

# Nietzsche's Metaethics: A Eudaimonistic Theory

An Investigation into Nietzsche's Theory of Value

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## **Introduction**

Friedrich Nietzsche had a vision for humans where “higher” men flourish and move society forward by constantly challenging accepted beliefs and values. What follows from this is that Nietzsche’s discussions of value -- what is good or bad, what is good or evil -- are intended to help us reach this ideal world and thus ultimately, human flourishing. My interpretation of Nietzsche differs from some well-known interpretations (I will focus on that of Brian Leiter but will mention a theory that Thomas Hurka endorses as well) in that I interpret Nietzsche as denying a distinction between non-moral and moral value. Instead, I argue that Nietzsche endorses a kind of eudaimonistic theory of value in which what is valuable is what is conducive to living a good or flourishing life. Like Aristotle – another endorser of a eudaimonistic theory of ethics – Nietzsche believes that what constitutes this “good life” for a human being will depend on her underlying nature, and the achievement of that good will depend on cultivating certain virtues. Of course, the virtues that Aristotle argues lead to flourishing *do not* resemble those virtues that Nietzsche would endorse.

In order to reach this conclusion, I will outline one of the most influential interpretations of Nietzsche and value -- that of Brian Leiter -- and then argue that his understanding of Nietzsche’s theory of value ignores Nietzsche’s ultimate aim, the flourishing of both “higher” and “lower” men. When we put what Nietzsche says about value in his work in the context of what seems to be his ultimate aim, I argue that the distinction between non-moral and moral value falls away, and value for Nietzsche becomes a more Aristotelian notion of “human flourishing.” Because of the essential dissimilarity of humans, however, I will argue that Nietzsche believes that “flourishing” looks different for different types of people. Under this

interpretation, Nietzsche turns out to be a realist about “moral” value, because there is no longer a clear distinction between the modern notions of moral and non-moral value.

In this paper, I will first outline how modern philosophers typically make the distinction between non-moral and moral value. The rest of the paper will be divided into three parts: first Brian Leiter’s interpretation of Nietzsche’s theory of non-moral good, second Leiter’s and Thomas Hurka’s interpretations of Nietzsche’s theory of moral good, and third my interpretation of Nietzsche’s theory of value. In Part I, I will first explain the parallel that Brian Leiter draws between Nietzsche’s theory of *non-moral* value and Peter Railton’s objective realist theory of non-moral goodness, and outline some of what Nietzsche says in his work that supports this theory of value. In Part II, I will provide a brief overview of different Metaethical views, explain Nietzsche’s “will to power” argument, and outline how Leiter and Thomas Hurka interpret the “will to power” doctrine and Nietzsche’s theory of moral value. In the last part of my thesis, Part III, I will argue for a different interpretation of Nietzsche’s theory of value. I will first explain what seems to be Nietzsche’s ultimate aim in his writing, for us to flourish as human beings through the progress of society. I will argue that it is this ultimate aim that drives Nietzsche’s theory of value. I will outline what Nietzsche’s realist eudaimonistic theory of value will look like, and then I will explain what I believe Nietzsche would say constitutes flourishing for “higher” types and “lower” types. I will conclude that Nietzsche can be interpreted as a moral realist, but in a eudaimonistic sense.

### *§1. Moral vs. Non-Moral Good*

I want to ultimately argue that Nietzsche is a realist about value in the eudaimonistic sense and thus there is no distinction between non-moral and moral value for Nietzsche. I need to begin, however, by defining how modern philosophers typically distinguish non-moral and moral

value. This distinction is important in understanding how philosophers such as Brian Leiter try to categorize Nietzsche. Generally in this paper I will use non-moral value when I am referring to what is “good” and “bad” for a person in a prudential sense, and I will use moral value when I am referring to what is “good” or “bad” from a moral point of view. There are many ways of defining what should be considered a “moral point of view,” but generally we agree that it is impartial in some sense, it considers interests other than the particular agent, and that judgments made from the moral point of view are in some sense universal. Prudential value, on the other hand, is concerned with what is in the self-interest of a *particular* agent, and therefore is not impartial, does not (necessarily) consider the interests of others, and does not yield judgments that should necessarily apply universally to others.<sup>1</sup> In this way, my definition of moral and non-moral good allows for a contradiction to appear between what is non-morally good for you and what is right (what is morally good). Another distinction between non-moral value and moral value is highlighted by the notion of *praise* and *blame*. If a person does something that is morally good, she is *praised* for the action, and *blamed* if she does something morally wrong. If, however, a person does something against her *non-moral* good, she is not blamed but we merely agree that what she did was “bad for her.”

Peter Railton makes a very clear distinction between non-moral and moral value in his article, “Moral Realism;” since Railton’s theory of non-moral value is instructive in Brian Leiter’s interpretation of Nietzsche’s own view, it makes sense to look at how Railton defines moral and non-moral value. In looking at what distinguishes moral norms from non-moral norms, Railton establishes certain formal features of morality. First, Railton argues that morality is concerned with the interests of more than one individual, while non-moral good seems to be concerned only with the agent in question. This is consistent with how I will distinguish moral

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<sup>1</sup> I formed this particular conception of non-moral and moral value with the help of Professor Angela Smith.

and non-moral good in this paper. Nietzsche's theory of non-moral good is a theory that relies on characteristics of individuals – an individual's constitution – so it makes sense to talk about non-moral good in the context of one person's interest, not a collective interest. Second, Railton asserts that moral evaluation is such that “the interests of the strongest or most prestigious party do not always prevail, purely prudential reasons may be subordinated, and so on” (Railton 1997, 150). This assertion of Railton's needs to be picked apart, for it is important to establish whether this feature of moral good applies to Nietzsche's view as well. This feature, which Railton sums up in saying that morality assesses actions and outcomes from a “social point of view,” does seem to be consistent with how Nietzsche separates morality and prudential goodness. What is important, however, is that Nietzsche does not believe that “morality” – here defined as morality in the pejorative sense (MPS) as I will outline later in Section 2.3 – should hold any force for us. In fact, it is exactly this characteristic of “morality,” that it is from a social point of view and is thus universal, which leads Nietzsche to reject it. What is misleading in Railton's clarification of morality as from a social point of view is this notion that the interests of the strongest or most prestigious party do not always prevail (Railton 1997, 150). Nietzsche wants to say that “morality” is not only such that the interests of the strongest do not *always* prevail, but that it is in fact designed to secure exactly the opposite. Morality in the pejorative sense was created as such and ensures that the ostensible interests of the *weakest* prevail. I will explain this much more clearly in Sections 2.2 and 2.3 when I outline Nietzsche's view of “higher” and “lower” beings (the *strong* and the *weak*) and his critique of morality, but for now it is only important that we understand Nietzsche's characterization of “morality” as a construction that systematically ignores the interests of the strongest. For Nietzsche, as we will see, this is unequivocally a *bad* thing for the stronger and thus it should *at least* be the case that “morality” is not universal.

## **PART I: Nietzsche's Theory of Non-Moral Good**

### *§1. Railton's Objective, but Relational, Theory of Non-Moral Good*

Peter Railton's overall strategy is to give a reductive naturalistic realist account of both non-moral and moral value. Realism about value is the view that there is a fact of the matter about what is valuable, independent of what we believe. This is in contrast to value anti-realism, the view that there is no "fact of the matter" about what things have value, and thus all of our value claims are either false or should be interpreted as expressions of non-cognitive attitudes such as liking, approval, or endorsement. Railton's brand of realism is reductive naturalistic moral realism, which means that Railton argues moral values can be reduced to natural properties. Another brand of moral realism is G.E. Moore's intuitionism, which argues that value is a real property, albeit a simple, unanalyzable, non-natural property which we can detect through a special moral sense. The key difference between an intuitionist account of morality and Railton's theory is that intuitionism dictates that moral properties *cannot* be reduced to natural facts.

Peter Railton's theory of non-moral good is an example of how one might argue that non-moral good is objective, but relational (as Brian Leiter does). For someone's non-moral good to be objective, it must exist and have certain features, independently of whether anyone *thinks* that it exists or has those features. In particular, a person's non-moral good does not depend upon what she *thinks* her non-moral good is. For example, Cathy may think that exercising everyday is good for her. She may have reason for this belief, such as reading that exercise improves your health, keeps you from gaining weight, etc. In this example, however, imagine that Cathy has a disease in which exercising makes the disease worse. With this information, we would *not* still say that exercising everyday is non-morally good for Cathy. Exercising everyday actually is

against Cathy's non-moral good *even though* Cathy thinks that it is non-morally good for her. If a person's non-moral good is relational, it may well be the case that different people have different non-moral goods. To the extent that *something* varies between human beings, different people's non-moral good may be different. In his theory, Railton lays out an argument for non-moral good that posits both objectivity and relationality. As he rests his argument for moral good on his argument for non-moral good, Railton is both a realist about non-moral and moral value. So while Leiter would not argue that Railton's view is Nietzsche's view – because he argues that Nietzsche is a realist about non-moral good and an anti-realist about moral good -- Railton's theory of non-moral goodness is useful for illustrating how an argument for an objective, relational non-moral good for human beings might succeed.

Railton's account of non-moral good rests on Hume's Instrumental Conception of Rationality. Under this conception, rationality is a matter of adopting appropriate means to the achievement of one's ends (Railton 1997, 142). This means that X is rational for person A to do if and only if X is a means for person A to achieve his ends. Accordingly, something that is rational for one person to do (because it is consistent with his ends) will not necessarily be a rational action for another person with different ends. One's ultimate ends and values are not themselves capable of being assessed as rational or irrational because one's ultimate ends are provided by passion. These passions (interests of a sort) are not themselves capable of being assessed as rational or irrational (Railton 1997, 142). Under this Humean conception of rationality, only the means about which one tries to achieve her interests can be assessed as rational or irrational, according to how well the means achieve the individual's ultimate ends. In sum, it follows from Hume's Instrumental Conception of Rationality that what's "good for" an

individual is going to depend upon the fundamental motivational nature of that individual, and this fundamental motivational nature cannot be assessed as rational or irrational.

