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NIETZSCHEAN VIRTUE: WHY MACINTYRE SHOULD NOT BANISH NIETZSCHE FROM THE COMMUNITY

Gavin Keisling

Introducing Nietzsche vs. Aristotle

In *After Virtue*, Alasdair C. MacIntyre claims that the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche has supplied one of the most scathing critiques of modern moral philosophy. In so doing, MacIntyre subjects the Aristotelian tradition, which he supports, to the same critique. But Nietzsche's system does not extend to the Aristotelian tradition, MacIntyre asserts, because it calls for man to "transcend" morality, and thus does not find any "objective good" in society.¹ This is a failure, according to MacIntyre, because the good of the community and the good of the individual are inseparable in the same that way morality is inseparable from society: to act otherwise is discordant with reality. Thus, MacIntyre declares that the Aristotelian tradition emerges as "the best theory so far" and banishes *der Übermensch* from the community because "it represents individualism's final attempt to escape from its own consequences".² Nevertheless, together with the effects of the Enlightenment project, the embodiment of Nietzsche's

¹ MacIntyre, Alasdair. *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*. Second Edition. University of Notre Dame Press. Notre Dame, Indiana 1984. 257

² *After Virtue*, 271, 259

philosophy in society has left a lasting effect: a moral dilemma, where liberal individualism reigns and “social and moral attitudes and commitments” are lost.³ For this reason, it is asserted at the end of *After Virtue* that “we are not entirely without grounds for hope... We are waiting not for a Godot, but for another – doubtless very different – St. Benedict”.⁴ The allusion to the Catholic saint from Nursia (480 – 543 A.D.) reinforces MacIntyre’s interconnected notion of society and morality, and places significant importance on community life whilst Benedict established, preserved, and cultivated a way of life, i.e., a virtuous life, in small communities, despite the decline of the Roman Empire to the threatening presence of the Dark Ages.⁵ So it is not simply the individual will that MacIntyre finds appalling in Nietzsche, but the particular form that it takes in Nietzsche: a destructive and manipulative force in community. Subsequently, transcendence of morality adopts a negative connotation for MacIntyre: “he who transcends is wanting in respect of both relationships and activities”⁶.

MacIntyre presents these two systems in such a way that they seem to be at odds with each other; the reader must ultimately make a choice: it is either one or the other. But, interestingly enough, MacIntyre’s endorsements of Nietzsche and the epic battle that he stages between him and Aristotle in the chapter “*Aristotle vs. Nietzsche*”, makes me question MacIntyre’s quick dismissal of Nietzsche altogether, especially of those traits in Nietzsche’s philosophy that could potentially contribute to society.

³ Ibid.

⁴ *After Virtue*, 256

⁵ *After Virtue*, 263

⁶ *After Virtue*, 257

Because of this, I will compare and contrast the two systems in order to demonstrate that despite some obvious disagreements, there may be fundamental features in virtue of which the Aristotelian tradition and Nietzsche's system find crucial common ground. Rather than abolish *der Übermensch*, the great man, from the community and neglect the strengths of Nietzsche's philosophy, as MacIntyre would have it, I propose that he and Nietzsche join forces. As a result, we will discover a different lens through which to look at Nietzsche. Most importantly we will discover the importance of the notion of transcendence because such a notion lends itself to understanding the benefit of great men in community.

Comparing and Contrasting Fundamental Features

The crux of Nietzsche's philosophy begins with his notorious statement that "God is dead". Nietzsche is referring to the fact that someone or something (i.e. the Enlightenment project) killed 'God' and as a result society must now deal with the question of how to live, act and behave without the ominous presence of an ultimate "Lawgiver". Initially Nietzsche's statement seems insulting and repulsive but it should be understood in this light that Nietzsche is genuinely concerned about the human condition. Nietzsche, much like the Aristotelian tradition, asks the all important question: "what sort of person am I to become?".⁷ This question is missing in the Enlightenment project and, as MacIntyre asserts, shows that such philosophers were concerned with a different kind of moral purpose⁸. So, Nietzsche is (quasi) reinstating a

