding of their *telos*, Nietzsche argues that this shared *telos* derives, in part, from an inability to think otherwise on the part of the politically weak.⁴⁰ For Nietzsche, the unity of an ancient *ethos* stemmed from the singularity of social and political power within the society in question. As I will argue shortly, this distinction is central to understanding how the “Nietzschean problematic” fails to capture Nietzsche’s modern ethical project.

Second, unlike MacIntyre, Nietzsche does not see the problems presented by pluralism as unsurpassable. At the end of his discussion about the decline of the state, Nietzsche says, “the prospect resulting from this certain decline is not an unhappy one in every respect”(HAH §472). Nietzsche argues that, just as civic life eclipsed the import of family life, so too a new way of life would come to eclipse civic life after the state’s decline. As with their different takes on the grounding problem of morality, Nietzsche sees the modern condition as transitional, whereas MacIntyre sees it as a problematic dead end. In keeping with this view, Nietzsche thinks that despite the problems pluralism presents for grounding morality, it must be embraced and overcome or transfigured,

⁴⁰ This can be seen in HAH §472, where Nietzsche talks about the necessity of top-down legislation by institutions and a powerful elite, as well as HAH §474, where Nietzsche states that it is in the interest of the Athenian *polis* to inhibit and cripple the culture and education of the people “in order to bind all generations and keep them at one level.” This introduces an interesting dichotomy, between what is for the benefit of the *polis* and what is for the benefit of the citizens within that *polis*. Nietzsche wants to keep these two questions distinct, whereas MacIntyre does not address them as distinct issues.

rather than being shied away from. This attitude can be seen in the introduction Nietzsche appended to *The Birth of Tragedy* entitled “Attempt at Self-Criticism.” Here, Nietzsche notes that, in order to revivify human excellence in modern culture, *The Birth of Tragedy* tried to find evidence of the tradition of Greek tragedy in modernity (i.e., in Wagner). Nietzsche then points out that this is why *The Birth of Tragedy*, with its hatred of the present in favor of an idealized past, in the final analysis is merely romanticism (BOT, P §7). With this passage, Nietzsche evidences his affinity with MacIntyrean concerns regarding modernity, but he also rejects adopting anything other than a modern solution to the problems of modernity. Specifically, Nietzsche notes that an attempt to revivify the Greek way of life fails as a solution to modern problems. In other words, *The Birth of Tragedy* is problematic insofar as it looks backward, in a MacIntyrean spirit, to find a solution to the problems of modernity. Looking back on the book in 1886, Nietzsche finds such a solution problematic because its denial of the present is life-denying, and thus fails to overcome the impending problem of nihilism which he has come to recognize.

This rejection of a MacIntyrean solution is congruent with Nietzsche’s broader thesis about the problems of modernity which I discussed in section one of this chapter. Nietzsche sees modernity’s problems as part of a larger story, one which begins sooner (with the dominance of the Christian worldview rather than the Enlightenment) and can lead to a more problematic end than the stalemate of emotivism MacIntyre identifies (the chaos that follows from unleashing the *ressentiment*-filled masses from the restraint imposed by Judeo-Christian morality). In relation to my rejection of the “Nietzschean problematic,” what is important to note is that Nietzsche does not reject a move back to premodern social commitments because he rejects the social grounding of ethics in favor of radical individualism. Instead, Nietzsche rejects MacIntyre’s move because, although he sees a similar problem, he also sees that a move to premodern society is an inadequate solution to the very prob-

lem identified.⁴¹ Nietzsche's project of value creation is an attempt to provide an alternative to modern pluralism without a resort to a premodern ethical system. I claim that MacIntyre misidentifies the goal of Nietzschean value creation. The creation of new values is not an attempt to create values without grounding now that the grounding problem in morality has been revealed. It is an attempt to create values which can be found in the present social context, given that the Enlightenment project to universally ground values has failed. Nietzschean value creation is not divorced from its social context, although it takes as its starting point a society which MacIntyre thinks precludes a coherent ethics.

According to MacIntyre, Nietzsche's project of value creation can only establish an individualist—and therefore relativist—ethics out of the rubble of modern moral theory because pluralist modernity provides no cohesive *ethos* to express. In response to this charge, Solomon suggests that, even though Nietzsche was not capable of expressing the *ethos* of modernity, because modernity is made of many *ethé*, his ethics is an attempt to make good the values of a particular group in modern society, “namely the community of disaffected academics and intellectuals.”⁴² Nietzsche was not writing for modern Europe as a whole, but for a select elite within modern Europe. This view of Nietzsche actually parallels the Aristotelean project insofar as Aristotle's ethics also sought to embody the excellences of the elite in his society. However, this comparison is problematic in two important ways. First, the Athenian aristocracy whom Aristotle ‘wrote for’ were a cohesive group. Modernity and the intellectuals and artists Nietzsche is writing to are not. Second, the values of Athenian aristocrats, and the ethics of Aristotle, by and large, supported the society out of which they grew. They reinforced the *ethos* that was their foundation. Nietzsche's virtue ethics, on the other hand, does not seek to reinforce the morality of his day. In fact, Nietzsche paints the moral tradition of his day as the enemy of virtue. Despite these problems, Solomon still holds that we can sensibly

⁴¹ At best we could say that a move back toward premodern society is an avoidance of the problems presented by pluralism rather than a solution to them.

⁴² Solomon, *Living with Nietzsche*, 133.

view the Nietzschean ethical project as an attempt to express a particular *ethos*, so long as we view modernity as made up of many *ethé*.⁴³ He says, “Ethics is an expression of an *ethos* even if that *ethos* is the scattered romantic sensibility of a few hundred brilliant and not-so-brilliant misfits scattered around the hills and lakes of Europe.”⁴⁴

While I agree with Solomon that we can view Nietzsche’s ethics as an attempt to express the *ethos* of the nineteenth century artist, MacIntyre would find this response insufficient. If Nietzsche is merely encapsulating the virtues of a small and scattered group of artists, then he is merely emoting in favor of his own moral viewpoint within the context of a society which still has many incommensurable moral commitments. Such emoting is precisely the problem of modern morality which MacIntyre describes, and which I have suggested Nietzsche is attempting to move beyond. In MacIntyre’s view, even if we read Nietzsche as embodying the virtues of this scattered *ethos* within a society built of many *ethé*, this is still evidence that something fundamental to ethics has been lost. However, I think that this reveals MacIntyre as making impossible demands of modern culture on the basis of an idealized view of the past.⁴⁵ The *ethos* expressed by Aristotelean ethics was unified, but only in the Nietzschean sense. That is to say, the unified culture of the Athenian *polis* was the culture of the Athenian nobility, who had the sociopolitical influence to treat it as the defining culture of Athens. This *ethos* explicitly excludes Athenian slaves, women, or non land-owning men. To the extent that those groups are unified within the *ethos* of the *polis*, that unity is forced upon them from higher social classes. Given that the unity of the ancient *polis* does not derive from a shared commitment to the human *telos*, but rather merely from its imposition by a sociopolitical power structure, the lack of a shared commitment to the human *telos* in modernity need not in itself preclude a modern revival of aretaic ethics. As I mentioned above, Nietzsche rejects MacIntyre’s understanding of the unified

⁴³ Ibid., 134-135.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 135.

⁴⁵ Solomon agrees with this accusation, saying, “are there ever such unified cultures, or is their very possibility a myth? (Think of the fiction of ethnically pure Japan, or look at how readily unified religions slip into warring sects.)” *Living with Nietzsche*, 132.

cultures of the past. I claim that in this rejection we can find a different understanding of the sense of group identity required for an ethics which, according to Nietzsche, can still be made good in a modern context.

