Aristotle Contra Nietzsche:
A Study of *Megalopsuchia*

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A Thesis

In

The Department

Of

Philosophy

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of Master's of Arts at
Concordia University
Montreal, Quebec, Canada

August 2004

Your file Votre référence
ISBN: 0-612-94620-7
Our file Notre référence
ISBN: 0-612-94620-7

Acknowledgments:

Thank you to Dr. Christopher B. Gray for all his patience and help during this project. He gave me extremely helpful advice on how to face this task with his great knowledge of the subject at hand. His help and insight is very much appreciated, and without it, this project could have never been finished. I would also like to thank my family and friends for their support during this period and helping me along the way with their encouragement and help. Thank you to Brandon and Michelle for making their home mine when the situation warranted it, I am grateful for their unforgettable help and hospitality.

Abstract:

This study was written to help show the similarities that exist between Aristotle's (great-souled man) and Nietzsche's (übermensch) conceptions of the ideal man, more specifically *megalopsuchia* (greatness of soul). This is to show that Aristotle's model is still the skeleton of modern conceptions of moral greatness. It is formatted as a compare and contrast study with a presentation of both their philosophies and then a comparison in the concluding chapter on specific themes. The main texts that are used for Aristotle are the *Nicomachean Ethics* and the *Politics*, while Nietzsche's main text of reference is *Thus Spoke Zarathustra.*

For each philosopher there is an introductory section to help illustrate how their conceptions of greatness of soul fit and what role they play. Their conceptions of the ideal man are extensively studied with relation to their philosophy of morality and eudaimonia. It is believed that at first the similarities between the two are quite substantial, but with further reflection, we notice that the differences that lie in their views of worldviews, nobility, becoming, gift-giving, and values are too great to be reconciled. This is then an exercise to show how the view of what is morally good has changed throughout the history of philosophy, the modern view is then no longer akin to the roots of its discipline, at least when it comes to the notion of the ideal man and moral greatness.

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Introduction: In Search of the Great-Souled Man

Aristotle is a philosopher whose influence can still be felt today. Whether it is his work in ethics or metaphysics, the presence is still felt. In this study, the focus will be on his work in ethics, and more specifically his conception of the great-souled man.[1] This was Aristotle's interpretation of what the good man consists, and it is a model that is still used today. This thesis will show that Aristotle's conception of the ideal man is still the major model of more contemporary interpretations of the ideal man, the skeleton of the newer models if you will.[2] To help show these similarities I will use as a case study Nietzsche's conception of the übermensch and Zarathustra. Many would believe that these two philosophers have nothing in common, but with a closer examination, that would prove to be not true. They both wrote a great amount on morality. Walter Kaufmann went as far as saying that Nietzsche owed a debt to Aristotle's ethics. This will be examined further into the thesis. The thesis will begin with an introduction of the two philosophers in question, and with an explanation of the method that will be used.

Aristotle

Aristotle is seen as one of the founders of western philosophy. His work spans a wide variety of subjects, from astrology to zoology. Aristotle was a student of Plato and because of this some view his philosophy as a reaction to Platonic thought. Aristotle's philosophical influence has created many different viewpoints, because his work has been interpreted and reinterpreted to accommodate different programs and serve different goals. In addition, some will define their view by their rejection of Aristotle's work on

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[1]During this thesis the term man will be used in its generic sense and not in its genital sense.

[2] It is believed that to "prove" this instead of "showing" would make this a thesis in the history of ideas instead of the attempt at a hypothesis in philosophy. It becomes problematic when we try to "prove" something instead of showing similarities, it is not in this cognitive discipline's capacities, and it is hard to "prove" an idea, as scientists are able to do with specific scientific experimentation. It is extremely difficult to prove any idea.

metaphysics and natural science. This is not something that only contemporary philosophers do; ever since his death philosophers have been doing this. The Lyceum continued to be a center for scientific and philosophical study, which went through many different phases. In contemporary philosophy, Aristotle's influence is still felt in the main areas, besides ethics, which are philosophy of mind and action, and metaphysical issues. Considering what the focus of this thesis is, I will only expand on ethics and his influence in that area.

Aristotle was known for writing stylish dialogues and other works on philosophy that is intended for the general public. Unfortunately, only certain fragments of his work have survived; since most were not intended for a general public, they could not be described as polished literature. The most accepted interpretation is that they are collections of his notes, for lectures that he was giving, or topics that he was working on at the time. There is the notion that some of his texts were lecture notes, and the statements would have been elaborated in the class room setting, and this is why texts like the *Nicomachean Ethics* is very condensed at times. Still other notions that help explain the style of Aristotle characterized the works as results of one editor who received all that was of Aristotle and tried to fill it in as best the editor could. This is also why the modern reader may find the *Nicomachean Ethics* to be not exactly chaotic, but loosely written.

The focus of this study will be on his ethics, which some consider to be the more influential part of his work. His text, the *Nicomachean Ethics,* is considered as the basis of much of western morality. The *Nicomachean Ethics* is a text to help us live a good life and the result is one achievement of *eudaimonia.* In addition, this text discusses the strategy of the end justifying the means during ethical decisions. Aristotle created such key and crucial concepts in philosophy that Aristotelianism comprehends a large section of philosophers through the ages. Aristotle asserts that the ultimate end of all human action is *eudaimonia.* For us to know what this happiness consists in we must identify the distinctive function of human beings; this is activity in accordance with reason. This is what will provide the basis for a general account of the moral virtues; the virtues are dispositions in accordance with our feelings and emotions that are guided by reason that will make our behavior appropriate to the situation. This guidance by reason will require

the avoidance of excess or deficiency, thus, the virtue will be a mean in between the two extremes. Aristotle's ethics contains three main strands. The first is its aim to give an understanding of well-being or the good life for humans. The second shows that well-being consists in excellent activity such as intellectual contemplation and virtuous actions from a virtuous character. Virtuous action is what the person with practical wisdom would choose, and it is practical persons who can deliberate successfully towards well-being. The third strand is a theory of *arete*, which explains the fact that what is good seems to be the virtuous. He examines the characteristic desire, goals, imagination, emotion, and intuition in the choices and intentional actions of virtuous people; it is in these terms that he explains how virtue differs from self-control, *akrasia*, and self-indulgence.

Aristotle believed that morality is a prolegomenon to politics; for one to be able to do politics properly there is a need for a proper understanding of ethics, and what makes up the good life. Each citizen must achieve the perfectionist goals set out in the ethics. The *Politics* has four major theses. First, the city-state has as its goal well-being; the ideal constitution will be one through which every citizen achieves well-being. Second, democracy is superior to oligarchy in practical terms because it is more stable and its judgments are likely to be wiser; individuals when grouped together have more wisdom than a few. Third, the practice of slavery, concerning both "natural" and "non-natural" slaves required to till the soil and maintain the state, is justifiable. Fourth, the "communist" society of guardians in Plato's *Republic* is to be condemned because it is unobtainable, leads to social disturbances, and undermines private property and friendship, which according to Aristotle is the greatest safeguard against revolution.

His political work is important, but in this study, most of the focus will be on his ethical theory. This is due in part to the fact that the great-souled man is mentioned in the *Ethics* and not the *Politics*. Introducing the concept of the great-souled man will help for the presentation of the matter at hand, and there will be a more in-depth study later on in chapter two. Aristotle created the great-souled man as the culmination of the *liberal man*, the *magnificent man*, and the *magnanimous man*. The great-souled man is the person who claims much and deserves much, but he is also an extreme. He is also someone who has the right disposition in relation to honours and disgraces. Honour is the object with which

the great-souled man is concerned, because it is what great men claim and deserve. The great-souled man must be a good man. He must be the best of men, for the better someone is, the more he deserves; and thus he who is best deserves the most (i.e., honour). Greatness of soul is the crowning ornament of the virtues: it enhances their goodness, and it cannot exist without them. Thus, it is hard to be truly great-souled, for the greatness of soul is impossible without moral nobility. Honour is the prize of virtue, and it is the tribute paid to the good. The great-souled man is concerned with honour and dishonour. Greatness of soul is concerned with great honours.

