

NIETZSCHE: PERFECTIONIST

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Nietzsche is often regarded as a paradigmatically anti-theoretical philosopher. Bernard Williams has said that Nietzsche is so far from being a theorist that his text “is booby-trapped not only against recovering theory from it, but, in many cases, against any systematic exegesis that assimilates it to theory.”¹ Many would apply this view especially to Nietzsche’s moral philosophy. They would say that even when he is making positive normative claims, as against just criticizing existing morality, his claims have neither the content nor the organization characteristic of moral theory.

To me this common view is the opposite of illuminating. I take it as uncontroversial that Nietzsche’s positive moral views fall under the general heading of what today is called perfectionism. They are centred on a conception of the good, which they commend actions for instantiating or promoting, but this conception does not equate the good with anything like pleasure or the satisfaction of desires; instead, it locates the good in objective human excellences that for Nietzsche centre on the concepts of power and strength. Like other moral views, perfectionism can be developed as a systematic theory, and when it is, a series of questions arise about its structure and content. If one reads Nietzsche with these questions in mind, it is striking how often, without formulating them explicitly, he suggests answers to them. And when one combines those answers, the result is a perfectionist theory of a distinctive Nietzschean stripe. Perfectionism has been embraced by, among others, Plato, Aristotle, Aquinas, Leibniz, Hegel,

Marx, Bradley, Brentano, Rashdall, and Moore. In my view Nietzsche is the most theoretical of the perfectionists before, say, Brentano, that is, the most likely to recognize and answer theoretical questions. His answers also have a characteristic merit. A standing temptation for moral philosophers, and indeed for philosophers generally, is to avoid difficult theoretical questions by making optimistic factual claims about the world that make competing answers to them compatible. It is characteristic of Nietzsche to reject such optimistic claims and insist that the questions be faced directly. He does this, for example, when he denies that the beliefs most useful to us are most likely to be true, and also at many points in his presentation of perfectionism. The result is a version of that view that brings out especially sharply its distinctive features and its distinctive dangers.

In this paper I will consider three aspects of Nietzsche's perfectionism: his most fundamental account of human perfection, the moral structure within which he embeds that account, and the more specific human states he takes to instantiate perfection.

1. The Will to Power and Human Nature

It is useful to distinguish between broad and narrow senses of the term "perfectionism."² In a broad sense perfectionism is any moral view centred on a conception of the good that values human excellences regardless of how much a person enjoys or wants them. As so understood, perfectionism can affirm many different values: knowledge, the achievement of difficult goals, moral virtue, the creation or appreciation of art, deep personal relations, and more. In a narrower sense, perfectionism is a version of this view that grounds its substantive values in a more abstract ideal of realizing human nature. Its central claim is that the human good consists in

developing whatever properties are fundamental to human nature, and if it affirms specific goods such as knowledge and achievement it is for embodying these properties.

What I take to be uncontroversial is that Nietzsche is a perfectionist in the broad sense, but it is often held that he is also a narrow perfectionist. On this reading he holds that it is fundamental to human nature to exercise a will to power and that the best individuals are therefore those who are most powerful. Many texts supporting this reading come from *The Will to Power*, but others are in texts Nietzsche published, such as *Thus Spake Zarathustra* and *Beyond Good and Evil*. Whether he accepts narrow perfectionism does not affect the rest of his view, which even without it can have the same structure and substantive values. But it is fruitful to ask how, if he does accept narrow perfectionism, he addresses the various issues it raises.

The first thing a narrow perfectionism must do is specify its concept of human nature, or explain which type of properties it takes to be fundamental to our species. Here different views have been taken, for example, that the relevant properties are those distinctive of humans, or essential to humans, or essential to and distinctive of humans. Since many distinctive human properties are morally trivial, such as making fires,³ perfectionists who talk of distinctive properties are best read as valuing only the subset of them that are also essential to humans, or that constitute humans' specific difference. But even with this restriction distinctive properties seem of no interest to Nietzsche. He does not care what distinguishes humans from other species, but says the will to power is fundamental to us because it is fundamental to all living things, and even to all things period. And by "fundamental" he often means essential, speaking of "a world whose essence is will to power" and of the will to power itself as "the innermost essence of being"(BGE: 186; WP: 693).⁴ So if Nietzsche is a narrow perfectionist, he equates human nature

with those properties -- or the one property -- that is essential to humans and also to everything that exists. Different beings instantiate this property to different degrees: a human's will to power is stronger than a snail's, which is stronger than a rock's. But essential to them all is the same fundamental property. In its structure, therefore, Nietzsche's narrow perfectionism is similar to Hegel's, where there is likewise a common essence for all things, that of instantiating Absolute Spirit, which different beings do with different degrees of adequacy and value.

Narrow perfectionism is commonly associated with metaethical naturalism. On this interpretation the theory starts from purely factual claims about human nature, derived, say, from biology, and then takes them to directly entail conclusions about value. To philosophers such as Alasdair MacIntyre and Bernard Williams this is the main interest of perfectionism: that it offers to provide foundations from outside morality for our moral beliefs.⁵ But in my view naturalist formulations of perfectionism are open to the standard objections raised by Sidgwick, Moore, and others against naturalism generally and should be rejected on that basis. In setting them aside, however, we should not move to an opposite interpretation proposed by some contemporary philosophers. They say that perfectionism does not derive values from facts because its claims about human nature are themselves evaluative, identifying as essential to humans those properties we already think most worth developing.⁶ The trouble with this proposal is that it makes the narrow theory vacuous, reducing its claim that it is good to develop the properties essential to humans to the tautology that it is good to develop the properties it is good to develop. And there is an alternative interpretation intermediate between this and the naturalist one. It treats the general principle that the human good consists in developing the properties essential to humans as substantive or non-analytic, while any claim that specific properties are

essential is factual. By itself the latter claim has no evaluative implications; those follow only given the substantive moral principle. But the principle needs the factual claims if it is to have content. On this reading a defence of narrow perfectionism must take a coherentist form. It must show that the general perfectionist principle is intuitively appealing in itself, as many philosophers have found it to be, and also that given which properties are in fact essential to humans, the principle has attractive implications about which specific states of them are good. Because these two tests are independent, the view's passing both would count significantly in its favour. But they are independent because, while the general perfectionist principle is evaluative, the claims about human nature that give it content are not.