⁷ *After Virtue*, 118

⁸ The work of G.E.M. Anscombe also agrees that something has gone wrong with moral philosophy in the Enlightenment project. She shows

telos in that he is not merely focused on discovering rules to govern one-as-she-is, but looking to who she, the rational agent, may become or as MacIntyre puts it “human-nature-as-it-could-be-if-it-recognized-its-*telos*”.⁹ The primary focus, or according to MacIntyre the “whole point of ethics – both as theoretical and a practical discipline – is to enable man to pass from his present state [man-as-he-happens-to-be] to his true end [human-nature-as-it-could-be-if -it-realized-its-*telos*].¹⁰ And for both Nietzsche and MacIntyre the answer to the important and “inescapable” question is action. For MacIntyre it is “given *in practice* in each human life”, and for Nietzsche it is in the expression of the will.¹¹ Subsequently, both claim that it is some kind of virtuous action of which our projects (*telos*) is to be constituted.

What is interesting about Nietzsche’s notion of virtue is that it is an abstraction from Greek Heroic society. Virtue here means “manly strength” from the root *Vir* or man, and literally stems from the Latin *Virilis* or virility. For Nietzsche, this does not in any way exclude brawn from brain because it is the expression of the will that is most important in human behavior, not simply physical prowess. In both the Aristotelian tradition and Nietzsche’s

first that moral language has lost its meaning and function with the rejection of Aristotelian *telos* and also that Kant and Mill do not place any importance on a theory of intention. This proves further that 18th century moral philosophy were doing a different ethics because they weren’t asking practical questions about moral behavior and human functioning such as “Why are you doing X?” or better, the distinction between involuntary and non-voluntary acts. See Anscombe, *Modern Moral Philosophy*.

⁹ *After Virtue*, 54

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *After Virtue*, 118

philosophy, virtuous action is identical with excelling and it is something that is valuable. It is a constant or habitual seeking, striving against conflict and in competition wherefrom excellence or *arête* emerges. Most especially for Nietzsche *arête* is creativity in the form of the expression of the will. Here virtuous activity may seem to take on an unfamiliar character from that of the Aristotelian tradition, but one can see how it contributes to the good and is no doubt an admirable behavior. In the *Gay Science*, Nietzsche describes “Two happy ones”. Nietzsche refers first to an individual that knows how to “*improvise life...but they are practiced and inventive and always ready at any moment to incorporate into the thematic order the most accidental note*”. For the second person, nothing seems to go right. All of his willing and planning “goes wrong” and he is not sure whether he “should be more grateful towards [his] failures than towards any success”. But in the end, the second person asserts “I know more about life because I have so often been on the verge of losing it; precisely therefore do I *get* more out of life than any of you!” In these two instances, the reader comes across two very different, very distinct notions of the will and in both instances, as is made clear by the title, both find happiness. The virtuous person for Nietzsche then is someone with a strong, yet creative will, or as we will later see, the embodiment of der *Übermensch*. This seems to be a desirable quality for an ethical system and something that could contribute to Aristotelian tradition. Do we encounter such a lively sentiment in the Aristotelian tradition?

Enter the Aristotelian great-souled man, the megalopsychos, and compared to Nietzsche’s great man, der *Übermensch*. Interestingly enough, MacIntyre finds

disdain for both of them.¹² Nevertheless, the parallels between the two characters are astounding, because they represent the culmination of their philosophies. For Aristotle, as for Nietzsche, the great man is a jack of all trades if you will, when it comes to virtuous behavior. Aristotle claims that “And greatness in every virtue would seem to be characteristic of a megalopsychos”^{13, 14} So just as Nietzsche’s Übermensch is the embodiment of a strong creative will so too is the megalopsychos in that he has extensive practical knowledge and wide range over virtue. The following passage from Nietzsche will demonstrate these points further.

He possesses the capacity of extending his will over great stretches over his life, and of despising and rejecting all small things, whatever most beautiful and “divine” things of the world there may be among them. *Secondly*, he is *colder, harder, less cautious and more free from the fear of “public opinion”*; he does not possess the virtues which are compatible with respectability and with being respected, nor any of those things which are counted among the “virtues of the herd”¹⁵

In comparison, Aristotle’s great-souled man is constitutive of two aspects “self-knowledge and greatness”, he is a man

¹² See MacIntyre *A Short History of Ethics* page 79. Here MacIntyre claims that the great-souled man is an “appalling picture of the crown of the virtuous life”. This proves to be extremely important later in the paper.