In *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche discusses the cultural identity which underlies any virtue ethics as necessarily arising from a conflict or tension between a social group and a threatening other (BGE §262). As Nietzsche describes it, the things a culture takes as virtues come to be seen in that light because of the role they play in distinguishing the group in question from outsiders or inferiors (real or perceived). This view seems to have the weight of history behind it. The virtues of the Athenian *polis* arose out of political, economic, and territorial competition between Greek city states. The virtues of Medieval Christianity arose in the context of external pagan religions. In each case, the values espoused by the *ethos* were the values of the elite. As discussed above, Nietzsche saw the fact that these *ethé* became unified as resulting from the exercise of sociopolitical power, not from some form of consent. Indeed, in each case we do not need to look far to find significant portions of the population who might have benefitted from some other conception of the good life (i.e., Athenian slaves, serfs at the bottom rung of the feudal system). Thus, while these *ethé* were unified, they were only unified in relation to other groups, and within their own group the ethics espoused only offered virtue to certain subsets of the society. Those excluded from the virtuous life by birth did not support their *ethos* because they valued its *telos*, but because they had no ability to do otherwise. MacIntyre's discussion of the role a unified *ethos* plays in ethics misses this point entirely. Nietzsche does not, and as a result he sees that the unity of these historical *ethé* is not a necessary part of their ethics, but a contingent fact of political history. The key to the social grounding of an ethics is a small group seeing itself as different from outside groups.

In this sense, Nietzsche thinks that the social unity of a small group (in opposition to one or many others) is possible in the context of modernity (BGE §200). In contrast to past societies, which Nietzsche characterizes with the two fundamental types—noble and slave moralities—Nietz-

sche sees the modern person as characterized by a combination of these types. He describes modern humans as having opposite or contradictory “drives and value standards that fight each other and rarely permit each other any rest.”(BGE §200) This internal conflict is caused by a “heritage of multiple origins,” or put differently, by modern pluralism. It is this conflict which gives rise to the two ethical types Nietzsche claims are at issue in modernity: the mediocre *bonhomme* and the superior individual. Nietzsche distinguishes these two types differently from the noble/slave moral taxonomy seen in *Beyond Good and Evil* and the *Genealogy*. Whereas noble and slave moralities are distinguished by active and reactive valuation respectively, as well as by the social status of their community, the mediocre and the superior individual are distinguished by their reaction to the internal conflict of their pluralist heritage. According to Nietzsche, “both types belong together and owe their origin to the same causes.”(BGE §200) The average human will constitute the weaker or more mediocre type, whose “most profound desire is that the war they *are* should come to an end.”(BGE §200). Nietzsche says they end this internal conflict with a tranquilizing happiness, one which prevents them from being disturbed. The superior individual, on the other hand, does not seek to end the internal conflict of pluralism with a totalizing worldview. While Nietzsche, in section 200 of *Beyond Good and Evil*, does not give an explicit account of superior individuals, he does say that they have a mastery of waging war against themselves. He clarifies this metaphor saying, “in other words, self-control, [and] self-outwitting has been inherited or cultivated, too”(BGE §200). Whereas the weak and mediocre *bonhomme* seeks escape in a happiness which Nietzsche views as hedonistic nihilism, the superior individual is able to reflect upon the turmoil of modernity and has the discipline to try to transfigure it into something which need not be escaped, but can instead be embraced.

It is my contention that the superior individual’s ethical project is related to an *ethos* unified by tension in much the same way that Nietzsche sees Aristotelean ethics as arising from the competition between city states in ancient Greece. That is to say, the superior individual’s virtues are grounded in an *ethos* which is delimited and unified by the tension, perceived by a small group of

elites, between their own way of life and society at large. This is certainly not a unified *ethos* in the sense MacIntyre intends. However, for Nietzsche, the overarching unity MacIntyre emphasizes is an artifact of the political and economic power of the Athenian *polis* (and the *Nicomachean Ethics* only applies to a small subset of that society).

Aristotle's ethics draws upon a social group which was already well defined and whose values he articulated, but by no means created himself. While the artists and academics Nietzsche writes for are not yet a similar group of elites, Nietzsche sees his project as an attempt to articulate the possibility of a new group of elites who can revive the virtues of excellence in modern society. Nietzsche was not writing for an already existing cohesive group, but attempting to be the catalyst which would unify a group he saw as latent in modern European culture. For Nietzsche, if these elites are able to create new values, it will be in the context of their seeing themselves as different from the others, the mediocre herd, in just the same way as the Athenian nobility saw themselves as other than their slaves, the Spartans, or barbarians. What makes them other is the hallmark of Nietzschean virtue: it is the self-control and self-mastery which allows the superior individual to be passionately engaged but also to avoid being unreflectively engulfed in the current of their passions.

Contrary to MacIntyre's assertions, this project is not the creation of values *ex nihilo*. Nietzsche makes clear that both the mediocre and superior individuals arise from the same cultural conditions (BGE §200). The difference is, where the mediocre are overwhelmed by the conflict which is their heritage, the superior individual has the ability to gain a critical distance from it. This distance does not involve a "stepping out" of society, resulting in moral relativism. Rather, it allows for the superior individual to embrace the "drives and value standards" which comprise both the modern self and modern culture and transfigure them into something new. Nietzsche's superior individual is not a new type of human, completely cut off from modern problems, but a modern human, who is defined by his or her virtuous response to the problems of modernity. As I will emphasize in the next chapter, the response to these problems involves engaging with the traditions which are the

heritage of the modern condition insofar as the conflict between these traditions constitutes the initial stock of meaning to be transfigured by the project of value creation. The new table of values legislated by the superior individual is made out of aspects of noble and slave morality, transfigured into a new and distinctly modern virtue ethics.

MacIntyre would certainly argue that, even if a small community of artists and intellectuals—following Nietzsche’s advice—engaged in such a project, this would only be one more fragment in an already fragmented society. This is necessarily the case, as even Nietzsche’s exposition of the superior individual, who arises from the same context as the mediocre *bonhomme*, is fundamentally elitist. While this is true, I don’t see any alternative, and it is not clear to me that there ever was an alternative in the first place. The virtues of Athens, in which MacIntyre puts so much stock, were also fundamentally elitist. Any unity it had was achieved via a confluence of a cohesive *ethos* among the aristocracy and the political power to treat that *ethos* as *the* Athenian culture. Nietzsche’s ethics does not solve the grounding problems presented by modern pluralism, but it does engage with them and attempt to use those problems as an impetus to revive an ethics which focuses on the pursuit of excellence in modern society. Without a project similar to this, we are left in the MacIntyrean position of lamenting a bygone age of human flourishing with no recourse to improvement in modern life.

Chapter 2:

Foot, Naturalism, and Proscription

Philippa Foot published three pieces critiquing Nietzsche's ethics.⁴⁶ These pieces are all united by Foot's attempt to understand what Nietzsche means when he calls himself an "immoralist." Foot thinks that understanding Nietzsche's immoralism provides good reason to reject his ethics. While Foot's exposition of Nietzsche's immoralism has many facets, my response will focus on one which appears prominently in two of her works ("Nietzsche's Immoralism" and *Natural Goodness*), Nietzsche's inability to declare certain acts as categorically unjust.⁴⁷ Foot's motivating concern is the genocides witnessed in the twentieth century, in particular during World War II. I claim that, while Foot is correct that Nietzsche is unable to label certain acts as categorically unjust, he is able to respond to Foot's concerns.

