

Course Code: FILO350

Candidate Number: 110

Semester: Spring 2023

List of abbreviations:

A: The Antichrist

BGE: Beyond Good and Evil

EH: Ecce Homo

GM: On the Genealogy of Morals (GM III, 6) = Genealogy of Morals Essay nr. 3 part 6.

GS: The Gay Science

TI: Twilight of the Idols

UM: Untimely Meditations (kl. = Kindle location.)

WP: The Will to Power

Z: Thus Spoke Zarathustra

Contents:

Abbreviations	1
Introduction	2
The Three Metamorphoses	3
Values, Nature, and Type-fact	7
The Active and the Reactive	11
Values; Individual vs Communal	15
Community Values	25
Combining the Individual and the Communal	33
Values and Truth	41
Summary and Conclusion	52
Bibliography	54

Nietzsche and Values

“God is dead! God remains dead! And we have killed him!” (GS 125) Anyone familiar with philosophy has likely heard this famous passage of Nietzsche’s, or has at the very least heard its introduction; “God is dead!” Faith in the Christian God was fading in Nietzsche’s time, and Nietzsche believed that this loss of faith would have momentous ramifications. Europe once stood upon the secure foundation of the Christian faith and its metaphysics, and everyone could rest assured that Christian values and Christian morality were absolute, were unquestionable. Yet now, the foundation for these values and this morality has been swept away from under our feet with nothing substantive to replace it. With the metaphysics of Christianity no longer believable, Nietzsche held that we are no longer entitled to Christian values and morality, for these were inexorably linked with Christian metaphysics. Yet, if we can no longer accept Christian values as given, then what are we to do? Shortly after the utterance that we have killed God, the following question is asked; “Is the magnitude of this deed not too great for us? Do we not ourselves have to become gods merely to appear worthy of it?” (GS 125) In this, we find not only a question, but also the intimations of an answer. Now that we can no longer rely on having values supplied to us from without, we must indeed “become gods,” or at least do something god-like; we must *create our own values*! The creation of values shall be the topic of this thesis. A great deal has been written on Nietzsche’s famous theme of the death of God and what the loss of Christian values would mean, and in the treatment of this theme, Nietzsche’s demand that we create our own values is invariably touched upon. The specifics of precisely *how* we are to create our own values, however, are often discussed only peripherally, if at all. Nietzsche does not exactly furnish us with a clear plan for such value-creation, and as with most of the subjects that Nietzsche engages with, there is much internally conflicting information that needs resolving. I shall strive to illuminate some of the details of value-creation as Nietzsche conceived of it, and hopefully provide some sensible proposals for how to resolve some of the existing conflicts. Among subjects covered shall be the following: can anyone create their own values? Are there any restrictions to the type of values that may be created? Are the values to be entirely individualized, or are they to be generalizable to the community?

And, finally, are these values to be considered “true?” Aside from this main theme of values, I shall also touch briefly on a side-topic, this being whether one should err on the side of harshness or softness when interpreting Nietzsche, if either. With this introduction out of the way, we may proceed.

The Three Metamorphoses

When one reads Nietzsche, exactly *how* the creation of one’s own values is to take place is left rather diffuse. Rather, we are left with indications of what kind of person is capable of such value-creation and what stages of development such a person must go through before being capable of taking on such a task. Given that this is perhaps the most direct way in which Nietzsche addresses the subject, I think a good (if rather artistic) introduction to how Nietzsche envisioned value-creation can be seen by looking at his description of the personal developments the individual must go through prior to being capable of creating values. We can find this in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, specifically in one of *Zarathustra’s Speeches* named *On The Three Metamorphoses*. The speech starts thus: “Of three metamorphoses of the spirit I tell you: how the spirit becomes a camel; and the camel, a lion; and the lion, finally, a child.” (Nietzsche 1982, p. 137). Seeing how Nietzsche’s work is to such a great extent influenced by his own life that it may practically be considered autobiographical, I think that it may help provide a more concrete understanding of the Metamorphoses if we investigate each stage as it is presented in *Zarathustra* and juxtaposing it with the periods of Nietzsche’s life that correspond to each stage. This way, we are left not only with abstract ideas, but with concrete examples of what they look like when applied. In support of this method of inquiry (at least as it pertains to Nietzsche), I shall quote Nietzsche’s *Schopenhauer as Educator*:

I profit from a philosopher only insofar as he can be an example. [...] But this example must be supplied by his outward life and not merely in his books - in the way, that is, in which the philosophers of Greece taught, through their bearing, what they wore and ate, and their morals, rather than by what they said, let alone by what they wrote.” (UM, kl. 3078)

Although the above passage is taken from *Schopenhauer as Educator*, which is one of Nietzsche's earliest works, in *Ecce Homo*, Nietzsche's last work, Nietzsche admits the following:

Now that I am looking back from a certain distance upon the conditions of which these essays [the *Untimely Meditations*, of which *Schopenhauer as Educator* is a part] bear witness, I do not wish to deny that at bottom they speak only of me. The essay *Wagner in Bayreuth* is a vision of my future, while in *Schopenhauer as Educator* my innermost history, my *becoming*, is inscribed. Above all, my promise! [...] this essay gives inestimable information about that, although at bottom it is admittedly not "Schopenhauer as Educator" that speaks here, but his opposite, "Nietzsche as Educator." (EH, chapter 3, 2.)

Last us start, then, by looking at the Spirit of the Camel. A camel is a beast of burden, and those embodied by its spirit seeks to harness themselves with duties and trials. "What is most difficult, O heroes, asks the spirit that would bear much, that I may take it upon myself and exult in my strength?" (Z. p. 138). This is the description of someone that takes the duties and responsibilities bestowed upon them by their parents, their culture, their teachers, and, most importantly, the moral code that has been ingrained through all these influences, with utmost seriousness. They need the directing force of these codes, and take them to heart, following them slavishly. They are dutiful and obedient. To gain an understanding of just what such a person might look like, we can look at young Nietzsche himself. Julian Young, in his philosophical biography of Nietzsche, gives us a glimpse of just how dutiful Nietzsche was as a boy. In Nietzsche's childhood, on an especially rainy day, all the boys were running home from primary school – except Nietzsche, who walked slowly home. When his mother "remonstrated with him for coming home soaked he replied 'But Mamma, the school rules say that on leaving school, boys are forbidden to jump and run about in the street, but must walk home quietly and decorously'." (Young, 2010, p. 19-20). Another instance, when asked by missionaries to donate "their best toys" to be sent to children in Africa, Nietzsche, in the *one* instance of "naughtiness" his sister Elizabeth could recall from his childhood, had sent toys, yet kept his best to himself. As had she. Young Nietzsche displayed deep regret at this shameful act, and when asked by his sister, "Ought God really to demand the very best toys of us, Fritz?" , "Fritz" replied in a whisper "Yes

indeed, Lizzie.” (ibid.) Most people, be it in childhood, adolescence, or adulthood, have only a peripheral concern with the demands of morality and duty. While they may not engage in wanton cruelty on a whim, when it comes to the more “mundane” acts of disobedience for one’s own benefit, such as running home in the rain despite being told that this is not how a good child behaves, they pay it no mind at all. They run home oblivious to any wrongdoing, and will only “regret” it should they be caught and disciplined. For some, this is not how they function. They internalize the moral codes and duties they are assigned and trouble themselves deeply with any perceived failures or inconsistencies between their strict codes and their behavior. The path towards making one’s own values is one Nietzsche would consider most people incapable of. Those that *are* capable must have an instinct and drive towards such dutifulness within them, if not from childhood, then to be developed at some point in their life. They *need* a code, a set of values to direct them. Those for whom such values are not a serious matter will have no drive to create their own. “The unwise, of course, the people—they are like a river on which a bark drifts; and in the bark sit the valuations, solemn and muffled up.” (Z, p. 225).

Acquired duties are not enough, however, and should the spirit be strong enough, it morphs from Camel into Lion. The Lion’s great task it to kill the dragon named “Thou Shalt.” The Lion rebels against old values and duties. “He once loved “thou shalt” as most sacred: now he must find illusion and caprice even in the most sacred, that freedom from his love may become his prey: the lion is needed for such prey.” (Z. p. 139) One cannot create one’s own values if one is burdened with the values of old, values that are ill-fitting for one’s spirit. For this, the Lion is needed. In his youth, Nietzsche was a dutiful Christian, yet eventually rejected his faith (to the horror of his mother) and replaced it with Schopenhauerian metaphysics. He took Schopenhauer’s philosophy with utmost seriousness, and even converted many of his friends to it. In time, Schopenhauer’s philosophy proved similarly inadequate for Nietzsche, however, and he rejected this philosophy as well, this time at the expense of his highly valued friendship with Wagner, Wagner’s circle of friends and compatriots, as well as some of the friends Nietzsche himself had converted to Schopenhauer’s philosophy. Without such a willingness to attack values one once considered sacred, one shall never uncover that which springs from one’s own spirit rather

than from without. A ruthless scrutiny of all that one holds sacred is necessary to liberate oneself.

Finally, should one's spirit be of a truly choice nature, the spirit morphs one last time from Lion to Child. "The child is innocence and forgetting, a new beginning, a game, a self-propelled wheel, a first movement, a sacred "Yes." For the game of creation, my brothers, a sacred "Yes" is needed: the spirit now wills his own will, and he who had been lost to the world now conquers his own world." (ibid.) To merely reject all values is insufficient. Once the ire and rebelliousness of the Lion has subsided, one is no longer distracted by the instinct of "No!" Rather, one sees both one's Camel-like dutifulness and one's Lion ferociousness, and now weaves the best of both together into something that is in line with one's spirit, with one's nature; one creates one's own values. In Part II of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, in the section named *Upon The Blessed Isles*, we find the following passage:

To be the child who is newly born, the creator must also want to be the mother who gives birth and the pangs of the birth-giver. Verily, through a hundred souls I have already passed on my way, and through a hundred cradles and birth pangs. Many a farewell have I taken; I know the heartrending last hours. But thus my creative will, my destiny, wills it. Or, to say it more honestly: this very destiny—my will wills. (Z, p. 199)

There is no doubt that Nietzsche went through many farewells on account of his changes, both to people and to ideas and philosophies that once held him. That these farewells resulted in pangs can also not be doubted. I think it reasonable to suppose that as Nietzsche transitioned from one view to the next, and to the next after that still, he came closer to what might be considered more truly "his," and further away from that which was alien to him. This was an ever-ongoing process. There can be no doubt that Nietzsche had his own, unique, valuations for practically everything. All of Nietzsche's works are riddled with valuations of all kinds; valuations of philosophers past and present, of cultures, moralities, art, music, different individuals, and really all you can think of. Nietzsche would not be capable of any such valuations had he not his own system of values. There is, then, much "Child-like" in Nietzsche. It is not clear, however, whether one could consider Nietzsche as a true example of the Child-like spirit. In *Zarathustra* Part Four, Zarathustra had to defeat his greatest enemy, that of pity, and only in so doing does Zarathustra finally achieve the sacred

“Yes” to life that he had been striving towards. Nietzsche and Zarathustra are two different people, however, and it is not clear whether Nietzsche himself overcame this greatest enemy. We shall touch on Nietzsche’s pity in more detail further down. For the purposes of this thesis, let us be content with saying that the state of the Child is the ideal, the goal that Nietzsche aspired towards, and that he had many traits that could be said to coincide with this state.¹ As mentioned, *The Three Metamorphoses* speak more of the type of individual that can create values rather than the specifics of how this is to be done, although we do get some clues as to the process itself as well. We shall speak more of the type of individual that can create values a later section covering the higher type and the question of whether values are to be fully individualized or communal. Before turning to this, however, we must address some of the basics of value-creation. Above, we have spoken the need for values to conform to one’s spirit, to one’s nature. I now move on to cover this subject in greater detail.

Values, Nature, and Type-facts

Zarathustra’s “speech” of *The Three Metamorphoses* gives us an overview of how Nietzsche believed someone might go from a “Camel,” this beast that is burdened with the values hoisted upon it by the environment in which it was born, to the “Child” that has shaken loose from any ill-fitting values as well as any fixation on rebelling against them. We must, however, see how we could conceive of this in less poetic terms and how this can be

¹ A complication is that in *Upon the Blessed Isles* there are also mentions of the Overman, both prior to, and after the above-quoted description of what it takes to become a Child. The Overman is typically spoken of as what is (hopefully) to come, not what is there in the now. “God is a conjecture; but I desire that your conjectures should not reach beyond your creative will. Could you *create* a god? Then do not speak to me of any gods. But you could well create the overman. Perhaps not you yourselves, my brothers. But into fathers and forefathers of the overman you could re-create yourselves: and let this be your best creation.” (Z, p. 197-198) It is difficult to say whether the spirit of the Child is one and the same as the Overman. They could be viewed as synonymous, but one could also view having the spirit of the Child as a prerequisite of becoming the Overman. I am tentatively inclined towards the latter interpretation, but I shall not delve deeper into this problem here.

applied. I think that the most basic aspect of Nietzschean value-creation is that whatever values one creates, one must ensure that they align with one's nature. As an example, we may look at the basic human instinct of sexual desire. Zarathustra's speech *On Chastity* gives us a clue as to how we should approach it.