In building his theory of non-moral good on Hume's conception of rationality, Railton could have simply concluded that what is non-morally good for a person is fulfilling his or her individual desires and interests. Railton rejects this view, however, because he thinks that we do not always know our own non-moral good; we can be mistaken. Railton outlines an account of *objectified subjective interests* that accounts for a possible discrepancy between what our actual wants and desires are and what constitutes our non-moral good (our objectified wants and desires). Railton's account identifies both non-moral value and moral value with a complex set of naturalistic facts. To arrive at this point, he begins with simple naturalistic facts about a person –her psychology, her interests and desires – and builds from there to articulate what is “good for” an individual. In his account of non-moral value, Railton begins with an individual's subjective interests. According to Railton, a person's subjective interests are his wants and desires (Railton 1997, 142). We can objectify these interests by determining what interests an individual would have if he had unqualified cognitive and imaginative power, full factual and nomological information, and full instrumental rationality. This idealized version of the agent (let's call him A+) would want his non-ideal self (A) to have certain interests; these Railton calls *objectified subjective interests* (Railton 1997, 142). While A may not have all of the facts and thus choose a particular interest, it is only an *objective* interest if A+ would choose it. Railton seems to want his theory of objectified subjective interests to work like this: Person A may have a desire to climb Mt Everest tomorrow. Person A's idealized version of himself, A+, has unqualified cognitive and imaginative power and sees that Person A will likely die if he climbs Mount Everest tomorrow because he is not prepared. Because of this knowledge, A+ wishes for A's



desire to be to climb House Mountain tomorrow, not Mount Everest. So while A's subjective interest is to climb Mount Everest, his objective interest is to climb House Mountain. The reductive basis of these objectified subjective interests are those facts about A and his circumstances that lead A+ to arrive at his views about what A should want. In this example, the reduction basis is A's current fitness, his breathing capability, and his current health, as well as his (genuine) desire to climb a mountain. This reduction basis determines what constitutes A's objective interests. According to Railton, acting upon one's objective interests is non-morally good for an individual. Following the example, climbing House Mountain is non-morally good for Person A. In clearer terms, X is non-morally good for A if and only if X would satisfy an objective interest of A (Railton 1997, 143). This principle constitutes Railton's conception of a person's non-moral good.

Railton supports his account of non-moral value by appealing to a wants/interest mechanism that "permits individuals to achieve self-conscious and un-self-conscious learning about their interests through experience" (Railton 1997, 144). This mechanism explains how, through trial and error, we are able to better understand what our objective interests are. For example, suppose Jake has a (subjective) desire to drink fifteen beers on a Saturday night. When he does this, however, he wakes up on Sunday morning with a considerable hangover, such that he has to stay in bed all day and isn't able to do the things that he likes to do on Sundays. The wants/interests mechanism allows Jake to learn about his objective interest (of perhaps not becoming intoxicated on Saturday night) through his hangover the next day. Railton argues that what makes our judgments about our non-moral good even more reliable is the ability for us to learn about our interests over "multiple lives and life-spans" (Railton 1997, 145). Human

beings, evolutionarily, have acquired a better understanding of our objective interests through trial and error.

Because of the instrumental conception of rationality, we cannot assume that “everyone has the same objective intrinsic interests” (Railton 1997, 144). “We should, however, expect that when personal and situational similarities exist across individuals—that is, when there are similarities in reduction bases—there will to that extent be corresponding similarities in their interests” (Railton 1997, 144). This is why the wants/interests mechanism can generally be applied to groups and cultures, not merely individuals. Despite this tendency, however, Railton does allow for some potentially unusual interests to be considered part of someone’s non-moral good. He says, “Depending upon the nature and circumstances of given individuals, they might have objective interests in things we find wrong or repulsive, and that do not seem to us part of the good life” (Railton 1997, fn. 20). He clarifies his point by saying, “people, or at least some people, might be put together in a way that makes some not-very-appealing things essential to their flourishing” (Railton 1997, 161). For example, if we assume that a serial killer’s nature and circumstances are such that they truly have the desired end of killing people, then Railton would concede that it is part of the serial killer’s non-moral good to kill people, however “unappealing” it may seem to the majority of people (because *their* nature and circumstances are such that they do not desire to kill others). In allowing for this kind of deviation from the “norm” in terms of non-moral good, Railton confirms that his theory is based on Hume’s Instrumental Conception of Rationality in which an individual’s non-moral good is determined by her fundamental motivational nature. Railton’s wants/interests mechanism explains how his version of non-moral value is plausible because it allows for a non-moral good that is independent of what we *believe*

to be our non-moral good (objectivity), and also explains how we *do sometimes* get it right and learn what our non-moral good is.

## §2. *Leiter's Interpretation of Nietzsche's Theory of Non-Moral Good*

Leiter argues that Nietzsche endorses an objective but relational theory of non-moral good in which what is non-morally good for a person depends on his constitution. While Leiter draws the comparison with Railton in order to show that an objective relational theory of non-moral good is possible, he doesn't think that Nietzsche has the *same* view. Rather, Nietzsche seems to want to say that natural facts determine what kind of person one is ("higher" or "lower") and these natural facts – and in turn the type of person one is – will determine what one's non-moral good is. Leiter further argues that Nietzsche's theory of non-moral good makes it such that "morality" (or MPS) is bad. The "higher" type man has a constitution such that "morality" (or MPS) is non-morally *bad* for him.

### §2.1 *Natural Facts Determine One's Interests*

Leiter argues that like Railton, Nietzsche seems to be committed to naturalism about prudential value. Nietzsche's theory of a person's underlying constitution – the idea that natural facts determine our interests -- supports this naturalistic interpretation. Nietzsche says that humans are constituted by a combination of natural facts; these facts, which Brian Leiter calls "type-facts," are "either physiological facts about the person, or facts about a person's unconscious drives or affects" (Leiter 2002, 91). All other facts about a person, her conscious interests and desires, her actions, her aversions, can be *explained* with reference to these fundamental type-facts. For example, Person A's desire to have a large circle of friends that are all like her can be explained with reference to her constitution, a part of which is an unconscious drive to be a part of a group. Her preference for a large group of friends is not, in essence, a

result of a decision on her part to make a lot of friends. Instead is a result of her constitution and her circumstances. In the *Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche says, “our thoughts, values, every ‘yes’, ‘no’, ‘if’ and ‘but’ grow from us with the same inevitability as fruits borned on a tree – all related and referring to one another and testimonial to one will, one health, one earth, one sun” (GM<sup>2</sup> Pref. 2). Further, Nietzsche seems to think that our constitutions are different enough that there exist different *types* of people. In *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche highlights this view, saying “[The] question is always who *he* is, and who the *other* person is. In a person, for example, who is called and made to command, self-denial and modest self-effacement would not be a virtue but the waste of a virtue: thus it seems to me” (BGE 221). There is sufficient dissimilarity in humans such that virtues cannot be universal. Moralities, if there exist some, should be many to account for the dissimilarity in humans. Nietzsche says, “Morality in Europe today is herd animal morality, in other words...merely *one* type of human morality beside which, before which, and after which many other types, above all *higher* moralities, are, or ought to be, possible” (BGE 202). In essence, Nietzsche seems to be saying that there are different types of people in the world, and these different types of people have different interests, goals, and desires (according to their specific type-facts). According to Leiter, this view of our constitutions informs both Nietzsche’s view of prudential good and his critique of morality. I will discuss how Nietzsche’s view of how interests are determined ties into Leiter’s interpretation of Nietzsche’s theory of non-moral good and will further discuss how it informs his critique of morality in Section 2.3. It is important to note here that I do agree with Leiter on what constitutes

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<sup>2</sup> Throughout this paper, I will use the following abbreviations for citations for Nietzsche’s works: *Genealogy of Morals* (GM), *Beyond Good and Evil* (BGE), *The Gay Science* (GS), *Will to Power* (WTP), *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (TSZ), *Twilight of the Idols* (TI), and *Daybreak* (D). I will cite them as (*Work Section*). For secondary sources, I will use the standard Chicago form (*Author Date, Page*).

a person's underlying nature according to Nietzsche, and will use these ideas to support *my* interpretation of Nietzsche's theory of value in Part III.

## §2.2 "Higher" and "Lower" Types of People

Nietzsche asserts that natural facts determine what type of person an individual is; what naturally follows from this is Nietzsche's discussion of what these different types of people look like. Throughout his works, Nietzsche speaks of two types of people, "higher" and "lower."<sup>3</sup>

Nietzsche never explicitly defines what "higher" and "lower" types are – perhaps because he doesn't want to ascribe too high of an importance on where a specific line can be drawn – but examples and characteristics of "higher" beings pop up in various places in his work. Traits like creativity, the desire for greatness, self-love, and solitariness are often associated with people like Goethe, Beethoven, Napoleon, and Nietzsche himself – all people to whom Nietzsche attributes this "higher" nature. In *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche says things like, "every choice human being strives instinctively for a citadel and a secrecy where he is saved from the crowd, the many, the great majority" (BGE 26) and, "the noble soul has reverence for itself" (BGE 287). Nietzsche also seems to want to say that "higher types" think only in terms of achievement and the necessary steps to achievement, not in terms of the sacrifices or unpleasantness they may have to encounter along the way. Nietzsche says, "Brave and creative men never consider pleasure or pain as ultimate values- they are epiphenomenal; one must desire both if one is to achieve anything" (WTP 579). Similarly, he argues in *Beyond Good and Evil*, "a human being who strives for something great considers everyone he meets on his way either as a means or as a delay and obstacle – or as a temporary resting place" (BGE 273).