¹³ Sited in Curzer (1123b29 – 1124a3).

¹⁴ Curzer, Howard J. “Aristotle’s Much Maligned Megalopsychos”, *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, No. 67:2, 133

¹⁵ Nietzsche IV. I. V 962.

who possesses “greatness in every virtue” and “in full compliment of the virtues.”¹⁶ Howard Curzer asserts in his article traits of the megalpsychos that are very much worthy of Nietzschean praise.

Self-knowledge also leads the megalpsychos to aim at higher standards of passion and action than others. The megalpsychos considers himself to be a superior person. He strives to maintain this superiority and not slip into acting like an ordinary person.¹⁷

To drive the point home W.F.R. Hardie in “”Magnamity” in Aristotle’s Ethics” claims that “the megalpsychos is the man of ‘superhuman virtue’ contrasted with the brute at the beginning of book VII”.¹⁸ Though it is notable that many translate Nietzsche’s *Übermensch* as “Superman”, what is important is that both Nietzsche and Aristotle depict their great men as somehow moving beyond the average. They raise the standards, they are not complacent and they are extremely self-aware. Because of such characteristics they are great men, men of the future, men who force society to move forward. Nevertheless, MacIntyre finds something wrong with such radical individualism and it is precisely here that one begins to understand the structure of MacIntyre’s system. We will see that this means MacIntyre breaks away at this point from Aristotle, yet he still considers himself a part of the Aristotelian tradition.

For MacIntyre the deal breaker is a strong notion of community constituted of non-manipulative relationships,

¹⁶ Curzer, 133

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

neglecting such a notion can only be problematic. His claim is that social practices are the main essence of ethics. For MacIntyre, something is missing in the solely individuated actions of these great men. He is criticizing these great men for being too self-referential and in so being, he finds their neglect to participate in the greater good of the community deplorable. *Der Übermensch* and the megalopsychos are found wanting in their unique independence because they attempt to transcend society in their greatness. In the end, such great men do not contribute to the good of society; ultimately, it is “he who transcends [that] is found wanting both in relationships and activities”.¹⁹ But if *Der Übermensch* and the megalopsychos are banished from the community then who is MacIntyre searching for?

A deeper analysis of his system shows that MacIntyre is looking to constitute his community of those people willing to commit to a structure based on giving and receiving. In order for this to occur, people must engage in practices. “A practice involves standards of excellence and obedience to rules as well as achievement of goods...and involves some kind of *relationship* (my italics) between those who participate in it.”²⁰ Football is a practice, chess, architecture or art and all of these have standards, authority and a history. More importantly, every practice requires a certain relationship and thus the virtues define and sustain our relationships.²¹ So it is with MacIntyre that “virtues are acquired human qualities the possession and exercise of which tends to enable us to achieve those goods which are

¹⁹ *After Virtue*, 257

²⁰ *After Virtue*, 190

²¹ *After Virtue*, 191

internal to practices”.²² And those “Internal goods are indeed the outcome of competition to excel, but it is characteristic of them that their achievement is a good for the whole community who participate in the practice” as opposed to external goods that can be one’s physical property or possession such as power, money, or fame...”.²³ The distinction to be made between Nietzsche and the Aristotelian tradition is that Nietzsche does not claim to need a community to cultivate great men or to search for the good. On the other hand, MacIntyre sets forth a cooperative project constitutive of individuals spending their efforts seeking the good life for man.²⁴ According to MacIntyre, in his system one finds internal value in the individual as well as the community, whereas with Nietzsche one is left struggling with solipsism. On a closer look at the two systems view of human nature, one begins to clearly understand why MacIntyre does not include Nietzsche in the community.

Human nature according to MacIntyre can be summed up in three words “dependent rational animals.” In this definition, humans are dependent animals at birth, vulnerable and naked, that need the protection, wisdom and relationships of other humans in order to become independent humans. In this view, humans depend on a give and receive structured community where those independent members give and those dependent receive in the idea that the tide will change as time changes. Nietzsche’s notion of human nature, however, takes on a different form from that of the Aristotelian tradition and in its most extreme notion is hardly seen as a constructive

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ *After Virtue*, 219

contribution. The following is MacIntyre's analysis of Nietzsche's view of human nature.