Do I counsel you to chastity? Chastity is a virtue in some, but almost a vice in many. They abstain, but the bitch, sensuality, leers enviously out of everything they do. Even to the heights of their virtue and to the cold regions of the spirit this beast follows them with her lack of peace. [...] Those for whom chastity is difficult should be counseled against it, lest it become their road to hell—the mud and heat of their souls. (Z, p. 167)

So, chastity is a "virtue in some, but almost a vice in many." Values invariably touch on the sexual realm, and Christianity has rather strict codes for all things sexual. People's sexual drive come in a variety of strengths. Some are very sexual by nature, whereas for others sex is a peripheral concern, if a concern at all. Should a person with a naturally strong sex-drive adopt values of chastity, values that proclaim sex to be something sinful, something shameful and filthy, this person shall suffer greatly as a result of adopting such values. Make sex morally distasteful enough, and you create in most people a continuing conflict with themselves that will torment them throughout their lives. When this happens, there is a mismatch between human nature and value-structure, and one has in one's hands a value-structure that makes people detest their very own being. Contrast this with the Greeks and their god of sex and love, Eros, and you see that sexuality was not vilified, but on the contrary elevated and sanctified, thereby ensuring psychological equilibrium and health. When creating values, one must thereby ensure that they do not conflict with one's nature, but that they are in alignment with it and enable and glorify it. While basic instincts such as sexual desire furnish us with a very clear example of how values must not conflict with our nature - for basic instincts are indeed part of said nature - it is important to understand that "nature" represents much more than basic human instincts. Nietzsche considered that every individual has a unique nature or is of a unique type, a combination of biology and environment and that affect every aspect of a person's being. This includes, among countless other examples, whether one is brave or cowardly, whether one is mendacious or truthful, whether one is melancholy or cheerful, and so on. Brian Leiter refers to this as "The

Doctrine of Types,” which he describes as follows: “Each person has a fixed psycho-physical constitution, which defines him as a particular type of person.” (Leiter 2005, p. 8) He continues by elucidating that “we may call the relevant psycho-physical facts “type-facts.” It is type-facts, in turn, that figure in the explanation of human actions and beliefs (including beliefs about morality).” (ibid.) If we use Leiter’s terms, then the goal of the individual that seeks to create his or her own values will be to ensure that their values do not contradict their type-facts, but rather align with them and glorify them.² With this goal in mind, the next step is to ascertain how this goal is to be attained. How can one find and develop the values that are suitable to one’s nature and discard those that are ill-fitting? As indicated by Leiter’s claim that “type-facts figure in the explanation of human actions and beliefs,” Nietzsche’s view is that we largely have no choice in the matter, for our nature dictates the ways in which we view things whether we want it or not. A famous passage from *Beyond Good and Evil* exemplifies this claim:

I have gradually come to realize what every great philosophy so far has been: a confession of faith on the part of its author, and a type of involuntary and unself-conscious memoir; in short, that the moral (or immoral) intentions in every philosophy constitute the true living seed from which the whole plant has always grown. (BGE 6)

Thus, every great philosophy is an “involuntary and unself-conscious memoir” because it is the reflection of the philosopher’s deep (and often subconscious) needs and desires, needs and desires that stem from the nature of the philosopher, from the philosopher’s type-facts. To illustrate how Nietzsche saw this process as taking place, we may look at his analysis of Buddhism. When investigating the origins of Buddhism in the *The Antichrist*, Nietzsche states that when it comes to Buddhism, “the two physiological facts upon which it rests and on which it fixes its eyes are: *firstly* an excessive excitability of sensibility which expresses itself as a refined capacity for pain, *then* an over-intellectuality, a too great preoccupation with concepts and logical procedures under which the personal instinct has sustained harm to the advantage of the ‘impersonal’ [. . .] On the basis of these physiological conditions a state of *depression* has arisen: against this depression Buddha takes hygienic measures.” (A

² Out of stylistic concerns, I shall mostly opt for using “nature” rather than “type-facts,” but it should be noted that I use these interchangeably.

20) The physiological condition of excessive excitability to pain, then, is cause for the suffering of Buddha and his overly excitable followers, and in turn dictates their philosophy which compels them to seek escape from this suffering. Such tracing of individual values and beliefs to psychology which in turn traces to physiology is a staple of Nietzsche's thinking. Thereby, when Plato wrote the Republic, this template for a great state that would be nigh-impervious to change, and when he there posited the Forms as never-changing perfect entities, this was not because these were Plato's unbiased and disinterested observations of reality, but because in Plato there was a deep-seated fear and revulsion towards change and a powerful longing for order and stability. When Schopenhauer believed he saw that reality was nothing but aimless Will, that this Will was the cause of all suffering, and that the only way to escape this suffering would be to deny the Will in its entirety, this was because Schopenhauer *suffered* from life, and thus created a philosophy that could to explain his suffering and simultaneously provide a potential escape from it. First comes the physical (Nietzsche would say "physiological") and psychological need of the person, then comes the system of beliefs that rationalizes and justifies this need.³ Sadly, this means that if one's nature is that of a weakling, a coward, or one who lies to himself, one has hardly any hope of developing into someone who can create values, or if one does, these values shall be negative and reactive values, slave's values, something we will speak more on in the next section. Nietzsche relegated most people to this unfortunate category. Despite this powerful directing force of our nature, or, to use Nietzsche's term "physiology," environment is not irrelevant. An example of someone Nietzsche considered to have been corrupted by the environment (Christianity) was Blaise Pascal: "The most deplorable example [of the corrupting influence of Christianity on the "higher type"]: the depraving of Pascal, who believed his reason had been depraved by original sin while it had only been depraved by his Christianity!" (A 5) This corrupting influence of Christianity on the "higher type" was among the primary reason for Nietzsche's vociferous attacks on the faith, and this is an attack that would make no sense if everyone was biologically predestined to become precisely one thing and one thing only. I will speak in more detail of the "higher type" in the section discussing community values and individual values. Whether one can rise to the

³ Even the inclusion of "psychological needs" is suspect from the Nietzschean perspective, for Nietzsche ultimately traces (or at least tends to trace) psychological needs and desires to physiological origins, as demonstrated with the example of Buddha.

level of creating values for oneself or not will depend, then, on a combination of nature and nurture; one must have the necessary natural prerequisites for value-creation coupled with an environment that can facilitate and push one's development in this direction, or at the very least an environment that doesn't actively stifle such development. As for how one is to undertake the task of value-creation on a personal level (assuming one is fortunate enough to have the capacity for it as well as being pushed in this direction by one's inner drives while not being too bound by outer circumstances), this can only be done by going through a process analogous to the Three Metamorphoses: a continuous scouring and investigation of various value-structures (especially one's own) coupled with a ruthless truth-seeking and willingness, in true "Lion's Spirit," to abandon those beliefs which one once held sacred should they prove somehow inadequate or incompatible with one's type-facts. If one then has the capacity for the "Yes!" as well as the "No!," then perhaps one may become a Child.

The active and the reactive

So far, we have spoken only of one restriction to value-creation, namely that values must not contradict one's nature, or, to me more precise, one's type-facts. This provides us only with half of the picture, for there is another other indispensable component to value-creation, which is that values must be "active" rather than "reactive." We find the distinction of the active and reactive most clearly expressed throughout the *Genealogy of Morals*, where this distinction is presented as the difference between master and slave morality. We speak here of "masters" in the literal sense, as the masters of slaves, as freemen, as noblemen, such as the aristocracy of ancient Greece. These masters, Nietzsche held, had "active" valuations, because they came directly from the natural inclinations of the masters, as an outgrowth of their immediate wishes.

The "well-born" *felt* themselves to be the "happy" they did not have to establish their happiness artificially by examining their enemies, or to persuade themselves, *deceive* themselves, that they were happy (as all men of *ressentiment* are in the habit of doing); and they likewise knew, as rounded men replete with energy and

therefore *necessarily* active, that happiness should not be sundered from action—being active was with them necessarily a part of happiness (whence *eu prattein* [to do well in the sense of faring well] takes its origin)—all very much the opposite of “happiness” at the level of the impotent, the oppressed, and those in whom poisonous and inimical feelings are festering, with whom it appears as essentially narcotic, drug, rest, peace, “sabbath,” slackening of tension and relaxing of limbs, in short *passively*. (GM I, 10)

Since the masters had the freedom and capacity to do as they liked, their valuations came from their natural inclinations and are thus free-flowing and spontaneous, *active*. That which they do, that which they enjoy and find meaningful, that is *good* according to them. The valuations of the slaves, on the other hand, come not from any spontaneous overflow of spirit and activity, but rather in reaction to the actions and valuations of the masters. “The master does *this*. I despise the master; therefore, *this* is bad/evil.”

While every noble morality develops from a triumphant affirmation of itself, slave morality from the outset says No to what is “outside,” what is “different,” what is “not itself; and *this* No is its creative deed. [...] in order to exist, slave morality always first needs a hostile external world; it needs, physiologically speaking, external stimuli in order to act at all—its action is fundamentally reaction. (GM, I, 10)

Nietzsche rejects values that he considers reactive on account of what he perceives as the unnaturalness and feebleness of the reactive creative process. Beliefs, impulses, and values that stem from negative reactive attitudes are by nature ignoble, inferior, unworthy, untrustworthy, and thus to be discarded. This may seem arbitrary, yet when we look to the individual, I think this view offers itself up rather naturally. For instance, when it becomes clear that someone’s views on a matter appear to be drawn from a well of bitterness, envy, and resentment, we tend to disregard such views. If, for example, a man had a bad mother and a string of bad girlfriends and comes, as a result, to espouse that “all women are trash,” we (lest we too have been similarly burned) naturally view such a perspective as suspect. We assume that such a man did not have a good female role model in his mother, and thereby did not know what kind of woman is worth pursuing. As such, the man pursued a series of questionable women that likely resembled his mother in character, which, naturally, led to negative experiences. These experiences warped the man’s perspectives,

and the valuation of women that the man has now likely created (women are without value, snakes, etc.) is likely similarly warped and thus to be discarded, or at the very least viewed with suspicion. When such bitterness, envy and resentment is the origin of one's valuations, it necessarily skews one's perspectives. One sees only that which justifies one's bitterness and exacts a pitiful revenge on the object of one's resentment through such skewed perspectives. Nietzsche was ever critical of such reactive attitudes throughout his writings.

While rejecting reactive attitudes in the individual seems perfectly appropriate, it is not equally obvious that values originating in reactive attitudes must be discarded once distance has been made between such an ignoble origin and its current iteration. Let us take Nietzsche's claim that Christian morality spawned from the *ressentiment* of slaves, and that this *ressentiment*⁴ resulted in the inversion of masterly values: "to be strong is bad," "to be prideful is evil," etc. What does this say about Christianity in later generations, far removed from any slave's *ressentiment*? Must it be that because the *origin* of Christianity was ignoble, that nothing positive or worthwhile can come of it in the future?⁵ After all, Nietzsche himself says that "even if a morality has grown out of an error, the realization of this fact would not so much as touch the problem of its value." (GS: 345) Think of Dostoyevsky's hero Alyosha from the novel *Brothers Karamazov*. Alyosha is a firmly believing Christian, yet there can be no doubt that he has a noble character and that his faith is in no way based on *ressentiment*. In terms of *The Three Metamorphoses*, Alyosha appears to me a good representative of the Spirit of the Camel, at least in his earlier stages; he longs for a set of values to follow, for duties to fulfill, and takes upon himself the duties of Christianity. I think it fair to say that one can find many a Christian that, even though not as noble as Alyosha, are nonetheless Christians for reasons entirely unrelated to any *ressentiment* towards "masters" of any kind. Given that their beliefs do not stem from *ressentiment*, what grounds do we have for dismissing said beliefs? The answer to this must

⁴ "*Ressentiment*" is a technical term for Nietzsche, and is not to be confused with resentment. *Ressentiment* describes a psychological state that emerges given specific circumstances. R. Jay. Wallace describes *ressentiment* as follows: "Ressentiment can be understood as a general emotional orientation of the person. It emerges under conditions in which people find themselves systematically deprived of things that they want very much to possess, without any prospects for improvement in this respect. [... Further,] there need to be some people who are singled out from the rest in not being deprived of the coveted goods, and who are publicly known not to be deprived." (Wallace, p. 116) *Ressentiment* emerges, then, when the systematically deprived compare their lot to those that are not thus deprived, all while being powerless (or at least believing themselves to be powerless) to do anything about their unfortunate circumstances.

⁵ Nietzsche did not hold that *nothing* positive came from Christianity or from slave morality. The priest is the first to make man interesting, for example. (GM I, 6)

lie in the distorting qualities of *ressentiment*. As mentioned above, I take the reason for our distrust towards the views of those motivated by reactive attitudes to be that their views are so clearly distorted; they present an inaccurate picture of reality, for they contort reality to fit their reactive attitudes, be these bitterness, envy, resentment, or any other such reactive attitudes. If a value-structure is created that is based on such a distortion, even if one follows this value-structure without similar negative emotions, this nonetheless means that one is following a system of beliefs that provides a skewed perspective of reality, and that one will thus have skewed perspectives oneself. If, for example, pride in one's own strength leads to positive growth in the individual but Christianity forces the individual to discard this pride and view it as shameful, this has a negative impact regardless of whether the individual does it out of *ressentiment* or not. Given that the original valuation of the reactive individual was based on such a distortion, so shall the later, non-resentful individual that follows these valuations lead a distorted life if they subscribe to the same valuations as the originators of these valuations.

When we look at these two restrictions, that of values aligning with nature and being active, what is vital to notice is that it is not necessarily the value itself that determines whether it is worthy or unworthy, healthy or unhealthy, noble or ignoble, but rather its origin and its use. For instance, in the *Genealogy of Morals* Nietzsche distinguishes between different origins and uses for asceticism. In the philosopher (Nietzsche uses Schopenhauer as his example), he asks (and answers) “‘what does it *mean* when a philosopher pays homage to the ascetic ideal?’—here we get at any rate a first indication: he wants *to gain release from a torture.*—” (GM III, 6) Schopenhauer was plagued by sexual desires that interfered with his work, distracted him from his philosophy to which he was so dedicated, and therefore made an enemy of it. To escape this obstacle to his purpose of philosophy, he sided with asceticism. Such asceticism Nietzsche considers valuable, and states clearly that “certain asceticism, a severe and cheerful continence with the best will, belongs to the most favorable conditions of supreme spirituality.”⁶ When we look, however, at the ascetic ideal

⁶ Schopenhauer's struggle with his sexuality may seem to conflict with the first requirement for values, namely to not be at conflict with one's own nature. Yet, Nietzsche does not condemn Schopenhauer for this, for he argues that Schopenhauer needed this internal battle to keep him going in a world that largely ignored and rejected him and his philosophy. Beyond this, there is also Nietzsche's formula: “Formula of our happiness: a Yes, a No, a straight line, *a goal...*” (A 1) One almost invariably has internal conflicts, and one must pick a goal

in the priest, or the ascetic ideal broadly distributed, this ascetic ideal no longer represents a will to dominate one's desires for the sake of an overarching goal, but rather "a will to nothingness, an aversion to life, a rebellion against the most fundamental presuppositions of life." (GM III, 28) In like manner, near any value may be noble or ignoble, healthy or unhealthy, all depending on its origin. This leaves room for tremendous variety, which in turn leads us to the question just how much variety is to be permitted, and whether such variety is compatible with a stable society. We shall discuss these issues more closely in the following section.