It is unclear whether Nietzsche accepts a naturalist version of narrow perfectionism or this alternative one. When he says, "There is nothing in life that has value, except the degree of power -- assuming that life itself is the will to power"(WP: 55), does he take his evaluative conclusion to follow directly from his premise about life or only given an additional substantive principle? I do not see that Nietzsche's texts clearly support one answer over the other or, more generally, support any clear metaethical position. But I will assume that he at least takes his claim about human nature to be factual, as both these interpretations do. And there is further support for this assumption in the way Nietzsche defends that claim.

If it is to avoid vacuity, narrow perfectionism must not only assign non-evaluative meaning to claims about human nature, but also have a way of establishing those claims that does not depend on moral beliefs. Here many perfectionists use a method that fits recent writing about essential properties. Hilary Putnam and others have argued that we identify a kind's essential properties by seeing which properties play a central role in the explanation of its other properties,

so that, for example, the atomic structure of gold is essential to gold because it explains gold's colour, weight, and so on.⁷ Similarly, many perfectionists argue that certain properties are essential to humans because they are central to the explanation of human behaviour. In many cases the explanations they cite are teleological. They say that all human behaviour is directed to a single goal, namely developing certain properties, and that these properties are essential to humans because they constitute this goal. Hence the common association between narrow perfectionism and a "teleological conception of human nature." Now, Nietzsche certainly accepts this general explanatory method of identifying essential properties. In *Beyond Good and Evil* he writes,

Suppose, finally, 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 ... then one would have gained the right to determine 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).

The explanations he appeals to also look teleological. They cite not only will, but will to a certain goal, namely will *to* power and even to the maximum of power. *The Will to Power* says that all intentional actions derive from "the intention to increase power" (WP: 663);⁸ *The Genealogy of Morals* concurs:

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 the most powerful activity) (GM III: 7).

But teleological explanations are not the only ones that can underwrite a claim about essence; gold's atomic structure is essential to it even though gold has no tendency to realize that structure to higher degrees. And Nietzsche's appeal to teleological explanations creates difficulties that he of all philosophers should avoid.

Teleological perfectionisms are committed to some version of the claim that humans tend naturally to develop their natures to the highest degree. One version of this claim, associated with Hegel and Marx, says that whatever happens in individual lives, the general direction of human history is toward the fuller development of humans' essential properties. Other versions say that individuals tend naturally to develop their essence, often because that is what they most fundamentally desire, either as such or under some co-extensive description, with everything else desired as a means to this single goal. A related claim is that developing one's essence is most pleasant, perhaps because pleasure just is the perception of an increase in one's perfection; given most humans' desire for pleasure, this again implies at least some tendency to perfection. Now, these various claims are in two ways optimistic. First, they assert that the world is arranged so the natural tendency is for good to be achieved; if humans are free from obstacles, they will naturally lead the best lives they can. Second, the claims imply that there is no conflict between perfection

and other candidate goods. If humans want above all to develop their essence, then the most perfect life is also the one that most satisfies their desires; if perfectionist activities are most pleasant, then the life with the most such activities also contains the most pleasure. There can still be a philosophical question about why this life is best: because it realizes the human essence or because it satisfies desires or is pleasant. And many perfectionists have thought this question vitally important. But at the practical level the tendency claims imply, optimistically, that there is no conflict between perfection and non-perfectionist goods such as pleasure and desire-satisfaction. In the realm of value, one can have it all.

Nietzsche is distinctive among perfectionists in rejecting, often vigorously, these optimistic factual claims. Whereas some might think the tendency of Darwinian evolution is to produce ever higher life-forms, Nietzsche thinks natural selection works systematically against the highest values and frustrates their achievement;⁹ he likewise denies that there has been progress in human history.¹⁰ More generally, he holds that the greater a person's potential for perfection the less likely he is to achieve it: by "the law of absurdity in the whole economy of mankind," the conditions for the success of the well-constituted are more complicated and therefore less often supplied (BGE: 62).¹¹ Nietzsche famously denies that the most perfect life is most pleasant; far from these two values always going together, suffering, and even great suffering, is needed for real achievement.¹² He also sometimes denies the claims about desire. This is implicit in his remarks that powerful individuals need self-discipline and hardness toward themselves, presumably to control impulses that would lead them away from perfection; in his accounts of resentment and the slave-revolt in morality, which involve individuals' choosing lesser forms of will and therefore less value for themselves as well as others; and in his definition

of decadence as a state in which “the will to power is lacking” and an individual “prefers what is disadvantageous to itself” (A: 6)¹³. This important strand in Nietzsche’s thought implies that obstacles to perfectionist achievement can arise not only outside a person, in unfavourable external circumstances, but also inside, in his own anti-perfectionist tendencies or “inner hopelessness” (BGE: 269). But how is this view compatible with his apparent use of teleological explanations to identify the human essence, and especially with his claim that all human actions aim at an “optimum” of power? Does the latter not imply an exceptionless tendency to power? The difficulty here surfaces very clearly in John Richardson’s book *Nietzsche’s System*. Richardson defends a narrow perfectionist reading of Nietzsche like the one I am exploring, on which the will to power is the supreme good because it is essential to all beings, and is essential to them because power is the goal of all their action. Richardson also says there are higher and lower forms of power, which he calls “active” and “reactive,” and allows that Nietzsche thinks humans sometimes prefer the lower forms, for example, prefer resenting others to developing their own capacities. But how is this last claim consistent with the strong teleology Richardson attributes to Nietzsche? How can people always seek the greatest power yet sometimes prefer lesser power?¹⁴ His attempts to resolve this difficulty are not persuasive. He says, first, that the reactive forms of will are logically dependent on the active forms,¹⁵ but this does nothing to explain how the reactive can ever be preferred. He then says that Nietzsche’s claim about essence is “ineliminably, a claim of the valuative priority of the active,” because we “find the essences of things when we find the highest and best they can become.”¹⁶ But this proposal reduces Nietzsche’s narrow perfectionism to the vacuity mentioned above: that we should develop the properties we should develop. It also does nothing to resolve the difficulty, so long as Nietzsche

still holds that all activity aims at a maximum of power. And in my view the difficulty is simply unresolvable. Nietzsche's recognition that people sometimes and even often prefer lower to higher exercises of power, and do so for internal rather than external reasons, is flatly inconsistent with the teleology that seems to underlie his power-ontology.