In section one, I examine the differences between Foot's and Nietzsche's conceptions of naturalist ethics. In my view, the differences between Foot's and Nietzsche's ethical outlooks prompt Foot to wrongly assess the nature of Nietzsche's ethical critique. With these differences in hand, it should be clear both why Foot thinks Nietzsche's ethics does not make adequate room for justice and how, despite Foot's claims, Nietzsche does have a reply to her concerns. In section two, I reject Foot's reading of a passage which she uses as evidence to support the claim that Nietzsche gives too

⁴⁶ Philippa Foot, "Nietzsche: The Revaluation of Values," in *Virtues and Vices and Other Essays in Moral Philosophy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 81-95; Philippa Foot, "Nietzsche's Immoralism," in *Moral Dilemmas and Other Topics in Moral Philosophy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 144-158; Philippa Foot, *Natural Goodness* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

⁴⁷ Some of Foot's other critiques include a rejection of Nietzsche's attack on pity and charity, arguments against making moral arguments from aesthetic grounds, and the claim that central aspects Nietzsche's revaluation of values are factually inaccurate.

much leeway to the superior individual. In my view, this passage does not represent sanction, indulgence, or reprimand of the nobles discussed, but is primarily a historical discussion. Finally, in section three, I examine Foot's discussion of what she calls Nietzsche's 'personalism'—which is her take on Nietzsche's perspectivism. I argue that Foot's 'personalism' is inadequate because it fails to get outside of the agent-action dualism Nietzschean perspectivism attempts to reject, and suggest my own reading of Nietzsche's perspectivism in its place. Following from this discussion, I show that Nietzschean ethics neither explicitly supports injustice, nor is inimical to justice generally.

1. Naturalism and Egalitarianism

Like MacIntyre, Foot mistakenly takes Nietzsche's critique of morality to target morality as such. Foot's refutations of Nietzsche often assume that he is speaking of morality in general rather than in a particular historical and social context. Divorcing Nietzsche's arguments from these contexts distorts their meaning. Foot's tendency to misrepresent Nietzsche in this manner follows from the differences between hers and Nietzsche's divergent naturalistic commitments. While Nietzsche and Foot both base their ethics in a naturalistic outlook, Nietzsche's naturalism requires an attention to sociohistorical detail that Foot's naturalism does not.

The term 'naturalism' means many things to philosophers, but for Foot and Nietzsche it means something quite similar. In the introduction to *Natural Goodness*, Foot declares that her project will provide an account of "natural goodness and defect in living things."⁴⁸ In a sense, this is a modern statement of an Aristotelean concept: what it means to be good is to be a good example of one's species, which in turn means a 'well functioning' example of that species. It seems to me that this is a good characterization of the naturalistic attitude that both Foot and Nietzsche take toward ethical values. Foot, especially in *Natural Goodness*, is interested in a naturalistic account of the good based upon a functional conception of what being human entails. Nietzsche's ethics has a similar

⁴⁸ Foot, *Natural Goodness*, 3.

naturalistic interest. Although they arrive at their positions from different beginnings, both Foot and Nietzsche ultimately argue that ethics is grounded in facts about the natural world.⁴⁹ Despite this shared commitment concerning the constitutive role that the natural world plays in ethics, Foot and Nietzsche arrive at very different ethical conclusions. For Foot, naturalism is egalitarian, whereas for Nietzsche, it is not.

Foot claims that for any species, “The way an individual [member of that species] *should be* is determined by what is needed for development, self-maintenance, and reproduction: in most species involving defence [sic], and in some the rearing of young.”⁵⁰ This holds for humans in just the same way it holds for plants and non-human animals.⁵¹ For Foot, the way a given species functions outlines the range in which we can say that a given member of the species is either good or defective. These are what she calls “natural norms.” For example, ‘good roots’ are good insofar as they do all the things roots ought to do (i.e., anchor a tree so it can grow tall, gather nutrients from the soil, etc.). Foot then argues that “there is *no change in the meaning of ‘good’ between the word as it appears in ‘good roots’ and as it appears in ‘good dispositions of the human will.’*”⁵² In other words, moral claims about the Good refer to goodness as defined functionally by natural norms. Foot uses this move to ground moral imperatives, such that “the actions of anyone who does not ϕ when ϕ -ing is the only rational thing to do are *ipso facto defective.*”⁵³ We could therefore summarize Foot’s idea of naturalist ethics as relying on a functional explanation of human actions in order to outline the ways that characteristic traits of the human define excellences toward which it is rational for each human to strive. In this

⁴⁹ Foot’s naturalism is introduced as a departure from the tradition which follows from G.E. Moore, arguing that ‘good’ is a non-naturalistic property (see *Natural Goodness*, 5). Nietzsche’s naturalism predates this debate, and instead is concerned with denying concepts which place a focus on the otherworldly (such as the Christian notion of heaven).

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 33.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 39—Foot thinks this method of grounding a ‘should’ is relevant and applicable even in the case of complicated human projects which might not be explicitly relevant to survival.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 39.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 59—This formulation is stated as the central statement at issue in Chapter 4 of *Natural Goodness*, in which Foot argues that it is rational to pursue goods outlined by natural norms.

sense, Foot's ethics is grounded by a teleology of excellence in function. The egalitarianism inherent in Foot's naturalism derives from the fact that she thinks there is one functional description which applies equally to all humans. For her, the natural norms which outline flourishing do not change on account of differences between individual humans. Foot does not argue for this one-teleology-per-species view so much as she assumes it.⁵⁴

Nietzsche's naturalism is similar to Foot's in that he thinks we can judge a trait or characteristic in an organism based upon its function in the life of that organism. However, unlike Foot, Nietzsche does not believe that this function-based view is ultimately grounded in the need for survival and reproduction. Heavily emphasized in Nietzsche's writing is the imagery of life forms growing, asserting, and expressing themselves. Unlike Foot, who takes the *telos* of a life form to be its capacity for self-preservation and its ability to reproduce, Nietzsche thinks that the "really fundamental instinct of life... aims at *the expansion of power* and, wishing for that, [life] frequently risks and even sacrifices self-preservation." (GS §349) It is this expansive force of life that Nietzsche terms 'the will to power.' In the same section, he argues that doctrines of self preservation are actually symptoms of distress and a temporary limitation of one's will to power. Elsewhere he claims that self preservation is merely a common side-effect of expressing one's will to power (BGE § 13). Either way, it is clear that the determining factor in Nietzsche's naturalism is the will to power of an organism or group of organisms, not its will to survival.

The expression of one's will to power, however, depends upon the contingent differences between humans—differences in talent, ability, social status, appearance, and historical context (to name just a few). Just as each oak tree grows towards the light but takes a different shape in doing so, every human being innately wants to express his or her will to power but will do so differently depending upon his or her strengths and weaknesses. Therefore, within Nietzsche's naturalism, what

⁵⁴ She does discuss equality as a fundamental part of ethics in "Nietzsche's Immoralism," 152. However, this discussion is primarily an appeal to intuition. Nietzsche, as I will show, also makes an appeal to intuition, but in support of elitism and a necessary recognition of inequality in nature.

promotes the goals of the weak is not the same as what promotes the goals of the strong, and what promotes the goals of the human species as a whole may not coincide with either.⁵⁵ Just as Foot assumes rather than argues for the egalitarian implications of her naturalism, Nietzsche presupposes that the differences between individuals matter. If what we do is express our own wills to power, then the ambidextrous, colorblind, and those born with perfect pitch will necessarily express their wills to power differently.

Up until now, the will to power has been discussed in a purely descriptive manner. Foot's natural norms are descriptive, but they also gain normativity through her claim that there is no distinction to be made between description of natural function and normativity. That is to say, our natural function sets clear boundaries, and any particular moral code must conform to those boundary conditions. According to Foot, the will to power fails to make this same move, because any action can be reduced to an instance of it.⁵⁶ If this is the case, even traits we would want to say are vicious or deficient can—in some circumstances at least—be explained as an expression of an individual's will to power. Thus, while the will to power offers a descriptive alternative to Foot's survival-based natural norms, it appears to offer no normative alternative.