[What interests Nietzsche] is instead the contrast between the animal as predator and the domesticated animal. "It is not the ferocity of the beast of prey that requires a moral disguise but the herd animal with its profound mediocrity, timidity, and boredom with itself"²⁵.

This shows that Nietzsche's notion of human nature calls for a different kind of independence, one that is a much more brutal, lonelier, and divisive road. And in fact, Nietzsche neglects the entire dependent stages of human life; those stages where it is essential that one learns and receives.

To cut oneself off from shared activity in which one has initially to learn obediently as an apprentice learns, to isolate oneself from the communities, which find their point and purpose in such activities, will be to debar oneself from finding any good outside of oneself. It will be to condemn oneself to that moral solipsism which constitutes Nietzschean greatness.²⁶

It seems that it does not matter how many parallels are drawn between Nietzsche and the Aristotle, because it is Nietzsche's extreme and literal notion of transcending morality/society that MacIntyre claims he cannot engage in the community. But I think there is something odd about the way MacIntyre selectively shows Nietzsche in his so

²⁵ *Dependent Rational Animals (DRA)*, 163

²⁶ *After Virtue*, 258

called solipsistic extremes and brushes aside that which is problematic not only for himself but for the Aristotelian tradition and that is the megalopsychos. If *der Übermensch* is the embodiment of the will to power for Nietzsche and as MacIntyre claims the downfall of Nietzscheanism then why is the megalopsychos not treated equally? Considering this, the next passage does not seem reasonable, considering that Aristotle's embodiment of virtue basically ends up at a similar solipsistic mark.

Hence we have to conclude not only that Nietzsche does not win the argument by default against the Aristotelian tradition, but also, and perhaps more importantly, it is from the perspective of that tradition that we can best understand the mistakes at the heart of the Nietzschean position.²⁷

With this MacIntyre states that the Aristotelian tradition is not simply another arbitrary choice; rather, the Aristotelian tradition points to the failures of Nietzscheanism that deconstructed the Enlightenment project, and therefore withstood the test of time (i.e. the best theory thus far). It is for this reason that MacIntyre claims we should solely work within the Aristotelian tradition, but again, I am not convinced. I believe that MacIntyre dismisses Nietzsche altogether too quickly, especially at the sight of the word "transcendence". Instead I suggest a different lens, if you will, a different tool with which to sift through Nietzsche. Taking a broader approach to Nietzsche's efforts might yield different results. In fact, I suggest that the Aristotelian tradition can learn from Nietzsche, in his will

²⁷ Ibid.

to power or *der Übermensch*. And why not? When one considers all of the said similarities along with MacIntyre's adamant endorsements of Nietzsche's endorsements work, it would seem a worthy task to incorporate those appealing features of Nietzsche's philosophy into MacIntyre's strong notion of community. In the meanwhile, we might discover that Nietzsche has much to contribute to the search and thus is less at odds with the good of the community than MacIntyre asserts.

MacIntyre *and* Nietzsche

In a later book MacIntyre claims that "In a genuine morality it is the rules that have authority, not the individuals. The notion of choosing one's own morality makes no sense. What *does* make sense is the much more radical notion of choosing to displace and overcome morality".²⁸ MacIntyre is obviously referring to Nietzsche and what is implied with this quote is Nietzsche's dissatisfaction with rules, society and morality in general. I think it demonstrates much more than a child's rebellious aversion to Daddy's rules. Rather, it is a profoundly unique maturity seeking for something much deeper, much more elusive; to push the limits of society in the hope of discovering new virtues, new meanings for new answers to age-old problems. In the following passage such a sentiment becomes quite clear. "This – is now *my* way: where is yours? Thus I answered those who asked me 'the way'. For *the* way – does not exist" (Nietzsche *Thus Spake Zarathustra* III, 'Of the Spirit of Gravity', 2). MacIntyre uses this quote to show the radical individualism of Nietzsche in a negative way even though it can easily be

²⁸ DRA, 261

understood as a good quality).²⁹ Interestingly enough this does not at all seem to stand in contrast to the Aristotelian tradition. As Martha Nussbaum points out it is human nature to seek “not the way of their ancestors” but first and foremost the good³⁰. The following quotes illuminate further that which constitutes a search for the good.