I think Nietzsche's best move here is to abandon his strong teleology. This would allow him to extend his denial of the optimistic tendency claims, so in no realm does the good tend naturally to prevail, and also to insist more strongly on the practical importance of perfectionist judgements, or on how accepting them can change the way we act. If the will to power always goes along with other goods, it makes no practical difference whether we embrace it or them as our fundamental goal. If the two can diverge, however, the choice between them is vital, and we will live less well if we make it wrongly. Nietzsche's teleology is also not needed for his narrow perfectionism. As I have said, the explanations that show properties to be essential to a kind need not be teleological; they are not so for gold, and need not be for humans. Nietzsche could say that humans essentially exercise a will to power because in all their actions they try to transform the world in light of a goal they have formed, and that some of their actions exercise more power than others. They do so, for example, when achieving their goal involves transforming more of the world; thus, a person who successfully redirects all human activity for centuries to come exercises more power than if he merely tied his shoelace. Actions also manifest more power when their goal is more intricately structured, so achieving it involves bringing about more complex relations among its parts. But Nietzsche need not say that people always seek power, and even less a maximum of power, under that description or as such. Whenever they exercise their will they do so by pursuing some particular goal, and he can allow that their primary

commitment is to that goal and not to the more abstract idea of power. More specifically, he can allow that their attachment to a particular goal can make them prefer it to other goals whose achievement would involve higher forms of power, and in particular allow that they can prefer reactive to active forms of will. Whenever they act they exercise power, but they do so by pursuing particular goals that may distract them from greater power.

I have argued that Nietzsche should abandon his strong teleology because it conflicts with one of his most valuable contributions, his vigorous denial of optimistic claims about natural tendencies. But his teleology also conflicts with the structure of his perfectionist view, and I now turn to that topic. Nietzsche may combine this structure with a narrow perfectionist identification of the human good, but he could also affirm it given a merely broad perfectionism, one that does not ground its values in human nature. Having spent the first part of this essay examining the possibility that Nietzsche is a narrow perfectionist, I now consider questions about the structure of his view that are independent of that issue.

2. Moral Structure

I have described perfectionism as “centred on” a conception of the good, and it is time to explain what this means. Perfectionism as currently understood is a version of consequentialism, which means it evaluates acts by the total amount of good they produce. More specifically, it is a version of maximizing consequentialism, which says the right act is always the one that will result in the most good possible. A maximizing structure is not essential to consequentialism, which can equally well make the satisficing claim that acts are right so long as they produce outcomes that are “good enough.”¹⁷ But while satisficing may be plausible for hedonic values

such as pleasure, it is not so for perfectionist values. As the terms “excellence” and “perfection” suggest, these values call intuitively for a maximizing approach. (The motto of the Olympics is not “Reasonably fast, reasonably high, reasonably strong”; the longtime recruiting slogan of the U.S. Armed Forces was not “Be at least two thirds of all that you can be.”) And there is another point where perfectionism differs from hedonistic consequentialism. The latter evaluates acts by their consequences in the everyday sense of that term, that is, by states of affairs that follow after an act and are separate from it. Perfectionism does this some of the time; it can say that an act, say, of educating oneself, is right because of the goods it will lead to. But perfectionism also often commends acts for embodying excellence themselves. If it values moral virtue or the achievement of difficult goals, it can say an act is right because it instantiates these goods and so contributes to good outcomes not causally but as a constituent. This is in fact an important feature of perfectionist consequentialism: to evaluate acts largely by their own intrinsic nature.

Nietzsche’s moral view certainly seems consequentialist in this sense. He does not accept any of the prohibitions that distinguish deontological moral views from consequentialist ones and can make an act wrong even when its outcome is best. His discussion of promising, for example, is not interested in any duty to keep promises at the expense of good outcomes, but only in the values and especially forms of will the practice of promising embodies. He sometimes judges acts by their consequences in the everyday sense; if he commends suffering, for example, it is not for its intrinsic properties but for the perfection it makes possible in the future. But he 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. He also makes maximizing claims. Just as his teleology emphasizes that humans want not just some power but the greatest power

attainable,¹⁸ so his ethics enjoins the continued pursuit of ever greater goods. He likewise accepts the consequentialist demand to measure values, speaking of a person's "quantum" of power¹⁹ and suggesting that the "attempt should be made to see whether a scientific order of values could be constructed simply on a numerical and mensural scale of force" (WP: 710). He never actually constructs this scale, but as we will see, identifies several features that count for or against a person's degree of power and that can in principle be measured. Contemporary moral anti-theorists are especially skeptical of the attempt to measure values; Nietzsche does not share that skepticism.

If Nietzsche's moral view is consequentialist, it faces two more questions: Whose good is each person to aim at, just his own or that of all people? And how are particular goods aggregated across the times in a person's life and, if this is relevant, across the persons in a society? I begin with the last question, about social aggregation, because it is the key to the structure of Nietzsche's perfectionism.

Nietzsche is famously antiegalitarian, favouring an aristocratic society and a strict "order of rank" among individuals. And his antiegalitarianism rests on a distinctive view about social aggregation, whereby 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. This view is expressed repeatedly in Nietzsche's writings, from the earliest to the latest. A famous passage in *Schopenhauer as Educator* says, "Mankind must work continually at the production of individual great men -- that and nothing else is its task.' ... how can your life, the individual life, receive the highest value, the deepest significance? ... only by your living for the good of the rarest and most valuable exemplars"(U III: 6).²⁰ *Beyond Good and Evil* says a healthy aristocracy

sees itself not as a function of the general population but as “their *meaning* and highest justification,” and therefore “accepts with good conscience the sacrifice of untold human beings who, *for its sake*, must be reduced and lowered to incomplete human beings, to slaves, to instruments” (BGE: 258).²¹ *The Genealogy of Morals* adds, “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 naivete of English biologists” (GM I: 17).²² And *The Will to Power* frequently echoes these claims, saying, for example, “*Basic error*: to place the goal in the herd and not in single individuals! The herd is a means, no more!” (WP: 766).²³ Since this view is the opposite of John Rawls’s famous maximin principle, it can be called a “maximax” view. Whereas Rawls wants society to maximize the well-being of its worst-off individuals, Nietzsche wants it to concentrate on the best, since only their perfection has value. Reflection on Rawls may suggest a “lexical maximax” principle, according to which society should first maximize the excellence of its best individuals, then when nothing more can be done for them, the next-best individuals, and so on.²⁴ But this lexical principle seems less true to Nietzsche’s view than simple maximax: he 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.