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<sup>3</sup> Nietzsche continually refers to these "higher" and "lower" types as higher *men* and lower *men*. I will continue to use the word *men* throughout this paper when appropriate in order to stay true to Nietzsche's writing. I do acknowledge, however, that we do not lose the integrity of the analysis of "higher" and "lower" men if we assume that *men* here includes women as well.

Nietzsche best defines “lower” types as those who are constituted by drives that are contrary to the ones above. “Lower” types seem to value attaining pleasure and avoiding pain. Nietzsche also ascribes the drive to be a part of the group to the “lower” types. In his texts, Nietzsche continually refers to the “lower” types as “the herd” and as “weaklings” (GM 1.14). As we will explore later, this drive to act as a “herd” is one of the characteristics of “lower” types that makes “morality” *ostensibly* prudentially good for these types. (I will argue, however, that “morality” is not actually good, all things considered, for the “lower” types). It seems that Nietzsche believes that the vast majority of us are “lower” types and only creative geniuses are of the “higher” type. Nietzsche says in the *Genealogy of Morals*, “the physiological casualties and the disgruntled” are “the majority of mortals” (GM 3.1). This distinction between the higher and lower types is important to keep in mind when we examine Nietzsche’s critique of morality.

Although Nietzsche uses the terms “higher” and “lower” – which might suggest that he is making an evaluative claim about the greater worth of “higher” beings – Leiter argues that he is simply making a distinction between two different types of people, which is helpful for arguing that there are different (non-moral) goods for different people. Just as Railton argues that people’s non-moral goods will be similar to the extent that people are similar to each other and different to the extent that they are dissimilar, Nietzsche’s view is consistent. This division of people into “higher” and “lower” beings is Nietzsche’s way of making the similarity/dissimilarity argument. We might even refer to “higher” and “lower” people as “Type-X” people and “Type-Y” people; why should it be that a person with a Type-X constitution has the same moral good as a person with a Type-Y constitution? It is important for Leiter’s argument that Nietzsche is not making a value judgment about different people, however. If one interprets Nietzsche to be arguing that there really are *higher* beings and *lower* beings and the higher

beings are actually higher and the lower beings are actually lower, then it suggests that Nietzsche may endorse a view of realism about non-prudential value. This is because in such a case “higher” and “lower” become normative statements. Leiter wants to say that Nietzsche is an anti-realist about moral value, though, and thus his discussion of “higher” and “lower” beings must not be a normative claim but simply an evaluative one. As I will discuss later, Leiter argues that Nietzsche is simply expressing his *taste* for the “higher,” creative types in naming the categories of people “higher” and “lower.”

### §2.3 *Nietzsche’s Critique of Morality Informs his Theory of Non-Moral Good*

We can further understand Leiter’s interpretations of Nietzsche’s relational view of prudential value by looking at Nietzsche’s critique of morality; according to Leiter, it is *precisely* the fact that morality threatens the prudential good of some people that leads Nietzsche to dismiss it. In this Section, I will first define what Nietzsche means when he refers to the word morality. Then, I will outline Nietzsche’s specific critique of morality and explain how, according to Leiter, it informs his position that prudential (or non-moral) value is the only kind of value that should be universalized and applied to everyone.

When Nietzsche uses the term “morality” in his writing, he means what Brian Leiter refers to as “morality in the pejorative sense” or MPS. MPS here, ironically, is simply a term to designate that morality which Nietzsche criticizes, but of course we need to qualify it more than that to avoid circularity. Leiter takes MPS to consist of a descriptive and normative component: first, that MPS “presupposes three *particular* descriptive claims about the nature of human agents pertaining to free will, the transparency of the self, and the essential similarity of all people”; and second, that MPS “embraces norms that harm the ‘highest men’ while benefitting the ‘lowest’” (Leiter 2002, 78). The three descriptive claims that Leiter speaks of are as follows:

humans have free will, humans are transparent such that their motives can be determined, and humans are sufficiently similar so that one morality can apply to all. Nietzsche argues against each of these theses and thus rejects the descriptive component of MPS. In this paper, however, I will only discuss the first descriptive claim – that of the existence of free will – and the normative claim because they are the only arguments that are crucial for Leiter in making the case that Nietzsche is a realist about non-moral value.

Free will is the notion that humans have autonomy of self: that they freely choose, and thus are morally responsible, for their actions. Nietzsche argues that a truly autonomous agent (acting under free will) would have to be *causa sui* – the cause of itself. Because nothing can be *causa sui*, however, no person is truly autonomous. His second argument against the notion of free will, and the one more relevant to our discussion, is based on Nietzsche’s belief that all humans are an aggregation of type-facts about ourselves, and that we act according to our constitution. Nietzsche says,

“The ‘inner world’ is full of phantoms... : the will is one of them. The will no longer moves anything, hence does not explain anything either – it merely accompanies events; it can also be absent. The so-called *motive*: another error. Merely a surface phenomenon of consciousness – something alongside the deed that is more likely to cover up the antecedents of the deeds than to represent them...What follows from this? There are no mental causes at all” (TI VI:3).

In Nietzsche’s view, the will is not free (and doesn’t explain anything) but is merely a non-causal accompaniment of events and actions. Because people’s actions (and thus their wills) are somehow a function of, at its core, type-facts about people, the will cannot possibly be free. If the will cannot be free, then people cannot be held morally responsible for their actions and “morality” or MPS does not have any binding force.<sup>4</sup> In sum, humans have no motivation to

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<sup>4</sup> It is important to note here that while Nietzsche believes that the will is not free, he doesn’t want to go as far as to say everything that happens is *pre-destined*. The will is not free because a man is only capable of doing what is in his constitution – that is, what his type-facts allow. Circumstances and situations,



follow what “morality” dictates *for the sake of morality*. MPS should only be followed if it is independently determined that following MPS will lead to the fulfillment of one’s non-moral good. As I will discuss later, Nietzsche actually thinks that for the “higher” types, what morality dictates is detrimental to their non-moral good. While he is more concerned about the “higher” types, I will argue that he also seems to think that the unequivocal acceptance of MPS is bad for the “lower” types as well. When I argue this however, I will approach it from the standpoint of what is good or bad, all things considered. I will not look at merely prudential reasons as Leiter does.

Leiter argues that even though Nietzsche *does* reject the three descriptive components of MPS, Nietzsche’s *main* critique of morality is an attack on the normative part of MPS, his claim that MPS systematically hinders the flourishing of the “higher” types. Nietzsche’s argument for this rests on his fundamental idea that not only are people *not* sufficiently similar so that one morality works for all, it is also true that people are not sufficiently similar for there to be one *non-moral* good for all. It is important to note, however, that while Nietzsche would argue that different “moralities” are prudentially good for different types of people (as determined by their underlying type-facts), it is not true that all moralities that exist are prudentially good for *someone*. It is possible for some moralities to coincidentally be non-morally bad for all types of people. Nietzsche argues that MPS creates virtues out of things that are only ostensibly good for the “lower types,” the “herd.” This is why Nietzsche often refers to MPS as the *herd morality*. Nietzsche says, “impotence which doesn’t retaliate is being turned into “goodness”; timid

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however, also play a part in what actions occur and what people do. Nietzsche *must* believe that actions and events are a combination of type facts and circumstances. If he didn’t believe this, then he certainly wouldn’t be concerned that MPS is harming the “higher” type man. Part of the circumstances of this world is “morality” or MPS, and so this circumstance (together with type-facts of the person concerned) is what determines what takes place. The presence of this circumstance (MPS) causes poor outcomes for the “higher” man. In sum, the will is not free because type-facts about a person can’t change, but circumstances *do* change, and that is how every action is not pre-determined by our type facts.

baseness is being turned into “humility”; submission to people one hates is being turned into “obedience”...The inoffensiveness of the weakling, the very cowardice with which he is richly endowed, his standing-by-the-door, his inevitable position of having to wait, are all given good names such as “patience”, also known as *the* virtue; not-being-able-to-take-revenge is called not-wanting-to-take-revenge, it might even be forgiveness” (GM 1. 14). These “virtues” – humility, obedience, patience, forgiveness are simply “the prudence of the lowest order” (GM 1.13). In his book, *Nietzsche on Morality*, Brian Leiter argues that this herd morality is non-morally good for some people, namely the “lower types.” It is not non-morally good for all people, however, and thus should not apply universally. Nietzsche says of the effect of MPS on “higher types,” “people who represent the nobly bred types are less likely to *turn out well*. Chance, that law of nonsense in the overall economy of mankind, is most terribly apparent in its destructive effect on the higher men, whose conditions in life are subtle, multiple and difficult to calculate” (BGE 62).

Nietzsche highlights some religions (especially the Judeo-Christian religions) as key contributors to the creation of MPS and as entities that give a certain power to “morality.” Religion – as it is part of the creation of MPS which is detrimental to the non-moral good of the “higher men” – is bad because it creates universal rules for all that *ought* only apply to some types of people. Nietzsche argues, “the religions that have existed so far (which have all been *sovereign*) have played a principal role in keeping the type “man” on a lower level. They have preserved too much of *what should be destroyed*” (BGE 62). There are two important things here. First, it is important to note that Nietzsche thinks some religions are bad because they perpetuate MPS, and MPS is bad for (at least some) people. It seems that it is not religion itself Nietzsche attacks (as some Nietzsche scholars have argued that Nietzsche has his own kind of

religion) but the (bad) values that religion enables. While MPS came first, religion has been the institution that has successfully carried out the spread of MPS.