Values; individual vs communal

A difficulty in understanding Nietzsche's stance on the creation of values is judging to which extent values are to be personalized on an individual level, and to which extent values must be generalizable to a community. This issue seems to me impossible to disentangle entirely from the issue of whether it is only the individual that matters to Nietzsche, or whether the community/society matters as well. Further, Nietzsche spoke in highly varied ways of whom may be considered as worthwhile individuals and as worthy of creating values throughout his writings, and having some grasp of this variety is necessary to grasp the type of diversity of values Nietzsche envisioned. Given the interconnectedness of these issues, I shall attempt to tackle them in tandem. With this roadmap in mind, let us proceed.

When tackling the issue of who matters in society, one can certainly get an impression upon reading Nietzsche that he believes only the supreme individual is of any import, while the majority, the "herd," are insignificant. Take, for instance, the radical passage on Napoleon found in the *Will to Power*: "The French Revolution made Napoleon possible; that is its justification. For the sake of such a prize, we should be willing to see our entire civilization collapse into anarchy." (WTP 877) This may be counted among the utterances of Nietzsche that have led many to believe, as Julian Young phrases it, "that nothing matters to

and follow a straight line to that goal, even through all manner of sacrifices and struggles, such as, in Schopenhauer's case, his struggle with his own sexuality. Nuance in interpretation is of vital importance.

Nietzsche other than a couple of Goethes per millennium,” (Young 2010, p. 426) an idea which opens for radically individualized values.⁷ Other aspects of Nietzsche’s writings may indicate that more than *only* the supreme individual matters - Nietzsche’s general admiration for ancient Greek *society*, for example – which in turn implies *some* generalizability of values, for no society can function without at least basic shared values. We shall look at these in turn, starting with the idea of only the higher individual mattering. We can find justification for such a radically elitist interpretation of Nietzsche - admittedly in rather fanciful form - already early in his writing, namely in *Schopenhauer as Educator*. Here, Nietzsche speaks of the philosophers, the artists and the saints as being those who “justify” nature, which allows nature to “perceive itself.”

They are those true men, those who are no longer animal, the philosophers, artists and saints; nature, which never makes a leap, has made its one leap in creating them, and a leap of joy moreover, for nature then feels that for the first time it has reached its goal - where it realizes it has to unlearn having goals and that it has played the game of life and becoming with too high stakes. This knowledge transfigures nature, and a gentle evening-weariness, that which men call 'beauty', reposes upon its face. (UM kl. 3526).

Further down, we get a continuation of this line of thinking:

For, as nature needs the philosopher, so does it need the artist, for the achievement of a metaphysical goal, that of its own self-enlightenment, so that it may at last behold as a clear and finished picture that which it could see only obscurely in the agitation of its evolution for the end, that is to say, of self-knowledge. (UM kl. 3547)

This resembles a sort of pantheism where “nature” is in a sense “alive,” yet unconscious. Nature wishes to become conscious, and it (at least partially) succeeds in this through the great individuals that have an elevated understanding of existence. The great individual is existence gaining understanding of itself.⁸ Even aside from such esoteric doctrines, Nietzsche famously wrote for the select few, the elite, the “free spirits,” and not for the

⁷ Young does not himself think this is an accurate representation of Nietzsche’s philosophy, he is only describing the sentiment of those who do.

⁸ Notice that because the great individual has this unique role, one could interpret him as an end in himself, a self-justified being, and as such he must be completely free to create values for himself.

“herd.” Such a view may appear as rather extreme, and it can be tempting to reject such a view with a wave of the hand; to simply write it off as lunacy and think no further on it. Many have done precisely this. Given how readily such thinking is dismissed, I think it would be valuable to investigate how it is that such an idea even occurs. While such an idea may appear radical and perhaps even perverse at first glance (at least to our egalitarian-minded eyes), once one looks at it closer, it is a view that offers itself rather naturally to the thinker. For one, it is very common to notice other thinkers, artists, and people in general that appear to be far ahead of oneself, which almost invariably turns to the conception of difference in rank between individuals. One typically conceives of Nietzsche as the self-assured philosopher confident in his great destiny, but in *Schopenhauer as Educator* he speaks with a combination of great admiration and lamentable envy of Schopenhauer’s deep insight that he himself cannot hope to obtain. “If we think of how much Schopenhauer for instance must have heard during the course of his life, then we might well say to ourselves afterwards: ‘Alas, your deaf ears, your dull head, your flickering understanding, your shrivelled heart, all that I call mine, how I despise you! Not to be able to fly, only to flutter! To see what is above you but not to be able to reach it!’” (UM, Kl. 3511). Nietzsche continues in this vein for half a page. Further, when speaking of Schopenhauer with Wagner, Nietzsche referred to Schopenhauer as “the master.” In his *Schopenhauer as Educator*, Nietzsche, when speaking of what the minds of second (or third) rate could contribute, he consigns them to the destiny of finding a “master” to serve and be useful to, whose journey they can make easier and whose glory they can take vicarious pride in. (UM Kl. 3852) The first-rate mind must not be burdened with trivial tasks, and the second-rate minds can thus be useful by removing these tasks from the master’s itinerary. It is telling, then, that around the time Nietzsche was writing his *Untimely Meditations*, of which *Schopenhauer as Educator* was a part, he started addressing Wagner as “master,” and he went so far as to offer Wagner to resign his professorship to fully devote himself to Wagner’s Bayreuth project, an offer Wagner did not accept. In part, this offer likely came from the fact that Nietzsche viewed his professorship as a burden and longed to get away from it, but it nonetheless serves as clear evidence that Nietzsche did not always view himself as being without equal; he took a subservient role to Wagner, and it was only in the later stages of his life that he truly started viewing himself as a great man with a great destiny in his own right. Nietzsche looked up prior to looking down, something that is the first experience of

many a thinker.

Conversely, one also perceives rank by looking down, rather than up. Among the philosophically inclined, one invariably gets confronted with the fact that *no*, it is in fact *not* the case that most people worry much about philosophical problems, at least not past a rudimentary level. A great number (most?) of people do not appear to spend much time thinking about their own behavior and character, concepts such as honor, nobility, or dignity, life, its purpose, their own beliefs or lack thereof, or, so it may sometimes seem, much of anything at all. When one encounters such individuals and discovers they appear to be the norm, it is natural to think to oneself, “do I not possess something *vital* that these other people do not?” Such thoughts, if one has either the arrogance or courage for them, turn to “am I not *better* than these people in some fundamental sense?” While such thinking may be deemed as largely unacceptable and odiously elitist in the West today, we must not succumb to myopia in this regard and forget that our understanding of this is still new and has not stood the test of time. In the age of the Greeks, such thinking was perfectly natural for the aristocracy, and was practically encouraged. If you were part of the aristocracy, you were considered better than those that were not, and as for the Athenians as a group, they unabashedly considered themselves superior to the entire rest of the world. The shame at viewing oneself as superior is something that Nietzsche came to consider as deeply unnatural, something forced on man by (slave/Christian/modern) morality and detrimental to the “higher types” that Nietzsche wished to prioritize.

Such men, the ones who undertake great works, the truly great men as I understand them, will be sought in vain at the present time and probably for some time to come: they are missing – and will be until after much disappointment it begins to be understood why they are missing and that nothing could be more inimical to their emergence and development than that which in Europe is now called without hesitation ‘morality’ (WP 957)

If Nietzsche was correct, then in a more natural state the higher individuals develop a “pathos of distance” between themselves and those of lower standing. “Without this pathos, that other, more mysterious pathos could not have grown at all, that demand for new expansions of distance within the soul itself, the development of states that are increasingly high, rare, distant, tautly drawn and comprehensive, and in short, the

enhancement of the type “man,” the constant “self-overcoming of man” (to use a moral formula in a supra-moral sense).” (BGE 257) These “states that are increasingly high, rare, distant, tautly drawn and comprehensive” are precisely what stimulate thoughts of being part of existence perceiving itself, of existence “waking up” to itself.⁹ The perception of difference in rank between individuals is the key to the philosophy claiming that only the “highest” individuals have worth. One looks up at one’s superiors and feels worthless, and one looks down at one’s inferiors and feels that one is worth more than they are. From the recognition of such difference in rank, the thought that only those of highest (or at least high) rank are truly worth anything is never far behind. Unless one is confident that one is among the highest, one struggles taking oneself to be among those of true worth, which in turn certainly makes it hard to view those beneath even oneself as worthy. When looking up at those one takes to be the highest specimens, however, one naturally thinks “if anyone is worth anything, *they* surely must be!” Therein lies the core of the belief that only the highest types are of worth. One may certainly critique such a view, but I would argue that there is nothing fundamentally perverse or unusual in the thought itself. If we then accept this thought, as Nietzsche did, then the question that naturally emerges is just how broad the category of “higher type” should be – is it really just “a couple of Goethes per millennium?” (Young 2010, p. 426)

So far in our discussion of the creation of values, we have outlined some basic requirements for the initiation of such a process. Recall that to be able to create one’s own values, one must be of choice nature and be born in an environment furnished to stimulate the growth of this choice nature. One must then create values that are in accordance with said nature, and these values must be active, not reactive. Brian Leiter delves deeper into

⁹ When Nietzsche was on his alpine walks and engaged in what might be called euphoric contemplation - he often cried and laughed while thinking, presumably over what he experienced as the wonder and richness of his thoughts – he likely believed that he was perceiving the world in a way no one else previously had, and in so doing he, being a part of existence, felt that he was giving existence a new perspective on itself. Carl Jung provides a beautiful description of the exact same experience: “I felt as if I was the first man, the first creature to know that all this, is. The entire world around me was still in its primeval state. It did not know that it was, and then, in one moment when I came to know, the world sprang into being. Without that moment, it would never have been. All nature seeks this goal, and finds it fulfilled in man, but only in the most highly developed and most fully conscious man. Every advance, even the smallest, along this path of conscious realization, adds that much more to the world. ... Unconsciousness is the primeval sin, evil itself, for the logos.” (Jung audiobook.) [This is quoted verbatim from an audiobook. Unfortunately, I do not have a physical copy of the text. I hope I shall be pardoned this one omission in sourcing, though I shall include the audiobook in the bibliography.]

the specifics of the higher type, and identifies what he considers 5 characteristics, at least some of which anyone that is to be considered a higher type must possess:

- 1: The higher type is solitary and deals with others only instrumentally.¹⁰
- 2: The higher type seeks burdens and responsibilities, as he is driven towards the completion of a unifying project.
- 3: The higher type is essentially healthy and resilient.
- 4: The higher type affirms life, meaning that he is prepared to will the eternal return of his life.
- 5: The higher man has a distinctive bearing towards others and especially towards himself: he has self-reverence. (Leiter 2005, p. 116-120)

As long as one has at least some of these traits, one may qualify as a higher type. If one has them all, then one must almost certainly be a higher type. I have no fundamental disagreement with this list as such, yet human nature is highly disparate, and one can find a great deal of variety of individuals that could embody some of the points above. The question then becomes just how radical a nature can be while still being counted as a higher type and thus worthy/capable of creating their own values. Goethe and Beethoven (Goethe in particular) are figures repeatedly spoken of with admiration and appear to be close to what Nietzsche would consider ideal representatives of the higher type. However, notions such as Napoleon being the justification for the French Revolution make it seem that even if

¹⁰ Leiter provides a more detailed description of each point, but I do not have the space to elaborate on each of them. However, when looking at this list as it is currently presented without any further elaboration, my thesis advisor, Anne Granberg, was left with the impression that this list of characteristics makes the higher type sound like a rather cold and calculating figure. To her, an unscrupulous business tycoon came to mind. I wish to discourage the reader from such an interpretation, as Nietzsche was not at all impressed with the unscrupulous businessman (see GS 40), and such a conception of the higher type would certainly clash with the requirement for the higher type to be a noble sort. Allow me therefore to elaborate on one of the points, the one most open to cynical interpretation, namely point nr. 1, which states that the higher type must “deal with others instrumentally.” While it is true that one *may* think of using others “instrumentally” in a cynical and even exploitative way, this need not be so. Rather, think of a group of ambitious friends where each seeks to better him or herself and has a particular unifying project that drives them in their lives. Each pushes the other (and themselves) to advance in said friendship, and the friendship is thus “instrumental” in that each individual participates in the friendship with the overarching goal of advancing him or herself and his or her life project. Should one member start slacking, the friendship would weaken, for they are no longer helping you advance. Yet, there might simultaneously be a mutual respect between the parties as long as each member is more or less equal and each contributes. To deal with others instrumentally, then, is not to be taken in a cold and ruthless way (at least not necessarily), but rather be viewed in the sense that no relation to others must interfere with one’s self-development and the development of one’s fundamental goals in life. For every point on Leiter’s list, I encourage the reader to posit at least some number of such non-pernicious interpretations, for defaulting to the most cynical interpretation available for each point would be an error.