Aristotle hoped to provide an account of how the good person should live, and how society should be structured in order to make such lives possible. His aim in writing the *Nicomachean Ethics* and the *Politics* could be compared to what Plato had accomplished with his *Republic*. Plato did believe that all that was needed for moral education was to give people a true understanding of what was good, noble, and morally worthwhile. Understanding is not enough without motivation, which knowledge alone can provide. This is why he sets out to give the reader an account of moral training as well as moral theory.

Nietzsche

Nietzsche emerged as one of the most controversial, unconventional, and important figures in the history of modern philosophy. His philosophy, as his sub-title for his text *Beyond Good and Evil,* is "a prelude to a philosophy of the future." His philosophical enterprise grew out of his schooling as a philologist; he studied classical languages and literature, and was deeply concerned with issues that relate to the quality of life in the culture and society of his time. His conviction was that the interpretative and evaluative underpinnings of Western civilization are fundamentally flawed. He was determined to come to grips with the profound crisis he believed to be impending as this came to be recognized. Nietzsche tried both to comprehend this situation and to help provide humanity with new possibilities for life, beyond what he called the "death of God" and "the advent of nihilism" following its wake. He found traditional philosophy to be inadequate for the task. His own grasp of philosophy came through the writings of

Schopenhauer and his text *The World as Will and Representation.* He created a radical alternative to philosophy and religion that might point the way to a solution.

Nietzsche's style of writing can be described as a series of writings whose common goal is to create a new image and ideal of the free spirit. An aphoristic style is something that he adopts as distinctively his own. He is known to be an astute, severe, and provocative critic on many subjects. Cultural, social, political, artistic, religious, moral, scientific, and philosophical developments and phenomena of many kinds drew his polemical attention. The most common impression of Nietzsche is that he is a radically negative philosopher, which contributes to the advent of nihilism that he announced. This all comes from his statement that all he saw was lamentably "human, all too human." This impression is incorrect, he was an extremely positive philosopher, who was concerned mostly with the discovery of a way beyond the nihilistic reaction he believed to be the inevitable consequence of the impending collapse in traditional values and modes of interpretation. This critical fire was only his means to his end, the twin philosophical tasks of reinterpretation and revaluation that he advocated and pursued with growing explicitness and determination from *The Gay Science* onward.

Nietzsche is greatly concerned with the basic problems discerned in contemporary Western culture and society, which he believed they were becoming increasingly acute, and for which he considered it imperative to try to find the new solutions. He prophesied the advent of nihilism, with the death of God and the demise of metaphysics, and the discovery of the inability of science to yield anything like absolute knowledge worried him. The "de-deification of nature," the tracing of the "genealogy of morals" and their critique, and the elaboration of "naturalistic" accounts of knowledge, value, morality, and our entire "spiritual" nature thus came to be among the main task with which he took himself and the "new philosophers" he called for were confronted.

Unlike most important philosophers of his time, Nietzsche was openly hostile to most forms of morality and religious thought. He declared a 'war' upon them, on the grounds that they not only are indefensible and untenable, but moreover feed upon and foster weakness, life-weariness, and resentment, poisoning the well-springs of human vitality, in the process by 'devaluing' all 'naturalistic' values. He did not just reject the God-hypothesis, but also any metaphysical postulation of a true world of being,

transcending the world of life and experience, and with them related the soul and thing-hypotheses, taking those notions to be ontological fictions reflecting our artificial conceptual shorthand for products and processes. His conception of the world is in terms of interplay of forces without any inherent structure or end, continuously organizing and reorganizing them as the fundamental disposition that he called the 'will to power.' This gives rise to successive arrays of power relationships among these forces.

Nietzsche constructs our human nature and existence naturalistically, with his insistence of translating man back into nature, which includes origin and fundamental character, so we are as one animal form among others. He made Zarathustra tell us that the soul is only a word for something about the body, and that the body is an arrangement of natural forces and process.[3] It is from this point of view that he makes Zarathustra differentiate between the higher types and the herd with his proclamation of the übermensch. The übermensch is the meaning of the earth, representing the overcoming of the 'all-too-human' and the attainment of the fullest possible enhancement of life. Nietzsche is directing our attention towards a higher humanity, which is capable of endowing existence with a human redemption and justification. He is proposing that life and the world be interpretated in terms of his conception of the will to power; this frames his 'Dionysian value-standard,' and the revaluation of values that he called for.

Method

The method for this thesis is modeled after John Stuart Mill's conception of the "joint method," which is a combination of his method of agreement and method of difference. This conception comes from Mill's *A System of Logic*, where he introduces the five canons for experimental inquiry. The joint method is the unification of two of the five canons of experimental inquiry. This method is a statement that, when two or more instances in which a phenomenon occurs have only one circumstance in common, while two or more instances where it does not occur have nothing in common save the absence of that circumstance, the circumstance in which these two instances differ is the effect or

[3]He also does insist on the importance of social arrangements and interactions in the development of human forms of awareness and activity, and upon the possibility of the emergence of exceptional human beings capable of an independence and creativity elevating them beyond the level of the general human rule.

the cause or an indispensable part of the cause of the phenomenon. This canon is stated to allow the possibility that a type of phenomenon under investigation may have more than one type of cause or that it may have a single underlying cause that is not revealed. This method also does not show how the strength of a causal hypothesis may be only a matter of degree.

The method of agreement is the first of Mill's five canons of experimental inquiry. This method determines that if two or more instances of the phenomenon under investigation have only one circumstance in common, the circumstances in which alone all the instances agree are the cause of the given phenomenon. It is not the observed regularity of co-occurrence that gives evidence for the causation, the observed elimination of all but one hypothesis does that. The method of difference is the second of the five canons of experimental inquiry. It determines that if an instance in which the phenomenon under investigation occurs, and an instance in which it does not occur, have one circumstance occurring only in the former; the circumstance in which alone the two instances differ is the effect, or the cause, or an indispensable part of the cause of the phenomenon. Usually it is hard to establish that two instances have every circumstance in common save one.

This project may not be an experimental inquiry, but there is still a lot of value that can be attached to Mill's method for the purpose of this thesis. The main reason for the choice of this method is based on how the method concludes to a matter of degree instead of proving a hypothesis true. Since the method of agreement is used with the method of difference, we are given a sort of model of comparing and contrasting, which helps in the creation of a dialogue structure between the two philosophers. This method is more concerned with showing the strength of a hypothesis instead of just trying to see if it is completely right or wrong. It is true that Mill did use this for a causal hypothesis, but causality is not what we are trying to achieve here, but more a degree of understanding similarities.

Causality is normally understood as a relation between two items, one of which is a cause of the other. In modern philosophy, the notion of cause is associated with the idea of something's producing or bringing about something else, the effect. I do not want to try to prove that a theory of the übermensch is the effect of a theory of the great-souled

man, but that they do share some common aspects. This duality of cause and effect is something that I believe not to be necessary, because I am more interested in showing to what degree they are similar; it is more a question of similarities than anything else.

These observations sufficiently introduce the topic and the philosophers that will be studied. The idea that Aristotle's great-souled man is still being used in contemporary views of the good man is achieved by the case study of Nietzsche, which will help further the point, seeing as how he is considered by most as one of the most influential philosophers of the modern period. His conceptions of Zarathustra and the übermensch definitely give echoes of Aristotelian great souledness.

Chapter 1: The Project of Eudaimonia

Eudaimonia literally translated means having a good guardian spirit. This is taken to be an objectively desirable life; it is also believed to be the supreme human good. The objective is character; this is what distinguishes it from the modern conception of happiness. Most ancient philosophers were concerned with what constituted the good life; the idea of eudaimonia is crucial. This is a pivotal idea in Aristotle's ethics too, because he also believed this to be the supreme human good. His ethics have as an end eudaimonia; the ethics are designed to help one achieve this goal.