Second, it is important to note that Nietzsche seems to think that any system of values should not be taken at face value – all systems should be evaluated and some “should be destroyed” (BGE 62). While this is only tangentially related to his theory of non-moral goodness, it is important in understanding Nietzsche’s aim in his writing. Nietzsche addresses “free thinkers” and “new philosophers” and seems to be writing for these people (GM 3.17). As I will discuss in Section 2 of Part II, Nietzsche champions a “revaluation of values” and discusses the notion of “will to power” in his critique of morality. While I will argue that Nietzsche is not offering up another *better* morality that *is* universal and *should* be sovereign in this doctrine, his “will to power” argument is another example of Nietzsche wishing to constantly evaluate and change our existing systems, preserve what is good for us (conducive to our flourishing) and destroy what is not. Systems and theories should constantly be judged as to their contribution to human flourishing. A state of the world where this constant re-evaluation is happening is one in which the “higher” types reach their full potential and we *progress* as a society. I will expand on this later in Part III, but it certainly seems as if constant critical evaluation of existing institutions and values seems to be at heart of Nietzsche’s ultimate aim.

## **PART II: Nietzsche’s Theory of Moral Good**

### *§1. Overview of Metaethical Views*

In this Section, I will briefly outline a taxonomy of Metaethical views as conceived by Geoffrey Sayre-McCord. Once I make clear the different possible stances a philosopher can take on moral claims, I can better articulate whether Nietzsche’s view about value is, at bottom, a realist or an anti-realist theory. In the following Sections as I discuss Nietzsche’s “will to power”

argument and different interpretations of this argument, I will reference different views in Sayre-McCord's taxonomy, so it makes sense to lay it out here.

Geoffrey Sayre-McCord developed a taxonomy of metaethical views that divides theories into two main categories, realist ones and anti-realist ones (Sayre-McCord 1988, 15). At bottom, Sayre-McCord is interested in dividing moral theories into categories according to how they answer three fundamental questions: (1) Are moral claims, when literally construed, literally true or false? (2) What are the truth conditions for those claims? and (3) Are those truth conditions ever met? According to Sayre-McCord, realism about moral claims relies on two theses, first that "the claims in question, when literally construed, are literally true or false (cognitivism)" and second that "some [claims] are literally true" (success theory) (Sayre-McCord 1988, 5). Anti-realist theories are theories that either deny that moral claims have truth values (non-cognitivism) or deny that any moral claims are in fact true (error theory).

While Sayre-McCord's main aim is to divide theories into realist and anti-realist ones, his account begins with making the distinction between cognitivism and non-cognitivism. In response to the question, "Do moral claims have truth-values?," cognitivists answer "yes" and non-cognitivists answer "no". An example of a non-cognitivist theory is *emotivism*, the idea that moral claims are merely an expression of emotion and cannot be assessed as true or false. When someone says, "that is wrong," he is merely expressing his disapproval of that thing. Cognitivists – those that believe that moral claims *do* have truth-values—can be further categorized (Sayre-McCord 1988, 15). Cognitivists who believe minds and their contents do *not* figure in the truth conditions for moral claims are objectivists. This means that there is a fact of the matter about whether a moral claim is true or false, independent of whether anyone thinks it to be so, wants it to be so, or is interested in it being so. Railton is one such philosopher who

endorses an objectivist view, arguing that moral claims are true or false, independent of whether anyone believes them to be true or false. Railton's theory of moral value is based off of his theory of non-moral value (as outlined in Section 1 of Part I), where value depends on objective interests. He thinks that what has moral value is what maximizes non-moral goodness, but from *a social point of view*. Railton's theory is an objectivist success theory, which means that he believes that the truth conditions for moral claims are *at least* sometimes met. J.L. Mackie, on the other hand, endorses an objectivist error theory, meaning that he believes (a) moral claims have truth values and (b) Minds and their contents do not figure in the truth conditions for moral claims but *also* he believes that (c) these truth conditions are *never* met. He thinks that there exist no objective moral properties, and so while we assert the existence of these properties when we make moral claims, all of the claims must be false. On the other side of objectivism within the umbrella of cognitivism are the subjectivists and the inter-subjectivists, those who believe minds and their contents *do* figure in the truth conditions for moral claims. Subjectivists argue that *individual* minds figure in the truth conditions, and inter-subjectivists assert that it is not individual minds that determine truth conditions, but some kind of collective mind or the aggregation of minds. An example of a subjectivist is Thomas Hobbes, who argues for a kind of personal relativist theory where what is good depends much on the particular person in the situation and the circumstances of the situation. On the other hand, John Rawls – who argues that we should come together in a situation that is *fair* and *agree* on principles that should govern us – is an example of an inter-subjectivist. Here, it is not individual minds but the aggregate mind (those people that have come together in a hypothetical fair situation) that determine what is morally right. Just as in the non-cognitivist branch, subjectivists and inter-subjectivists can also

be success theorists or error theorists, depending on whether or not they believe that the truth conditions for moral claims are ever met.

Accordingly, in this paper, I will count all objectivist success theories as realist ones. Subjectivist success theories and inter-subjectivist success theories must show that, in fact, the moral claims, “when *literally* construed, are *literally* true or false” (emphasis added) (Sayre-McCord 1988, 5). If they are, then they can count as realist moral theories, and if they don’t they fall into the category of anti-realism about morality. All non-cognitivist theories, *and* all error theories, are anti-realist ones.

## §2. Nietzsche’s Will to Power Doctrine

Throughout his works, Nietzsche references the notion of ‘will to power,’ the idea that humans are driven not by the desire for preservation, but by the ‘will to power.’ Nietzsche gives this idea different connotations and different emphases in different parts of his work, leading philosophers to interpret Nietzsche as arguing for different theories in bringing up the notion of ‘will to power.’ It is important to determine what Nietzsche wants to argue with this idea because it is relevant to determining whether Nietzsche is a realist or an anti-realist about all moral value. While I have already discussed Nietzsche’s critique of “morality” (MPS), it does not follow from the fact that Nietzsche rejects MPS that Nietzsche is an anti-realist about moral value. MPS is a particular morality that Nietzsche explicitly rejects. We still need to determine whether Nietzsche believes that moral claims, when literally construed, have truth-values, and if so, whether *some* of those claims are literally true. If he rejects cognitivism about moral claims, or if he thinks the truth-conditions for moral claims are never successfully met, then Nietzsche will turn out to be an anti-realist about moral value. As Richard Schacht argues, if we take Nietzsche’s argument about ‘will to power’ to be that all life *is* the ‘will to power,’ then all value

should be evaluated by this criterion of ‘will to power’ (Leiter 2002, 138). This means that something is “morally right” to the extent that it increases an agent’s power, and it is “morally wrong” to the extent that it decreases power. If Schacht is right about this single criterion of value, then it suggests that Nietzsche is a moral objectivist success theorist and thus a realist about moral value. On the other end of the interpretation spectrum, if we interpret much of Nietzsche’s discussion of ‘will to power’ as rhetoric and simply as an expression of Nietzsche’s “evaluative taste” for higher men as Brian Leiter proposes, Nietzsche seems to be an anti-realist about moral value. In Part III, I will examine an entirely different interpretation of Nietzsche in which the distinction between non-moral and moral value disappears, but for the time being I will examine several outside interpretations. In the following Sections, I will discuss Leiter’s interpretation of Nietzsche’s ‘will to power’ argument as well as another interpretation, that of Thomas Hurka. Before the discussion of particular interpretations, however, it is necessary to outline what Nietzsche says about ‘will to power’ and how this idea appears throughout his work.

In *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche says,

“Suppose we succeeded in explaining our entire instinctive life as the development and ramification of *one* basic form of the will—namely, of the will to power, as *my* proposition has it; suppose all organic functions could be traced back to this will to power and one could also find in it the solution of the problem of procreation and nourishment...then one would have gained the right to the world defined and determined *all* efficient force univocally as *–will to power*. The world viewed from inside, the world defined and determined according to its ‘intelligible character’—it would be ‘will to power’ and nothing else” (BGE 36).

Later in the same text, he says,

“[Anything which] is a living and not a dying body... will have to be an incarnate will to power, it will strive to grow, spread, seize, become predominant - not from any morality or immorality but because it is *living* and because life simply *is* will to power... 'Exploitation'... belongs to the *essence* of what lives, as a basic organic function; it is a consequence of the will to power, which is after all the will to life” (BGE 259).

In the *Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche echoes similar ideas. He says,

“Every animal...instinctively strives for an optimum of favourable conditions under which it can expend all its strength and achieve its maximal feeling of power; every animal abhors, just as instinctively...every kind of intrusion or hindrance that obstructs or could obstruct this path to the optimum (I am *not* speaking of its path to happiness, but its path to power, to action, to most powerful activity)” (GM 3:7).

In one of his unpublished works, *Will to Power*, Nietzsche further explains his doctrine of will to power. As readers we may have to examine these excerpts more critically because Nietzsche never published this work, but things Nietzsche says in *Will to Power* make a strong case for a sort of realism about value. Nietzsche says,

“My idea is that every specific body strives to become master over all space and to extend its force (--its will to power) and to thrust back all that resists its extension. But it continually encounters similar efforts on the part of other bodies and ends by coming to an arrangement ("union") with those of them that are sufficiently related to it: thus they then conspire together for power. And the process goes on” (WTP 636).

Shortly following this passage, Nietzsche comments,

“My theory would be:-- that the will to power is the primitive form of affect, that all other affects are only developments of it...All driving force is will to power, that there is no other physical, dynamic or psychic force except this” (WTP 688).