Napoleon was not quite on the level of Goethe (Nietzsche refers to Napoleon as a “synthesis of the inhuman and the superhuman (GM I, 16)), he was seemingly elevated enough to be worth all the death and chaos of the French Revolution in Nietzsche’s eyes.¹¹ Cesare Borgia, this “healthiest of all tropical monsters and growths,” is another example of such a mixture of “inhuman and superhuman” that garnered some praise from Nietzsche. (BGE 197, WTP 871) I would say both Napoleon and Cesare Borgia have several of the five characteristics described by Leiter. In general, Nietzsche has a sympathy for those of the criminal type. Pierre Klossowki, in his book *Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle*, covers a letter exchange between Nietzsche and August Strindberg. Part of a letter to Nietzsche from Strindberg reads as follows:

Dear Sir, You have certainly given mankind the deepest book they possess, and not the least of your achievements is that you have had the courage and perhaps also the irrepressible impulse to spit all these magnificent words into the face of the rabble. I thank you for it. Nevertheless it strikes me that with all your intellectual candor you have somewhat flattered the criminal type. Just look at the hundreds of photographs that illustrate Lombroso's 'Criminal Man', and you will agree that the criminal is an inferior animal, a degenerate, a weakling, not possessing the necessary gifts to circumvent those laws that present too powerful an obstacle to his will and his strength. Just observe the stupidly moral appearance of these honest beasts! What a disappointment for morality! (Klossowski 1997, p. 227)

Nietzsche replies:

The hereditary criminal is *décadent*, even insane - no doubt about that! But the history of criminal families, for which the Englishman Galton (*Hereditary Genius*) has collected the largest body of material, points constantly back to an excessively strong person where a certain social level is the case. The latest great criminal case in Paris, that of Prado, presented the classic type: Prado was superior to his judges, even to his lawyers, in self-control, wit, and exuberance of spirit; nevertheless, the

¹¹ Nietzsche admittedly had a tendency for hyperbole, so one should be cautious taking such utterances without a grain of salt. Still, the sentiment seems clear enough, even if exaggerated.

pressure of the accusation had so reduced him physiologically that some witnesses could recognize him only from the old portraits. (ibid. p. 228)

A criminal, then, can be of a “superior” nature on account of “self-control, wit, and exuberance of spirit.” Further support for a rather broad conception of higher sorts of men can be found in the *Will to Power*:

To estimate a man’s worth by how much he benefits other men, or costs them, or harms them, is no better or worse than estimating a work of art by the effects it produces. That said, a work of art is meant to be compared with other works of art, whereas a man’s worth remains completely untouched by a comparison with other men. [...] A man with his own sense of taste, surrounded and hidden by his solitude, incommunicable, incommunicative – an enigmatic man, i.e. a man of a superior, or at least a different, species: how are you able to deprecate that which is unknowable and incomparable? (WTP 878)

The fact that Nietzsche disregards here not only what “benefits” a person provides, but also what “harms” he causes, opens for men to have (at least *some*) value even if they fall short of the grandeur of Goethe, and further appears to allow for what most would consider dubious individuals to attain a high ranking. The higher type of criminal has an unabashed will to power, as well as the courage to break the rules and norms that bind the majority in order to pursue this will to power. This combination, that of both a “healthy” will to power as well as the courage to pursue it despite societal condemnation constitute the attraction such criminals have for Nietzsche. While the noble criminal is not the peak, while he has “inhuman” qualities, he still has nobility, self-mastery, health, and is certainly to be preferred over the herd man that has lost his will for (to) power, or, even if he has it, is too timid and weak to do anything with it. If we accept this rather diverse and individualistic interpretation of the higher type, then it seems to me that values can be of highly disparate nature indeed. Recall point nr. 5 on Leiter’s list of characteristics denoting the higher type: “The higher man has a distinctive bearing towards others and especially towards himself.” (Leiter 2005, p. 120) Leiter refers to this aspect of the higher type as “the most unusual,” (ibid.) presumably because it leads to such an odd result. It is not great works that make the great man, but a kind of greatness of character. Leiter quotes several passages to support

this characteristic of the higher type, among them the following passage from *The Gay Science*:

[T]he passion that attacks those who are noble is peculiar. . . . It involves the use of a rare and singular standard cold to everybody else; the discovery of values for which no scales have been invented yet; offering sacrifices on altars that are dedicated to an unknown god; a courage without any desire for honors; self-sufficiency that overflows and gives to men and things. (ibid. p. 122 / GS: 55)

Beyond this, we find another part of the *Gay Science* stating that not only the noble, but “even the evil man, the unhappy man, and the exceptional man should have their philosophy, their good right, their sunshine!” (GS 289) All this, I think, supplies clear support for radically individualized values. A man of unique and noble nature is one who shall create or “discover” equally unique values to suit him. Upon discovering values that align with his nature, he shall “offer sacrifices on altars that are dedicated to an unknown god,” meaning that he shall strive to uphold his values even in the face of great difficulty, in a world where it may be that none but him appears to adhere to them. Napoleon had his unique vision for the world, and thus appears among the worthy to Nietzsche. So, it would seem, did Borgia, and even Prado. Perhaps still more brutal men than these would be considered worthy of creating values in Nietzsche’s eyes, provided they have sufficient nobility, provided their spirit is *active* enough. If the range of higher types is this high, then so is the range of acceptable values that shall suit them.

It must here be stated that there are certainly commenters on Nietzsche that reject any notion of Nietzsche admiring “noble beasts” of the kinds listed above. Walter Kaufmann, for example, denies that Nietzsche truly speaks in a positive light of Cesare Borgia. If he is right in this, then the range of acceptable values would be reduced. As evidence, he puts forward Nietzsche’s commentary on Borgia in *Twilight of the Idols* (TI, IX: §37), where Nietzsche, in response to criticism of his elevation of Borgia in *Beyond Good and Evil*, supposedly “explained that he did not favor “the abolition of all decent feelings” but that he was questioning “**whether we have really become more moral.** [sic]” (Kaufmann 2013, p. 224) Kaufmann then makes a point similar to the one I made in the section immediately preceding this one in discussing the noble criminal: Borgia may not be a “hero,” but that the modern herd man of Nietzsche’s age is not “better,” but simply “weaker.”

Kaufmann further adduces a quotation from *Ecce Homo*, pointing out that Nietzsche states one should look “*even* for a Cesare Borgia rather than for a Parsifal [my italics]” (ibid.) “This eher noch [even] leaves no doubt that Nietzsche considered Cesare Borgia far from admirable but preferred even him to the Parsifal ideal [Wagner’s last opera, which had a Christian character]. (cf. A 46, 61; WM 871).” (ibid.) I included in the above citation Kaufmann’s own references to A46, 61 and WM (WM = WP) 871, because they strike me as highly telling. Kaufmann adduces them as evidence that Nietzsche did not view Borgia as an individual for admiration, and proceeds shortly after to state that “The Borgia and the [blond] beast are both ideograms for the conception of unsublimated animal passion. Nietzsche does not glorify either of them.” (ibid. p. 225) In the *Will to Power* paragraph 871, Nietzsche does indeed start by speaking of the “the vicious and the unbridled and their depressing influence upon the value of the appetites.” Yet, in the very same passage, after some discussion, Nietzsche goes on to say the following:

All the propensities of the strong man were brought into disrepute by virtue of the fact that measures designed to protect the weakest (including those for protecting the weakest from themselves) were made a standard of value. The confusion here is so great that people have actually branded the great *virtuosos* of life (whose self-mastery presents the sharpest contrast to the vicious and the ‘unbridled’) with the most ignominious epithets. Even now we feel obliged to disapprove of a Caesar Borgia, which is simply ludicrous. (WTP 871)

It seems perfectly clear that Cesare Borgia is *not* to be taken as an example of the “vicious and unbridled” that are in need of taming, but rather as an example of the “sharpest contrast” to this type, one that has achieved self-mastery of “virtuoso” proportions! Borgia may have been ruthless, yet he was ruthless not on account of “unbridled viciousness,” but because he was playing in a very vicious game of power-politics, where you either become vicious yourself, or perish. In this, Nietzsche saw a type of nobility, strength, and self-mastery. The “noble criminals” such as Prado are, I take it, lesser versions of Borgia. Though I shall not delve into Kaufmann’s other adductions, that of *Antichrist* paragraph 46 and 61, I can say that they seem to me to do little better in terms of condemning the Borgia type. As such, I view this as an attempt by Kaufmann at defanging Nietzsche, one that does not hold water. Kaufmann is not the only one inclined to this particular brand of defanging. Julian

Young also engages in this practice. Although Young references BGE in saying that “Cesare Borgia, we have been told, though a ‘monster’, was one in whom no trace of ‘disease’ is to be found,” he too follows up by making the same mistake as Kaufmann in comparing Borgia to the vicious and unbridled by saying that “on other occasions, he [Nietzsche] says the same of the marauding Vikings.” (Young 2010, p. 549) I think I have demonstrated that Cesare Borgia is *not* to be taken as being in the same category as marauding Vikings. Young does not stop there in his attempted defanging of Nietzsche, however, but goes so far as to claiming that his “his overriding concern is the flourishing of the community as a whole” (ibid.) and even that one of Nietzsche’s “most fundamental aims” was “world peace.” (ibid. p. 548), doing this by emphasizing a more community-focused interpretation of Nietzsche. We move now to investigate such an interpretation to see if it can lead towards a less radically individualistic conception of values than the one we have so far observed.

Community values

In contrast to the individualized interpretation of the higher type and value-creation offered in the previous section, Julian Young views Nietzsche as a highly community-focused. As mentioned, he goes so far as saying that Nietzsche’s “overriding concern is the flourishing of the community as a whole,” (Young 2010, p. 549) and even makes of “world peace” one of Nietzsche’s “most fundamental aims.” (ibid. 548) Such an interpretation would naturally restrict the number of values available, for values would have to conform to a society, as well, it would seem, as being generally benevolent. I think that investigating such a sharply contrasting view may be useful in helping us see the complete picture. To begin with, Young paints a picture of the philosopher of the future. Young views such a philosopher as one that is not confined to books, but is rather “philosopher” in the style of Napoleon, one not primarily seeking to “understand” but rather to “dominate” the future as an expression of the philosopher’s will to power. “Hegel called Napoleon ‘history on horseback’. Nietzsche, it seems to me, thinks of him as philosophy on horseback. (Young 2010, p. 423) All throughout BGE, particularly in the chapter/part of the BGE named *We Scholars*, Nietzsche is setting up the “philosopher of the future” that may be interpreted in the dominating style above.

What is it that the grand goal of these philosophers of the future ought to be? Young, in the heading of a section, calls it “Nietzsche’s Republic.”

For, like Plato, he [Nietzsche] believes that the ‘rank-ordering’ of any healthy society will consist of just three basic classes: the spiritual leaders; an educated and self-disciplined middle class who aspire to a ‘higher spirituality’ and from whom, one day, future leaders might arise (Plato’s ‘auxiliaries’); and finally, ‘the common people, the great majority’ (Plato’s ‘craftsmen’) (Young 2010, p. 425)

Such an interpretation has merit. Nietzsche’s admiration for the Greeks is no secret, and the Greek aristocracy seems to have been a significant part of what Nietzsche found admirable. I have already spoken of the “pathos of distance” in order to denote the importance that the perception of difference in rank has for the development of a philosophy where only the highest specimens matter. Yet §257, where Nietzsche first introduces the idea of the “pathos of distance”, starts by stating that “every enhancement so far in the type “man” has been the work of an aristocratic society.” We see, then, that Nietzsche links the development of such a pathos of distance directly to aristocracy. Young himself refers to this section as evidence for his interpretation. Beyond that, Young also directs us to BGE 61 and A 57, and it is indeed true that these sections, especially A 57, speak explicitly of a partitioning of society that is very similar to that of Plato’s Republic:

Nature, not Manu, separates from one another the predominantly spiritual type, the predominantly muscular and temperamental type, and the third type distinguished neither in the one nor the other, the mediocre type – the last as the great majority, the first as the élite. [...] The order of castes, order of rank, only formulates the supreme law of life itself; the separation of the three types is necessary for the preservation of society, for making possible higher and higher types – inequality of rights is the condition for the existence of rights at all. (A, 57)

We see here an attempt at the production of such individuals, Nietzsche’s “eugenics.” It is “nature” that is responsible for such a partitioning of individuals into castes, and Nietzsche appears to take the adherence to such partitioning in society to be necessary for “making possible higher and higher types.” It seems clear that if one is to have a functioning society of such a sort, one needs values that are generalizable to the community, and are not

entirely solipsistic. Among the ruling caste there must be, at the very least, some agreement as to how they shall behave, how they shall structure society, and what culture and values they shall promote for the populace. While Nietzsche was certainly aware of the great variety that exists between individuals (not just between higher and lower, but also between the members of the higher type themselves), it is not unreasonable to assume that the higher types, the noble “free spirits,” are drawn to each other. Like appreciates like, and thus those of noble nature would eventually find each other and endeavor to shape the world in a shared vision, one that would be conducive to further growth of higher types. Nietzsche himself sought community of such a sort, sought to create “communes,” or at least to develop groups of friends that would share in his vision. While Nietzsche found himself to be “untimely” and could find no proper comrades in his own age, he hoped that in the future, when select people with noble natures and healthy wills (to power) had studied him and been inspired by him, “new philosophers” would emerge that would take up his quest. (BGE 43, 44, & 45.) There is clearly some support for Young’s view that such a union of new philosophers would result in a social structure akin to Plato’s Republic. Assuming we accept the idea of such a Republic-like social structure being the result of a union of the new philosophers, what shall the relation between the castes, especially between these new philosophers (the higher types) and the common man, be? Shall the members of each caste subscribe to the same set of values? Shall morality be equal between them? Young envisions something of the sort. The Republic would have a religion, for instance. Such a religion would perhaps resemble the Greek pantheon, and it would reflect the communal ethos, an “empowering articulation of that ethos.” (Young 2010, p. 431) Young does not envision such a religion to be merely a tool for the highest caste used to cynically dominate the lowest caste, but would rather be a representation of a community ethos that is shared by all castes. The difference, presumably, is that while the lowest caste would believe in the gods in a crude and literal way, the highest caste, the Guardians, would be aware that it is but a representation of a way of life, something to aspire towards. I should note that even if one does not take something to be literally true, this does not mean one cannot take inspiration from it, and even for the Guardian caste who are aware that these are naught but parables, the gods can furnish examples that inspire and give them heroes to emulate. No one, be they high or low, is immune to the power of stories and myths. It should be clear that this view of Nietzsche’s Republic is a

reflection of Young's very "humane" interpretation of Nietzsche's elitism. The lower castes, both Auxiliaries and Craftsmen, are not mere tools and their happiness is not disregarded. They even get to share in the community ethos through the religious beliefs of the community; in this they share with the Guardians, even if the Guardians have a more refined understanding of such religion. For Young, these are "slaves" only in the sense that they are relegated to the simplest tasks because simple people suffer least from such tasks; not only suffer least, but even enjoy and find purpose and happiness in them. The higher type would suffer greatly in a menial job, something the lower type does not. Nietzsche does indeed display such consideration for the lowest type. In A 57, he expresses himself thus:

To be a public utility, a cog, a function, is a natural vocation, it is *not* society, it is the kind of *happiness* of which the great majority are alone capable, which makes intelligent machines of them. For the mediocre it is happiness to be mediocre; mastery in one thing, specialization, is for them a natural instinct. It would be quite unworthy of a more profound mind to see an objection in mediocrity as such. It is even the *prime* requirement for the existence of exceptions; a high culture is conditional upon it. When an exceptional human being handles the mediocre more gently than he does himself or his equals, this is not mere politeness of the heart – it is simply his *duty*....¹² (A 57)

Apart from such consideration for the lower types in writing, Nietzsche also displayed such consideration in his own real-life interactions. For instance, Nietzsche begged his friend Emily Fynn, "with tears in his eyes," not to read his books, "since they contained much that

¹² Whether one accepts the notion of higher and lower types or not, I do think it is undeniably true that some people tolerate and even desire "menial" work more than others – they suffer less from it. I shall be so bold as to offer some anecdotal evidence for this: I have myself worked alongside others in ordinary jobs of various sorts, and I have asked many of them whether, if they won some obscene amount of money in the lottery (enough to retire and live in luxury for the rest of their lives), they would continue working. The majority of them, even working in the most common jobs, such as in computer stores, as receptionists, in convenience stores and the like, say they would continue working (often in the very same job), though maybe at a reduced percentage. If they didn't have such a job, they, and I quote, "wouldn't know what to do with themselves." I recall a pensioner who started driving a taxi, not because he needed money after his retirement, but because he "needed something to do."

would hurt her feelings.” (Young 2010, p. 397) On one hand, Nietzsche must not have viewed Emily Fynn as a free spirit or higher type, for then he would not beg her to avoid his books. On the other hand, he referred to her as a “noble and tender soul.” (ibid.) It is instances such as these, I think, that direct Young towards his highly community-minded and humanized interpretation of Nietzsche. If this compassionate (pitying) side of Nietzsche is to be taken as part of the foundation of his character and philosophy, then it is not *only* the aristocrats, the Guardian higher types, that are worthy of admiration in his Republic, but the community as a whole. The lower castes may not partake in the Guardians’ higher vision, in their brilliance, yet as long as they adhere to the community ethos, they too would be worthy of esteem. They would, just as Emily Fynn, have claim to a “nobility” of their own. The Greek citizen (perhaps even slave?), even if not of the higher type, would still have a healthiness to them, a nobility of character, an honesty, a genuine concern for the community and a shared ethos. Given that Nietzsche described culture as “unity of artistic style in all the expressions of the life of a people,” (UM, kl. 728) if we take the Greeks to have such a unity, then even those that are not of the higher type may share in the nobility. This, I think, is Young’s interpretation.