Aristotle's understanding of eudaimonia has had much scholarly attention. Some argue that he did not have a consistent understanding of what it consists in. Aristotle believed that eudaimonia was the achievement of one's full potential; this implies that it is not just a matter of feeling. Aristotle also states that happiness is somehow living well or doing well. We should translate eudaimonia as a fulfilled life; we would then translate *eudaimonia* as fulfillment instead of just translating it as happiness. Since there are different ways for us to translate eudaimonia, it will be easier for the point of this study just to list the elements of which it consists.

Aristotle begins this discussion by asking why people do anything. He answers with what he believes is the answer, to live a fulfilled life. There is no higher aim for someone than the fulfilled life. It is generally agreed that most people think that Aristotle believes that what we want in life is personal fulfillment, thus, eudaimonia. This answer may be different today, but in Ancient Athens, this was the accepted response. Many believe, however, that a fulfilled life cannot be one-dimensional. Some would say that a fulfilled life is about money, or as Plato believed, to live in the light of one's knowledge of the Form of the Good. These two options would still hold true today, the life of money for the businessman who measures his worth in monetary value, while the religious

person measures his worth according to his relationship with God or other celestial beings.

Aristotle considers different lives in Book I chapter 4 and 5, which are characterized by the different answers their proponents would give to the question. He discusses three types of life very briefly; they are moneymaking, pleasures, and being well thought of. Moneymaking cannot be what makes a life fulfilled because we want money for the sake of what money can bring. Pleasures cannot be what make life fulfilled because a life of pleasure seeking is fit only for the brute beasts. Being well thought of also cannot be what makes life fulfilled, because people don't just want to be well thought of for the sake of it, but they want to be well thought of because they are in fact good people. Aristotle dismisses moneymaking because it is not valued for its own sake at all. Pleasures are dismissed in 1.5 where Aristotle only seems to refer to physical pleasures, because later in the Ethics he does state that a fulfilled life is a pleasurable life. This argument against the pleasures points to the idea that a fulfilled life is something that is unattainable by any animal. He quotes an inscription from the entrance of the temple of Leto, the mother of Apollo in Delos:

> Noblest is what is most just, most to be prized in health,
> But sweetest of all is to win one's love.[4]

Aristotle does not agree with the split between the concepts of what is noble, what is best, and what is pleasant. The virtuous man is meant to be at once the best, most noble and the most enjoyable. The pleasures of the fulfilled life are definitely different from the pleasures of the typical pleasure seeker. The problem here is that it raises the question that, if there must be higher and lower forms of pleasures, how we are to distinguish them. Stephen Watt[5] however believes that Aristotle has an argument to distinguish the life of the pleasure seeker from the life of the fulfilled person.

His argument follows that the pleasure seeker makes an indiscriminate identification between pleasure and eudaimonia, but eudaimonia must be an ultimate reason for someone to live as one does. If a pleasure seeker were asked whether something is worth doing, the person would answer that anything is worth doing as long

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[4] Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics,* Herthfordshire, Wordsworth Editions, 1996, 1099a29-31

as it is enjoyable. Aristotle is not denying that there is a need for bodily enjoyment in someone's life, but it should not be the motivation to his or her acts. This is because happiness is more than just pleasure; most philosophers would agree that pleasure does not play an important role in virtue or happiness. In Book VII Aristotle states that pleasure is good, but it cannot be the supreme good. Of course, one will choose pleasure over pain in any situation; this does not mean that it is the most supreme good. I think that the way that Aristotle believes pleasure is meant to function is not as the main drive of humans, because this would make them hedonists. Aristotle examines *akrasia* in Book VII of the ethics.

For Aristotle wrongdoings are usually done by ignorance; this is an idea that stems back to Socrates. He discusses this is Book III, the Socratic doctrine that denies that there is voluntary wrongdoing, thus, all ignorant wrongdoing becomes involuntary. Aristotle did not hold this to be true, but I am more concerned with discussing his views of pleasure in later parts of the text. Book VII and X is thus focused on a discussion of pleasure. The nature of pleasure is what is the most dominant theme in both books but they are different in comparison. The two definitions of pleasure in the two section do differ, but they do agree that pleasure is not a bad thing. In the good life, pleasure should be pursued and not shunned. There are of course different types of pleasure; they differ depending on the activity that is being performed. The good man takes pleasure in virtuous actions, while the wicked man's pursuit will not only be wrong but repellent. It is right for the good man to pursue pleasure because it will point him in the right direction; the proper pleasure will encourage the activity, and he will perform good actions that will build the virtuous character. What is important to stress here is that one must be right about pleasure, because it is only the good pleasure that will lead in the right direction. "Since only pleasure in good actions will lead to the performance of good actions, the good man must be right about what kind of pleasure to encourage; but when he is right, that kind is certainly to be encouraged."[6]

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[5] Stephen Watt has written the introduction to the version of the *Nicomachean Ethics* that is used in this thesis.

[6] Julia Annas, "Aristotle on Pleasure and Goodness" in *Essays on Aristotle's Ethics,* ed. Amelie Rorty, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1980, p.286.

Bodily pleasures are also good, but not all of course. Aristotle does however believe that they are necessary to a good life even if they are not considered to be as good as the pleasure that arises from contemplation. "The good man's life will include these pleasures, but it will include far more, and it will be structured in such a way that the bodily pleasures have a place subordinate to intellectual and virtuous activities and the pleasures derived from these."[7] What should be understood to be pleasure would be what the good man takes pleasure in. Thus, what the bad man claims to be pleasure would be considered to be the pleasures that hinder the good life. To say this is still too simplistic: "of those which are thought to be bad some will be bad if taken without qualification but not bad for a particular person, but worthy of his choice, and some will not be worthy of choice even for a particular person, but only at a particular time and for a short period, though not without qualification."[8] There is importance for the place of bodily pleasures in the good life, but the pleasures that come from thought and contemplation will of course override them in importance. Enjoyment seems to be what would be the criteria when we examine a life that is focused on bodily pleasures as the criteria of actions.

Enjoyment, even higher enjoyment, is not the point. Thus, a fulfilled life is more than just a string of enjoyable actions; it is a series of actions that are completed by someone who does them because the person correctly sees the point of doing them. The results may be different depending on the act, but it is usually for the moral good of the situation that the person is experiencing. In other words, the mean will be an act that will bring about the morally good end that is wanted.

The life spent being well thought of can be assessed in a very similar way. Aristotle does not study the person who does not care which people think well of them and which do not. He only discusses the one who wants to be well thought of by good people who see his good character. Aristotle then points out that it is not the fact that he is well thought of that he values the most, but it is his good character. This implies that eudaimonia is just the possession of good character. It cannot just be that, since one would be able to possess a good character and be in a coma one's whole life. A fulfilled life must at least contain a series of actions that will help demonstrate the good character.

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[7] Ibidem.
[8] Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics,* Herthfordshire, Wordsworth Editions, 1996, 1152b29-31

A fulfilled life will be enjoyable, and well regarded by good people, but the point of it will be in the living of it, and doing it because it is worthwhile. This still does not help us in understanding how to live a fulfilled life, for the examples that Aristotle presents make one wonder if a fulfilled life might be more than just one thing. For instance, a fulfilled life must be more than just one thing that we all aim at, because fulfillment will be different for everybody.

There are, however, agreed characteristics of eudaimonia. Aristotle points out two features of the fulfilled life, which everyone is agreed upon: it is the most complete end; and it is sufficient of itself. By the first he means, that the fulfilled life alone is sought after for its own sake and not for the sake of anything else as well. We do not need to ask for a further explanation of why we should wish for a fulfilled life. If one is fulfilled nothing more is required, and no other end must be pursued. The point of self-sufficiency is interpreted differently. The passage where Aristotle discusses this is:

> We define 'sufficient of itself' as that which, taken by itself, makes life worth living, and lacking in nothing. This is what we take eudaimonia – fulfilment – to be like. Moreover, we think that fulfillment is what is most worth having, rather than counting it as one good thing among others. Fulfillment, counted as one good thing among others, would be still more worth having if even the least of the others were added to it. For what is added on produces a larger total of good things, and of good things the more the better, always.[9]

An inclusivist could ask why Aristotle should say that nothing could be added to eudaimonia, and his answer is that nothing can be added to it since it already contains all the other goods. Eudaimonia is simply the name to the total package.