The interpretation of these quotations is what may help determine whether, when push comes to shove, Nietzsche is a realist or an anti-realist about moral value.

### §3. Leiter's "Anti-Realist" Interpretation

Leiter argues that Nietzsche's 'will to power' doctrine should be interpreted simply as an expression of Nietzsche's evaluative taste for higher men, and further Nietzsche should be interpreted as an anti-realist about moral value. Leiter agrees with Maudemarie Clark's interpretation of Nietzsche's 'will to power' doctrine, namely that we should not accept the strongest form of 'will to power' --that human nature is the will to power--but that we should instead interpret Nietzsche as merely making an explanatory argument about what we do. Instead



of focusing on Nietzsche's 'will to power' doctrine, we should look at other passages of Nietzsche's that suggest that he is an anti-realist about moral value.

Maudemarie Clark argues that Nietzsche could not have accepted the strongest form of the doctrine of the will to power, namely that "life itself is will to power" (BGE 259) and thus his doctrine of will to power is still compatible with an anti-realism about value, a point she argues in *Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy*. In examining the plausibility of Nietzsche's acceptance of the 'will to power' doctrine, Clark looks chiefly at the passage in Section 36 of *Beyond Good and Evil* that is quoted above in Section 2. Clark chooses this passage because "it presents a detailed argument for the cosmological doctrine of will to power, and is the only passage in all of Nietzsche's published writings to do so" (Clark 1990, 212). It is important to note, first, that Nietzsche frames this passage in hypothetical form. *If* we accept premise A and B, then C. C, the conclusion, is that "*all* efficient force" is will to power (BGE 36). Clark argues that Nietzsche *does not* accept the premises, thus he could not have accepted the conclusion according to this passage. Clark points to places in Nietzsche's work where he rejects the notion of 'will' (this is outlined briefly in Section 2.3 of Part II) and argues that because of this, Nietzsche would reject Premise A (that "our entire instinctive life [is] the development and ramification of *one* basic form of the will"). I am not convinced by this argument, however, because it seems that Nietzsche is using the word 'will' to mean two different things in each instance. When Nietzsche rejects 'will,' he is referring to the notion of will as an action-causing phenomenon. When Nietzsche uses the word 'will' in his 'will to power' doctrine, though, he seems to take 'will' to simply mean a drive. The 'will to power' for Nietzsche seems to just mean a drive or ambition for power.

Clark's --and Leiter's-- interpretation of Nietzsche's notion of 'will to power' indicates that we cannot use Nietzsche's 'will to power' doctrine as evidence that Nietzsche is a realist about value. Instead of accepting the strong claim that "all driving force is will to power," Clark's interpretation is that Nietzsche's doctrine of the 'will to power' is an "empirical hypothesis," the best account of human behavior (arrived at through induction) given all of the available information (WTP 688) (Clark 1990, 211). Because this hypothesis is based on available information, we have *reason* to consider it true; it is not, however, an absolute truth, an *a priori* principle, or an objective criterion of value. 'Will to power' is instead a psychological doctrine that explains reasonably well Nietzsche's observance of human behavior. Because there is no normative aspect to Nietzsche's 'will to power' doctrine, we should not interpret it as a signal that Nietzsche is a realist about moral value. Clark attributes this interpretation to Walter Kauffmann, a well-known Nietzsche scholar who has translated much of his work. What is appealing about this interpretation is that it allows Nietzsche's 'will to power' argument to be consistent with what Nietzsche seems to argue in other places about the absence of *a priori* principles.

After rejecting the strong form of 'will to power'—the view that all life is will to power and we ought to morally evaluate people as to how well they exhibit this will—Leiter argues that Nietzsche provides substantial evidence that he is an anti-realist about value<sup>5</sup>. In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Nietzsche says, "Verily, men gave themselves all their good and evil" and "good and evil are transitory and do not exist" (TSZ 1.15, 2.12). Both of these quotations seem to

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<sup>5</sup> I likewise agree that we should not put normative weight on Nietzsche's 'will to power' doctrine in thinking about Nietzsche's Metaethical position. I do not, however, agree with Leiter's position that Nietzsche is an anti-realist about value. I will explain my view—that Nietzsche holds a eudaimonistic theory of value—in Part III.

suggest that there exist no a priori principles about morality, but one might object that Nietzsche here is referring merely to MPS. In *Beyond Good and Evil*, however, Nietzsche says, “There are no moral phenomena at all, but only a moral interpretation of phenomena” (BGE 108). This comment, at least, seems to be directed at morality *as such* and not simply MPS.

Leiter reconciles his interpretation that Nietzsche is an anti-realist about moral value with Nietzsche’s discussion of “higher” and “lower” men by appealing to the notion that this use of “higher” and “lower” is an expression of Nietzsche’s evaluative taste for higher men, and not a claim that such men *really are* of higher moral value than lower men. Leiter argues, Nietzsche’s “anti-realism applies to the ‘revaluative’ judgment that *follows upon* [his] judgments of welfare: that is, the judgment that *because* herd morality is *good for* the herd and *bad for* higher men, herd morality (or the universal reign of herd morality) is bad or disvaluable” (Leiter 2002, 147). This is central to Leiter’s argument because if Nietzsche is an anti-realist, he cannot argue for any kind of objective moral basis for distinguishing between higher and lower men. If “higher” and “lower” were objective moral claims about people, then this is problematic for an anti-realist interpretation.

#### §4 Hurka’s Perfectionist Interpretation

In his article, “Nietzsche: Perfectionist,” Thomas Hurka argues Nietzsche’s ‘will to power’ doctrine commits him to a realist perfectionist theory about value. Hurka defines perfectionism as “any moral view centered on the conception of the good that values human excellences regardless of how much a person enjoys or wants them” (Hurka 2009, 10). Further, he says, a narrower form of perfectionism –one that he attempts to defend-- is one that “grounds its substantive values in a more abstract ideal of realizing human nature” (Hurka 2009, 10). Hurka interprets the references to the ‘will to power’ in Nietzsche’s work to mean that Nietzsche

endorses a perfectionist view where “it is fundamental to human nature to exercise a will to power and that the best individuals are therefore those who are most powerful” (Hurka 2009, 10). It appears from this conclusion that Hurka takes Nietzsche’s doctrine seriously enough to assume first, that ‘will to power’ is part of human nature and second, that we can determine whether someone lives a good life according to how well the person exhibits power in her life. According to Hurka, power is the criterion by which we can measure value. Hurka’s perfectionism is a consequentialist view, meaning under this theory actions are evaluated “by the total amount of good they produce” (Hurka 2009, 16). Simply, Hurka argues, the more powerful the action, the more good it produces. Even though Nietzsche’s perfectionism is a consequentialist view, it doesn’t share the same definition of ‘goodness’ as some common utilitarian theories. Goodness is not pleasure, but power.

Hurka argues that Nietzsche’s view is a ‘maximax’ view, meaning that only the perfection (achievement of power) of the “higher” type man is valuable. Thus everyone should work toward making the “higher” type man more powerful, because that will produce the most good. The *moral goal* of this theory is to maximize “the perfection of the best,” and so the theory is agent neutral in that there is one moral goal for all. (I have problems with this particular point, which I will address at the end of this Section, and again in my interpretation in Part III). The ways of achieving this moral goal, however, will be different for different types of people. Under this perfectionist theory, the “higher” type man should seek to be as powerful as possible, and the “lower” type man should make sacrifices so that this power is possible for the “higher” type man. As separate from a traditional consequentialist view, the well being of the majority is not *morally* important here. Nietzsche says, “The well being of the majority and the well being of the few are opposite viewpoints of value: to consider the former a priori of higher value may be

left to the naiveté of English biologists” (GM 1.17). Hurka argues that Nietzsche would in fact argue that what is valuable is the excellence of the few, and thus, Nietzsche endorses a *morality* where what is morally right is the excellence of the “higher” type man. Even the “lower” type man’s moral goal is the excellence of the “higher” type man, not his own excellence.

Before I attempt to refute Hurka’s interpretation, I want to explain what exactly ‘power’ is for Hurka (as the criterion of value), because it is not simply *exerting power* that is valuable. Hurka argues that Nietzsche should abandon his abstract term ‘power’ as the criterion of value because it conflicts with some of Nietzsche’s other convictions. A sympathetic reading of Nietzsche could take ‘power’ to be a general term that describes the types of goods that are valuable. In this case, we could use the phrase ‘the will to pursue a goal’ instead of power. To describe these types of goods, Hurka says, “Many of Nietzsche’s goods are active, involving the pursuit and especially the achievement of goals rather than mere contemplation of the world” (Hurka 2009, 23). Hurka references two formal properties that Nietzsche highlights in determining good, first the extent of the goal and second the degree to which the goal coheres with the individual’s other goals. The extent of the goal means the goal’s extent across time *and* across people. Hurka says, “For [Nietzsche] the greatest individuals are those creators of new values who fix the course of life for millions of humans far into the future, and they are marked precisely by the extent of the goals they achieve” (Hurka 2009, 23). Hurka looks at the second formal property, that of unity, by referencing a Section of the *Gay Science*:

“*One thing is needful*. To ‘give style’ to one’s character—a great and rare art! It is practiced by those who survey all the strengths and weaknesses of their nature and fit them into an artistic plan until every one of them appears as art and reason and even weaknesses delight the eye...In the end, when the work is finished, it becomes evident who the constraint of a single taste governed and formed everything large and small. Whether this taste is good or bad is less important than one might suppose, if only it was a single taste” (GS 290).

This quotation, in addition to demonstrating the second formal property of Nietzsche's goods, also gets at what kind of person is the *best* kind of person for Nietzsche. He seems to say that there is an *art* to being perfect.