A maximax view is extremely radical, since it favours unequal distributions of resources and opportunities given almost any assumptions about the world. Even if people’s talents are exactly equal, society will do best if it arbitrarily selects a few individuals and devotes all its energies to them, since then the greatest perfection will be as great as possible. Perhaps because the principle is so radical, some commentators try to deny its role in Nietzsche’s thought. Walter Kaufmann says Nietzsche’s interest in the best individuals derives from his belief that most lives

have zero value, and “no addition of such zeroes can ever lead to any value.”²⁵ But though this interpretation is supported by one text (WP: 53), it does not fit the general tenor of Nietzsche’s thought. Recall *Beyond Good and Evil*’s claim that lesser individuals must be “reduced and lowered to incomplete human beings,” that is, denied some perfection they could achieve (BGE: 258). James Conant has recently attempted a more thoroughgoing denial of Nietzsche’s antiegalitarianism, claiming that his interest in outstanding individuals does not imply that only their achievements matter but instead reflects their capacity to serve as models who can inspire everyone to lead better lives.²⁶ But Conant does not consider the full range of Nietzsche’s maximax texts, discussing only *Schopenhauer as Educator* and especially the passage from it quoted above. And even his treatment of this passage is highly selective. First, he ends the passage in mid-sentence, not acknowledging that, after directing us to live for the good of the most valuable exemplars, Nietzsche adds, “and not for the good of the majority, that is to say those who, taken individually, are the least valuable [*wertlosesten*] exemplars” (U III: 6). This is hardly the remark of an egalitarian. Second, Conant does not acknowledge that the first and last two sentences of the passage are separated by about a page of text that makes further strongly antiegalitarian claims, for example, that the “only concern” of a biological species is “the individual higher exemplar” and not “the mass of its exemplars and their well-being” (U III: 6). In fact, this intervening text utterly demolishes Conant’s main interpretive argument. He claims that the antiegalitarian reading of *Schopenhauer as Educator* rests on a mistranslation of Nietzsche’s “*Exemplar*” as “specimen.” Whereas this term has misleading biological connotations, Conant says, Nietzsche’s use of *Exemplar* is continuous with Kant’s in *The Critique of Judgement* and that of the German Romantics, for whom an exemplar is a creative

genius we all can emulate. But the intervening text Conant omits is precisely about biology, suggesting that we apply to humans a lesson that can be learned from “any species of the animal and plant world.” So the biological analogies are made by Nietzsche himself. The intervening text also uses the word *Exemplar* three times to refer to members of animal and plant species, and not just outstanding but also ordinary members ([*die*] *Masse der Exemplare*). I would have thought that if Nietzsche uses *Exemplar* to refer to ordinary blades of grass he is not using it to refer only to Kantian creative geniuses, but perhaps Conant thinks that in interpreting Nietzsche’s use of a word it is less important to look at Nietzsche’s own repeated use of the same word a half-page earlier than at its use by another philosopher in another book published eighty years before.²⁷

Nietzsche’s acceptance of a maximax principle explains several of his other views, for example, about the value of egoism. He holds that egoism is neither always good nor always bad: “Egoism is of as much value as the physiological value of him who possesses it ... If he represents the ascending course of mankind, then his value is in fact extraordinary; and extreme care may be taken over the preservation and promotion of his development ... If he represents the descending course, decay, chronic sickening, then he has little value: and the first demand of fairness is for him to take as little space, force, and sunshine as possible away from the well-constituted” (WP: 373).²⁸ *Beyond Good and Evil* claims not only that lesser individuals must be sacrificed, which could be something forced on them by their superiors, but that they must “sacrifice themselves” or voluntarily forgo their own perfection (BGE: 265).²⁹ And *Zarathustra* speaks frequently of sacrificing oneself for the sake of the overman, saying, for example, “I love him who works and invents to build a house for the overman and to prepare earth, animal, and

plant for him: for thus he wants to go under” (Z 1: Prologue 4).³⁰ Nietzsche’s endorsement of egoism by the best is qualified by his claim that they have duties to each other and should treat their peers as they treat themselves (BGE: 260, 265).³¹ This might be a tactical recommendation, proposing a bargain with those few others capable of hindering one’s perfection. But this is not how Nietzsche presents the issue, speaking simply of “duties,” “rights,” and “equal privileges” among the most perfect. And his whole treatment of egoism precisely fits a maximax principle. If the good of society depends entirely on the good of its few best members, those best members should be mostly egoistic, restraining their pursuit of their own perfection only to acknowledge the similar perfection of their peers, while the majority of members sacrifice themselves entirely for the good of their betters.

If Nietzsche applies a maximax principle across persons, one might expect him to do the same across times, and equate the aggregate perfection in a person’s life with the perfection he achieves at his few best moments. But he does not seem to do so. His most striking remarks about the value in whole lives urge people to “die at the right time,” and especially not to “die too late,” as apples do that hang on the branch long after they “taste best” (Z 1: 21).³² These remarks are inconsistent with a maximax principle, on which once a life’s best moments have passed it is a matter of indifference whether other moments follow. Instead, they suggest something like an averaging view across times, which equates the aggregate perfection in a life with its average perfection per moment; this implies that additional moments below a life’s previous average make it worse. It is probably too much to attribute averaging across times to Nietzsche on the basis of his few remarks about “free death,” but those remarks do tend in an averaging direction.

Nietzsche's discussions of aggregation bring out more clearly than any other perfectionist's how different aggregative principles are appropriate for perfectionist than for other values. No one would average across times given hedonic values, or say that additional happy moments can make a person's life less good. But many take precisely this line when making perfectionist judgements about careers in sports or the arts, which are often thought to be best if they end not too far past their peak. A similar point applies to maximax across persons. Whereas the idea that society should maximize the happiness of its few happiest members has no plausibility, the parallel view about perfectionist values has real, albeit disturbing, appeal. These values make antiegalitarianism intelligible and even tempting in a way that hedonic values do not. In an earlier discussion I went further, suggesting that just as antiegalitarian principles are more plausible for perfectionist than for hedonic values, so egalitarian principles are less plausible.³³ This may be false: it may be not only logically possible but also morally intelligible to aim at the greatest perfection for the least perfect. Even so, perfectionist values have an affinity for antiegalitarian aggregations that rival values do not. The perfectionist tradition contains many defences of aristocratic inequality, from Plato and Aristotle through Hastings Rashdall and Bertrand de Jouvenel.³⁴ These defences often turn on factual claims, for example, that people's natural abilities are very different. But one can wonder whether these claims really do support the degree of inequality these writers defend, and whether the perfectionists who cite them may not tacitly be using maximax or a similar principle in arriving at their views. There is nothing at all tacit in Nietzsche's approach: his antiegalitarianism rests on an aggregative principle that directly and explicitly gives most weight to the achievements of the most perfect.