Nagel says that this interpretation is unsatisfactory. The most important objection is that earlier when Aristotle states that eudaimonia is complete it is explicitly put on the same level as what he says about being sufficient of itself. During his treatment of completeness, Aristotle never mentions what fulfillment consists in; the point is its status as an end. If the parallel with completeness is to hold, then to say that fulfillment is not one good thing among others is more likely to be a remark about its status instead of what it consists of. The question that Aristotle was trying to answer was not exactly what a fulfilled life consists of, whether that by definition a fulfilled life is sought for anything further and whether it can be improved upon.

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[9] Ibid, 1097b14-20

Nagel

This section of the *Ethics* has received much scholarly attention; here I will discuss some of the philosophers who have devoted much attention on trying to grasp what eudaimonia truly consists in for Aristotle. Thomas Nagel in his essay "Aristotle on Eudaimonia" argues that the *Nicomachean Ethics* exhibits indecision between two accounts of eudaimonia; they are a comprehensive account and an intellectual account. The intellectualist account of eudaimonia is "realized in the activity of the most divine part of man, functioning in accordance with its proper excellence. This is the activity of theoretical contemplation."[10] The comprehensive account describes it differently: "eudaimonia essentially involves not just the activity of theoretical intellect but the full range of human life and action, in accordance with the broader excellences of moral virtue and practical wisdom."[11]

Nagel points out that this indecision is also present in the *Eudemian Ethics*. Most of the text does expound a comprehensive account, but the passage that he saw as most fit was this one.

> Therefore whatever mode of choosing and of acquiring things good by nature – whether goods of body or wealth or friends or the other goods – will best promote the contemplation of God, that is the best mode, and that standard is the finest; and any mode of choice and acquisition that either through deficiency or excess hinders us from serving and from contemplating God – that is a bad one. This is how it is for the soul, and this is the soul's best standard – to be as far as possible unconscious of the irrational part of the soul, as such.[12]

It is true that this passage is isolated, but it gives the reader a good example of how Aristotle was tempted by the intellectualist account at the end of the *Eudemian Ethics*. Nagel did not find it out of line for Aristotle to bring in God at the end of the *Eudemian Ethics* considering the emphasis on the divine element in our nature at the end of the *Nicomachean Ethics*. He did state that the term "intellectualist" does seem to be too dry a term for the "almost Augustinian sentiments" that are detected in both works.

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[10] Thomas, Nagel, "Aristotle on Eudaimonia" in *Essays on Aristotle's Ethics,* ed. Amelie Rorty, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1980, p.7

[11] Ibidem

[12] Aristotle, *Eudemian Ethics,* Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1992, 1249b17-24

Nagel believes that there is a relationship between the intellectualist tendencies in the *Ethics* and Aristotle's view of the relation between *nous* and the rest of the soul. Because Aristotle is not sure who we are, he finds it difficult to say in what our eudaimonia consists, and how to draw the line between its constituents and its necessary conditions. Nagel believes that, if we were not to stop with the truism that the supreme human good is eudaimonia, then we are then forced to inquire into the *ergon* of man, because if something has an *ergon*, that thing's good will is a function of its *ergon*. Nagel states that the *ergon* of something is what makes it what it is. Therefore, the proper *ergon* of man, with which human excellence is measured, is what makes him a man rather than anything else. The proper *ergon* of man is obvious to anyone; it is our capability of rationality. This feature humans have is not common with any other animals. The only thing that we do have which truly separates us from beasts is our capability of the practical exercise of the rational faculty as well as the contemplative.

Nagel wonders if we should be trying to include more than one function in the definition of the human *ergon* and thus the human good. Nagel does consider other options like health and fertility, but they lack an essential condition for inclusion, that is the condition of autonomy. This condition means that the fundamental elements of human good cannot be due to luck. In the former example of health, good health can be the result of sheer luck instead of someone's own efforts. Nagel believed that the basis of this question had to be examined. He believed that the good "stems, presumably, from the condition that good is tied to ergon or functioning; and what simply *befalls* a thing, whether that thing is a man or a plant, is not an instance of its functioning or malfunctioning."[13] This statement brings about the issue that the account of what makes a person should include or exclude their bodily functions that they share with animals and plants. Nagel states that neither in *De anima* nor the *Nicomachean Ethics* is the nutritive element excluded from the human soul; but it is not one of the aspects of human functioning that Aristotle considers as a measure of eudaimonia. Nagel believes that this position just mentioned has much potential; if we are able to understand why he assigns nutrition to such a low status, we would be able to see why he gets rid of everything

[13] Thomas, Nagel, "Aristotle on Eudaimonia" in *Essays on Aristotle's Ethics,* ed. Amelie Rorty, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1980, p.9

except the intellect, to the point that the only thing that intrinsically bears on eudaimonia is the ability of contemplative activity.

Nagel brings up the example of a combination corkscrew and bottle-opener, it thus has two functions: to remove caps and corks. This object then has an *ergon*, which gives room for us to evaluate the implement in terms of its capacity for a successful performance. He believes this not to be simple enough to escape the question that Aristotle has raised.

> It removes bottle-caps, to be sure. However, since it has that function in common with any mere bottle-opener, *that* cannot be the special ergon (*to idion*) of our implement – the ergon by which its excellence is judged. So, by elimination, *to idion* must be removing corks. Unfortunately, that is a capacity it shares with mere corkscrews, so that can't be part of its special ergon either. Obviously, this argument is no good. The thing must have a simple conjunctive ergon, and its excellence is a function of both conjuncts.[14]

It is then obvious that there is a necessity to abandon this argument by elimination and acknowledge that man does indeed have a conjunctive *ergon* that will overlap with animals.

The main difference between man and animals is reason, and the fact that his complex of organic function supports rational as well as irrational activity. Reason is involved in the control of perception, movements, and feelings; that allows him to include animals to lesser degrees. Nevertheless, the highest level of human life puts all the other functions into a lower position in relation to rational activity. The supreme good for man must be measured in terms of the surrounding environment; that is where all human functions are organized, because the conjunctive and the disjunctive view of eudaimonia are inadequate. The practical employment of reason is in the service of the lower functions, Aristotle is forced to pass from his vague statement that human life is rational, as opposed to other life, and consider the objects that are best suited for the exercise of this capacity. When Aristotle mentions reason from this point on, he is not including practical reason but a reason that transcends beyond the ordering of practical life. A person is to seek to transcend from not only his individual practical concerns, but also those of society and humanity as a whole.

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[14] Ibid., p.9-10

The highest type of knowledge then becomes *sophia*. "For it is absurd to think that Political Science or Prudence is the loftiest kind of knowledge, inasmuch as man is not the highest thing in the universe."[15] Theoretical and practical matter must then compete for the attention of the rational faculty; the capacity that helps a human focus on subjects more elevated than him at the same time will spoil them from lowlier concerns.[16] The reason behind this imperfection of applications of reason to practical matters is that these applications make human life the primary focus of rational attention. This is because humans are the only animals that have developed the capacity to reason over things that are higher than they are, and thus to share in it to some extent.

We have to cultivate the portion of our nature that promises to transcend the rest. Our capacity to think of things higher than ourselves is the highest part of the soul, and we are then not encouraged focusing on the lowlier matters unless ignoring them will make contemplation impossible. Thus, contemplation is the ultimate human good; it is the highest part of us and that is what we must associate with ourselves. "If anyone insists that the rest belongs to a complete account of human life, then the view might be put, somewhat paradoxically, by saying that comprehensive human good isn't everything and should not be the main human goal. We must identify with the highest part of ourselves rather than with the whole."[17] The other functions, this includes practical employment of reason itself, are not our proper excellence as primary component factors. This is because we are not just the most complex species of animal but because we have the essential nature of a capacity to transcend ourselves and become like gods. It is in virtue of this capacity that we are capable of eudaimonia. Animals are not capable of this task, children have not yet achieved it, or some adults will never be able to achieve it.