So much for our outline sketch of the good. For it looks as if we have to draw an outline first, and fill it in later. It would seem to be open to *anyone* (my italics) to take things further and to articulate the good parts of the sketch. And time is a good discoverer or ally in such things. That’s how the sciences have progressed as well: it is open to *anyone* (my italics) to supply what is lacking (EN 1098a20-6).

And so it may be that Nietzsche, ultimately claims to transcend but it is only in a broader sense that we can understand his plea for creativity. Such a notion is obviously very idealistic and dangerous but it is such a notion that our societies are based upon and how the search for the good has been forged. MacIntyre adds

The good life for man is the life spent in seeking for the good life for man, and the virtues necessary for the seeking are those which will enable us to understand what more and what else the good life for man is”.³¹

²⁹ *The Gay Science*, 344

³⁰ Nussbaum, Martha. “Non-relative Virtues: An Aristotelian Approach.” In *Ethics: History, Theory, and Contemporary Issues*. Editors: Steven M. Cahn and Peter Markie. Oxford University Press. Oxford, New York 2006. 659

³¹ *After Virtue*, 219

From this we might usurp from Nietzsche this notion of the will to power, for the simple notion that there is a drive common to all human being and not simply as an insatiable drive for power. Human nature in this milder approach to Nietzsche illuminates the importance of creativity and competitiveness as an individual drive to search for the good. Community is better off for the insights that Nietzsche provides and also for the courage and honesty that he displays in his writing. He is willing to incorporate all of human nature: imperfections, deceptions, mutations and those things that the masses call appalling because he is desperate to try anything, to force society to move out of its complacency, which is stagnant and opposed to saying yes.³² From this vantage point, it can be concluded that Nietzsche contributes to the search because he redefines the search for the good and supplies another aspect of human nature that accounts for radical individualism. Perhaps this is just enough wiggle room for Nietzsche to sleep on MacIntyre's couch, that is, for Nietzsche to be allowed into the community.

Ultimately my deepest sympathies lie with Nietzsche and how can this not strike a chord in any passionate and idealistic individual? Nietzsche captures a fervent youth that burns in all of us and contributes to society in revolutionary fashion. But MacIntyre is not so naïve to believe that individual striving does not exist in practices or his communities, because his system actually allows that internal goods can be achieved through competition. His system bases itself on internal conflict in that he advocates deliberation of the search for the good

³² *The Gay Science*, 276

within individual small-scale communities.³³ Here MacIntyre only allows limited access, such as competition constrained by a community, because he does not see the benefit of transcendence, that is, he does not acknowledge the benefit of great men like the megalopsychos or *der Übermensch*. So our first question is, “Can we incorporate Nietzschean virtue in the MacIntyrean system”? Then, our ultimate question seems to be, “Can we expect great men without neglecting those things essential to human nature and the community?”

In *After Virtue*, MacIntyre gives the example of an adult teaching a child to play chess. His purpose demonstrates how the virtues, the possession and exercise of which, tends to enable us to achieve those goods in a practice, such as chess. In addition, the example shows acknowledged dependence on a teacher, the adult, the rules and a game, chess, in that it stresses the importance of learning. What MacIntyre does not emphasize, however, is what happens after the adult is gone and the child grows into an adult. He seems to think that because the child has already learned the virtues, that such qualities will stay with him indefinitely. This is inconsistent with the Aristotelian notion of a constant search for the good, in that it assumes that we all want to excel, at all times, but does not explain how or why. Nietzsche’s individual will shows the importance of a strong individual in competitive relationships. Dependence and learning at some point transforms into excelling and transcending, and crucial to this transformation is the strengthening of the individual; she must find value in the practices she engages, otherwise meaning in her life is not really meaning at all. Instead she

³³ *After Virtue*, 277

only understands why something is good because of how someone else values it. In this way, MacIntyre neglects to address how the good of the individual align with the good of the community and because of this, his good and his community seem to be complacent, even stagnant. Nietzsche demonstrates, however, that in her independence, there exists passion, enthusiasm, and a drive to continually create. These are the virtues of the great man, but it is not so obvious how these will contribute to the community. Let's look at the following example that demonstrates how the incorporation of Nietzschean virtue in MacIntyre's system will be a good for the community.