More abstractly, Nietzsche's acceptance of a maximax principle across persons gives his

moral view an agent-neutral structure, one where all agents are assigned the same moral goal, so their acts if right will tend to produce the same outcome. There are not different goals for different agents, so the outcome that is best from one's point of view need not be best from another's; instead, the outcome all should seek is the same. Agent-neutrality is most commonly associated with views like utilitarianism that include all people's goods in their common goal by adding or averaging them. But maximax perfectionism is also agent-neutral, since it assigns everyone the same moral goal of maximizing the perfection of the best. Those who are among the best should pursue that goal in one way, by concentrating primarily on their own perfection, while those who are not best should do so differently, by sacrificing themselves to their betters. But despite this difference their ultimate goal is the same.

Nietzsche's view is not often read as agent-neutral. Most commentators treat it as egoistic, telling each person to seek just his own perfection; this is, for example, an unargued assumption of Alexander Nehamas's *Nietzsche: Life as Literature*.³⁵ One reason for this assumption may be the belief that perfectionism, and especially those narrow versions grounded in human nature, must be egoistic, because their classical Greek formulations were egoistic. But the claim about Greek perfectionisms is disputable, and it is simply false that perfectionism in general must be egoistic: it can and in its best versions does tell each person to care about others' good as well as his own.³⁶ A second reason may be Nietzsche's frequent praise of egoism. The praise is usually restricted to egoism by the best individuals -- it is only whose lives will be spoiled by altruism. But Nietzsche is so focussed on these individuals that it can look as if his praise is for egoism generally. A final reason for the assumption is that the desire claims undergirding Nietzsche's argument that the will to power is essential to humans are egoistic: they

say that everyone seeks his own greatest power, not power for others. And the only moral view that can follow from claims of this kind is likewise egoistic. In fact, if the claims were true, a morality telling people to sacrifice their own perfection for the sake of others' could not influence their conduct. Nietzsche's predicament here is similar to that of classical utilitarians such as Bentham, who tried to ground an agent-neutral hedonism in the egoistic psychological claim that everyone desires only his own pleasure. But the latter claim is inconsistent with the former, and later utilitarians such as Sidgwick dropped the psychological egoism and defended agent-neutral moral hedonism on its own. A charitable reading of Nietzsche will do the same. I argued in section 1 that Nietzsche's egoistic claims are not needed for his narrow perfectionism; it now appears that they also contradict his maximax view of social aggregation, at least if that is intended to have action-guiding force. A maximax principle is central to Nietzsche's positive moral view, appearing in works from his earliest to his latest and organizing his claims about the values of egoism and altruism. But it is also obscured by his occasional claims about desire; that is a further reason to ignore those claims.

3. Extent and Organic Unity

Nietzsche's more specific claims about the good value many states of humans: gaiety, courage, unselfconsciousness, pride, overflowing generosity, and more. It is unclear whether all these states can be unified under some more abstract value, either a narrow perfectionist one of will to power or some other. Without settling this issue, I will examine some remarks of Nietzsche's that can unify at least many of his goods and that express a distinctive Nietzschean view of human perfection.

Many of Nietzsche's goods are active, involving the pursuit and especially the achievement of goals rather than mere contemplation of the world. Their further specification requires an account of which goals are most worth pursuing, or whose achievement has most value. Here Nietzsche's approach is distinctively formal. He does not hold that there are substantive goals that perfection requires people to pursue, such as knowledge, virtue, or the creation of beauty. Instead, he evaluates goals in terms of formal qualities, ones that are compatible with many different substantive contents. It is not its specific aim that determines an activity's degree of worth, but how far that aim instantiates certain formal properties. He mentions two such properties, one internal to a goal and the other a matter of its relation to other goals.

The first property is the goal's extent, both in time and in the number of objects or persons it involves. This property naturally connects with ideas about power, since someone who achieves a more extended goal transforms more of the world and so exercises greater power over it. Nietzsche is especially interested in a goal's extent in time. In *The Genealogy of Morals* he sees the chief value of promising as its expressing a "protracted and unbreakable will," one through which a person fixes his future behaviour and so makes himself more valuable than "all more short-willed and unreliable creatures" (GM II: 2). More generally, Nietzsche commends the "tensing of a will over long temporal distances," says a great individual can "extend his will across great stretches of his life," and looks forward to a new caste that will rule Europe with "a long, terrible will of its own that would be able to cast its goals millennia hence" (WP: 65, 962; BGE: 208).³⁷ But he also values a goal's extent across persons. One aspect of power is the ability to impose one's will on others and so determine their behaviour, and the more people one does

this to the greater one's exercise of power. Hence the attraction for Nietzsche of a conquering race that "unhesitatingly lays its terrible claws upon a populace perhaps tremendously superior in numbers but still formless and nomad" (GM II: 17), and of those "artists of violence and organizers who build states" and who exercise their "form-giving and ravishing" force on "some *other man, other men*" (GM II: 18).³⁸ For him the greatest individuals are those creators of new values who fix the general course of life for millions of humans far into the future, and they are marked precisely by the extent of the goals they achieve.

The second formal property is the degree to which a goal is unified with a person's other goals, so they form a system in which many different ends are pursued as means to a single overriding one. In *The Gay Science* Nietzsche writes,

One thing is needful. -- To "give style" to one's character -- a great and rare art! It is practised 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 how the constraint of a single taste governed and formed everything large and small. Whether this taste was good or bad is less important than one might suppose, if only it was a single taste" (GS: 290).

Beyond Good and Evil expresses a similar idea, saying that what is "essential" is "that there should be *obedience* over a long period of time and in a *single* direction" (BGE: 188). And *The Will to Power* uses claims about organization to define power:

Weakness of will: that is a metaphor that can prove misleading. For there is no will, and consequently neither a strong nor a weak will. The multitude and disgregation of impulses and the lack of any systematic order among them result in a “weak will”; their coordination under a single predominant impulse results in a “strong will” (WP: 46).³⁹

But Nietzsche does not value just unity of action, as could be found in a life devoted narrowly to a single activity. On the contrary, he heaps scorn on the specialist scholars he finds among European intellectuals, calling them “nook-dwellers” and “fragments of humanity”(BGE: 204; TI VIII: 3).⁴⁰ Instead, his ideal is a unity that combines diverse elements, so a person’s greatness lies in his “range and multiplicity, in his wholeness in manifoldness” (BGE: 212). It is an ideal of unity-in-diversity, or what is often called organic unity. It requires that a person have a single guiding impulse, one that organizes all his other impulses, but also that those other impulses be varied, individual, and strong. Then his goals combine the two traits of organized unity and individual diversity.