Christine Swanton objects to this reading of the will to power, arguing that, while it is true of the genus, it is not so for the species.⁵⁷ In Swanton's terminology, the 'genus' is the will to power as such, whereas a 'species' of the will to power would be a particular action (character trait, skill, etc.) viewed as an expression of one's will to power.⁵⁸ According to Swanton, a distinction between genus and species allows for the will to power to be normative at the level of individual instances. She

⁵⁵ Nietzsche uses this last frame of reference when he speaks from the point of view of life (for example, at the opening of GM, III §16). Foot, on the other hand, explicitly rejects the logic of treating a species of animal as the organism in question when describing natural norms (*Natural Goodness*, 32 fn.).

⁵⁶ Foot, *Natural Goodness*, 112.

⁵⁷ Christine Swanton, "Nietzschean Virtue Ethics," in *Virtue Ethics Old and New*, ed. Stephen M. Gardiner (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005) 179-192.

⁵⁸ This is not to be confused with the differences between individuals and the species as a whole mentioned above.

proposes that we categorize different expressions of the will to power in terms of the degree to which they are “distorting,” which, for Nietzsche, means life-denying or unhealthy. In other words, built into Nietzsche’s conception of the will to power is the assumption that not all expressions of the will to power are equal. The will to power is not only descriptive, but normative by way of establishing a concept of excellence in its expression. As Swanton puts it, excellent (“undistorted”) expressions of the will to power work towards being more life-affirming, healthy, or both, whereas distorted expressions do not.⁵⁹ Because we can only judge something *more* life-affirming or healthy by way of comparing it with what came before it, this reading necessarily takes account of the historical and physical particulars of the individual agent.⁶⁰ Note that, on this reading, Nietzsche arrives at normativity in a similar manner to Foot. Both assert that their natural descriptions have an inbuilt conception of excellence. In my view, this is the correct way to read the will to power, because it is in this manner that Nietzsche orients much of his criticism. For example, Christianity is not criticized for failure to express its will to power. Rather, Nietzsche critiques Christianity precisely because its expression of the will to power is ultimately life-denying. Although Foot rejects it, Nietzsche’s understanding of the will to power does provide a normative yardstick in the form of less distorted expressions of an individual’s will to power.

Finally, Nietzsche sees the human animal historically. Historical episodes leave their mark upon the species, by way of epochal changes in culture. For example, what it meant for a person to flourish in Homeric Greece is not what it means to flourish in modern Europe because these two settings for action are on either side of a major epochal shift in culture—the slave revolt in morality. Nietzsche claims that slave morality *made* us deep and interesting animals (GM, I §6). Slave morality inspired a self-concern and self-scrutiny which was not a feature of humanity under the previous “noble” morality. With the turn inward inspired by the rise of slave morality, the fundamental char-

⁵⁹ Christine Swanton, “Nietzschean Virtue Ethics,” 181.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 190.

acter of the human animal has changed. As a result, modern individuals who would exercise their will to power excellently must engage in this self-scrutiny in such a way that it aids rather than inhibits their flourishing. By contrast, in societies which predate the slave revolt in morality, individuals would not have the same compulsion for self-scrutiny which Nietzsche thinks has developed over the past few millennia.⁶¹ Thus it would make no sense to say that an individual of ancient times scrutinized themselves in such a way that promoted their flourishing, whereas a rich understanding of oneself is a necessary condition of flourishing in modernity. In this sense, sociohistorical changes, too, matter within the context of Nietzsche's naturalism.

However, even though our understanding of human flourishing develops over time, this model for human flourishing is not culturally relative. That is to say, while certain traits which are necessary for flourishing in modernity arose within slave morality, Nietzsche still sees slave morality itself as incompatible with human flourishing. However, our modern culture, influenced by two millennia of slave morality, makes up the backdrop for the actions of the new superior individual.⁶² As a result, human flourishing in the context of modernity must account for the self-scrutiny engendered by slave morality despite the fact that Nietzsche finds good reason to reject slave morality as a model for flourishing in its own right. This interaction between slave morality and human flourishing is a good example of how, for Nietzsche, human flourishing necessarily takes account of its sociohistorical context, but does not collapse into cultural relativism.

Foot's naturalism, by comparison, simply does not account for culture in this manner. Her claims about natural norms are grounded in empirical, logical, and biological truths. For Foot's naturalism, culture only comes into play insofar as humans are necessarily social animals, and thus we

⁶¹ BGE §76: "Under peaceful conditions a warlike man sets upon himself." Here, Nietzsche hints at a common theme of his psychology: we cannot easily turn off parts of our nature. Thus, when humanity became civilized, we did not lose the drives which we previously expressed via wars and raids and hunting, we just kept them inside. The pre-slave moral person would have had an external vent for these drives, and thus had no motive for self-scrutiny.

⁶² Nietzsche occasionally points out that the new superior individual he is calling for will not be an unproblematic reassertion of ancient nobility, but a new ideal arising out of our modern context (see BGE §200 and 260, GS §377).

naturally have some norms which are other-regarding.⁶³ Beyond this, specific cultural issues are merely the playing out of the natural norms of our species. In other words, Foot's system sets natural boundaries that aim to delineate the contents of the moral. Within those boundaries, culture is free to set up a moral schema, but on her view, those boundaries are effectively universal. As we will see, Nietzsche's refusal to offer universal proscriptions about moral issues follows from the fact that he differs from Foot on this issue. Foot does state that her system of natural norms only functions insofar as we think of a species as an unchanging still frame in a particular time and place (although, of course, over time that still frame would require updates as the species evolves).⁶⁴ However, her discussion of this change leaves out any mention of cultural change as a suitable reason to reassess our conception of flourishing. That Foot does not recognize the role culture plays for Nietzsche is evident when she argues that Nietzsche is especially dangerous because he was talking about humanity rather than angels, Martians or Neanderthals.⁶⁵ Foot implies that, by virtue of the nature of our species, proscriptions naturally follow. For Nietzsche, this is simply not the case. Foot's reading of Nietzsche ignores a basic commitment of his naturalism: that differences between cultures and individuals *within* the species must inform our conception of the necessary conditions for human flourishing.

Perhaps the best way to characterize the difference between Foot's naturalism and Nietzsche's naturalism is as follows: Foot thinks a naturalist account of the function of a species is sufficient to develop what she calls natural norms; in the case of humans, these norms include proscriptions which form the boundaries for any system of morality. Nietzsche, on the other hand, rejects the idea that physical and biological facts about our species can play such a determining role in outlining normativity, notwithstanding certain interpretations of his thought to this effect. This is not to

⁶³ Foot, *Natural Goodness*, 44. Note that this is not a point Foot explicitly makes, but one which follows from her discussion of the social nature of humans and the "diversity of human goods." Foot would surely not say that cultural issues are unimportant, but only that they are not a part of her naturalism.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 29.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 114.

claim that they are not involved, but for Nietzsche, a full naturalist description would need some account of the time, place, and individuals (or groups of individuals) involved.