In interpreting Nietzsche in so communitarian a way, I think Young has relied a good deal on looking at Nietzsche’s life rather than only his major philosophical works, for in looking at Nietzsche’s life, one does not get the impression that one is dealing with a cold-hearted elitist that regards the lives of the common man as worthless and beneath concern. In the case of Nietzsche, I would say that this is not entirely unfair, for as we have already established in the introductory parts of this thesis, Nietzsche’s philosophy was intimately tied to his life and how he lived it. Nietzsche himself dealt with philosophers this way, looking not only on their works, but also (perhaps even first and foremost) at their lives. There is, however, something which Young has missed in observing Nietzsche’s life, namely that Nietzsche was ever at conflict with himself when it came to his pity. It is not for nothing that *pity* was Zarathustra’s greatest obstacle, and the obstacle he only finally overcame in *Zarathustra* book IV, in order to finally become the Overman. Nietzsche was indeed a compassionate man, but this was often *in spite of* himself and his philosophy. This is one of the great paradoxes of Nietzsche. We now come to the side-topic spoken of in the introduction to the thesis. Although this is a slight digression from our main subject, I will

investigate this paradox closer, because I believe that understanding this paradox is of vital to any accurate understanding and appraisal of Nietzsche's philosophy. Lev Shestov saw this paradox and took it as far as it can go. He held that Nietzsche had a "sacred right" (Шестов 2018, p. 24) to be the spokesperson for all that is hard, cold, anti-Christian, for in being this spokesperson, he was speaking, in large part, against himself.

In Nietzsche, under every line of his writings, a tormented and anguished soul beats, which knows that there is not and cannot be mercy for her¹³ on Earth. And her "guilt" is only that compassion and shame had too much power over her, that she saw God in morality and believed in this God, contrary to all her basic instincts... (Шестов 2018, p. 124)

Nietzsche was modern, and born within a system of morality that preached pity and compassion. He was also, no doubt, a descendant not only of masters, but also of slaves. The intellectual part of Nietzsche saw that in past times, for those of aristocratic values, this was not so. They had a "pathos of distance" not only in perception of rank, but also in feeling. They could use the lower without guilt, see their suffering and not lament it overmuch, which Nietzsche considered a healthier state of being given that it is not taken to excess.¹⁴ Nietzsche could not. In this, Nietzsche may be thought to resemble Dostoyevsky's Raskolnikov, though in less dramatic form. Raskolnikov admired Napoleon, saw him as a higher type, one that could walk over the corpses of his lessers and feel no qualms over this as long as it was for the furtherance of his noble goals. When Raskolnikov attempted to emulate Napoleon and killed a wretched grandmother (and, unintentionally, her young sister) for the pursuit of his goals, he was crushed by guilt and destroyed by it. Similarly, Nietzsche also admired Napoleon, though not without reservation. Like Raskolnikov, he could not behave or even think as a Napoleon without being tormented by it. Nietzsche may not have killed any grandmothers, but every bit of his writings was a murderous assault on the morals and sentiments of his time, morals and sentiments that he, on some level, shared, in his nature if not in his intellect. His writings could thus not reflect his life completely, for he was, as almost all those in his age, corrupted by the slave revolt of morals and thus ever burdened by their pity. Shestov takes this to the extreme, claiming that "until

¹³ In Russian, the word "soul" is feminine, which is why Shestov refers to the soul as "she" and "her."

¹⁴ The reason for this shall hopefully become clearer in the chapter on Values and Truth.

the very last moments of Nietzsche's life, in everything he wrote, one feels such a deep, such hopeless despair from consciousness that it is impossible to wash off the shame of [his] past virtue." (Шестов 2018, p. 125) This is all very dramatic, and perhaps even crosses over into the histrionic. While I do not think Nietzsche suffered quite so deeply from this conflict as Shestov believed him to suffer, there can be no doubt that such a conflict existed within Nietzsche. This is why I must take issue with projects of "defanging" Nietzsche, such as those of Kaufmann and Young. Yes, he was compassionate, and one can find examples of this not only in his life, but also in his writings, such as seen above in the "duty" he ascribes to the higher types when of dealing with the mediocre more "gently" than with oneself or one's equals. (A 57) Yet, one must never lose sight of the fact that Nietzsche *did* write, at least in part, in spite of himself, and thus one must be careful in making out of him someone that is concerned first-and-foremost with "world peace" in the way Young did. Zarathustra overcame his pity; Nietzsche likely never did. Let us then stop doing Nietzsche the disservice of making him softer, gentler, and kinder than he himself wanted to be. We should rather accept Nietzsche's efforts at being hard and looking cold and unpalatable truths in the eye, accepting them for what they are, for it is only in accepting the hardest aspects of life that we can say "Yes" to life, something Nietzsche saw as a condition for being a higher type. If one does not, as Brian Leiter emphasized, say "Yes!" to the Eternal Recurrence (the idea of the repetition of one's life again and again), then one has not really said "Yes!" to life and one is still a nihilist, one who longs for sleep, for the afterlife or for non-existence. Life is not fair, not kind, not beneficent, and never will be. For this reason, when Young, in looking at BGE 61, points out that in this passage Nietzsche says that "the philosopher as we understand him, we free spirits, [is] the man with the most comprehensive responsibility, whose conscience bears the weight of the overall development of humanity," and uses this to justify his notion of the compassionate Republic where everyone has a place, as everyone is part of said humanity (Young 2010, p. 426), I must emphasize that in the very same passage, it is stated that

[...] As for the common people, the great majority, who exist and are only *allowed* [sic] to exist to serve and to be of general utility, religion gives them an invaluable sense of contentment with their situation and type. [...] Perhaps there is nothing more venerable about Christianity and Buddhism than their art of teaching even the

lowliest to use piety in order to situate themselves in an illusory higher order of things, and in so doing stay satisfied with the actual order, in which their lives are hard enough (in which precisely this hardness is necessary!). (BGE 61)

Not only do we see here that the common people are “only allowed to exist to serve and to be of general utility,” but also that their part in religion does not appear to be nearly as equal as Young envisioned it, for it is there to teach “even the lowliest to use piety in order to situate themselves in an illusory higher order of things,” while living hard lives where “precisely this hardness is necessary!” Young accuses John Rawls of getting Nietzsche “exactly back to front” when he claims that Nietzsche has no concern for the mediocre and that these exist only for the sake of the artist and the philosopher. (Young 2010, p. 426) He does not. What we have here is a continuous problem with interpretations of Nietzsche. Nietzsche’s adversaries, such as Rawls and Bertrand Russell make of Nietzsche a cold-blooded elitist for whom might makes right and who would gladly walk over the corpses of the masses to produce a Goethe or a Napoleon, and do so with not a worry on his mind.¹⁵ In this, they entirely miss that Nietzsche struggled deeply with his discoveries, and that he was by no means oblivious to the fact that they entailed suffering, suffering that he did not trivialize or take lightly. As for Nietzsche’s supporters, such as Kaufmann and Young, they clearly admire Nietzsche, his life, his compassion and decency and his unwavering will to truth in the face of this compassion and decency. They thus try to “rescue” him, try to make him into someone who they and others can admire in good conscience without being too troubled by him. After all, if Nietzsche was really all for the community, wanted world peace, and cared deeply for the common man, admiring him would pose few problems. In this, however, all the hard truths that Nietzsche worked so hard to bring to his readers fade, and his “rescuers” almost do him a greater disservice than detractors such as Rawls and Russell. Such detractors, although they too get him wrong, are still no further away from an accurate interpretation of Nietzsche than his would-be rescuers. Even if I do not think Nietzsche wrote quite so much against his own nature as Shestov would have it, Shestov’s view lands closest to the target. If Nietzsche were nothing but a Thrasymachus preaching

¹⁵ “It does not occur to Nietzsche as possible that a man should genuinely feel universal love, obviously because he himself feels almost universal hatred and fear, which he would fain disguise as lordly indifference. His ‘noble’ man—who is himself in day-dreams—is a being wholly devoid of sympathy, ruthless, cunning, cruel, concerned only with his own power. (Russell 2005, p. 692-693) Needless to say, I do not subscribe to this view of Nietzsche.

“might makes right,” this would make him too crude, too primitive, too unpalatable. Neither does Nietzsche preserve his flavor if he is made into an inoffensive preacher of world peace. It is precisely the unique combination of a compassionate man preaching hardness that makes him and his philosophy so captivating. While this segment on the interpretation of Nietzsche has in part been a digression from our main theme, let me attempt to tie it to the theme of values by saying that it is this remarkable nuance in Nietzsche and his thinking that also allows us to imagine such a tremendously rich variety of possible values. If our conception of the type of values we had available to create had to be compatible with someone as one-sided as a Thrasymachus or as a Socrates, the range of possible values would be far more limited than I take it to be.

Combining the individual and the communal

After all these twists and turns, it is time to return to the question we initially started with: are values to be individualized or generalizable to the community? As I think should now be evident, this is not a simple question to answer. There is a conflict between the communal and the individual aspects of value-creation in Nietzsche’s writing. We have, on the one hand, Nietzsche’s continuous focus on the great individual and the emphasis on the personal journey of such an individual. *The Three Metamorphoses* describe the transitions an individual goes through on the way to becoming a Child, one capable of value-creation. This noble individual engages in “the discovery of values for which no scales have been invented yet; offering sacrifices on altars that are dedicated to an unknown god.” (GS 55) Not only the noble, it would seem, but “even the evil man, the unhappy man, and the exceptional man should have their philosophy, their good right, their sunshine!” (GS 289) Furthering this individualistic theme, we find the extolling of “heroes” such as (among many others) Goethe, Beethoven, and, on the more radical side, of Napoleon and Cesare Borgia. Let us repeat what is maybe the most radical statement of this view: “The French Revolution made Napoleon possible; that is its justification. For the sake of such a prize, we should be willing to see our entire civilization collapse into anarchy.” (WTP 877) We even have the mysterious notion nature perceiving itself through such exceptions. This all pushes us

towards a strange mixture of either “a couple Goethe’s per millennium” creating their own values, or, if we are to base ourselves more on the more inclusive passages from the *Gay Science* and the *Will to Power*, towards a radical anarchism of values where everyone that has a capacity to create them values does so in their own image – “even the evil man, the unhappy man.” (GS 289) Simultaneously with this individualistic focus, we find the praise of ancient Greece, of Rome, of Italy, and of aristocracy in general, as well as a Republic-esque blueprint for societal structuring. We even find a passage that could be considered the more community-focused equivalent of the radical quote promoting the sacrifice of civilization for the sake of a Napoleon:

The magnitude of an “advance” can even be measured by the mass of things that had to be sacrificed to it; mankind in the mass sacrificed to the prosperity of a single stronger species of man—that *would* be an advance. (GM II, 12)

The above statement could be seen to cast doubt on whether, when speaking of the “prize” of Napoleon, Nietzsche is speaking of Napoleon the *individual*, or, rather, whether he is merely using Napoleon as a real-world example of “mankind in the mass sacrificed to the prosperity of a single stronger species of man.” After all, when Napoleon came to power, this represented a rejection of democracy and a return towards something akin to aristocracy, which Nietzsche considered a healthier state of being for society. Further, it was not just *any* civilization that Nietzsche was willing to sacrifice for the sake of the of Napoleon; he spoke specifically of the sacrifice of “*our*” civilization, meaning civilization in Nietzsche’s time, which he famously found highly wanting. Whether the sacrifice of Greece for the sake of a Napoleon (at least Napoleon as nothing more than an individual) would be as desirable is not nearly as evident. What matters then, the individual or society? And are we to create individualized values or shared values? First, let us look at the notions of the great individual “justifying existence” and having nature “see itself” through the thinking of the contemplative. These aspects of Nietzsche’s philosophy appear primarily in his earlier writings, namely the *Birth of Tragedy* and the *Untimely Meditations*. Given how Nietzsche was then still under the thrall of Schopenhauerian metaphysics, it puts these notions under serious doubt. Nietzsche veered more and more towards naturalism in his later philosophy, and his rejection of metaphysics is well-known. Further, the very notion of justifying existence necessarily deals with the question of the *value of life*, and Nietzsche states quite

clearly in *Twilight of the Idols*, one of his last three works, that “one must reach out and try to grasp this astonishing finesse, that the value of life cannot be estimated. (TI, I, 2) For these reasons, I think these metaphysical ideas must either be discarded or, at best, be relegated to articles of faith that may motivate the higher types and help them feel like their striving is meaningful. What we cannot do away with nearly as readily as these metaphysical ideas is Nietzsche’s clear inclination for a variety of values, values that cater to the individual rather than the group; “even the evil man, the unhappy man, and the exceptional man should have their philosophy, their good right, their sunshine!” (GS 289) Neither, it seems to me, can we do away with Nietzsche’s concern for society, his praise of aristocracy, or his notions of the active cultivation of the higher types. At this point, it must be said that expecting a perfectly satisfactory resolution of this conflict may be to demand too much. Nietzsche was no system-builder, and it is notoriously difficult to create a coherent and consistent whole out of Nietzsche’s philosophy, which underwent many changes over the course of his life.¹⁶ Beyond Nietzsche, humanity has been wrestling with the problem of how to balance personal freedom with societal cohesion for as long as it has existed, and given that no complete answer to this dilemma has been found, it is perhaps too much to expect Nietzsche to have fully resolved it. Just as the judge cannot expect to find the answer to every dilemma that occurs within the written laws and must thereby use similar precedents coupled with what the judge considers the spirit of the law, so must we attempt to resolve this conflict by consulting the information we *do* have coupled with what we take to be the spirit of Nietzsche’s philosophy.¹⁷ We must then do our best to combine this freedom of

¹⁶ Perhaps to ask for a “why” from Nietzsche in regards would yield the same result as when a disciple asked for a “why” from Zarathustra: “You ask, why? I am not one of those whom one may ask about their why. Is my experience but of yesterday? It was long ago that I experienced the reasons for my opinions. Would I not have to be a barrel of memory if I wanted to carry my reasons around with me? It is already too much for me to remember my own opinions; and many a bird flies away. And now and then I also find a stray in my dovecot that is strange to me and trembles when I place my hand on it.” (Z, *On Poets*, p. 238-239) Nietzsche also speaks explicitly of his changeability and inscrutability in GS 371, aptly named *We incomprehensible ones*.