In a showdown for the title of the world's greatest chess player two world chess masters come together to compete like a clash of the titans. The match is everything that the two opponents could want: a worthy challenger, an opportunity to express creatively the will, and the chance to win. On a closer look, it is truly one strong will against another. Such a match is much like Nietzsche's prediction: a confrontation of the will to power in a space that allows for such expression. Each chess master wants to pummel the other, to chew him up and spit him out, but at the same time there exists a strong sense of mutual respect, a relationship. It is a competitive relationship between the two and although it begs for creativity of the will, it cultivates virtuous action as well. The two wills of the individual's play off of each other, encouraging the other to strive more and in this sense neither player loses. Not only will each player gain value individually but such a heavyweight match will be viewed, recorded and will benefit the entire chess community for years to come.

In this example the "game" supplies a space for individual wills to conflict. The "game" provides guidelines and as each player is striving they are pushing

each other, the limits of the community and the current tradition of the “game”. In the rare instance that they transcend standards and traditions, they would have discovered new value and created new tradition. A confrontation of two great chess players is conflict that changes the game individually and on the community level. The result of such change is multifaceted: both men have individually sought for excellence, and in so striving they have individually contributed to a community good; in their relationship to the “game” and their opponent, they have clashed against one another to further the tradition of the “game”. This shows that the individual will in competitive relationship, there is an acknowledgement of another player, of a great opponent, and also an acknowledgment of the “game”; this title match could not occur without the “game”, which represents a community that calls for rules and relationships. The power of the will demonstrates that there is a need for competitive individual participation, but moreover that there is a need for individual excellence and transcendence.

So it is that the chess example satisfies those things we like about Nietzsche and recognizes the benefit of community for dependent individuals transitioning to independent individuals. The chess example identifies that someone at sometime has to teach chess players the game; that these two masters learned the rules of the game first through a relationship, secondly in that they were able to participate in the game through relationships and lastly they are able to stand in relationship to the “game” after the fact. Nevertheless, without the possession of a strong will to power, each individual would not have contributed. It is precisely here, that we can conclude that MacIntyre’s community should accept great men and even hope to cultivate them because their relationships, and their

contribution to the community, and ultimately to the good depends upon their greatness. For this reason, MacIntyre should reconsider his worry about great men transcending community walls. Let's look to examples that depict "transcendence" as a behavior that is acceptable, appropriate, and timely; as behavior that MacIntyre might call virtuous because it contributes to the good.

In a first example, we turn to Basketball and someone who changed the game. It is only after learning first and then playing the game of basketball for so many years that Michael Jordan was able to transcend the basketball community with radical and revolutionary ways to score two points; people claim that he would at times even defy the laws of gravity let alone the rules of the game. Jordan, as a part of the tradition went on to change the tradition displaying slam dunks, techniques and strategies that pushed the bounds of the game so far that they are imitated by his predecessors such as Kobe Bryant and Lebron James. All of these players are considered great men, in that they have significantly contributed to the good of the basketball community. There are other examples in film as well: Neo in *The Matrix* for instance. He is picked-out from amongst the throngs, guided and shown the way in order that he become "the one" for the betterment of the community. Without his master and mentor Morphius, Neo would not be able to transcend the constraints of a simulated reality. In another example, there is Christian Bale who plays Batman in the recent film *Batman Begins*. This film shows Liam Neeson, who plays an evil-fighting Guru, as he directs Bruce Wayne's individual will to efficiently fight crime and find worthy a value void of *ressentiment*, which is the embodiment of the superhero Batman. It is only after learning such skills that he is able to transcend the master's rules and his self the

ordinary Bruce Wayne, to become super-heroic and contribute to the good of Gotham city.