The philosophy of the *Ethics* is what is of most interest concerning this thesis. What is Aristotle setting out to accomplish with his *Ethics*? Most philosophical texts

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[15] Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics,* Herthfordshire, Wordsworth Editions, 1996, 1141a21-23

[16] I think that Aristotle would say this because if someone spends all his time thinking about higher concerns, he will lose focus on the smaller things in life. If people then spend their time only thinking about things that have no place in practical concerns they will then not be able to become virtuous in concerns that may be seen as lower in importance, but will still be important on different levels, practical concerns for everyday life. They will become detached from everyday life situations that could bring an outcome that would still be just as important depending on the end that it would bring.

[17] Thomas, Nagel, "Aristotle on Eudaimonia" in *Essays on Aristotle's Ethics,* ed. Amelie Rorty, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1980, p.13

could answer this question easily for themselves by saying that their purpose is to provide a true account, or improve our understanding, of some particular field of knowledge. For Aristotle, his answer cannot be quite that simple. This is because Aristotle makes it a point to tell his reader that the *Ethics* is a practical study that is intended to make its students good instead of being knowledgeable. It is true that he is making his reader more knowledgeable, and therefore better at being good; this is in the same way that a more knowledgeable doctor will be better at being a doctor. The *Ethics* aim at making you good, but this is a conception that the reader may have to abandon during their reading of the text, because it will become harder to think of moral goodness as a distinct class of goodness. Aristotle is thus trying to make his readers good at doing what humans do, but not necessarily everything that humans do. Aristotle is trying to make his reader good specifically concerning not just any end, but the ultimate supreme end of human beings. The key to understanding the *Ethics* is to realize what Aristotle is trying to do, and that is producing a good statesman; this can be understood as people who are good at making other good people by running good societies. This also gives the reader foreshadowing of where the *Ethics* are supposed to evolve towards, and that is politics.

Virtue Ethics

The translation of the word, ethics from the Greek arrives at a definition that can be summed up as matters concerned with character. Most Western moral writings are not specifically concerned with being a good person, but with what an agent are supposed to do in certain circumstances. This difference of focus shows what question Aristotle is asking himself, 'what should the statesman do?' instead of any normal person.[18] Aristotle's treatment of character is quite different from most modern accounts whose concern is what we could call 'virtue ethics.' Virtue ethics is normally understood as an attempt to analyse those qualities that a person will need in order to lead any sort of recognisable human life. We must keep in mind that the virtues Aristotle is discussing are

[18] Aristotle believes that the statesman should have good character for specific reasons. For decisions to be done that are just and fair, the person making these choices will have to be someone with good character. This is the main reason why Aristotle is asking for his statesman to be of good character, because then his choices will be more for the good of everyone instead of being for ulterior motives that would help his situation and not of the society as a whole. The character of the statesman will then set the tone for his skills as a leader and decision-maker.

not exactly the same ones that a modern philosopher would discuss. However, some virtues that he does discuss resemble the ones that a modern philosopher would explore, which are courage and temperance. One would need courage to confront dangers and temperance while pursuing pleasures. To understand how Aristotle arrives at his virtues it is important to examine how he goes about doing ethics in more detail.

Virtue ethics are understood to have two different foci, the perfection or actualization of potentiality and attention to character instead of rule, it is thus important for us to briefly leave the discussion of Aristotle's ethics and discuss the two to see what roles they do play in virtue ethics as a discipline. Let us briefly examine the first foci, the actualization of potentiality, with Raymond Devettere's treatment in his text *Introduction to Virtue Ethics: Insights of the Ancient Greeks*. He treats this when he discusses eudaimonia and how it involves more than just good conduct with virtue. He mentions that the prephilosophical definition of eudaimonia is "good conduct with virtue" (*eupraxia met' aretes*)[19]; this seems to be close to Aristotle's definition of happiness at the end of the ethics. This definition may seem close, but Aristotle defines happiness as actualization in accord with virtue (*energia kat' areten*). Devettere does point out that there is an important difference between the two definitions mentioned above. *Eupraxia* is meant to designate good action or deeds, while *energia* is a term that denotes the actualization of a being's potential. He also does summarize the first foci very nicely to show the role in Aristotle.

> Thus, Aristotle's *energia* is a much more fundamental term than *eupraxia*. It refers to the fulfillment of a being's total potential and not merely its actions. This is why Aristotle can say *energia* for human beings includes contemplation (*theoria*), something he sharply distinguishes from action (*praxis*). Aristotle's phrase *energia kat' areten* really means something like "fulfillment of your potential in accord with virtue."[20]

I believe that it is now important for us to examine briefly the focus on character.

Character is related to habit, the best translation of *ethos* is probably moral character or simply character. We have to remember that habit and character are not the same, even though they both can be bad or good. Devettere believes that good character

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[19] Raymond Devettere, *Introduction to Virtue Ethics: Insights of the Ancient Greeks*, Washington D.C., Georgetown University Press, 2002, p.45.
[20] Ibidem.

is acquired in two stages: the first is when others direct us towards good feelings and actions; the second is when the person starts to makes its own decisions to seek what is good for its own sake. It is from these decisions that we acquire virtue. "Repeated good decisions coalesce into enduring states that can be identified as character virtues, virtues such as justice, temperance, and so forth. Thus, deliberately chosen good actions create the virtuous states that form good character."[21] The authentic character virtue is thus of interest at this point, Aristotle does take time to explain this in his ethics, with an important distinction in virtue ethics.

The distinction will be the difference between character virtues (*ethikai aretai*) and intellectual virtues (*dianoetikai aretai*). This distinction is important for us to understand, and how the former is dependent on the latter. Some believe that character virtues are just habits, but there is more to them than just that. They should be understood as permanent states of character that are produced by our habits. Character virtue is thus not based on action alone; it is a focus on the psychological state that is produced by habitual actions. For an action to be virtuous for Aristotle is based on three essential conditions: first, it must come from the proper character state; second, it must be reasonable in circumstances; and third, it has to be done for the right reasons.[22] This mention of the reasonable brings forth the second kind of virtue in Aristotle's ethics, intellectual virtue.

Intellectual excellence is thus made of intellectual virtues, which are understanding (*nous*), science (*episteme*), philosophy (*philosophia*), skill (*techne*), and prudence (*phronesis*).[23] Within these intellectual virtues, Aristotle places them into two major categories: theoretical and practical. "The major theoretical virtues are science and philosophy; here, the goal is to *affirm* what is factual and *deny* what is not. The practical intellectual virtues are skill (*techne*) and prudence; in this case, the goal is to *pursue* what is good and *avoid* what is not."[24] Prudence is the practical virtue that is relevant to ethics. Understanding appears in both the theoretical and practical categories. In theoretical thinking, it grasps first principles like the principle of noncontradiction. In practical

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[21] Ibid, p.140
[22] Ibid, p.67
[23] Ibid, p.68
[24] Ibidem.

thinking, it grasps the principle of the desire above all for what is good and the morally salient features of each situation. This distinction is thus meant to show us how the two do play a role in virtue ethics. There are our states of character, virtues such as justice, courage, temperance, and love. Then there is the decision-making intellectual virtue of practical wisdom or prudence.[25]It is important now for us to return to the *Nicomachean Ethics* and study his treatment of virtues in the text.

It is his philosophical method that explains his virtues, it is evident when one reads his discussion of the virtues in Books III-V that he is describing an idealised version of a character of a fourth-century BC Athenian male and not the qualities required to live any sort of human life. This does make sense, because of his starting point that the common opinions of male Athenians regarding what makes an admirable character. A misconception must be erased also when reading Aristotle. Western philosophy has a tendency to be sceptical, taking the possibility seriously that our commonsense everyday knowledge of the world can be wrong. In the *Ethics*, the different methodology leads Aristotle to believe that what all think to be good is actually good, also where thinking includes not just what people say about what is good, but what they reveal about their understanding of good and bad in their actions. Although Aristotle is seen as a non-sceptical philosopher, that does not mean that he is unable to distinguish between what seems to be good to any person and what is actually good. In fact, this helps to show that there is a possibility that some people will be wrong in their judgments; they are not able to see the good as a blind person is not able to see the physical world. What it does mean, is that people will be usually right; that what they think, feel, and pursue, as good will actually be good because of the habit of moral virtue that they have achieved. It is a trained behaviour, not something that is in us naturally. "And therefore it is clear that none of the moral virtues is engendered in us by nature, for no natural property can be altered by habit."[26] Because of this, it then makes sense for him to start with the examination of the common view of good character; this hopefully would establish something that is actually good for human beings.