Some may object that this value of organic unity cannot be measured in the way consequentialism requires. This seems to be the suggestion of those who, in commentaries on Nietzsche or elsewhere, describe the value using literary analogies, speaking of the “narrative unity” of a life or the unity of a character in fiction.⁴¹ But these analogies are in several ways misleading. Narrative unity is a specific kind of unity with a specific structure, one whose most familiar instances involve rising tension leading to an emotional climax and then a brief denouement. I see nothing in Nietzsche’s talk of unity that restricts it to this specifically narrative

form. At the same time, the analogy with literary characters is in another respect too permissive. I take it that for Nietzsche what unifies a person's impulses must be an end that she herself wills, even if unconsciously, and wills as unifying her impulses. But the unity of a literary character can depend on connections between aspects of her character that she does not will and has no awareness of; this more external unity does not seem sufficient for what Nietzsche calls power. And the analogies' anti-theoretical implications are also misleading. Without attributing it to Nietzsche, let me give a brief sketch of how the value of organic unity can in principle be cardinally measured.⁴²

Consider a model of unified action, where a person achieves one goal by achieving two others as means to it, and achieves each of those by achieving two others as means to it. Here the person's goals are hierarchically organized, as in Figure 1. And we can measure their organization by stipulating that each goal in this hierarchy has one unit of value in itself, plus

<INSERT FIG. 1>

an additional unit for every further goal achieved as a means to it. The four goals at the bottom of the hierarchy then have one unit of value each, the two in the middle three units each, and the one at the top seven units, for a total of seventeen units in the hierarchy as a whole. This is more than the seven units of value the person would achieve if he achieved seven unconnected

<INSERT FIG. 2>

goals (Figure 2), and also more than the thirteen units of value in an intermediate structure where six subordinate goals are achieved as a means to an overriding seventh (Figure 3). By

<INSERT FIG. 3>

counting the number of goals subordinate to a given one and taking that to determine its value, this measure neatly captures the value in more complex hierarchies of intention. And it does so even better if it is modified to give more weight to diversity in a unified structure. Instead of counting just the individual goals subordinate to a given one, it can count, either in addition or instead, the number of goals *of different kinds* that are means to that goal. Then, if a goal has ten very similar goals subordinate to it, say, ten pullings of the same lever, it gains at most ten units of value from doing so. But if it has ten subordinate goals of different kinds, it gains ten plus ten equals twenty units, making the more diverse unity better. This account can be modified in further ways, and in any case should not be taken too literally. But it does show how the value of organic unity can at least in principle be measured.

A more serious objection says that if Nietzsche uses only formal measures of perfection, he has to say the instigators of the slave revolt in morality led immensely valuable lives: after all, they profoundly affected millions of people for centuries.⁴³ Now, Nietzsche does not think the slave revolt had no desirable features. It introduced a new spirituality into human life and also involved a certain devious cleverness – better that, surely, than mere passive resentment of the masters. But he clearly does not consider the instigators of the revolt to be paradigms of excellence, and an account of his view must recognize this fact. There are at least two ways in

which a broadly formal account can do so.

The first is to make the value of an activity depend not just on its current properties but also on its origins. If an integrated activity with far-reaching goals issues from strength and self-confidence, as it presumably will in Nietzsche's hoped-for creators of values, it has immense worth. But if it is a product of weakness and resentment, it does not. This move enables the account to deny that the instigators of the slave revolt were immensely valuable, since they acted ultimately from resentment, but will be consistent with the formal approach if the criteria identifying originating motives as weak are themselves formal. This may be Nietzsche's view. He may think resentment is a form of weakness because it is essentially reactive, taking its chief goals from outside the self and being unable to resist doing so, rather than finding them within the self as a truly integrated personality would do.⁴⁴ If this is his view, he can condemn action from resentment without using substantive measures of value.

The second way is to make the value of an activity depend in part on the goal to which it is directed. If an integrated, far-reaching activity aims to promote further such activity on the part of the best individuals, as Nietzsche's hoped-for creators' will, it again has immense worth. But if it is designed to hinder such activity by the best, as the slave revolt was, it does not. Here the activity's value is undercut not by its origin but by the value of its intentional object.⁴⁵ But the approach is still formal if the evaluation of that object uses only formal measures and an aggregative principle like maximax: if the aim of the slave revolt undercuts its value, it is because that aim involves less of the relevant formal properties in the activities of the only people whose activity matters.

I cannot say that Nietzsche clearly embraces either of these possibilities; he never

explicitly addresses why propagating slave values is not only instrumentally but also intrinsically worse than promoting higher ones. But the two show that he can consistently condemn the slave revolt while using only formal and no substantive measures of individual perfection.

Nietzsche's acceptance of these measures connects his view to many others in nineteenth-century philosophy. Organic unity is the chief value in Hegel's ethics and also in those of later Idealists such as F. H. Bradley, whose *Ethical Studies* describes it as the combination of "homogeneity" and "specification," or "not the extreme of unity, nor of diversity, but the perfect identity of both."⁴⁶ Bradley sometimes combines this good with considerations of extent:

To reduce the raw material of one's nature to the highest degree of system, and to use every element from whatever source as a subordinate means to this object, is certainly one genuine view of goodness. On the other hand, to widen as far as possible the end to be pursued, and to realize this through the distraction and dissipation of one's individuality, is certainly also good.⁴⁷

Similar claims are made by other philosophers of the period who reject Idealist metaphysics but retain a central value of "personality" involving both the organization of a person's goals and their extension beyond his own states now.⁴⁸ Nietzsche's general account of human perfection is therefore absolutely in the mainstream of nineteenth-century philosophy, but his presentation of it has several distinctive features.