¹⁷ The alternative to this approach would be to divide Nietzsche’s philosophy in two and treat these two parts separately. One part would be directed towards the individualistic, the personal, the psychological, while the other part would be concern for society and societal structure. I thank my thesis councilor, Anne Granberg, for this suggestion. While I was initially positively disposed towards this idea, upon further reflection, it appears to me that the individualistic and the society-focused are so intertwined in Nietzsche’s philosophy that we cannot do away with one without thereby irrevocably damaging the other. If we were to focus only on the psychological, this would essentially turn Nietzsche into a type of self-help philosophy for the higher type, and rather a hopelessly solipsistic one at that. Treating the societal as separate from the psychological, in turn, is meaningless, for Nietzsche’s prescriptions for society are largely founded on observations of the physiology and psychology of individuals. As such, while there are conflicts between the two, it seems to me that an attempt at some combination is indispensable.

values with the structure of a stable society as far as this can be done. What would such a combination look like, if it is even possible? While any wholesale return to ancient Greece would be impossible, an anachronism, it seems clear that ancient Greece would function as a template for such a society. Take, for instance, the following statement in *Ecce Homo*, Nietzsche's final work: "Everything in this essay [referring to *The Birth of Tragedy*] points to the future: the impending return of the Greek spirit, the necessity of counter-Alexanders who will retie the Gordian knot of Greek culture." (EH, III, 1.) It is, as such, to Greece that we must look. Further, I agree with Young that society would have a Republic-like structure, if not in detail, then in generality. As for the creation of values in said society, I tentatively propose that polytheism may serve as a mechanism for such creation, as well as a buttress for them. I refer to part 143 of the *The Gay Science*, named *The greatest advantage of polytheism* in support of such a proposal:

For an individual to posit his *own* ideal and to derive from it his own law, joys and rights – that may well have been considered hitherto to be the most outrageous of human aberrations and idolatry itself[.] [...] The wonderful art and power of creating gods – polytheism – was that through which this drive could discharge itself, purify, perfect and ennoble itself[.] [...] Here for the first time one allowed oneself individuals; here one first honoured the rights of individuals. The invention of gods, heroes, and overmen (*Übermenschen*) of all kinds, as well as deviant or inferior forms of humanoid life (*Neben- und Untermenschen*), dwarfs, fairies, centaurs, satyrs, demons, and devils, was the invaluable preliminary exercise for the justification of the egoism and sovereignty of the individual: the freedom that one conceded to a god in his relation to other gods one finally gave to oneself in relation to laws, customs, and neighbours. (GS 143)

Polytheism would help to accommodate a wide variety of values, as well as providing a way to spread such values to the public. I think we must suppose that the creation of new gods, at least "official" gods that are to function as exemplars for the society, would be the prerogative of the highest caste. While the statement that "even the evil man, the unhappy man, and the exceptional man should have their philosophy, their good right, their sunshine!" (GS 289) may give the impression that *anyone* can have their own philosophy, the second part of GS 289 works to counteracts this: "a new *justice* is needed! And a new

motto! And new philosophers! The moral earth, too, is round! The moral earth, too, has its antipodes! The antipodes, too, have their right to exist! There is another world to discover – and more than one! On to the ships, you philosophers!” (GS 289) It is the *new philosophers*, then, who have this task.¹⁸ Among these new philosophers, there would have to be a diverse pool of characters, each of whom would help create new ideals, new philosophies, new gods. The love-loving philosopher would create the new Aphrodite, the combative and war-like one the new Ares, and so on. The individuals in the general population, in turn, while incapable of creating their own ideals and gods in such a way, could perhaps follow the gods most in alignment with their own nature, just as the populace of Greece had temples dedicated to a wide variety of gods. Despite the diversity of characters among the higher caste, it seems to me that the members of this caste would all have to share Nietzsche’s attitude, namely that “the moral earth, too, has its antipodes! The antipodes, too, have their right to exist!” (GS 289) Without such an attitude there could be no unity, no society, for each creator would seek separation from, or the destruction of, the other.¹⁹ As for the role of the highest caste in relation to ruling society, Young envisioned this relation as being similar to that of the relation between the Ayatollah of Iran and the Iranian president, namely as a sort of spiritual leadership that does not involve itself directly in government, yet has final say in any governmental policy. (Young 2010, p. 424) While such a dynamic is possible, I think that we could also construe a more direct involvement among certain members of the highest caste. We must remember that Nietzsche envisioned a great diversity of higher types, and that for each, their Will to Power would direct them towards different expressions of said Will that aligns with their nature. One need only look at two of the higher types we have used as examples, Goethe and Napoleon, to see how disparate in nature higher types may be. There can be no doubt that Goethe represents a higher type and a great individual for Nietzsche. One thing that does not seem to fit Goethe, however, is

¹⁸ Keep in mind that this may refer not only to “philosophers” in the traditional sense, but likely also includes Young’s conception of those that exemplify “philosophy on horseback.” For more on the “new philosophers,” see BGE 42, 43 and 44. I say this with the caveat that one cannot be sure of the complete consistency of the term “new philosophers” between GS and BGE.

¹⁹ There is reason to believe Nietzsche wanted a degree of conflict in his society. “We [children of the future] hold it absolutely undesirable that a realm of justice and concord should be established on earth (because it would certainly be the realm of the most profound levelling down to mediocrity and *chinoiserie*). (GS 377) I take the extreme interpretation of this as being incompatible with any stable society, and proceed without factoring this in. I leave it open, however, whether there may be some antagonism between the followers of different gods, and that this could be beneficial to stimulating growth.

Young's conception of "philosophy on horseback."²⁰ Goethe, the brilliant "world-traveler," having the capacity to sample all the world's fruits and give them his evaluation, as well as coloring the world through his art and his thinking, is perhaps a representative of the highest type one can hope for, or at least close to it. Yet, a man such as Goethe, high and noble though he may be, is not one who is likely to bend society to his will, at least not directly. Here, a man such as Napoleon is more likely to be effective. Like Goethe, he too is contemplative, artistic, and has a vision of the world, but he is not content with contemplation and artistic expression. Rather, he seeks to mold the world in his image – the world is his canvas, if I may be forgiven the cliché. In thus shaping the world, he naturally pushes it further towards the Greek spirit. While one may wish for a Napoleon with fewer "inhuman" qualities, it is difficult to envision society changing in the direction of the Greek revival Nietzsche sought without such forceful figures paving the way, as it would be rather fanciful to expect the art of a Goethe (or the philosophy of a Nietzsche, for that matter) to be so persuasive that it turns society on its head all on its own. Without a Lenin, Marx would likely not have had such an impact on the world.²¹ Seeing how Napoleon and Goethe had direct interaction with each other and neither offended or hampered the other by his existence, one could envision a similar mutual understanding between the higher types involved directly in ruling and those outside such roles. Regardless of precisely how the society is organized and how political power is divided, it must allow for diversity of values and characters, and if we are to take seriously Nietzsche's comments on the "incommunicable, incommunicative – an enigmatic man" (WP 878) as being of worth and nobility, we must assume that once the ruling caste is properly situated and no longer at threat, there shall be allowances made for a wide variety of characters even if they are not quite on the level of a Goethe, this including oddballs and eccentrics, and perhaps the occasional Prado - even the evil man has a right to his sunshine! As for the common people,

²⁰ Rather, the opposite is true. When, in *Schopenhauer as Educator* Nietzsche presents us with three individuals who "inspire mortals to transfiguration of their own lives," (UM, kl. 3354) Goethe, as one of these three individuals (the other two being Rousseau and Schopenhauer), is portrayed as an observer rather than an actor. (ibid. kl. 3378) Compared to the violent revolutionary "man of Rousseau," "the man of Goethe is no such threatening power, indeed in a certain sense he is the corrective and sedative for precisely those dangerous excitations of which the man of Rousseau is the victim. [...] the man of Goethe here turns away from the man of Rousseau; for he hates all violence, all sudden transition but that means: all action; and thus the world-liberator becomes as it were only a world-traveller." (ibid. kl 3369 – 3378)

²¹ This is not to be taken as an endorsement of neither Marx nor Lenin as examples of higher types. I merely use them as an analogy for the dynamic between the thinker and the doer.

it could be that both the lower and the higher would, in a sense, worship at the same temples, and the only difference shall lie in the level of sophistication and understanding displayed in the worship. The common man could worship gods while believing in them as literal entities while the higher type shall understand them as metaphors and myths meant to inspire. This would conform more to Young's vision. Yet, Nietzsche holds quite clearly that what is virtue for the lower is vice for the higher, and vice versa, and I cannot see how this aspect of Nietzsche's philosophy can be compatible with the lower and the higher having a fully shared vision. For example, in the higher castes one may counsel a degree of selfishness, for the higher type needs leisure and freedom to create, to grow, and may therefor feel entitled to this. In the lower caste, this would lead to them losing their function of seeing to the basic needs of society. As such, it is more likely that religion for the common man would function largely as a soporific to make a life of service bearable. That the common man in such a society would, in Nietzsche's eyes, still have more of a claim to grace and nobility than the common man of modernity, I take as highly probably. We must however not be too utopian in our conception of the common man's role in a Nietzschean society, for as I have argued, this appears to me a way of inappropriately defanging Nietzsche.

While the above sketch is one that I hope matches the spirit of Nietzsche's writings, it *is* a sketch, and the specifics of a hypothetical Nietzschean society appear to me to be highly open. For instance, while I think polytheism would be a natural fit for a plurality of values and would provide a justification for such a plurality, it is conceivable that the Western modern man is at this point incapable of taking polytheism seriously, for polytheism has long been relegated to the realm of myth, not to mention popular culture. One would then have to find a different way of disseminating values to the public. The precise nature of the ruling structure appears to me open as well. We could imagine an emperor such as Napoleon or Julius Caesar, an aristocracy of sorts sharing the leadership position, or it could be as Young suggested, a sort of spiritual leadership that is not directly involved in the details, but has final say when it comes to general patterns. Even the exact role of the common people is, it must be admitted, rather nebulous in Nietzsche's writings; while I have argued for a harsher reading of the role of the "herd" in Nietzsche's philosophy than Young has, there *are* indications that point towards more "humane" treatment in Nietzsche's

published works, and certainly in Nietzsche's life. What, if anything, *can* we say with certainty? I take it as certain that whatever the details of such a hypothetical society may be, it must represent a return of the Greek spirit, a way to "retie the gordian knot of Greek culture." (EH III, 1). I shall not attempt an exhaustive list of what the components of such a revival of the Greek spirit would be, but I shall provide some examples that stand out as indispensable. In no particular order:

- 1: A rejection of reactive values, especially Christian values.
- 2: An openness towards a plurality of values.
- 3: Discarding "good and evil" in favor of "good and bad."
- 4: A cultivation and facilitation of the higher types.
- 5: A rank-ordering of society into castes which facilitates a "pathos of distance" between the higher types and the common people.²²

Beyond such generalities, I do not think we can truly say with certainty precisely what Nietzsche had in mind when imagining a future society built on his ideas, assuming he had specifics in mind at all. This could appear inadequate, and may even incline one to levy against Nietzsche the accusation that *he* is being reactive and negative; playing with ideas such as the collapse of civilization (for the prize of a Napoleon, say) with nothing concrete to put in its place is not the activity of a creator bursting with superfluity, but rather the activity of a malcontent leveler. Here, we must understand that Nietzsche was not a social engineer, and it was not a blueprint for a future society that was his primary concern and contribution, but rather *the revaluation of values*. In *this* realm, Nietzsche's philosophy provides us with much more concrete material to work with, for while there is certainly a negative component to it – the deconstruction of reactive (slave) morality and valuations – we are also provided with ample alternatives to said reactive valuations throughout Nietzsche's works, especially in the form of his *Zarathustra*. The goal (or at least *a* goal) of Nietzsche's philosophy is to induce his readers of the higher type to reject the reactive, to

²² Whether the existence of such a caste system shall be explicitly known by the common people or whether they shall be more unwitting servants is unclear. I veer in the direction of it being explicitly known and established social order, for it would be difficult to fully develop a pathos of distance if no such distance were publicly recognized.

throw off slave morality and slave valuations, to return once more to an active and natural form of valuation, and to create values catered to their nature and needs. This is an endeavor for the individual. Simultaneously with providing this quest and this method to the individual, there is a clear hope that the higher types shall not be content with simply creating their own values and live as hermits and eccentrics, but that they shall have enough strength to inspire others, and perhaps that they shall even come together and reshape society in their image and thus make society healthier as a whole. This can clearly be seen in BGE 203:

We who have a different faith –, we who consider the democratic movement to be not merely an abased form of political organization, but rather an abased (more specifically a diminished) form of humanity, a mediocritization and depreciation of humanity in value: where do we need to reach with our hopes? – Towards *new philosophers*, there is no alternative; towards spirits who are strong and original enough to give impetus to opposed valuations and initiate a revaluation and reversal of “eternal values.”