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[25] Ibid, p.69

[26]Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics,* tr. Rackham, Harris, Herthfordshire, Wordsworth Editions, 1996, 1103a14-b8

Out of all the virtues that Aristotle examines in Book III-VI, prudence and choice seem to be the ones that would require the most attention and understanding. When prudence is mentioned in the *Ethics,* it means the virtue by which we reason about our actions. Because of this, it is sometimes translated as practical reason and it is to be contrasted to wisdom or theoretical reason. Choice is discussed in Book VI and Book III; this is also one of the most important technical terms in the *Ethics*. Choice, as is prudence, is concerned with means and not ends; it is caused by reasoning and is itself the cause of action.

If we examine people and their actions, we are faced with two major elements in the account of action. First, reason is believed to have no effect on ends: if I desire ice cream as an end, it is not the result of my reasoning, even if working out the means to get ice-cream does involves some reasoning after the desire for it appears. Aristotle did believe that prudence was used in the assessments of the ends that someone should pursue. The best evidence of this is when one looks at the *Ethics*; this is a work of reason dedicated to arriving at the supreme end for humankind, if one follows what is stated. In addition, whatever Aristotle does mean by stating that prudence is concerned with means and not ends, we are not to assume that this is to exclude reason from the assessment of ends.

Secondly, the account assumes that there is a temporal dimension to an action; when a person acts, he will have always deliberated, and then chosen, and after all of that will the act occur. Most people when reading this would think that this is not always the case. Everyone at some point and time has just acted. After the act, we explain our actions and provide the reasons why we did what we did, but this does not mean that at every action we take time for deliberation. During this event, we make a choice and then we act; this will happen during an important and unfamiliar dilemma when we have time to do so, but not in the case of our everyday actions. Some scholars believe that if this is Aristotle's picture of it, that seems to be wrong; but there are possibilities for explanation that can help in convincing some into accepting it.

It is easy to say that Aristotle is suggesting that there is only choice in the case of the actions where we have to sit down, think, and come to a conscious decision, but that this case of actions typifies all our action. This is an explanation that is hard to accept,

because in Book III and VI Aristotle talks about a type of action which is our habitual way of acting as good adults; this alone will rule out the possibility of his focusing on actions that are preceded by the agent's conscious deliberation and decision. Secondly, it is hard to understand how a type of action that is radically different from our normal actions could in any way typify all our actions. Another explanation is that there is always an event that we could call a choice, which always precedes our action but of which we are unaware most of the time; this could be because it happens quickly. This does not explain the deliberation that is supposed to occur before the action, except if we claim that there is an unconscious process of deliberation. This may be an explanation that a modern philosopher would accept, but I do not think that Aristotle would agree with this completely. The main reason why people believe that he assumed that choice is an event that precedes the action is because of a comment at 1139a31-32.

> Now the cause of action (the efficient, not the final cause) is choice, and the cause of choice is desire and reasoning directed to some end. Hence choice is necessarily involves both intellect or thought and a certain disposition of character [for doing well and the reverse in the sphere of action necessarily involve thought and character].[27]

If one were to put the idea of efficient cause into a modern context, the best example would be billiard balls, the white ball moves towards the red ball, and then at contact the red ball moves down the table. If Aristotle talks of efficient causality, using the same example, that the choice precedes the movement of the body in the same way that the movement of the white ball precedes the movement of the red ball. If one examines Aristotle's works outside of his *Ethics*, however, his conception of efficient causality is very different from the modern conception; he does not assume that the efficient cause always precedes the movement for which it is responsible, but that it occasionally coincides with that movement.

The final possibility, which seems the most feasible, is to look at Aristotle's conception of choice as seeking to explain actions by giving the reasons for which they were done instead of their causal history. For this possibility to be considered plausible one must have the ability to distinguish Aristotle's understanding of efficient causality from the billiard ball example earlier; this also requires an account of how reason is to

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[27] Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics,* Herthfordshire, Wordsworth Editions, 1996, 1139a31-32

explain actions with giving their causal history. Only if it is possible that deliberation occurs before the action to cause a choice, in learning that our actions as done for reasons, will highlight the role of the intellect or at least understanding it as such. This is considered as one of the most difficult area of the *Ethics*.

Human Nature

Another area that deserves a lot of attention in the *Ethics* is the argument from human nature, which is discussed in Books I and X. It is important to study his argument for human nature because it will help us understand the virtues better, and this will in the end help us understand moral virtue on a much better level.

Book 1 states that the common opinion of humankind is that everyone tries in their lives and actions to achieve happiness. Everyone does agree with this statement, but unfortunately, not everyone agrees on what happiness actually is. It is from this opinion that Aristotle suggests that we might be able to understand what happiness is by considering what the function of man is. He concludes that it is an activity in accordance with the best human virtue. Jumping from this statement to Book X, happiness is the exercise of that virtue in contemplation. This statement brings the image of a person who has spent his complete adult life in the ivory tower. This oddness is reduced by Aristotle's statement that the life of active participation in city life also constitutes happiness, even though it is of a secondary variety. Exactly what Aristotle thinks is involved in contemplation can be argued over; no matter what the details are, we can be sure that it involves prizing some sort of cognitive activity over other goods. Before accepting this conclusion, it is useful to study the argument that leads up to it, for if this conclusion is wrong, perhaps the argument for it is flawed.

This argument begins with Aristotle stating that once we are aware of that the job of a sculptor is to sculpt, we are able to say that someone who sculpts badly is a bad sculptor; or if we know that the job of an eye is to see, we can say that an eye that sees badly is a bad eye. If we are to then say that human beings, just by virtue of being human instead than by being a sculptor, shoemaker, or painter, have a function, we are able to conclude that someone who performs that function badly is a bad human being. It is generally understood that Aristotle's ascription of a function to human being is simply

the result of his general metaphysical and scientific system that gives functions and purposes to all substances: this is one of the reasons why some are no longer able to accept his ethics, since we no longer accept his metaphysics and science. We should not be so quick to judge and believe this argument to be fruitless; there are some points that should be considered.

Even if we drop the argument that relies strictly on function, Aristotle might still be able to claim to have proven that the exercise of theoretical reason is the supreme good. When discussing the function argument Aristotle says that the results already achieved, presumably by the function argument, must now be compared with the truth; maybe not explicitly, we regard the exercise of theoretical reason as the highest occupation of humanity. Aristotle remains faithful to his anti-sceptical assumptions: if he were able to show that everyone already thought theoretical reason is best, or acted in a way that they revealed this as an unarticulated assumption, then he would have proved this true. It is also important to note that human beings just like animals have needs; if we are to use the function argument and understand that humans need reason in order to be happy, Aristotle's claim would then be true regardless of anything else.

Aristotle's *Ethics* does not contain the same focus as modern moral philosophy. The modern moral philosopher is concerned with the moral dilemma, while Aristotle would just state that; we are to do what the good man would do. There are not specific ways for people to act in different circumstances according to Aristotle, unlike most modern moral philosophers; instead, the good person will solve the dilemma correctly, just as how someone identifies tables when following a set of explicit rules. The reason is that Aristotle does not focus on the specification of what a good person does, but on what the product of a good society should be. For this purpose, to know that a society should regard the exercise of theoretical reason as the supreme good, instead of the expansion of territory, is to learn something new and of importance. This is something that is one of the transition points to be continued in the *Politics*. The argument of the *Ethics* is not just the study and identification of eudaimonia, but also how a good society is to be and exactly how it will be structured to make sure that theoretical reason is held in the highest rank in human activity.