2. Pranksome Nobles and Cruel Monsters

Foot's primary attack on Nietzsche—his inability to make categorical statements about morality—is most forceful when she discusses problems of injustice, particularly genocide. As I argued in section one of this chapter, I think that Foot and Nietzsche are largely at an impasse in regard to whether certain acts can be categorically sanctioned because of the different conclusions they draw from their naturalistic assumptions. If we accept Foot's naturalism, we will also accept its egalitarian presuppositions about humanity. From this standpoint, Nietzsche's ideas about the necessary differences between people seem either a hinderance to moral reasoning or else they are irrelevant. However, if we side with Nietzsche and see our innate differences as a determining factor in a naturalist ethical view, then Foot's claims seem idealistic. However, Foot does not simply argue that her theories are incompatible with Nietzsche's. She claims that Nietzsche's ethics is "sinister," "threatening," and a "poisonous doctrine."⁶⁶ In other words, Foot thinks that Nietzsche's ethics not only handles questions of injustice poorly because it cannot make categorical statements, but also that following a Nietzschean ethics will *lead to* injustice. This worry follows from what Foot sees as the indulgences Nietzsche is willing to make for the actions of the superior individual. In this section I examine the textual support Foot presents in support of her worry. I argue against Foot's claim that Nietzsche writes "indulgently" about murder and rape performed by ancient nobility on the grounds that Foot misreads the passage she cites in support. My own examination of this passage suggests that Nietzsche in fact shares Foot's concerns about the cruelty which was commonplace in ancient times.

Foot's primary piece of evidence in support of Nietzsche's indulgent view of the superior individual is section 11 of the *Genealogy's* first treatise, in which Nietzsche describes ancient nobility's

⁶⁶ Foot, *Natural Goodness*, 110, 110 and 113 respectively.

practice of raiding and pillaging neighboring societies. Citing this passage, Foot argues that “while [Nietzsche] was ready to castigate certain types of individuals as cruel monsters or licentious beasts (having no time for either), he spoke indulgently of the nobles of earlier times, whom he saw as ‘pranksome’... in performing acts of plunder, murder, and rape.”⁶⁷ Foot offers this passage as an example of the problems inherent in arguing that actions are not bad in themselves, and therefore cannot be categorically rejected as immoral. Given the abhorrent nature of these acts, Foot thinks we should find Nietzsche’s lighthearted discussion of them troubling. However, Foot’s conclusion fails to accommodate Nietzsche’s distinction between questions of origin and value which plays an important role throughout the *Genealogy*, and in section 11 of the first treatise in particular.

In my view, if we account for the distinction Nietzsche makes between questions of origin and questions of value, the passage Foot cites has almost the opposite implications. In the preface to the *Genealogy*, Nietzsche claims to pursue two different questions. The first is a question of the origin of values, and the second is that of the value of values (GM, P §3). Although he pursues both questions in tandem throughout the *Genealogy*, for Nietzsche, they are separate lines of inquiry with divergent answers.⁶⁸ For Nietzsche, the question of origin is factual. In the *Genealogy* he pursues it primarily by way of etymological and philological evidence, but what he presents is a sort of philosophical anthropology of premodern cultures. The question of the value of values, however, is essentially an ethical and meta-ethical question. In my view, Foot doesn’t distinguish between these lines of thought in the *Genealogy*, and because section 11 pursues both questions simultaneously, she skews Nietzsche’s remarks.

Nietzsche says that when these nobles go out to pillage, what they are doing is stepping out of the social constraints of their society and providing themselves a release for their more violent urges. He says, “they step *back* into the innocence of the beast-of-prey conscience, as jubilant mon-

⁶⁷ Ibid., 111.

⁶⁸ This is a point at which Nietzsche hints at the end of GM, P §4 and then picks up again in GM, II §12.

sters, who perhaps walk away from a hideous succession of murder, arson, rape, torture with such high spirits and equanimity that it seems as if they have only played a student prank”(GM, I §11). Nietzsche is not saying that *he* sees their acts as mere pranks. He is reporting the nobles’ own self-conception. Nietzsche uses different terms to voice his own view of the nobles’ raiding, such as “uncaged beasts of prey,” “jubilant monsters,” and “their appalling lightheartedness and depth of desire in all destruction.”(GM, I §11) These judgments indicate that, while Nietzsche does think the nobles themselves were not bothered by their actions, Nietzsche is (or would be if they were adopted as values in modern times). In order to better grasp Nietzsche’s tone in this passage, I think it is helpful to separate out his two interests—origin and value—which appear intertwined in this discussion.

In the context of the *Genealogy* more broadly, section 11 of the first treatise primarily discusses a question of origin, not a question of value. Nietzsche tells a story of interaction between early ‘noble’ and ‘slave’ societies. The strong nobles go on raids of weaker (slave) societies to vent their strength. Whereas outsiders whom the nobles raid are merely afterthoughts for the ancient nobles, the ancient nobles are a tyrannical threat to the weak (or slave) societies. Given this difference in the way each group regards the other, it is only natural that the nobles, who are very self-concerned, define ‘good’ in terms of themselves, whereas the slaves’ concern for their own safety causes them to define ‘good’ negatively in terms of those things which do not embody the ‘evil’ threat of the ancient nobles. Nietzsche’s aim in telling this story is to describe a historical scenario in which the stark difference between moralities which he proposes could possibly arise. In this sense, Nietzsche’s description aims at presenting a philosophical anthropology rather than an evaluative assessment of historical practices.

When, in section 11, Nietzsche does discuss the ancient nobles with evaluative language, he is notably ambivalent.⁶⁹ Above, I noted that he says they are “jubilant monsters” who are simultaneously lighthearted and appalling. He also describes ancient times as a “contradiction” between “the glorious but likewise so gruesome, [and] so violent”(GM, I §11). From all of this it is clear that, while Nietzsche finds something to respect in the nobles, he also finds something deeply troubling. More to the point, those things he finds troubling are *precisely* the things Foot claims he is indulgent of: the nobles’ violent actions and their seeming lack of concern for their own cruelty. Nietzsche certainly respects and admires ancient nobility. However, this respect has nothing to do with their violence toward other (slave) cultures. In fact, Nietzsche sees the tension between the nobles’ pursuit of excellence and their violence as “the problem of the *noble ideal in itself*”(GM, I §16). In other words, this tension must be resolved by the superior individual in order to make good new “noble” ideals in a modern context. Insofar as Foot is concerned that Nietzsche’s veneration of ancient nobility celebrates their more inhumane qualities as well as their storied achievements, I think her concern is misplaced. If my reading is correct, Nietzsche is no more indulgent of these acts than any other typical modern person. The major difference is that Nietzsche wants to hold aside evaluation of such acts so that he can investigate the history of value judgments themselves without presupposing any conclusions. Thus, while he agrees with Foot that the raiding parties of ancient times were terrible by modern standards, he does not immediately move to evaluate them. Further, contra Foot’s reading, Nietzsche’s pursuit of a value-neutral description is not an injunction against evaluating the cruelty of the ancient nobles from a modern standpoint. An attempt at value-neutral philosophical anthropology is simply part of what Nietzsche sees as responsible genealogical method—one which separates questions of value and questions of origin. Therefore, Nietzsche’s reporting of

⁶⁹ Nietzsche’s ambivalence about many issues often goes unnoticed. Just as the ancient nobles are seen as both good and problematic throughout the *Genealogy*, slave morality is not seen as *wholly* problematic. In the third treatise, Nietzsche is explicit that systems of asceticism such as slave morality are beneficial *to the sick*. Nietzsche also has a great respect for the inwardness and spiritualization of humanity which was a direct result of the slave revolt in morality.

the ancient nobles' lighthearted attitude is a far cry from Foot's claim that Nietzsche presents a "poisonous doctrine" which encourages those who see themselves as superior individuals to do what they will with the rest of us.⁷⁰

3. The 'Who,' 'What,' and 'Why' of Action

Foot's critique of Nietzsche centers on her claim that Nietzsche's philosophy is incapable of declaring any act morally reprehensible in itself. She bases her argument in what she calls Nietzsche's "personalism," which, based upon her description, I take to be her reading of Nietzsche's view more often called perspectivism.⁷¹ For the sake of clarity, I will refer to Foot's reading of Nietzsche by her term, but use perspectivism when referring to my own position. According to Foot, personalism is an attempt to shift the focus of moral judgment from the 'what' of an action (the action in itself), to the 'who' of the action (the agent who acts). She claims that, "given the horrors of the past century... today it would be especially strange not to see the 'what' of actions as even more important."⁷² In Foot's view, Nietzsche's personalism is a move in the wrong direction, away from objective arguments for the unconditional rejection of extreme acts of injustice (such as genocide). In this section I argue that this is an oversimplified account of Nietzsche's perspectivism. Nietzsche's ethics does not provide the basis for a categorical endorsement or rejection of any type of action because he is opposed to typologies of action which typify modern moral theory. However, Foot's assertion that he replaces moral typologies of action with a typology of persons is an inaccurate characterization of the moral ramifications of perspectivism. Foot's claim, that Nietzsche wants to shift moral judgment from the 'what' to the 'who' of action, is still beholden to a traditional dual-

⁷⁰ Foot, *Natural Goodness*, 113.