It shall then be up to these “new philosophers” (those among them with an aptitude for such work, that is) to figure out the precise structure of a society in alignment with active values. As far as a conclusion to the conflict between individualized values and community values, I think this is as close as we can get.

Values and Truth

Having looked closer at the process of value-creation, the type of person that engages in such value-creation, and some of the purported benefits of such creation, it is natural to wonder what we are to make of it all. Does Nietzsche induce the higher types to create their own values based on something he would consider objective observations, or merely as his own subjective preference and inclination? If objective, what makes it objective? If subjective, then why should we care? We enter here the treacherous territory of Nietzsche’s relation to truth. Treacherous though it may be, no account on Nietzsche’s conception of

value-creation could be complete without having some stance on whether we are to understand such value-creation as reflecting an objective reality, or rather whether it is simply Nietzsche's subjective and idiosyncratic view on things. If we were to pose this question in a more contemporary philosophical style, we would ask whether Nietzsche was a realist or an anti-realist in relation to values. I think a good way to start this investigation is by inspecting certain passages on truth made by Nietzsche. Part 344 of *The Gay Science* has the headline "*In what way we, too, are still pious.*" It starts with the statement that "in science, convictions have no right to citizenship." Nietzsche points out that only when conviction has become something far humbler, such as a hypothesis or a "tentative experimental standpoint," do we grant it admission to the realm of knowledge. Yet, this is followed up by Nietzsche with a famous question and treatment:

But doesn't this mean, on closer consideration, that a conviction is granted admission to science only when it ceases to be a conviction? Wouldn't the cultivation of the scientific spirit begin when one permitted oneself no more convictions? That is probably the case; only we need still ask: *in order that this cultivation begin*, must there not be some prior conviction – and indeed one so authoritative and unconditional that it sacrifices all other convictions to itself? We see that science, too, rests on a faith; there is simply no 'presuppositionless' science. The question whether *truth* is necessary must get an answer in advance, the answer 'yes', and moreover this answer must be so firm that it takes the form of the statement, the belief, the conviction: '*Nothing is more necessary than truth; and in relation to it, everything else has only secondary value.*' (GS 344)

Nietzsche goes on to question this will to truth. Where does it come from? Why do certain people, particularly Nietzsche's (admittedly idealized) scientist seem to believe in it so unquestioningly? He considers purely prudential reasons for this, such as the will not to be deceived by others, and yet rejects this as an insufficient justification for anything resembling an *unequivocal* will to truth. While avoiding deception by others may certainly be beneficial, it is far less clear why one should avoid deceiving oneself. Do we not all know of some individuals that appear to be rather blissful thanks to what, to many, can be seen as nothing other than blind faith?

So, the faith in science, which after all undeniably exists, cannot owe its origin to such a calculus of utility; rather it must have originated *in spite of* the fact that the disutility and dangerousness of ‘the will to truth’ or ‘truth at any price’ is proved to it constantly. ‘At any price’: we understand this well enough once we have offered and slaughtered one faith after another on this altar!²³ (ibid.)

Nietzsche’s diagnosis is that this unquestioning will to truth is a *moral* attitude, and one that stems not from life, but from “the Christian faith which was also Plato’s faith, that God is truth; that truth is divine . . .” (ibid.) He then asks portentously: “But what if this were to become more and more difficult to believe, if nothing more were to turn out to be divine except error, blindness, the lie – if God himself were to turn out to be our longest lie?” (ibid.) We must remember that the very foundation of Nietzsche’s philosophy is the saying of “Yes!” to life, to accept life *as it is*. Yet, in observing life, Nietzsche saw that deception, both that of others and (more importantly) of oneself, appears to be a fundamental characteristic of existence. “For you have only to ask yourself carefully, ‘Why do you not want to deceive?’ especially if it should seem – and it does seem! – as if life aimed at semblance, i.e. error, deception, simulation, blinding, self-blinding, and when life on the largest scale has actually always shown itself to be on the side of the most unscrupulous *polytropoi*.²⁴” (ibid.) If one is to accept life *as it is*, if one is to say “Yes!” to life, then it appears that one must say “Yes!” to (self)deception and illusion as well. If one does not, then one is rejecting life; “‘Will to truth’ – that could be a hidden will to death.” (ibid.) We see here a duality that runs through Nietzsche’s writings. Nietzsche clearly venerated truth and the truth-seeking instinct, for he speaks highly of the truth and truth-seekers consistently throughout his writings. Simultaneously, he became suspicious of truth, at least if it came “at any price.” This is a very difficult duality to understand and balance. Are the values Nietzsche championed a reflection of *the* truth as Nietzsche conceived it, or merely Nietzsche’s concession to just another “illusion” among many, the only difference being that Nietzsche found his aristocratic illusion more personally pleasing than the other illusions on

²³ In the last portion of this quotation, it seems clear that Nietzsche is speaking from personal experience, for Nietzsche’s commitment to the truth “at any price” cost him many a friendship and resulted in much hardship.

²⁴ I shall quote directly the footnote on “polytropoi” as it is found in the translation of the *Gay Science* that I am using: “‘sly, knowing all the tricks, devious.’ Nietzsche uses the plural of this word which in the singular is used in the *Odyssey* (e.g. Book I, line i) to describe Odysseus.” (GS, p. 248)

offer, such as those of Christianity? If we are to create our own values, to which extent must we view them as *the* truth, and to which extent *a* truth, if “truth” at all?

First, let us rid ourselves of one notion on Nietzsche’s conception of truth right away:

Nietzsche did not deny “truth” in the sense of denying that there are facts in the world. We are not here speaking of “truths” such as “the Earth is round” or “at standard atmospheric pressure, water boils at 100 degrees Celsius.” While one could in principle adopt some form of radical skepticism and deny even these statements, this is not what Nietzsche was primarily concerned with or interested in. If this were so, all of Nietzsche’s concern with physiology and psychology would be meaningless, as they would need to be thrown out along with everything else. Take Nietzsche’s questioning of “truth” as it is found in the *Genealogy of Morals*:

[...] science itself henceforth requires justification (which is not to say that there is any such justification)," and that "the will to truth requires a critique . . . the value of truth must for once be experimentally called into question (GM III, 24)

This is a natural continuation of Nietzsche’s observations on truth in GS 344 discussed above. As Maudemarie Clark keenly observes in her book *Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy*, for the value of truth to be “experimentally called into question” as Nietzsche demands, there must be the possibility for these experiments to yield factual results that are not mere illusion, but that reflect true (true with a capital T) beliefs. (Clark 1990, p. 184) Perhaps it would here be prudent to take a lesson from pragmatists such as William James, and separate the notion of “truth,” which is a concept that the pragmatist considers as being influenced by its usefulness and relevance for human affairs, and “facts,” which “simply are.” With this distinction between facts and truth in mind, we can safely say that Nietzsche considered it a *fact* that much religious thinking is motivated by *ressentiment*, for example. Viewed through this lens, Nietzsche can be said to be looking for the facts about truth, particularly facts about the value of truth for the sake of human flourishing. The difficulty arises, however, when we start speaking of morality, for Nietzsche states quite clearly (and conveniently for our current “facts/truth” distinction) that “*there are no moral facts whatever.*” (TI, VII, 1) In the same section, Nietzsche goes on to say that morality is nothing but “*misinterpretation,*” and that it is “merely sign-language, merely symptomatology,” meaning that the usefulness of morality is revealed when we read it as

semeiotics, as signs that allow us to understand the underlying physiology and psychology of the cultures and individuals that adhere to any given morality. While this passage of the TI only deals with morality, I think it can safely be extended to Nietzsche's treatment of values in general. Artistic taste, personal preference, character, all these are similarly "symptomatology," a reflection of a person's drives and inclinations, of a person's nature. Nietzsche makes similar pronouncements in other texts, such as BGE 108: "There are absolutely no moral phenomena, only a moral interpretation of the phenomena . . ." All this can be taken as a clear sign that Nietzsche is an anti-realist in relation to values. Brian Leiter reaches precisely this conclusion. Leiter acknowledges that values for Nietzsche are "symptomatology," a reflection of a person's nature, the "type-facts" we spoke of in the beginning phases of this thesis. According to Leiter, Nietzsche is appealing specifically to those of a similar type-fact to his own, and is attempting to have them perceive the fact that morality, at least morality of the Christian sort, is inimical to the flourishing of their type; that it corrupts and spoils them. This also explains, in part, the remarkably forceful and polemical tone of Nietzsche's writings. Added to the attempt of awakening the higher types to this fact, Leiter argues that "a rhetorical tone like Nietzsche's – looked at in the context of his life – does not really suggest realism about the content, but rather desperation on the part of the author to reach an increasingly distant and uninterested audience." (Leiter 2005, p. 155) There is certainly truth to these claims, as Nietzsche explicitly wrote for the select few, for the "free spirits," for *his* audience, and his proclamations about there being "no moral facts" are rather hard to dismiss. Still, I am not convinced that this is *all* Nietzsche was doing. Take, for instance, two of Nietzsche's central claims regarding religious thinking, namely that much religious thinking has its origin in *ressentiment*, and that much religious thinking is an attempt by the ill-constituted to escape an unsatisfying life by granting themselves importance in a grand metaphysical scheme, as well as providing the comfort of an imagined afterlife. This, one can say with certainty, is something Nietzsche took to be a fact, an objective reality. Given that Nietzsche took these to be facts, are we simultaneously to believe that Nietzsche saw *no* objective benefits at all to being aware of such facts and to creating a system of values that rejects such feebleness? I think not. Nietzsche observed life, and saw that "life itself is essentially a process of appropriating, injuring, overpowering the alien and the weaker, oppressing, being harsh, imposing your own form, incorporating, and at least, the very least, exploiting." (BGE 259) If one observes the animal kingdom, I cannot

see how one could deny this. Animals kill each other, eat each other, exploit others through parasitism, dominate each other, and seemingly do this with no qualms at all. This is not only true *between* species, but *within* species as well. While cooperation within and between species certainly exists, it would nevertheless be utterly blind to deny the ruthlessness of nature. Not only is all this ruthlessness to be found, but it is all done with a “clean conscience.” The poem “In Praise of Feeling Bad About Yourself” by Wislawa Szymborska provides us with a glance at this reality:

The buzzard never says it is to blame.
The panther wouldn't know what scruples mean.
When the piranha strikes, it feels no shame.
If snakes had hands, they'd claim their hands were clean.

A jackal doesn't understand remorse.
Lions and lice don't waver in their course.
Why should they, when they know they're right?

Though hearts of killer whales may weigh a ton,
in every other way they're light.

On this third planet of the sun
among the signs of bestiality
a clear conscience is Number One. (Szymborska 1996, p. 168)

While Szymborska praises our capacity for feeling bad about ourselves, Nietzsche believes that our excessive excitability over suffering is a sign that something has gone wrong, that we have become incapable of accepting this indispensable aspect of reality, and that we have thus degenerated, become decadent. In rejecting or attempting to sidestep the hard principles of life, one is negating life itself.

Mutually refraining from injury, violence, and exploitation, placing your will on par with the other's: in a certain, crude sense, these practices can become good manners between individuals when the right conditions are present (namely, that the individuals have genuinely similar quantities of force and measures of value, and

belong together within a single body). But as soon as this principle is taken any further, and maybe even held to be the *fundamental principle of society*, it immediately shows itself for what it is: the will to *negate* life, the principle of disintegration and decay. (BGE 259)

At this point, the immediate objection likely to be put forward is that this is nothing but a mixture of an appeal to nature with a failure to perceive that an *is* does not make an *ought*; just because things *are* a certain way, this in no way entails that this is how they *ought to be*. I concede that one cannot in any way conclusively *prove* that being more in alignment with nature is superior to non-alignment. Further, I concede that it is ultimately impossible to nail down precisely what “nature” or “life” *is like*. However, allow me nonetheless to attempt a defence of Nietzsche’s ideas of what is beneficial to “life” and what is inimical to it, and why I think it amounts to more than mere fallacy. First, let me point out that while the exact amount of time is unknown, life on Earth has existed for billions of years. For all these billions of years, the ruthless principles of nature have dominated. Bacteria consume other bacteria, plants fight over sunlight and nutrients, and, once larger animals eventually emerged, these devoured each other too. While an “is” may not guarantee any “ought,” is it not a sign of an extraordinary arrogance to look at an “is” that has existed for billions of years, and, with the myopic perspective of a few thousand years of recorded human history, say that this “is,” or at least a very significant portion of the “is,” must be somehow “wrong” and thus to be discarded? Nietzsche saw this “is” as having existed throughout all of Earth’s history, and could not accept that we may discard the suffering, the competition, the harshness, and all manner of other such qualities that humans (at least modern humans) typically decry, and still be left with *life*, or at least with any life worth living. Nietzsche’s attempt to analyze nature and/or life in this way amounted, it seems to me, to his doctrine of the Will to Power. Schacht, in attempting to ground Nietzsche’s value claims in something objective, attempted to ground them in this Will to Power (Schacht 1983, p. 398). Leiter mentions Schacht’s attempt, and discusses a part of it:

Human life, for Nietzsche, is ultimately a part of a kind of vast game . . . [which] is, so to speak, the only game in town. . . . The nature of the game, he holds, establishes a standard for the evaluation of everything falling within its compass. The availability

of this standard places evaluation on footing that is as firm as that on which the comprehension of life and the world stands. (Leiter, p. 138 / Schacht 1983, p. 398)

Leiter rejects this argument of the Will to Power being “the only game in town” for being too metaphorical and makes the expected is/ought objection. I agree that merely saying that the Will to Power is “the only game in town” is inadequate if unelucidated. I think, however, that this notion of the Will to Power being the “only game in town” is based ultimately on a rather basic observation. This observation is, to repeat, that “life itself is essentially a process of appropriating, injuring, overpowering the alien and the weaker, oppressing, being harsh, imposing your own form, incorporating, and at least, the very least, exploiting.” (BGE 259) If we think of what would happen if we were to do away with this principle, we quickly realize that this is no trivial observation. If there were no such ruthless competition between and within species, then there would be no principle of natural selection as we understand it. If there were no principle of natural selection, there would be no constant arms race between species and the environment or between species and other species. We simply cannot conceive of what life might look like if such ruthless competition were taken out of the equation, for such an existence would have to be fundamentally different to ours in every way. Perhaps life could not emerge under such circumstances at all. As such, if one attempts to do away with these harsh aspects of life (to the extent that this is possible, for we cannot truly do away with them), then one ends up with an anti-life philosophy, one which Nietzsche argued leads to decadence, degeneration, and mediocrity. Nietzsche is not speaking merely from a place of arbitrary and idiosyncratic preferences, but from what he takes to be (at least partially) empirical observations of reality. The Will to Power is an attempt at positing this ever-present striving for growth, advancement, enhancement, and competition (both ruthless and benign) as the most fundamental aspect of life, and therefore as something that must be embraced if one is to say “Yes!” to life and avoid a lapse into nihilism. It is Will to Power that has led to life as we know it, and we attempt to do away with it at our peril. It is in *this* sense that the Will to Power is “the only game in town.”