When Hurka tries to interpret what Nietzsche himself is doing (and not what Nietzsche should have done in order for his views to be coherent), Hurka's interpretation seems to first place too high of an importance of Nietzsche's 'will to power' doctrine. When he encounters contradictions between Nietzsche's 'will to power' doctrine and some of Nietzsche's most central ideas in constructing the perfectionist theory, Hurka suggests that Nietzsche should have abandoned this strong form of 'will to power.' The contradictions are as follows. First, Hurka acknowledges that humans can be prevented from achieving perfection (the maximum amount of power in Hurka's argument) either because of outside factors (external circumstances) or because of internal ones (type-facts). Hurka's narrow conception of perfectionism, however, does not allow for these kinds of internal obstacles to perfectionism if, as Hurka argues, 'will to power' is *part* of human nature. To make this objection clearer, let's consider a "lower" type person, Person X. For Nietzsche, X's type-facts are such that it is impossible for X to achieve large amounts of power. It is impossible, then, for it to be person X's nature to achieve power if X's own nature prevents him from doing so. Hurka suggests that we could satisfy this objection by dropping the narrow conception of perfectionism and committing Nietzsche only to the broad form. Under this broad form, 'will to power' need not be part of human nature. Hurka argues that the abstract term 'power' could have a more general meaning, that of the will to pursue a goal. Even with this concession, however, I believe that Hurka ascribes too much importance to Nietzsche's 'will to power' argument. Hurka takes 'will to power' as the basis of a realist moral theory. I am inclined to agree with Leiter and Clark in that Nietzsche's 'will to power' doctrine

should not commit Nietzsche to moral realism. I do not, however, want to agree with Leiter and Clark that given this rejection of the strong form of Nietzsche's 'will to power' doctrine, Nietzsche is necessarily an anti-realist about moral value. In Part III, I will expand on this argument.

A second objection I have to Hurka's interpretation is his assertion that Nietzsche's perfectionism is of the consequentialist variety. Hurka says that Nietzsche's perfectionism is a special kind of consequentialism where an act is evaluated not just by "the goods it will lead to" but also evaluates "acts largely by their own intrinsic nature" (Hurka 2009, 17). Hurka clarifies this point by saying, "[Nietzsche] also often judges acts by the perfection and especially the strength of will they embody themselves, so their contribution to good outcomes is through their own nature" (Hurka 2009, 17). So far, there doesn't seem to be anything problematic with this view of consequentialism. The tension is clear, though, when Hurka maintains that Nietzsche's view is *maximizing*. Consequentialist perfectionism must stipulate that we pursue the greatest development of all human beings at all times. In this way, a consequentialist theory dictates that each human has a shared goal for which they strive. The closer to the goal a human comes, the more total good is produced. After proclaiming this, it seems odd, then, that Hurka asserts that Nietzsche's view is that "the value in a society depends not on the total or average perfection of all its members but on the excellence of its few most perfect members" (Hurka 2009, 18). If perfection is the good, then it doesn't make sense in a maximizing consequentialist view that *some people's* perfection has no value.

Hurka takes great care to assert that Nietzsche only values the perfection of "higher" men. This does not cohere with perfectionist consequentialism that says we should pursue the greatest perfection of all human beings at all times. Hurka's interpretation of Nietzsche asserts

that the “lower” type man *ought* to sacrifice for the sake of the perfection of the “higher” type man. I believe that it is not coherent to say that the “lower” type man can achieve perfection by sacrificing for the “higher” type man’s perfection, but still the “lower” type man’s perfection has no value. One might object that surely Hurka does not actually argue that *even though* the “lower” types are capable of perfection of some sort, this perfection has no value. But Hurka certainly seems to want to make this strong claim. Hurka argues that Nietzsche’s comment in *Beyond Good and Evil* that the “lower” types must be “reduced and lowered to incomplete human beings” (BGE 258) means that the “lower” types should be “denied some perfection they could otherwise achieve” (Hurka 2009, 19). Hurka further asserts that there is no value in the achievements of the “lower” types *even* after the “higher” types have become as perfect as they can possibly be. He says, “[Nietzsche] seems to find no value whatever in the achievements of lesser humans, so once the best have developed as far as they can it is a matter of indifference what other individuals do” (Hurka 2009, 18). There is a certain tension with having a maximizing consequentialist view that views some people’s achievement of the (common) goal as having no value. As I will discuss in Part III, while the flourishing of the “lower” type man does not in any way resemble the flourishing of the “higher” type man, there is a possible flourishing for the majority. While the virtues that the “lower” type man should cultivate in order to flourish may be other-regarding, cultivating these virtues are not *sacrifice* because they lead to the “lower” man’s flourishing (which has value).

### **PART III: Nietzsche’s Eudaimonistic Theory of Human Good**

Philippa Foot points out an interesting aspect of Nietzsche, namely that while it is difficult to easily determine how each of his claims is consistent with each other, Nietzsche’s work overall achieves a sort of unity. This unity, Foot argues, “comes from his daring, his



readiness to query everything, and from his special nose for vanity, for pretense, for timid evasion, and for that drive to domination which he finally supposed to be the principle of all life” (Foot 1994, 3). Thus, while Nietzsche’s work is fraught with apparent contradictions, we can look to Nietzsche’s overall aims, tendencies, and goals to determine what he meant in certain circumstances. Leiter himself does this at points where Nietzsche seems to be straying from a particular view. Leiter argues that Nietzsche exaggerates in order to get his point across, using rhetoric to invoke stronger claims than he might actually endorse. I want to take this idea of unity in Nietzsche’s writing one step further and argue that in order to properly interpret Nietzsche and his theory of value, we should look *first* to the unity in his work, the overall aims to which Nietzsche is writing. Given this initial standpoint, I interpret Nietzsche as having a kind of eudaimonistic view of value in which there is no distinction between moral and prudential value.

In this part, I will first describe what I take to be Nietzsche’s aim in his writing, the thing about which he is chiefly concerned. Then I will outline the view common to the ancient philosophers that denies the distinction between non-moral and moral value. Next I will briefly outline Aristotle’s eudaimonistic theory of value. I will then explain what a Nietzschean eudaimonistic theory of value might look like and how it might apply to the flourishing of “higher” and “lower” men. My ultimate conclusion is that an interpretation of Nietzsche’s work in which he endorses a realistic, eudaimonistic theory of value is plausible given what Nietzsche professes to care most about in his writings.

### *§1. Nietzsche’s Perfectionistic Aim<sup>6</sup>*

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<sup>6</sup> I do want to make one note about Nietzsche’s perfectionist aim. By using the word perfectionist, I am not using it in the same sense as Hurka. Hurka uses perfectionism to ascribe an objective moral theory to Nietzsche. I will use perfectionist to merely describe the nature of Nietzsche’s aim in his writing. In his writing, Nietzsche seems to have a goal for a more perfect

Nietzsche's main goal in his writing seems to be to warn people of the dangers of conforming, of passively accepting systems of thought without critically examining them. The entire work *Genealogy of Morals* seeks to expose MPS (by looking at its history and how it came to be) as a fraud, as a system of thought that has been manipulated and has no intrinsic value. In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Nietzsche's project is similar; he seems to want to warn people (especially these "higher" types) against the dangers of following custom and of not rocking the boat. In his work Nietzsche continually praises creativity and creation, self-discipline, and solitariness (the same qualities he deems characteristics of the "higher" man). It seems that his overall aim is to encourage these "higher" types to fulfill their potential, to flourish.

Nietzsche warns in his writing that even though we are taught (by the herd and by herd morality) that what is new and different is *evil*, only by challenging the accepted and adopting the new and different will we progress as a society. In the *Gay Science*, Nietzsche says, "What is new, however, is always *evil*, being that which wants to conquer and overthrow the old boundary markers and the old pieties; and only what is old is good. The good men are in all ages those who dig the old thoughts, digging deep and getting them to bear fruit - the farmers of the spirit. But eventually all land is depleted, and the plough share of evil must come again and again" (GS 4). Creation is also continuous, we always have to continue creating. In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Nietzsche asserts, "Whatever I create and however much I love it—soon I have to oppose it and my love: so my will wills it" (TSZ 100). He further says, "And he who must be a creator of good and evil: truly, he must first be a destroyer and break values. Thus the greatest evil belongs with the greatest good: that, however, is the creative good.—" (TSZ, 100). Thus what is good for us is

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or better world—and thus human flourishing—and so I will use this aim to better understand what Nietzsche's metaethical position may be.

to continually challenge the values we have now and create new ones, and then create new ones again. For Nietzsche, it seems, there is no stopping point, no resting point for individuals or society. In order for an individual to flourish (and in order for a society to progress) we must never stop creating, stop challenging what is accepted. Sometimes Nietzsche uses the word “overcome” instead of “challenge” or “create,” but it seems that what is important is that we overcome our complacency.

Later in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Nietzsche says, “The most careful ask today: ‘How is man to be preserved?’ But Zarathustra asks as the first and only one: ‘How is man to be overcome?’ (TSZ “The Higher Man”). And again, he urges the “higher” type man to not accept the happiness of the herd, the blind following of the herd. He says, “Overcome these masters of today, O my brothers—these little people: *they* are the *Übermensch’s* greatest danger! Overcome, you higher men, the petty virtues, the petty prudence’s, the sand-grain discretion, the ant’s pretensions, the wretched contentment, the “happiness of the greatest number”--!” (TSZ “The Higher Man”). All of these things that Nietzsche wants the “higher” type man to overcome – “petty virtues” and “wretched contentment”-- are the very things that we generally think are morally good for us. Nietzsche argues, however, that these things are not conducive to the flourishing of the “higher” type man. I will argue, incidentally, that they are not conducive to the “lower” type man’s flourishing either – or rather that there is something that is *more* conducive to the flourishing of the “lower” type man than the herd morality –but it is *at least* clear in Nietzsche’s writing that many of Nietzsche’s chief warnings are directed to the “higher” type man.