There is a specific point in all of these examples where student becomes master and it truly is a Nietzschean triumph of the will that helps these great men transcend for the purpose of the good. There are two main points to be taken away from these examples. One is that Nietzsche's will to power offers a unique perspective, perhaps motivation even, to value internal good in virtuous action by encouraging the excellence of an individual. As a result, such encouragement might lead to a positive yet rare occurrence of transcending the bounds of a community (i.e. student becomes master moment). The second point demonstrates that Nietzsche's insights are only possible when incorporated with MacIntyre's notions of human nature and community. It is only after this realization that one can begin to look at the aforesaid examples as more than a "game", because it is not that one wants to be a great man to "win". Instead great men see that their virtues, all of their striving and competing have only to do with transcending, which is as I have exhibited it, a good. It is great men that pay no heed to the common adage "if it's broke don't fix it". In fact it is great men that point out to the herd that "it" is broken because they are not comfortable in complacency, which is perhaps more dangerous than attempting to transcend the ordinary standards, or radically changing how one lives life. Nevertheless, great men do not escape the dependency of the community, because the needs of the community extend to great men and great men cannot but stand in relationship to those in the community.

MacIntyre needn't worry about Nietzsche's attempt to transcend morality; rather he should adopt a different perspective of Nietzsche's larger goal. In what I have

suggested, transcendence can be understood as constructive independence most especially in that it reshapes or reforms the community, ultimately giving new perspective to the search for the good. Because of this, I propose that Nietzschean virtues should be incorporated in MacIntyre's system and that community should look to encourage transcendence, rather than chastise those men that return from the wilderness. For sometimes it looks that the strengthening of the will might include a conscious removal of oneself from the masses or separating oneself from the hustle and the bustle of the big city in order to gather the strength necessary to contribute to the search. In this regard it seems as if we may want to encourage independence from the community because great men, those who change world perspective and push boundaries, must separate themselves from the overbearing weight of the masses, in order to serve society better. When they are not understood or scorned for their unseemingly revolutionary ideas, such a lonely road may be the only answer for so called prophets.^{34 35} It is here that MacIntyre misses the unique parallel between his Saint Benedict of Nursia³⁶ and Nietzsche's Zarathustra. Both men had to remove themselves from dark times, from the herd, gathered their thoughts in solitude and silence, and

³⁴ According to Saint Benedict the hermit lifestyle is one only for great men, men of unique ability. See *Christian Ethics 2nd Ed.* from Waldo Beach and *Wisdom from the Monastery.*

³⁵ Such a notion is a historical literary example. It extends much farther than Nietzsche and MacIntyre, to finds its origins in Greek antiquity (i.e. Homer's *Odyssey*) and as a biblical reference as well (i.e. Jesus of Nazareth).

³⁶ At the end of *After Virtue*, MacIntyre claims that we are waiting on another, perhaps different St. Benedict who created small communities despite the imperialist Roman Empire.

attempted to start the problem of society afresh. MacIntyre's Benedict was a great man, a leader that transcended the decline of the Roman Empire, which included corruption within the Catholic Church, especially in monastic communities, and withstood the swelling tide of the Dark Ages.³⁷

A community needs those people, those great men, not only with practical wisdom, but contemplative wisdom, those willing to sacrifice their life striving, deliberating, competing and investing in the good of the community. It will be said that only the few have such time or would waste such effort, but it is for the good of community that is the reason for which most philosophers emphasize the importance of a contemplative life. Because of this, I think it can also be said, this need demonstrates that it is the community's responsibility to provide space for great men, instead of forcing them to the outskirts. Perhaps then, the good of community truly is to provide a place of flourishing, which does not seem so far off from Nietzsche's notion of a meeting place of individual will. Community then should make its primary goal, to plan to allow all community members the opportunities and provide the tools each individual needs to excel to greatness. This is in alignment with MacIntyre's notion of giving and receiving, that community should be primarily focused upon giving to its members those opportunities to transcend its walls in order to receive the benefits of transcendence. Along with this, we will usurp MacIntyre's notion that the community should cultivate such virtues not simply in childhood but for an entire life. Therefore, if we

³⁷ Beach, Waldo and Niebuhr, Richard, H. *Christian Ethics: Sources of the living Tradition 2nd Ed.* The Ronald Press Company New York, 1973. 243

allow Nietzsche and Nietzschean virtue to also be an integral part of the community we perhaps face the persistent fear of an unstable structure in society but we allow a larger possibility for great men, for a greater good.

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