First, the Idealists value not only the practical good of achieving goals but also the theoretical one of knowing truths, which they see as involving the same formal properties of mental states. For them the best knowledge is of the most extended states of affairs and plays the

greatest systematizing role, this time by explaining the most other items of knowledge a person has; on both grounds the knowledge of scientific or philosophical principles is especially valuable. In addition, and following earlier perfectionists such as Plato and Aristotle, the Idealists treat knowledge as the greatest good, and in particular as higher than any practical good. Nietzsche firmly rejects this view. He does not develop any parallels between knowledge and achievement, and, far from considering knowledge the greatest good, grants it no intrinsic value whatever. This is most evident in his claim that the falsity of a belief is no objection to it; what matters is only how far the belief is life-promoting and species-cultivating, that is, how far it is instrumental to other goods (BGE: 4). Nietzsche's denial of intrinsic value to knowledge may fit his natural desire claims, which suggest that even a person's choice of beliefs expresses his desire for power.⁴⁹ But even apart from that, it gives Nietzsche's view a distinctive cast. Whereas many perfectionists make theoretical or contemplative goods the highest goods, he goes to the opposite extreme of recognizing only practical or conative ones.⁵⁰

Second, the Idealists hold that there is a higher degree of unity in a mind's consciousness of an object than in any physical relationship between things, and more unity still in self-consciousness, where the mind's object is itself. This is why the direction of historical development according to Hegel is toward the full self-consciousness of spirit.⁵¹ But Nietzsche holds that the best activities are unconscious, and that consciousness "gives rise to countless errors" (GS: 11) and even expresses "an imperfect and often morbid state in a person" (WP: 289).⁵² His reason may be that consciousness detracts from the unity of unconscious drives, by introducing a foreign element that disrupts their smooth functioning.⁵³ But whereas others use the value of organic unity to affirm the supremacy of conscious states, Nietzsche denigrates those

states.

Finally, the Idealists hold that achieving the formal goods of extent and unity necessarily involves acting in a conventionally virtuous way. They have two grounds for this claim, which they do not always clearly distinguish. One is that the entity in which one should seek organic unity is not oneself but something larger, such as one's society. One should identify what Bradley calls one's "station" in this society and fulfil its "duties," all as a means to the society's organic good.⁵⁴ The other ground is that even unity in oneself requires conventional virtue. This is Plato's argument in the *Republic*: that an internally unified person will necessarily act justly toward others. The argument is rejected by Aristotle, who holds that a vicious person can be unified around his evil goals. But it is accepted by Bradley, who calls Aristotle's vicious person a "creature of theory" and holds that a morally bad self can never be properly unified.⁵⁵ By so doing he connects his formal value of organic unity with conventionally approved conduct toward others.

Nietzsche rejects both these arguments. Richardson has suggested that Nietzsche's power-ontology should lead him to value organized unity in societies as well as in individuals,⁵⁶ but he does not seem to do this. He does not think, for example, that the diversity he values is present in a society where everyone specializes but in a different field; the diversity must characterize individual lives. He here treats individual lives as the morally primary units, the ones where the central values are defined, and the same is true of his concern that people "die at the right time." Nor does he think for a minute that a unified life must be conventionally virtuous. His early statement about giving style to one's character says it does not matter whether the taste that governs a person's actions is good or bad so long as it is a single taste (GS: 290). This gives

a person complete moral freedom not only in choosing self-regarding projects but also in deciding how to treat others. The same freedom is present in his later discussions of power. If the power Nietzsche values is at least partly power over others, it can be exercised either cruelly, by harming them against their will, or benevolently, by helping them to improve their lives.⁵⁷ In itself the concept of power is neutral between these alternatives and therefore neutral between conventional morality and immorality.

Nietzsche here sees more clearly than other perfectionists that formal measures of value are indeed just formal. They do not favour any substantive goals, and certainly not conventionally moral ones, but instead consider only a goal's extent and the process by which it is achieved. What this means is well illustrated by the example of games. In playing a game one pursues an intrinsically trivial goal such as standing atop a mountain or directing a ball into a hole in the ground, while willingly accepting rules that forbid the most efficient means to that goal, such as chartering a helicopter up the mountain or dropping the ball in the hole by hand.⁵⁸ Playing the game therefore involves taking complex means to a trivial goal, which makes its value entirely one of process rather than product, journey rather than destination. The same is true on a broader scale of Nietzsche's account of perfection, which likewise values only formal properties of a person's activities and does not pretend that these somehow justify specific substantive projects. In the history of perfectionism this is an important innovation. Most earlier perfectionists do tie a person's practical perfection to substantive goals and, in particular, using arguments similar to Bradley's, to the goals prescribed by conventional morality. But this allows their claims about each person's good to be infected by claims about the right, or about how the person ought all things considered to act. Nietzsche rejects this approach, making claims about the good that

concern only that topic and so recognize its autonomy from claims about the right. A perfectionism that follows Nietzsche on this point, and in particular that uses only formal measures of practical perfection, need not as a whole be hostile to the other-regarding elements in everyday morality. Nietzsche's perfectionism is hostile to them, because its maximax aggregative principle implies that for some people the perfection of most others has no intrinsic significance. But a view that uses the same measures of individual perfection can embed them in a more familiar structure where each person is required to care impartially about the good of all; then his pursuit of extended, complex achievements for himself should be constrained by a concern to allow and encourage similar achievements by others. The resulting version of perfectionism captures many other-regarding duties, but does so by deriving them from its form, and more specifically from its claims about whose good each person is to pursue, rather than by building them into its claims about each person's good.

I have said that one of Nietzsche's contributions is to bring out sharply the distinctive features of perfectionism as a moral view. He does so, first, by rejecting the various optimistic tendency claims, thereby giving perfectionism different implications from any view focussed on pleasure or the satisfaction of desire. He also does so by recognizing that perfectionist values call intuitively for distinctive aggregative principles, including especially, though disturbingly, antiegalitarian ones. And he does so, finally, by developing an account of individual perfection that is strictly formal and therefore does not incorporate claims about other-regarding duties. Sidgwick said the ancient Greek moral philosophers never properly distinguished between good of self and good of others, or between what will make a person's own life best and how he ought all things considered to act.⁵⁹ The same criticism can be made of many later perfectionists, but it

cannot be made of Nietzsche, who offers an account of individual perfection that remains within the confines of the good and does not contaminate it with judgements about the right.