Should we accept these observations on the ruthlessness of reality and its supposed indispensability? After all, none of this amounts to conclusive proof of the correctness of such a view of life, and by no means dispels the “is/ought” objection. One may, as the

Christians, trust that life is but a test, and have faith in an afterlife with God. One may observe all the suffering in life and, as the Buddhists and as Schopenhauer did, decide that rather than saying “Yes!” to life, one ought to sound a resounding “No!” One may, as socialist, communist, or utopians of various sorts hope to improve the lot of man to such a degree that life no longer appears a burden, thereby removing the need for any such philosophies and faiths. One may even fantasize about possible future technological advancements, such as the uploading of the mind to a virtual realm of infinite possibilities. We cannot “disprove” these alternatives. All we can do is to compare them to each other and to Nietzsche’s philosophy, and see how they measure up. Nietzsche was perfectly aware of this, and so this is precisely what he did. While Nietzsche’s criticisms of Christianity are manifold, I think the following key criticisms shall suffice as examples for why Nietzsche condemns it: First, Christianity creates a mass of psychological distress as well as psychological and physiological weakening, for it demands of man a constant struggle with, and shame over, all his basic instincts. Second, it makes man focus on the afterlife rather than *this* life, which halts growth and advancement. Third, it is largely founded on *ressentiment*, which, as we have discussed earlier, has distorting qualities and thus leads to distorted valuations. Fourth, it is insufficiently positivistic for the scientific age; we cannot take it seriously, for it demands too much blind faith. For these reasons, Nietzsche would have us reject Christianity. Buddhism, in turn, is much more scientifically sound than Christianity: “Buddhism is the only really *positivistic* religion history has to show us, even in its epistemology (a strict phenomenalism –), it no longer speaks of ‘the struggle against *sin*’ but, quite in accordance with actuality, ‘the struggle against *suffering*’.” (A 20) Although Buddhism poses much less of a problem for the critical mind than Christianity does, the issue is that it appears to lead us nowhere. The grand goal is the negation of suffering, which means for the Buddhist the negation of life. If everyone adopted this philosophy, then any pursuit of progress would be halted, for we would spend all our time meditating, seeking the cessation of our existence through Nirvana (which, incidentally, is both a key aspect of Buddhism and simultaneously *does* pose problems to the critical mind, for we cannot verify the possibility of Nirvana). In countering such a view on life, we must rely on human intuition and emotion, for I think anyone but the most intensely suffering individuals, when they think of the future of humanity, would wish for something more than to see us all become cave-dwelling meditators that have sworn off life as nothing but a meaningless

realm of suffering meant to be abolished. There is no advancement this way, no growth; there is only stagnation. Are we so tired of life that this is the best we can hope for? Is there nothing sickly in such a view of life? Do we not wish for more? I find these arguments against Christianity and Buddhism compelling. As for the more worldly attempts to improve man's lot, such as socialism, Nietzsche rejected them for related reasons. It is not that Nietzsche considered the establishment of some such political system as impossible, but rather that he believed it would lead to something wholly undesirable. His arguments for this should by now sound familiar: the removal of competition and hardship, equalisation of rank of all, and a superficial goal of happiness and comfort with a lacking greater vision invariably goes against the principle of Will to Power and leads to stagnation and mediocrity. Perhaps the clearest example of what Nietzsche feared in this instance is to be found in *Zarathustra*, with Zarathustra's famous description of the "last man." "Alas, the time is coming when man will no longer give birth to a star. Alas, the time of the most despicable man is coming, he that is no longer able to despise himself. Behold, I show you the *last man*. [sic]" (Z, p. 129) The last man is one that wishes to work a little, but not too much, for while work is "entertaining," one must be "careful lest the entertainment be too harrowing" (ibid.) "The last man has "invented happiness" (ibid.) and is satisfied with it. The image of the last man is one of humanity that has reached a stage where only the mediocre is desirable. Nihilism has taken full hold, no values are recognized, and when there are no values, then no great exertions are undertaken in their name. No grand goals are present any longer, and only quiet comfort is sought. "'What is love? What is creation? What is longing? What is a star?' thus asks the last man, and he blinks." (ibid.) Zarathustra described this last man as that which is "most contemptible," (ibid. p. 128) and given the contempt with which Nietzsche spoke of socialists in *Beyond Good and Evil*, I think they represent precisely this the danger of this last man for him:

The *total degeneration* of humanity down to what today's socialist fools and nitwits see as their "man of the future" – as their ideal! – this degeneration and diminution of humanity into the perfect herd animal (or, as they say, into man in a "free society"), this brutalizing process of turning humanity into stunted little animals with equal rights and equal claims is no doubt *possible*! Anyone who has ever thought this

possibility through to the end knows one more disgust than other men, – and perhaps a new *task* as well! . . . (BGE 203)

When speaking of Buddhism, it is clear enough that a faith that classifies life as meaningless suffering must lead to stagnation. That this is so with socialism and other such political/economical systems is not equally clear. Delving any further into this issue would take us too far afield from the task at hand, so I shall say only that I am inclined to agree that humans need some overarching goal past merely securing basic well-being and comfort, and if society provides said well-being while leaving all spiritual and philosophical concerns on the side, this *shall* leave its population impoverished, either resulting in people going from one distraction and pleasure to the next, or having them devote themselves to superficial ideologies; to use a famous quote usually attributed to G. K. Chesterton: “When men stop believing in God they don't believe in nothing; they believe in anything.” Nietzsche could not accept belief in (a Christian) God, but surely held that his alternative is not tantamount to Chesterton's “anything,” but rather something more substantive.

The above comments Nietzsche makes on Christianity, Buddhism, and socialism are all empirical claims pertaining to the effects of said belief systems on humans and their development. One may accept some or all of these as factually correct, or reject them as factually incorrect. Which of these belief systems one ultimately opts for, on the other hand, cannot be said to be a question of being factually correct or incorrect, for we have no basis of judging one as being “wrong” in such matters. The reason I nonetheless do not wish to call Nietzsche's views as *nothing but* idiosyncratic personal preferences is that they are based on a wide variety of empirical observations, and ones that seem to me to be well worth considering. Nietzsche speaks in extremes, and these may frighten away; the above quotations from *Beyond Good and Evil* can certainly be hard to swallow.²⁵ Yet, prioritizing growth and (intellectual/spiritual/cultural) advancement over well-being and happiness is by no means exclusive to radical elitists. As an example of this, I provide what happened in a philosophy seminar I once attended. My fellow students and I were asked whether we would like, if we could, to live the life of a dog if we knew this dog would be healthy and

²⁵ Nietzsche's *Gay Science* indeed has much more gayety in it than most of his other texts, and many of the points made in *Beyond Good and Evil* can be found in the *Gay Science* in a form much easier to swallow. *Beyond Good and Evil* was a polemic, and this should not be forgotten when reading it.

happy. A Golden Retriever living in a wealthy family that cares deeply for it, say. In a class of approximately twenty, all but one answered “no.” If happiness were truly the only priority, then such an answer would be nonsensical, and we should in that case all say “yes.” Yet, only one in twenty would take such an option when the price would be the loss of their intellect, their understanding, their consciousness. I think everyone had an understanding that this path they chose would likely include much more suffering than the path of the Golden Retriever, yet they were evidently willing to accept this suffering. This is obviously anecdotal, yet although this may be nothing but the bias of a philosophy student, I do believe most people, philosophy students or not, would make the same choice. Nietzsche’s prioritization of growth and excellence is representative of precisely this choice, merely taken further than most would take it. Adherence to such a path must perhaps be relegated to the realm of *faith*. I think, however (as far as this can be said without it being an oxymoron), that it is in many aspects a *rational* faith.

Summary and conclusion

It is now time to summarize what we have covered and see what we are left with. First, values must not clash with our nature, our type-facts, but must rather align with said nature and enable and glorify it, thus motivating us in our lives and directing us forward and upward. In large part, we have no choice in making our values conform to our nature, for our nature largely dictates our inclinations, and our inclinations dictates our actions and directs our beliefs. Yet, our environment does influence our development, and to the extent that we are ourselves conscious of this process we must strive to relinquish those values which our environment has furnished us with that contradicts our being. As well as aligning with our nature, values must be active rather than reactive. We must scour our spirit and ensure that our actions, our beliefs, and our values stem from a place of plenty, overflow, and superfluity lest we devolve into creatures of bitterness, envy, or *ressentiment*. As long as we ensure that these two requirements are met and we are fortunate enough to be of a high enough type to be capable of such creation, there is openness to a great variety of values. Precisely who is and who is not worthy and capable of such value-creation is not

conclusively answered. Some aspects of Nietzsche's writings leave us with the impressions that only the Goethe's and Napoleon's are worthy (and even this is not iron-clad), while other aspects point us to a much more open landscape, including rogues such as Prado and presumably all kinds of eccentrics. I am inclined towards a rank-ordering of the higher types, where one can indeed acknowledge a degree of worth to a wide variety of individuals given that they are active in spirit, noble of character, and creative, brave, and strong enough to go their own path while simultaneously acknowledging that this does not put them at the rank of a Goethe. The question of whether values are to be individualized or adapted to the community is also left without any definitive answer. Nietzsche displayed an admiration for the individual who can separate himself from the crowd, go his own way and offer "sacrifices on altars that are dedicated to an unknown god," (GS 55) yet he also desired a return to the Greek spirit and to aristocracy. I propose that this is not truly an either-or question. Nietzsche wished for an individual or a group of individuals that would, thanks to their active spirit, seek a return to something more akin to the natural and active society of the Greeks. He himself sought to inspire them through his works, especially his *Zarathustra*. Should this individual or these individuals be imbued with sufficient force and drive, they shall naturally inspire others to follow them and their values. If these individuals succeed in establishing a society or inspiring others of like spirit to do so, they shall (hopefully) open up for a diversity of values. We must remember, however, that Nietzsche was no social engineer, and the precise form any such "New Athens" would be up to the "new philosophers" with the aptitude for such societal structuring. Moving finally from the values themselves to their truth-status, while I conceded that the values cannot be universally binding and cannot be "proved," I proposed that Nietzsche's observations on the harshness of nature/life is accurate, and that his appeal for the alignment of one's values with "the only game in town" of the Will to Power represents a type "rational faith." We cannot *know* that such an alignment is the correct way to go, but given that this is how the world appears to have functioned for the entirety of its existence and that it is largely or even wholly through this harsh mechanism that life on Earth has emerged, it is not unreasonable to opt for an acceptance of and alignment with such a natural order rather than a stubborn rejection of it.

I hope this tour of Nietzsche's treatment of values has not been found too unpalatable. While I have striven to tackle both the individual and the community-minded aspects of value-creation, I recognize that when one first encounters Nietzsche, it is likely that one will primarily be struck by the aspects of his writings that deal with the individual, the personal, and with how to create one's own values. Given this reality, I hope that this thesis has made some of the nuances of value-creation as Nietzsche conceived of them more understandable, and that the path towards the state of a Child capable of creating values is perhaps not quite as nebulous it was prior to the reading of this thesis. I further hope my secondary goal of dissuading the reader from any undue defanging of Nietzsche while simultaneously preventing any relegation of Nietzsche into the category of heartless brute as having left some (positive) impression. I take the unique combination of the compassionate thinker urging hardness in spite of himself as precisely that which makes Nietzsche so interesting, and without an understanding of this paradox, Nietzsche's philosophy loses much of its flavour.

Bibliography:

Clark, M. (1990) *Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy*. New York: Cambridge University Press

Jung, C. G. (NA) *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*. (2. Ed) Ukemi Audiobooks. [Audiobook.]

Kaufmann, W. (2013) *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist* [Kindle Edition.] New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Klossowski, P. (1997) *Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle*. London: The Athlone Press

Nietzsche, F. W. (1982) Thus Spoke Zarathustra in *The Portable Nietzsche by Kaufmann, W.* (ed.) [Kindle Ed.] New York: The Viking Press

Nietzsche, F. W. (1989) On the Genealogy of Morals in *On The Genealogy of Morals and Ecce Homo* (VINTAGE BOOKS ED.) by Kaufmann, W. (ed.) [Kindle Edition.]. New York: Vintage Books

- Nietzsche, F. W. (1990) *Twilight of the Idols and Antichrist*. London: Penguin Publishing. [Kindle Edition.]
- Nietzsche, F. W. (1997) *Nietzsche: Untimely Meditations* in Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy by Breazeale, D. (ed.) [Kindle Edition.] New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Nietzsche, F. W. (2001) *The Gay Science: With a Prelude in German Rhymes and an Appendix of Songs*. Ed: Williams, B. New York: Cambridge University Press. [Kindle Edition.]
- Nietzsche, F. W. (2013) *Beyond Good and Evil* [Kindle Edition] New York: Cambridge University
- Nietzsche, F. W. (2017) *The Will to Power*. UK: Penguin Publishing. [Kindle Edition.]
- Leiter, B. (2005) *Nietzsche on Morality*. Taylor & Francis e-Library.
- Russell, B. (2005) *History of Western Philosophy*. Taylor & Francis e-Library. [Kindle Edition.]
- Schacht, Richard (1983), *Nietzsche*. London: Routledge.
- Szyborska, W. (1996) *Poems New and Collected*. Nobel Laureate Foundation.
- Wallace, R. J. (N/A) *Ressentiment, Value, and Self-Vindication: Making Sense of Nietzsche's Slave Revolt*. In: Leiter, B. (2005) *Nietzsche And Morality*. Taylor & Francis e-Library.
- Young, J. (2010) *Friedrich Nietzsche A Philosophical Biography*. New York: Cambridge University Press [Kindle Edition.]
- Шестов, Л. (2018) *Добро в учении графа Толстого и Ницше* (Russian Edition). Strelbyskyy Multimedia Publishing. [Kindle Edition.]