⁷¹ Ibid., 110. For a brief discussion of perspectivism more generally, see Solomon, *Living with Nietzsche*, 37-40.

⁷² Ibid., 113.

ism between agent and action which Nietzsche rejects, and therefore misses the point of the contextualized viewpoint Nietzsche supports. I then go on to argue that, while Nietzsche does argue that the superior individual is not bound by universal proscriptions, this does not mean that the superior individual will run rampant. Foot's concern plays off the assumption that such proscriptions are necessary to prevent individuals from indulging in, and acting on, the more vicious side of human desire. In the case of the superior individual, at least, Nietzsche thinks that such proscriptions are unnecessary.

Foot describes Nietzsche's personalism as the claim that "right and wrong in action could not be determined by *what* was done *except in so far as that stood in a certain relation to the particular nature of the person who performed it.*"⁷³ In Foot's eyes, such a doctrine is problematic because of its universal scope. She is not arguing that the 'who' of an act is never relevant, only that there are instances where the 'who' ought *not* be relevant.⁷⁴ In other words, there are acts that are so horrendous that we should not need to ask questions about the agent in order to see the act as morally reprehensible.

For Foot, the problem with looking at the 'who' rather than the 'what' of an act is tied to what she sees as Nietzsche's binary view of people. In Foot's reading, "The important question to ask about any man was whether he represented an ascending or descending type. This was the profound classification, and determined the worth for the particular instance of those elements of character and action that moralists wrongly thought significant in themselves."⁷⁵ Here, "ascending" identifies what I have been referring to as the Nietzschean superior individual: one who is strong, healthy, has depth, and seeks solitude.⁷⁶ By contrast, the descending type means the weak masses—what Nietzsche elsewhere refers to as the herd (as in BGE §199). In Foot's view, this distinction is of

⁷³ Ibid., 111.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 113.

⁷⁵ Foot, "Nietzsche's Immoralism," 147.

⁷⁶ For a detailed examination of the virtues of the Nietzschean superior individual, see Solomon, *Living with Nietzsche*, 158-173.

the utmost importance for Nietzsche because she thinks it is the deciding factor for him in questions of right action. Put simply, Foot thinks the ascending type acts beyond moral reproach, whereas the descending type does not. Foot's worry is that, if the factor that determines the moral status of an action is only the *type* of person who performs it, there is nothing to stop murder from being morally justified when performed by an "ascending" individual.⁷⁷ She thinks Nietzschean personalism leaves us in this quandary, which she sees as good enough reason to reject Nietzschean ethics.

I agree that this sort of distinction between types is found throughout Nietzsche's writings in various forms. However, Foot's assertion that, for Nietzsche, this question of type is *the* distinction one must make when questioning the moral status of an action reveals a major flaw in her explanation of personalism. In order to bear out the concern that an ascending person might be able to do terrible things, one needs to assume that the classification of a person is separate from their actions. That is to say, when an ascending person acts in the world, it does not matter what their actions are, only that they are done by an ascending person. This treats the type of person (the 'who') and their action (the 'what') as independent. Yet this presumption—that a person and their actions can be, and are, separate in the relevant sense—is part of the standard view of the self Nietzsche's perspectivism intends to reject.

A major motivation behind Nietzsche's perspectivism is a rejection of the dualist metaphysical conception of the self.⁷⁸ However, as it pertains to moral questions, one particular move is important to note: the Nietzschean 'moral agent' is always a person in the world. That is to say, they always have a past, they are always in a particular sociohistorical time and place, and they always are acting with particular goals in mind. In this context, Nietzsche's argument that we must account for the 'who' of an act is not to value the 'who' instead of the 'what.' Such a valuation would fail to escape the dualist metaphysics Nietzsche rejects. Instead, Nietzsche's moral perspectivism claims that

⁷⁷ Foot, *Natural Goodness*, 115.

⁷⁸ For example, Nietzsche's famous assertion that "there is no 'being' behind the doing"(GM, I §13). Also, GS §335, which MacIntyre makes the focus of Nietzsche's rejection of the Enlightenment moral project.

the ‘who’ and ‘what’ are inextricably linked, and therefore examining either in isolation is a mistake. Foot is correct that, according to Nietzsche, moralists wrongly take actions to be significant in themselves, but this does not mean that Nietzsche intends to substitute a typology of persons for a typology of action.

What arises from Nietzsche’s view that the ‘who’ and ‘what’ of action are conjoined is his placing a priority on a third question: the question of ‘why’ or ‘to what end?’ Nietzsche wants to look at why a particular agent would engage in a particular action. The end towards which a person aims forms a linkage between the ‘who’ and the ‘what’ which, for Nietzsche, is the means by which we can judge the value of both the ‘who’ and the ‘what.’⁷⁹ Take the passage Foot uses to support her view as an example.⁸⁰ In *Twilight of the Idols*, Nietzsche claims that the value of egoism in a person depends upon the value of the person who is egoistic. Foot focuses on one particular line: “Every individual may be scrutinized to see whether he represents the ascending or the descending line of life. Having made that decision, one has a canon for the worth of his self-interest”(I, Skirmishes §33). However, looking at the passage more broadly, it is clear that Foot’s extrapolation from this, that the type of person determines the value of egoism, is too literal. Nietzsche says that those who *represent* the ascending line of life are justified in their egoism. But how do we determine whether one represents ascent or descent? By “scrutinizing” them, which is to say, looking at who they are as evidenced by what they do. In this passage, Nietzsche is primarily echoing the Aristotelean conception of proper pride, albeit with a provocative flair and bravado typical of Nietzsche. In other words, one represents ascent, in this instance, by being egoistic to the extent that he or she has something worth being egoistic about. This reading is supported by comparison with another prominent passage where Nietzsche talks about the more contemptible branch of self-interest, vanity (BGE §261). Whereas proper egoism, for Nietzsche, implies that the individual merits their own

⁷⁹ Though I do not pursue it here, this triad of ‘who,’ ‘what,’ and ‘why’ has obvious similarities with the tripartite system of ethics laid out by MacIntyre (cf. Ch. 1 §2).

⁸⁰ Foot, “Nietzsche’s Immoralism,” 147-148.

high self-opinion, the vain do not think well of themselves and compensate for this by attempting to sway others to think well of them instead.

This contrast makes clear that the important issue for Nietzsche is not the ‘who’ or ‘what’ of an action, but the ‘why.’ Further, it is only in light of the answer to this ‘why’ that the ‘who’ and the ‘what’ can be fleshed out. In the case of egoism, the ‘why’ is the distinction between the justified egoism of the superior individual and the manipulative attempt to raise oneself up which is the vanity of the slavish. In each of the two passages, it is action (what Foot would call the ‘what’) which—through considering it in relation to its end (the ‘why’)—presents us the ability to make a character judgment (the ‘who’). It is worth noting that the judgments of character at issue here are in line with the normative dimensions of the will to power I outlined in section one of this chapter. For Nietzsche, virtuous action is virtuous insofar as it is an expression of human excellence, and this excellence in action is distinctive because of the life-affirming motives which lay behind the action—the ‘why’ or the ‘to what end’ of that action.