I have not claimed that Nietzsche is a completely theoretical philosopher, nor even that his remarks on moral topics are always consistent. He is, after all, Nietzsche. But I have suggested that he often addresses, even if implicitly, the main theoretical questions that arise in a systematic development of perfectionism; that his answers to these questions often show strong tendencies, expressed in different works, toward certain theoretical views; and that these views respond to the distinctive features of perfectionist values by making claims that, while striking, intuitively fit those values. Together these aspects of Nietzsche's moral thought make him, if not a fully theoretical philosopher, then more stimulating for contemporary moral theorists than any earlier figure in the long line of perfectionist writers on ethics.⁶⁰

ENDNOTES

1. Bernard Williams, "Nietzsche's Minimalist Moral Psychology," in his *Making Sense of Humanity and Other Philosophical Papers 1982-1993* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 65-76, pp. 65-66.
2. See Thomas Hurka, *Perfectionism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).
3. Bernard Williams, *Morality: An Introduction to Ethics* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), p. 64.
4. See also BGE: 259; GM II, 12; WP: 55.
5. Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue* (London: Duckworth, 1981), chaps. 5, 7; Bernard Williams, *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), chap. 3.
6. Jennifer Whiting, "Aristotle's Function Argument: A Defense," *Ancient Philosophy* 8 (1988), pp. 35, 38-39; Martha C. Nussbaum, "Aristotle on Human Nature and the Foundations of Ethics," in *World, Mind, and Ethics: Essays on the Ethical Philosophy of Bernard Williams*, ed. J. E. J. Altham and Ross Harrison (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 93-95, 100-02.
7. Hilary Putnam, "Is Semantics Possible?" and "The Meaning of 'Meaning,'" in his *Mind, Language, and Reality: Philosophical Papers Volume 2* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975).
8. See also WP: 675, 688.
9. GM I: 17; TI IX: 14; WP: 243, 401, 647, 684, 685.
10. A: 4; WP: 90, 339.

11. See also BGE: 269; and WP: 252, 684, 685, 864.
12. GS Pref: 3; BGE: 225, 270; WP: 382, 910, 957, 1030.
13. See also EH 1: 1-2; TI IX: 35.
14. People could prefer lesser power if they falsely believed it was greater, but where could the false belief come from? In Nietzsche's picture it would have to result from self-deception, but how could a desire for the greatest power lead people to form beliefs that cause them to achieve less power?
 15. John Richardson, *Nietzsche's System* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 43.
 16. *Ibid.*, pp. 43-44.
 17. Michael Slote, *Common-Sense Morality and Consequentialism* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985), chap. 3.
 18. See especially his vigorous rejection of the view that humans want only self-preservation, or only the minimal realization of their essential properties needed to stay alive (GS: 349; BGE: 13; WP: 650, 651).
 19. WP: 382, 674, 689, 855; WP: 480 and 485 speak similarly of the "measure" or "degree" of power.
 20. See also U II: 9.
 21. See also BGE: 126, 199, 257, 260, 265; and GS: 23.
 22. See also GM III: 14.
 23. See also WP: 246, 252, 373, 660, 681, 877, 881, 987, 997.
 24. For Rawls's lexical principle, see John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge: MA: Harvard University Press, 1971), p. 83.
 25. Walter Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*, 4th ed. (Princeton,

NJ: Princeton University Press, 1974), p. 150.

26. James Conant, “Nietzsche’s Perfectionism: A Reading of *Schopenhauer as Educator*,” in Richard Schacht, ed., *Nietzsche’s Postmoralism: Essays on Nietzsche’s Prelude to Philosophy’s Future* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 181-257.

27. Conant has the good taste to associate antiegalitarian interpreters of Nietzsche with Hitler. His own interpretation reduces Nietzsche to a writer of banal self-help books, a kind of Deepak Chopra of the 19th century.

28. A lightly edited version of this passage appears in TI IX: 33.

29. See also WP: 246.

30. See also Z II: On the Famous Wise Men; Z IV: The Welcome.

31. BGE, 260, 265.

32. See also GS: 281; TI IX: 36; WP: 864.

33. Hurka, *Perfectionism*, p. 79.

34. Hastings Rashdall, *The Theory of Good and Evil* (London: Oxford University Press, 1907), vol. 1, chap. 8; Bertrand de Jouvenel, *The Ethics of Redistribution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1951).

35. Alexander Nehamas, *Nietzsche: Life as Literature* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985).

36. See Hurka, *Perfectionism*, pp. 62-64.

37. See also GS: 356; Z I: 8; BGE: 257; TI IX: 39; WP: 527.

38. See also WP: 964. The importance of power over others in Nietzsche’s account is emphasized in Richardson, *Nietzsche’s System*, pp. 28-35.

39. For further remarks about the unity of goals see Zarathustra I: 22; BGE:19, 208; GM

Preface: 2; WP: 334, 387.

40. See also Z II: 20; BGE: 205; GM III: 23; A: 57; WP: 390, 881.

41. MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, chap. 15; Nehamas, *Nietzsche: Life as Literature*, chap. 6.

42. For a fuller account see Hurka, *Perfectionism*, chaps. 8-10.

43. I owe this objection to Neil Sinhibabu.

44. Richardson proposes this interpretation; see *Nietzsche's System*, pp. 39-42, 60.

45. I explore the general idea that love of the good is good and of the evil is evil in Thomas Hurka, *Virtue, Vice, and Value* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

46. F. H. Bradley, *Ethical Studies*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1927), p. 74.

47. F. H. Bradley, *Appearance and Reality*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1897), p. 367.

48. See, e.g., L. T. Hobhouse, *Liberalism* (London: Oxford University Press, 1911), pp. 111, 122-23, 132; and *The Rational Good* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1921), pp. 20-21, 39-40, 100).

49. See, e.g., WP: 480.

50. According to Richardson (*Nietzsche's System*, p. 235) Nietzsche objects to the essentially passive nature of knowledge, the fact that its goal is to mirror or correspond to reality rather than transform it.

51. For a more recent view identifying consciousness and self-consciousness as higher forms of organic unity, see Robert Nozick, *Philosophical Explanations* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981), p. 417.

52. See also BGE: 191; GM I: 10, GM II: 16; EH II: 9; and WP: 423, 524, 707.

53. This is suggested in Richardson, *Nietzsche's System*, pp. 204-05.

54. Bradley, *Ethical Studies*, chap. 5.

55. Bradley, *Ethical Studies*, pp. 303-09.

56. Richardson, *Nietzsche's System*, pp. 50-52.

57. See, e.g., WP: 769, 784.

58. See Bernard Suits, *The Grasshopper: Games, Life, and Utopia* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978).

59. Henry Sidgwick, *Outlines of the History of Ethics for English Readers*, 5th ed. (London: Macmillan, 1931), pp. 17-28, 197-98.

60. For helpful comments I am grateful to Neil Sinhibabu, who commented on an earlier version of this paper at the Morality After Nietzsche conference, and to Maudemarie Clark, Brian Leiter, and other conference participants.