## §2. *The Aristotelian Conception of Human Flourishing*

### §2.1 *Rejecting the Moral/Non-Moral Distinction*

If we want to interpret what Nietzsche *actually* meant in his writings, we must take into account the lines of thinking and terms that were characteristic of the time period. It is helpful to understand what lines of thought Nietzsche was familiar with to understand how he agreed (or disagreed) with certain phenomena, such as moral realism. Nietzsche was undoubtedly familiar with not only the “modern” approaches to ethics endorsed by Kantians and Utilitarians but *also* ancient philosophy and the ancients’ approach to ethics. In the early part of his productive life, in fact, Nietzsche spent much time “investigating Greek thought” (Wilkerson 2006, 52). In interpreting Nietzsche, I believe that we should take as a starting point not the modern ideas of moral value and non-moral value but the ancient philosophers’ take on value where no distinction is made between non-moral and moral value. In her book *Nietzsche and the Ancient Skeptical Tradition*, Jessica Berry defends a skeptical reading of Nietzsche that is based on his agreements with some of the Greek skeptics (Berry 2011). It is evident that it is not altogether odd to assume that Nietzsche was influenced by the ancient Greeks; it should not be odd either, then, to assume that Nietzsche’s theory of value could come from the ancient perspective where the non-moral/moral distinction does not exist. Thus, I will attempt to explain how the ancients viewed value, and use *this* interpretation of value as a starting point for determining Nietzsche’s own view.

In the introduction to his book, Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy, Bernard Williams says about the ancient Greek philosophers, “the Greek themselves were much impressed by the idea that such a question must, consequently, be about a whole life and that a good way of living had to issue in what, at its end, would be seen to have been a good life” (Williams 1985, 4). It is true that one can ask how should I live from a *moral* standpoint or how should I live from a *self-interested* standpoint, but there still remains the questions of “What should I do, all things

considered?” (Williams 1985, 5). It is important to note that this rejection of the non-moral/moral distinction by no means forces philosophers into one view of value. As Williams points out, a question about how one should live, morally, “may be the same as a question about the good life, a life worth living, but that notion in itself does not bring in any distinctively moral claims” (Williams 1985, 5). When the moral/non-moral distinction is removed, what is good for a human being (prudentially) is not separated from what is morally good.

In her book, *The Morality of Happiness*, Julia Annas makes the further point that ancient theories, despite starting with the question “What is a good life for the person living it?,” need not be egoistic. Annas says about this egoistic worry, “Modern moral theories..often begin by specifying morality as a concern for others; morality is often introduced as a point of view contrasting with egoism. If a basic and non-derivative concern for others is taken to be definitive of morality, then this contrast may be taken to show that ancient ethics is really a form of egoism” (Annas 1993, 127). Ancient ethical theories, however, are not egoistic. Ancient theories that attempt to determine “the good life” assert that cultivating virtues is essential to living a good life. Much of the content of virtues – like justice, courage, etc—“can be fully as other-regarding as that of other systems of ethics” (Annas 1993, 127). Thus, just because we start from a place of individual flourishing does not mean that in order to flourish one need not take into account the interests of others. This is an interesting point in regard to the discussion of Nietzsche’s eudaimonistic theory because, as I will discuss in Sections 3, 4, and 5, Nietzsche seems to think that there are different types of people and thus each type should cultivate different virtues in order to flourish. Nietzsche *does* seem to think that “higher” men will flourish by being largely *egoistic*, while the virtues that “lower” men should cultivate are much more other-regarding. Regardless of Nietzsche’s specific views, however, ancient theories do not

commit themselves to egoism simply by asserting that the primary unit of concern is individual flourishing.

The purpose of this articulation of the ancient view in which there is no distinction between moral and non-moral value is to show what theorizing from an ancient moral perspective looks like. If Nietzsche is theorizing from such a perspective – as I argue he is—then we shouldn't assume the non-moral/moral distinction when interpreting him.

### *§2.2 The Aristotelian Naturalistic Project*

Aristotle endorses a eudaimonistic theory of value where what is good is what is conducive to flourishing. For Aristotle, what is “good for” anything, human or otherwise, is to perform its function well. For example, the function of a knife is to cut, so a *good knife* is a knife that cuts well. Thus, in order to determine what is “good for” a human being we must look at the nature (or function) of a human, and then we must determine what is necessary for a human to perform his function well. According to Aristotle, the function of humans is an “activity of soul in accordance with reason” (Aristotle and Akkrill 1987, 1.7). Eudaimonia, or happiness, is the achievement of this function. Just as a sharp knife is good, so is a happy human being.<sup>7</sup>

In order to perform our function well and achieve eudaimonia, Aristotle argues that we need to cultivate certain virtues. A virtue is a “disposition of character to choose or reject actions because they are of a certain ethically relevant kind” (Williams 1986, 9). Additionally, “virtues are more than mere skills, since they involve characteristic patterns of desire and motivation” (Williams 1985, 9). Virtues bear on action because if “an agent has a particular virtue, then certain ranges of fact become ethical considerations for that agent because he or she has that virtue” (Williams 1985, 10). And those ‘ranges of fact’ help determine what actions one takes.

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<sup>7</sup> I will not go into what exactly Aristotle has in mind when he says *eudaimonia* or happiness, but it is only important to note that he did *not* endorse a hedonistic definition of happiness.

Aristotle's virtues were things like courage, truthfulness, patience, proper ambitions, and modesty (Aristotle and Akkrill 1987, 3.6-3.12, 4).<sup>8</sup>

### §3. Nietzsche's Realistic, Eudaimonistic Theory of Human Good

My interpretation of Nietzsche's metaethics – according to which we look at Nietzsche's overall aims in his writing and begin with the ancient perspective—is a realist eudaimonistic theory of value. I will work off of the basic Aristotelian naturalistic project and make the necessary adjustments to fit Nietzsche's own views. My interpretation echoes some of the sentiments of Thomas Hurka, but I will argue that while Nietzsche is mostly concerned with the flourishing of the “higher” type man, there is possible flourishing for all men, and even the flourishing of the “lower” type man has value. Frithjof Bergmann says of Nietzsche's project, “Nietzsche's most elementary perception is that values, in their foundational intention, were simply meant to designate the *valuable*—the precious, the sunny, the golden, the encouraging, and the health giving—but came then to be perverted into their precise opposites: into the self-denying, the self-emaciating, and hence the self-destroying” (Bergmann 1994, 77). Instead of reading this position of Nietzsche's to mean that it is only non-moral value that Nietzsche recognized, we instead should consider a different approach, denying the non-moral/moral distinction altogether and looking at Nietzsche's theory of value as a eudaimonistic theory that answers the question, “How can I *flourish*?” or “What should I do, all things considered?”

Aristotle begins with the function of human beings; so will I, thus, begin with Nietzsche's view of the function of humans. Recalling Nietzsche's assertion that humans are composed of their individual type-facts (outlined in Section 2.1 of Part I), I think that we can say with

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<sup>8</sup> While I will argue that Nietzsche proposes different virtues from Aristotle (and different virtues for different types of people), I have laid out Aristotle's basic eudaimonistic view as a jumping off point for Nietzsche's own view.

confidence that the function of humans (their nature) will depend of their type-facts. Insofar as the relevant type-facts are similar among humans, they will have the same function (or nature). Insofar as the relevant type-facts are different, humans will have different functions. For Nietzsche, there are two basic types of people, “higher” men and “lower,” and each type has different type-facts, and so their functions will be different. What is *good* for both types will be performing their function well, but the *good* will be different for “higher” men and “lower” men because of their different function (nature). This view may seem to echo what Leiter says about Nietzsche’s theory of non-moral value. I believe, however, that we should extend this idea to all value; there are distinctly moral aspects to Nietzsche’s theory that make it such that we cannot simply look at prudential value. For example, Nietzsche says that MPS is simply the “prudence of the lowest order” (GM 1.13). Here, it is clear that Nietzsche suggests that the “lower” types may have prudential reasons to follow MPS. It is not clear, however, that the “lower” types *should* follow MPS. Nietzsche certainly makes comments that suggest MPS is bad in itself. In *Daybreak*, Nietzsche says, “*Morality makes stupid.*-- Custom represents the experiences of men of earlier times as to what they supposed useful and harmful - but the *sense for custom* (morality) applies, not to these experiences as such, but to the age, the sanctity, the indiscussability of the custom. And so this feeling is a hindrance to the acquisition of new experiences and the correction of customs: that is to say, morality is a hindrance to the development of new and better customs: it makes stupid” (D 19). This seems to suggest that Nietzsche may have in mind a theory of value that encompasses more than simply prudential value—while “lower” types may have prudential reasons to follow MPS, it is not “good for” (all things considered) the “lower” types to follow MPS.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> This argument is in direct contrast with Leiter’s view because he wants to say that MPS is good for the



#### §4. *The Role of “Higher” Men*

For Nietzsche, it seems that the function (or nature) of the “higher” types is creation. I formed this view given Nietzsche’s many comments in his works about overcoming the thoughts and practices of today and creating new systems of thought, new ideas. In this eudaimonistic theory, then, the good life for the “higher” type man is creation. In Aristotle’s example of a knife, a knife is good if it cuts well. To apply this to Nietzsche and the “higher” type man, the “higher” type man is good if he creates *excellently*. So what does it mean to create excellently? I think that Hurka has an appropriate answer to this. In his discussion of how men can achieve perfection, Hurka evaluates the goals of humans in two ways. First, the extent of the goal (both in terms of time and across persons) and second in terms of unity with other goals (Hurka 2009, 23-4). While I am asserting a different function of the “higher” type man (not ‘will to power’ as Hurka argues but creation), his discussion can lend itself to my interpretation as well. In the *Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche says that he wishes that “the sort of increase in the threat of Russia would force Europe into choosing to become equally threatening and, specifically, *to acquire a single will* by means of a new caste that would rule over Europe, a long, terrible will of its own, that could give itself millennia-long goals:—so that the long, spun-out comedy of Europe’s petty provincialism and its dynastic as well as democratic fragmentation of the will would finally come to the end” (GM 2.18). This quotation from Nietzsche talks of value both in terms of the extent of time (“that could give itself millennia-long goals”) and in terms of the extent of person (“a new caste that would rule over Europe”) (GM 2.18). It seems that these formal properties could suffice to determine what constitutes living excellently.