While Foot recognizes that Nietzsche wants to delve into the explanatory power of psychological motivation, her division of moral action into an either/or of action and agent does not escape the agent/action dualism which Nietzsche rejects, and therefore necessarily mischaracterizes the central role motivation plays in Nietzsche’s ethics. Foot’s concern about Nietzsche’s “ascending types” is exaggerated by her reading of perspectivism. However, even with my more moderate explanation of perspectivism, Foot would likely remain adamant that Nietzsche views a certain group of elites as effectively (and troublingly) above moral reprimand.

As I see it, the sticking point for Foot is her view that, when Nietzsche denies the categorical rejection of certain acts, he denies the only thing which keeps the vicious in check. And, if the vicious happen to think themselves prime examples of the Nietzschean superior individual, things will quickly get ugly. It is important to note, however, that this view implies that human nature requires the constraints of morality in order to act rightly, for without it we would revert to something re-

sembling a Hobbesian state of nature. If this implication bears out, then Foot's concern is perhaps fitting. However, the implication that humanity *needs* the constraint of morality in order to act well is precisely the idea Nietzsche rejects in the case of the superior individual.

In Nietzsche's mind, our assumption that we need to be contained is an artifact of slave morality. Slave morality is founded on *ressentiment*, but slave morality is also the only thing which keeps that *ressentiment* in check.⁸¹ While this is a standard interpretation of Nietzsche's exposition of slave morality in the *Genealogy*, it has two implications which are important here. First, Nietzsche would likely agree with Foot that some people certainly need restraining. However, according to Nietzsche, it is not the strong, but the weak who, consumed by their *ressentiment*, would be disastrously destructive were they not kept in control (GM, III §14). Second, Nietzsche does not think that everyone needs the universal proscriptions of morality to refrain from terrible actions. For Nietzsche, it is the strong, the superior individuals, who are capable of being "beyond good and evil." This does not mean that they are deprived or fundamentally unable to understand moral valuations. Instead, Nietzsche is arguing that, for the superior individual, a moral theory is unnecessary, and insofar as morality is fashioned to constrain the viciousness of the weak, it likely inhibits the flourishing of the strong unnecessarily. It is this second point which is the focus of Nietzsche's ethical project, and which I think, if fleshed out, can rebut Foot's concern about Nietzsche's immoralism.

In an important passage about his "denial of morality" Nietzsche makes clear that he is not suggesting that we should revert to a world in which anything goes. He writes,

"It goes without saying that I do not deny—unless I am a fool—that many actions called immoral ought to be avoided and resisted, or that many called moral ought to be done and encouraged—but I think the one should be encouraged and the other avoided *for other reasons than hitherto*." (D §103)

Here, Nietzsche makes clear that, while he does want to call morality into question, this does not entail an absolute suspension of constraint. He rejects that the reasons underlying our moral proscriptions do not provide suitable justification for these proscriptions, but does not claim that those

⁸¹ *Ressentiment*—French for resentment—was adopted by Nietzsche as a technical term for the brooding and vicious bitterness which is the psychological motivation of the weak.

actions are themselves unsuitable or problematic. In other words, Nietzsche is rejecting the supposition of Foot's argument, that the constraints of modern morality are necessary to prevent the Nietzschean superior individual from running amok in society. It is worth noting that this passage predates Nietzsche's distinction between noble and slave moralities, but captures a more important distinction. As Robert Solomon points out, the difference is between the Kantian notion of 'morality' and the Humean notion of 'morals.'⁸² 'Morality,' according to this distinction, is the system of rules which attempt to justify right action, the system which Nietzsche "denies." 'Morals,' on the other hand, are those actions "called moral" which Nietzsche says "ought to be done and encouraged."⁸³ Although Foot takes Nietzsche's denial of 'morality' so defined to entail a rejection of 'morals' as well, it is clear from Nietzsche's claim in *Daybreak*, that he rejects only the former.⁸⁴ His "immoralism" is not encouraging the superior individual to act immorally—to pillage, rape, and murder. Rather, it is only encouragement to find reasons for our actions outside the model of contemporary 'morality.'

The question of what these reasons are, then, becomes centrally important. Fleshing out these reasons has been the task of Nietzsche scholars such as Robert Solomon and Michael Slote. While Solomon and Slote approach Nietzsche from different vantage points, the picture of the superior individual that each paints supports my claim that the rejection of 'morality' does not entail a rejection of 'morals.' For each thinker, the hallmark of the superior individual is the pursuit of excellence conjoined with the discipline required to bring such pursuits to fruition. It is my contention that this conjunction is a distinctly modern one, combining the aretaic virtues of ancient nobility

⁸² Solomon, *Living with Nietzsche*, 125. Note that Solomon's distinction between 'morality' and 'morals' uses the terms in a different manner than Clark's distinction between the terms, which I discuss in Chapter 1 §2.

⁸³ This is, in essence, the same distinction which inspired Clark to re-title her translation of the *Genealogy*, as discussed in Ch. 1, §2.

⁸⁴ Even then, Nietzsche may not necessarily reject all moralities. He certainly is critical of the generally Kantian or utilitarian moral dispositions of 19th century philosophers. However, his contention that slave morality is necessary for the sick and the weak leaves room for the possibility that some sort of morality is acceptable, so long as it does not apply to the superior individuals who are capable of more.

with the self-discipline which Nietzsche sees as the primary innovation and achievement of slave morality. Recall that, in my discussion of Nietzsche's naturalism, I argued that unlike Foot, Nietzsche saw epochal changes in culture as capable of reshaping what it means for humans to flourish. The conjunction of these aspects of slave and noble morality means that, in the case of the superior individual, they stand at a distance from a time where slavery and unmotivated raids were a regular part of the political landscape.

As discussed in the previous chapter, Solomon attempts to articulate the character of the superior individual as a modern Aristotelean project aimed at rejecting Kantian morality. Solomon's depiction is centered around a passage in *The Gay Science*, where Nietzsche argues that we ought to "give style" to our character (GS §290).⁸⁵ Style, in this discussion, is the term Nietzsche uses for the authenticity or self-becoming which is the pinnacle of Nietzschean virtue. However, as Nietzsche describes it, this style requires the discipline of "long practice and daily work," and as such, it is only an avenue for the rare and exceptionally strong willed. Thus, for Solomon, the superior individual is characterized by the artistic pursuit of authenticity, which is only possible via the conjunction of aspects of both slave and noble morality, combined in and transfigured by the superior individual.

While Slote contends that Nietzsche actually presents a distinctly *non*-Aristotelean ethics, the qualities of the superior individual that Slote highlights are the same. Slote characterizes Nietzschean virtue ethics with the phrase "morality as inner strength."⁸⁶ This morality, as he sees it, has four main components: "courage to face facts," "self-sufficient self-reliance," "self-sufficient moderation and generosity," and "strength of purpose."⁸⁷ Generally speaking, the first two of these four represent the commitment to excellence for which Nietzsche revered ancient nobility, while the latter two represent the ability to be hard with oneself which Nietzsche finds in the ascetic ideal, which figures prominently in Christianity. For Slote's agent-based ethics, these four components are signs of the

⁸⁵ Cf. Solomon, *Living with Nietzsche*, 136.