The political interest of the *Ethics* is captured in the concept of the *great-souled man*. The great-souled man is the culmination of the liberal man, magnificent man, and magnanimous man. This idea deserves attention, especially considering that it is still used today in discussion of what the ideal man should be. In the following chapter, there will be an extensive study of the great-souled man and all his three parts: generosity (liberality), wisdom (magnificence), and magnanimity. The great-souled man embodies all the moral virtues, so understood by this mode of life helps to understand Aristotle's conception of the practice of each particular virtue. In this study, we will not go beyond the study of liberality, magnificence, and magnanimity, because Aristotle did believe that greatness of soul was the crowning virtue and thus we need only study its specific components.

Chapter 2: The Great-Souled Man

Aristotle considers greatness of soul to be the crowning virtue. The great-souled man is able to be the statesman who will help administer the ideal society.

> Greatness of soul seems therefore to be as it were a crowning ornament of the virtues; it enhances their greatness, and it cannot exist without them. Hence it is hard to be truly great-souled, for greatness of soul is impossible without moral nobility.[28]

The great-souled man is concerned with the most important things, in other words, he is concerned with lofty matters. Aristotle believes that the great-souled man deserves the greatest reputation. Aristotle even says that *megalopsuchia* implies bigness, because it is derived from the word bigness *megas*. The same way that beauty consists in a large body, this state of *megalo* consists in grasping for the biggest degree of virtue. Thus, *megalopsuchia* is compared with beauty to further his insistence on the greatness of the great-souled man. "He who deserves little and claims little is modest and temperate, but not great-souled, since to be great-souled involves greatness just as handsomeness involves size: small people may be neat and well-made, but not handsome."[29]

The great-souled man believes that he deserves certain external goods and internal goods like honour especially, which is the greatest of them all. This is what we are to pay as tribute to the gods. Since the pursuit of honour is a pursuit for a kind of divinity, because people worship honourable people, the pursuit of greatness of soul then becomes tied with the pursuit of godlike honour. Honour as a virtue raises some difficulties, because there is no real name for the virtue regarding honour. Before continuing our discussion of honour, I believe that it would be best to discuss the three descriptions of human beings that put together culminate into the great-souled man. The discussion

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[28] Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics,* Herthfordshire, Wordsworth Editions, 1996, 1123b14-1124a6
[29] Ibid., 1123a19-b14

follows the order of the liberal man (generosity), the magnificent man (wisdom), and the magnanimous man (magnanimity).

Liberality

Generosity is the moral virtue for the liberal man.[30] Generosity is about *chremata*, which can be translated as material goods, but with a wider application. Aristotle says that it includes everything whose value is measured in money. The range of possibilities thus becomes endless because of how moneygrubbers try to put a monetary value on everything and anything they can. Aristotle even applies this not only to moneygrubbers, but also to tyrants. *Chremata* extends to tyrants and their giving of offices, freedom, and all the other benefits that tyrants bestow in exchange for support. Aristotle's range of meaning does not technically cover only money or possessions; for the sake of this discussion, the term that is the most fitting would be external goods.

Aristotle begins his discussion of generosity by giving details of how it appears to sound opinion. Generosity is considered as a mean with respect to the giving away of external goods. The vices corresponding to this virtue are stinginess (deficiency) and wastefulness or extravagance (excess). Aristotle does point out that this account itself is deficient on its own because it focuses only on the giving and not on the taking. Maybe the reason why generosity focuses on giving over taking is that virtue usually focuses on doing good instead of having good done to you; it is thus about doing noble-fair acts. When we think of generosity, we usually focus more on giving than taking on because we love to receive gifts. Aristotle gives the example that we do show gratitude toward

[30] The idea of moral luck comes into play here; it is important to explain briefly before going further. Since the virtue of liberality has to do with the giving away of material goods, how can just anyone be liberal then? Some would believe that there is some luck involved; if someone does not have the resources to give away, how will they be recognized as generous. I believe that Aristotle would agree that if someone cannot give a lot and still makes the effort to give whatever is considered reasonable for their situation, the virtue of generosity still stays intact. The sacrifice is still the same if the poor person gives away less than the rich person, it is easier for someone who is wealthy to give a lot away. If someone has two apples and gives one to another person, that should be considered just as generous as someone who has twenty apples and gives ten away. The sacrifice is just as big and should be viewed as such; it is not just a matter of circumstance because the act still has the same end in mind, to give what one can afford to without giving away everything that they do have. It should still be considered that it is the action that the person decides to choose to undertake. It may be easier for some than others but the virtue is still in the end the same. If the rich person only gives one apple he or she will not be viewed to be generous because of the resources available, but the poor person that does give one will be seen as generous because of the amount of

someone who gives something to us, but we will not praise someone from refraining from taking from us.[31] Aristotle has said that it is easier not to take than it is to give goods away, and people will be less likely to give away what is theirs than what belongs to their neighbours.

The liberal man is he who is linked to the virtue of generosity. He is the most liked, because generous people are so helpful. They are the people that we turn to when we are in need of help, whether it is financial or some other need. Generosity is an important virtue for Aristotle, but virtue is not only about external action, it is also, about how that action is performed. This should be understood in a Greek political context where the pursuit of honour contains several related dimensions. Its most obvious manifestation is in the desire to win public recognition of excellence in competitions for superiority. The notion of revenge becomes involved in the process of social evaluation; it is necessary to bolster one's reputation and to ward off future attacks. The feeling of envy towards others' good fortune is also invoked especially when the success seems undeserved.

Aristotle is seeking a fuller notion of generosity, one that is not mixed with envy, self-seeking, and self-protection. He is trying to define in what generosity would consist. The truly generous person will give in the right way for the right reason. He will also not take from the wrong source, because unjust taking is not characteristic of a person who holds possession in low esteem. The generous person is also selective to whom he gives, for it is not in his character to give for the sake of giving alone. He will give to the right person at the right time for the sake of *to kalon*. This already gives a richer conception of generosity for many reasons. As mentioned before, the generous person is the most loved because he does give away. The motives for generosity as practiced are honour and the avoidance of the dangers of being envied. Aristotle does state that the real virtue is done for the sake of the noble and fair, and not for acceptance or respect from his peers. The generous person also does not focus on just giving the right way, but he will also focus on

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resources available. It is still the perfection of his potential, maybe the quantity is different but the mean is still the same.

[31] We also tend to identify virtues with acts that we can see and feel. Giving away something is an obvious external act that one is able to see and touch, while refraining from unjust taking is hidden. This is why we focus on the former instead of the latter

taking the right way. "For as this virtue is a mean both in giving and in getting, he will do both in the right way."[32]

With this is mind the generous person is not able to be wealthy, seeing as how he will give away his belongings accordingly. "But it is not easy for a liberal man to be rich, since he is not good either at getting money or at keeping it, while he is profuse in spending it and values wealth not for its own sake but as a means of giving."[33] In addition, it is hard for someone to accumulate goods without spending most of the time taking; hence, the liberal man will not be able to partake in the most important aspect of his life, which is giving away external goods. The truly generous man is thus someone who does not take indiscriminately. Instead, he will be someone who values external goods for the sake of giving. As stated earlier, people that are obsessed with the accumulation of external goods do not know the real criterion of value for the very goods they pursue.

As Aristotle's argument develops, he realizes that there is a need for a new view of the vices opposed to generosity. He still believes that virtue with respect to *chremata* requires right giving and right taking. The new vices are not named in the initial account because they were not apparent in the beginning. This new articulation of vices opposed to right taking gives new meanings to right giving. This is because there are many forms of extravagance and stinginess. The vices concerning external goods thus change. The extravagance stays the same while the stinginess is the one that changes the most. The vice of stinginess no longer just applies to the example of the tyrant, there are now two kinds.