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“lower types.” When he says this, however, he means “good for” in a prudential, non-moral sense. I want to make the point that while Nietzsche can say that while from a prudential standpoint MPS is good for the “lower” types, *all things considered* MPS is bad for the “lower” type man as well.

Once it is clear what the function of the “higher” type man is (creation), the next step in a eudaimonistic theory is to determine what virtues the “higher” type man should cultivate in order to live well (and create excellently). I believe that the virtues Nietzsche endorses for the “higher” type man are many of those characteristics that Nietzsche wishes for in the “higher” type man. It seems that the type-facts of the “higher” type man are such that they *can* cultivate the virtues necessary to create, to overcome. As Nietzsche says in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, however, it is difficult for the “higher” type man to cultivate these virtues and achieve *eudaimonia*. Zarathustra says of the “higher” man, “The higher its type, always the less often does a thing succeed. You higher men here, have you not all been failures? Be of good cheer; what does it matter? How much is still possible! Learn to laugh at yourselves, as you ought to laugh! What wonder even that you have failed and only half succeeded, you half-shattered ones!” (TSZ “The Higher Man”). It is comments like this that save a eudaimonistic theory from potential circularity. The type-facts of the “higher” type man make it such that the man is *capable* of cultivating the virtues that lead to living well, to creation. Thus far, “higher” men have only half-succeeded. Nietzsche blames this partially on MPS, and this blame ties my eudaimonistic interpretation of Nietzsche well with his criticisms of MPS. The virtues preached by MPS are *not* the virtues that lead to living well for the “higher” type man, and thus the “higher” type man has been cultivating the wrong virtues. Nietzsche echoes this sentiment in *Beyond Good and Evil*, saying “[The] question is always who *he* is, and who the *other* person is. In a person, for example, who is called and made to command, self-denial and modest self-effacement would not be a virtue but the waste of a virtue: thus it seems to me” (BGE 221). The virtues endorsed by MPS (self-denial,

self-effacement) are not conducive to the flourishing of those that have the type-facts of a “higher” man.<sup>10</sup>

### §5. *The Role of “Lower” Men*

The role of the “lower” type men in this interpretation of Nietzsche’s theory of value is a little more difficult. Nietzsche himself says that what he is most concerned about is the “higher” type man, and additionally Nietzsche says that he is writing to an audience of only “higher” type men. This is perhaps why there are not many references to the role the “lower” type man plays in a theory of value. I do think, however, that there are reasons to interpret Nietzsche as believing that “lower” types men are capable of flourishing as well. As discussed above, the “lower” type man’s function (nature) is different from the “higher” type man’s function (nature) because he has different type-facts. We have reason to believe that Nietzsche argues the function or nature of the “lower” type humans is to *follow*. Zarathustra says about humans, “But wherever I found the living, there too I heard the language of obedience. All that lives, obeys. And this is the second point: he who cannot obey himself is commanded. Such is the nature of living” (TSZ “On Overcoming”). According to Nietzsche, everything that lives obeys something or someone. This passage seems to be saying that the “higher” type man may be capable of obeying himself; this is coherent with the idea that the nature (or function) of the “higher” type man is to create (to overcome, to obey oneself). This passage likewise asserts that the “lower” type man, the majority of men, cannot obey himself; the nature of the majority is to be commanded, to follow.

So if the function of the “lower” type man is to obey or to follow, for the “lower” type man to *live well*, he must follow excellently. The question of what it means for the “lower” type

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<sup>10</sup> This account of the function and virtues of “higher” men in Nietzsche’s realist eudaimonistic theory of value is not wholly inconsistent with Hurka’s perfectionist account. We could replace “creation” with “achievement of a goal” and the account would look similar. Where our interpretations differ the most is in our accounts of Nietzsche’s treatment of the “lower” type man.

man to *follow excellently* is at the crux of the question about the role of the “lower” man in Nietzsche’s eudaimonistic theory of value. In looking at the possibilities, it could be that to follow excellently, one can follow anything as long as he is truly following. I am not inclined to think that Nietzsche would endorse this notion. It also could be that to follow excellently would be to follow MPS. If we took this interpretation to be Nietzsche’s view, it would be the traditional virtues (the virtues of MPS) that the “lower” type man should cultivate in order to flourish, in order to perform his function well. This view certainly seems to have some evidence in Nietzsche writing, most obviously in the passage in which Nietzsche claims that MPS is “the prudence of the lowest order” (GM 1.13). As I argued above, though, this passage does not commit Nietzsche to saying that following the virtues of MPS is *good for* the “lower” type man, all things considered. Additionally, in general Nietzsche takes a very negative view on the notion of prudence altogether, and so it is unlikely that he is endorsing prudence (and thus MPS) as virtues for *anyone*, even the “lower” types. In *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche describes MPS as “prudence” mixed with “stupidity.” (BGE 198). In speaking of MPS, Nietzsche says, “all this is, from an intellectual point of view, of little value and far from constituting “science,” not to speak of “wisdom,” but rather, to say it again and to say it thrice, prudence, prudence, prudence, mingled with stupidity, stupidity, stupidity” (BGE 198). In sum, it is not clear that for Nietzsche, prudence is a good thing.

Instead, I interpret Nietzsche to be saying that what is *good for* the “lower” type man is to follow excellently, and to follow excellently is to follow the “higher” type man. Zarathustra says, “That the weaker shall serve the stronger, to that it is persuaded by its own will, which would be master over what is weaker still: that pleasure alone it is unwilling to forego” (TSZ “On Overcoming”). It certainly seems like Nietzsche is saying that what is weak will follow what is

strong. It does not follow that the weak *should* follow the strong, but I believe that Nietzsche does in fact want to say this. It would be good for the “lower” type man to follow the “higher” type man because the “higher” type man has the capability to create. I do not want to say that “following excellently” means adopting the virtues of the “higher” man. Instead, “following excellently” is something like cooperating with the “higher” types as they create. For example, we can say that it is *good*, all things considered, for a “higher” type man to challenge old customs and posit new ideas. In this example, it is *good* (all things considered) for the “lower” type man to cooperate with the “higher” type man and try out the new custom or idea the “higher” type man has created. This type of following is conducive to the “lower” type man’s flourishing (as he is following excellently) and is also conducive to the “higher” type man’s flourishing (for he is given feedback in the form of the actions and thoughts of the “lower” type man from which to make judgments about the value of his creation). In this way, following excellently is *not* the idea that the “lower” type man should “serve” or “obey” the “higher” type man in order to flourish. Rather, it is that what is conducive to the flourishing of the “lower” type man is to live through the creation of the “higher” type man (through cooperation). Because the “lower” type man cannot create, the majority can only benefit from creation if they follow the “higher” type man. Even though they cannot create, though, “lower” men are capable of flourishing.

I do not discount the possibility that Nietzsche would concede that (some) of the standard virtues (humility, modesty, patience) are good (all things considered) for some people, as long as we recognize that the “higher” type man cannot flourish or reach his full potential with these standard virtues. “Higher” men most certainly require different virtues to flourish, which is why Aristotle endorses egoism for the “higher” type man. In *Twilight of the Idols*, Nietzsche says,

“The value of egoism depends on the physiological value of him who possesses it: it can be very valuable, it can be worthless and contemptible. Every individual may be regarded as representing the ascending or descending line of life. When one has decided which, one has thereby established a canon for the value of egoism” (TI 9.33). This passage clearly lays out Nietzsche’s view that “higher” men and “lower” men do not have the same virtues. For “higher” men, egoism is a virtue because it is conducive to creating. For “lower” men, egoism is *not* a virtue because it is *not* conducive to following excellently. Concern for others (a traditional virtue) may very well be a virtue for the “lower” type man.

### **Concluding Thoughts**

If we interpret Nietzsche this way, then Nietzsche’s theory of value becomes consistent with Nietzsche’s hope for progress in society and ultimately human flourishing. The consistency works something like this. What Nietzsche is ultimately concerned with is the flourishing of the “higher” type man (which can be achieved through the “higher” type man performing its function well.) Nietzsche outwardly admits that MPS hinders the flourishing of the “higher” type man. If Nietzsche truly argues that MPS is *good for* the “lower” type man, all things considered, then it appears that Nietzsche is perpetuating the very thing that he criticizes (and that he argues prevents the “higher” men from flourishing). If as *I* argue, however, the “lower” type man achieves eudaimonia by following excellently, and following excellently means following the “higher” type man, then Nietzsche’s realist eudaimonistic theory of value is such that it is possible for “lower” men and “higher” men to flourish. Under this theory, “higher” men should cultivate the virtues needed to perform their function well, *to create*, and “lower” men should cultivate the virtues needed to perform their function well, *to follow*. In this way, it is the case

that the flourishing of all humans is *possible* (and desirable) and also the greater the flourishing of humans, the more our society progresses.

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