⁸⁶ Slote, "Agent-Based Virtue Ethics," 246.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 250.

inner strength, or strength of character, that we all find intuitively admirable. As such, it follows that anyone who does not exhibit these qualities when appropriate has a deficient strength of character. The central emphasis of Slote's "agent-basing" is the idea that a properly virtuous character naturally exhibits all these characteristics simultaneously by virtue of their inner strength. Therefore, despite his divergence from Solomon's reading of Nietzsche, Slote's image of the superior individual also fits my assertion that the superior individual's ethical project is founded on the conjunction of aspects of both slave and noble morality in modern culture.

Thus, whatever one may argue about the "*reasons other than hitherto*," which Nietzsche mentions in *Daybreak*, they are reasons which entail avoiding and resisting actions called immoral without reference to categorical proscriptions. In the case of Solomon, the superior individual is almost singularly focused on the authentic pursuit of excellence seen as living artfully. If this characterization of the superior individual has a political flaw, it is not lust for power, but political apathy. For Slote, the types of concerns Foot raises are out of the question because they are seen as acts of weakness and desperation by virtue of the *ressentiment* which provides their motivation. While each reading has its advantages and problems, both provide convincing evidence that the superior individual is not a tyrannical threat to society at large.

Finally, I want to question Foot's assertion that the genocides of the twentieth century provide good reason to reject Nietzsche and renew our search for the grounds of universal proscriptions against certain types of action. Foot herself mentions that, despite the force of his challenge, Nietzsche has not really shaken our belief in the general commitments of traditional morality.⁸⁸ As she notes, moral theory has continued on rather unfazed. Given this fact, it is safe to say that the universal proscriptions Foot claims are necessary were as firmly sedimented for Hitler's Germany as they were for Nietzsche's Germany or Kant's Germany. Still, those proscriptions did little to prevent the genocidal campaign of Nazism which Foot mentions as a supporting example against Nietz-

⁸⁸ Foot, *Natural Goodness*, 103; "Nietzsche's Immoralism," 144; and "Nietzsche: The Revaluation of Values," 81.

sche's rejection of universal proscriptions.⁸⁹ The same could be said for the other dictators Foot cites. If these horrific episodes in human history are an occasion to reconsider the value of our values, I should think them to be a point in Nietzsche's favor. We had—and more or less still have—a firm cultural sense that murder, rape, and ethnic cleansing are categorically wrong, yet the episodes Foot mentions have happened despite this categorical rejection. Nietzsche asserts the real danger to humanity is not the superior individual, but those whose bitterness and hatred toward themselves and others is held in check *only* by the thin constraints of morality (GM, III §14). However, unlike Foot, Nietzsche's solution is not to try to thicken and reenforce the foundations of a morality he thinks is failing, but to support the potential of the exceptional in hopes that they might realize the possibility of new excellences in modern times.

⁸⁹ Foot, *Natural Goodness*, 113.

Conclusion:

Nietzsche's Place in Virtue Ethics

The two chapters which comprise this thesis have each sought to respond to major critiques of the Nietzschean superior individual's relation to his or her society. While MacIntyre and Foot offer differing criticisms of Nietzsche's ethics, their concerns are topically similar in that they are both concerned with the relationship between the superior individual and society more broadly. I have argued that Nietzsche has a reply to each critique, yet their focus highlights an important question for any theory of Nietzschean virtue ethics. How *should* we approach the relationship between the Nietzschean superior individual and his or her society? Admittedly, the responses presented here do not comprise a complete answer to this question. However, in my responses to MacIntyre and Foot, I hope to have cleared the ground for a more positive account of the Nietzschean superior individual vis a vis his or her society. This thesis does not aim to fully flesh out an account of this relationship, yet my rebuttals of Foot and MacIntyre raise two particular points which any such account would necessarily incorporate. I would like to conclude by briefly discussing these points.

First, MacIntyre's and Foot's takes on Nietzsche are similar in that both view the superior individual as significantly separated from society. For Foot, this separation is the ground of her concern insofar as she sees the superior individual as not only rejecting morality (understood as a system or moral code), but normative practice altogether. This places the superior individual fully outside the expectations of their culture, and in her eyes, makes the superior individual dangerous. For MacIntyre, the separation of the superior individual from society is not the basis for problems with the superior individual. Instead, it is the problem itself. As MacIntyre sees it, the normative force of an

ethics is tied to its socially grounded history and tradition, and in attempting to create new values, the superior individual prevents such a grounding.

In each case, I have argued that these criticisms are misguided insofar as it is a mistake to view the superior individual as fundamentally separate from their society. Instead, I claim that the superior individual is ‘of’ their society in the same sense that any individual is. They are not distinct by virtue of stepping outside of their society, but by virtue of their ability to gain a critical distance from it in order to make something else of it (and of themselves). This critical distance does separate the superior individual from the “herd,” but it does not cut the superior individual off from public life in a robust sense. In addition to the reasons for rejecting MacIntyre’s and Foot’s readings given in the preceding chapters, there is also a general reason we should not expect Nietzsche’s superior individual to be radically cut off from society: Nietzsche’s thoroughgoing rejection of Kantian morality. It is the Kantian tradition which seeks to get outside of the particulars of a social place and time in order to establish universal moral laws. Nietzsche’s rejection of this method is largely a claim that one *cannot* get outside of one’s time and place. This effectively precludes the disconnected view of the superior individual which lies behind both MacIntyre’s and Foot’s critiques.

Second, Nietzsche’s thought is primarily diagnostic, which is to say that he spent most of his energy on criticism, and very little on an affirmative project. Nietzsche talks of his ideal types almost exclusively as people who have yet to come, individuals whose way he is preparing, by pointing out the flaws in society around him. In this sense, Nietzsche is not presenting an instantiation of the superior individual (either in life or writing), but providing what he hopes will be the catalyst which brings about the superior individual. For this reason, I think that concerns about a Nietzschean ethical program are generally misconceived insofar as they take Nietzsche’s affirmative ethics to be a clearly defined ethical project. While authors have outlined various Nietzschean conceptions of ethics, there is no fully articulated theory to be had. Nietzsche’s ethics tends to focus on character and omit discussions of right action. A complete ethical theory requires at least some treatment of both

topics, and in this sense, Nietzsche's ethics is incomplete. As a result, although I think Nietzsche has much to contribute to modern ethics, any robust solutions to problems such as pluralism or social justice will necessarily need to not only overcome his critiques, but also go beyond his vision of the "free spirit" in order to develop a complete conception of the superior individual.

In *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche distinguishes between genuine philosophers and philosophical laborers (BGE §211). The difference, he says, is that the philosophical laborers' task is "to make everything that has happened and been esteemed so far easy to look over, easy to think over, intelligible and manageable, to abbreviate everything long, even 'time,' and to *overcome* the entire past" whereas genuine philosophers "*create values*." While one might expect Nietzsche to put himself in the latter category, I think the fact that he consistently places the ideal human in the future implies otherwise. He was, in a sense, the last philosophical laborer of the Enlightenment and his work focuses heavily on overcoming the entire past (although Nietzsche often paints a less humble self-portrait.) According to Nietzsche, philosophical laborers are not unimportant, but they are only important insofar as they are the condition of possibility for the next generation of genuine philosophers.

It is in this light that I think Nietzsche's ethics in general, and the social aspects of his ethics in particular, must be approached. Nietzsche does not present an ethics as Aristotle does, and he did not set out to. While some of the content of his social outlook is remarkably dated and his social outlook is challenging in general, this does not cripple his philosophy—despite accusations to the contrary. Most of all, any critique of Nietzsche regarding the values of the superior individual must bear in mind that Nietzsche did not lay out a clear plan for those values. He certainly outlines some virtues. However, we have little reason to think Nietzsche's virtue theory includes any discrete ethical program, and it should not be taken as such. Nietzsche's hope was that, partly due to his efforts, some of us might become the superior individuals he saw on the horizon, and if we do, that we would create our own values.

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