Vices Concerning External Goods[34]

	Giving too much	Not giving enough
Taking too much from the wrong source	Extravagance #1 (Most extravagant people are like this)	Stinginess #1 (Pimps and Tyrants)
Not taking too much	Extravagance #2	Stinginess #2 A) Those afraid to give because they do not

[32] Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics,* Herthfordshire, Wordsworth Editions, 1996, 1120b9-1121a6
[33] Ibidem.
[34] Thomas, Smith, *Revaluating Ethics: Aristotle's Dialectical Pedagogy*, New York, State University of New York Press, 2001, p.95

		want to be forced to do anything base if they lose what they have. B) Those afraid to take because they think it is risky and hard.

This table creates a discussion that revalues how we are to relate toward external goods. This table makes the virtues of law abidingness and respectability become banal and devalued. If one also looks at the second examples of stinginess there is no mention of wrongful taking, but they also do not involve virtue. People that are law-abiding are usually seen as people that are afraid of acting on their desires because of the consequences that will occur. To these people applies example 2B, they are afraid to take because they will find it risky and hard. There are also stingy people that will not take because they want to keep what they have but would have to repay a favour, and they do not want to lose any of their material accumulations. A person like this is considered not confident enough in his or her own character to do the right thing in adversity.

> With some of them this is due to an honourable motive of a sort, namely a shrinking from base conduct – since some persons are thought, or at all event profess, to be careful of their money because they wish to avoid being forced at some time or other to do something base; to this class belong the skinflint and similar characters, who get their names from an excessive reluctance to give. But some keep their hands off their neighbours' goods from fear; they calculate that it is not easy to take what belongs to oneself, and so they 'prefer (as they say) neither to take nor to give'.[35]

Therefore there are people that are stingy and do not do this out of virtue, but out of fear of owing something to their neighbour. The corresponding sort of people is those who are stingy because they do not want to lose their external goods. People relate happiness with the possession of external goods, thus they will take without consideration for the other and make sure that their possessions grow in quantity. The liberal man is therefore defined by the virtue of generosity, and his vice is stinginess and excess is extravagance. The liberal man is only a part of the great-souled man; greatness of soul, however, contains much more than just that.

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[35] Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics,* Herthfordshire, Wordsworth Editions, 1996, 1121b5-1122a4

Magnificence

The magnificent man is the next depiction of the person that leads to the great-souled man. His virtue is obviously magnificence. Aristotle links the magnificent man with the discussion of generous giving and the possession of wisdom and the person of Socrates. Many people would agree that magnificence is hard to define, it contains different meanings. On the one hand, it is the virtue that is shown by citizens that spend money for the benefit of the public, on the other hand, Aristotle believed that it also meant when expenditure is made only once like paying for a wedding or paying for a foreign visitor to be received. The object that is produced must be worthy of the expenditure, the expenditure must be worthy of or even exceed the object that is produced. "So the magnificent man's expenditure is suitable as well as great. And consequently the objects he produces must also be great and suitable; for only will a great expenditure be suitable (to the result) as well."[36] One can say that magnificence is generosity with a public dimension, but the public dimension is not meant to be limited to the spending of money on political things. Magnificence is therefore about doing the honourable thing, and not necessarily about the amount of money or external goods that are used. The magnificent man is thus the next step up from the liberal man because instead of being solely based on generosity, there is also the consideration of the most honourable way of going about it. The lay understanding of magnificence would link it to people that are born in high birth or people that have important relatives, because these qualities carry greatness and prestige. It is then obvious that magnificence is in the upper strata of society. Poor people are unable to be magnificent because they do not have the opportunity to be wondered at, and they do not have the resources needed to do the needed expenditures. The gift that will be the most honoured will be the one that is the biggest, greatest, and fair-noble. A gift must be so big that it is to be a source of wonder. A magnificent man wants to buy a gift so big that it will make people's jaws drop.

The different criteria that Aristotle lays out for the virtue of magnificence are useful for understanding it, and help us in understanding of the opposing vices. The magnificent man is a knower, because he knows what is best for the *polis* and he spends with good taste. He also has to be wise; he will have to know how distinguish whether an

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[36] Ibid., 1122b1-27

expenditure is frivolous, whether it will only make him look good or will actually work for the benefit of the *polis*. He will thus have to know what the *polis* actually needs in order to know where to spend his money and where his efforts will do the most good. He also has to know that a city can mistakenly think that it needs something, and he avoids the temptation of spending for the sake of flattery. A man will be magnificent not when he spends money on himself, but for the sake of the common good.

There are problems when trying to list the vices for magnificence because to the commonplace understanding they too appear to be virtues. It is just as difficult to judge magnificence as it is to judge generosity; this is because we like it when people give us things. The extreme of the magnificent man is the vulgar man who spends a lot when he should spend a little and vice versa. He does it this way because he does not spend for the sake of the common good, but to show his wealth in hope that people will wonder at him. In this case, the city will definitely not receive what it really needs. It will however, celebrate the vulgar man because, since he does have his eye on honour, he will give the city what it most wants instead. The love of honour will make people flatter others for public opinion.

The deficiency for the magnificent person is thus the cheap person. He will spend a lot of money on an object, but will then spoil the beauty of the gift by aggravation over a little. He will grumble and complain and then find a way of economizing, he will also say that he is spending too much. Aristotle believes that this vice does not bring any reproach, because if we are to follow this train of thought we will conclude that they both involve giving. If we look closely at what magnificence is when judged by people who like to be given things, we realize that in most cases, what we take to be magnificent is an act of vice. A modern example of this could be outside funding of universities. Corporations want to give to the bigger better-known universities instead of the smaller private institutions. There is more honour to give funding to Harvard instead of a small private college that does need the funding more. In addition, the funding may not be placed in the proper area of the university; instead of giving funding that will go to professors' salary they will focus on a football stadium or auditorium. This kind of excess for Aristotle is not that there is a lot of money being given, but that the money is being given to the wrong people at the wrong time for the wrong reasons.

It is hard to give a city what is required for the common good. This is because most regimes are more or less unjust and thus deform their citizens; most do not know what is in the city's best interest. An expenditure most celebrated may in the end turn out to be bad for the city. The person that is giving what citizens most want may be giving what we least need. Even though magnificence is supposed to work for the common good, it may also be for the private good of the man that loves honour disproportionately, and in the end hurt instead of help the regime or city. In all reality, spending on the common good could bring on censure instead of praise, because sometimes what is most needed is what is most painful.

Aristotle never does clearly criticize the way that public expenditure is practiced. He uncovers that the magnificent man's desire for praise points to a more fundamental desire, which is the desire for wisdom. This is because the evaluations of the common good will need someone that must hold wisdom as one of the criteria that make up the character of the magnificent person. The magnificent man, according to Aristotle, will have to be knowledgeable of what the city will need most. The motivation of the magnificent man is identified as the desire to produce something that will be wondered at. Wonder is considered by most as the beginning of philosophy. When people are in the presence of a wise person, they become aware of their own ignorance and then wonder at him because the wise person is saying things grand and big that go over their heads. This is the kind of wonder that the magnificent man is searching for, to feel superior to the extent that people will be in awe when they are near him. He wants to be celebrated for being a good judge and doing what the occasion will require. He does not just want to be known as a good spender. His desire is thus to be known as someone that spends money wisely on what the people actually need. This stems from of want of being honoured in virtue of some excellence. The magnificent man's longing to be honoured for wisdom thus points beyond itself to a desire for wisdom. If the magnificent man is not careful, he will not be led by what wisdom demands but by what popular opinion demands. He will risk recognizing popular acclaim as a proof of wisdom, something that Aristotle knows is not true. He will also risk becoming unwise by reverting to the standards that most people will use to evaluate wisdom. He thus risks being foolish.

Wise persons will not give away external possessions; they will give away their wisdom. Their wisdom is what a city needs the most from them, over external goods. A problem of appearances then intrudes into this picture. People may wonder at the wise person, but most people will believe that philosophers are not practically wise, because they seem ignorant of things that are advantageous to them. It is true that philosophers do know many wonderful and extraordinary things, but are seen by many people as useless because they do not concern the humanly good things. Practical wisdom is concerned with what is actually good for humans in reality, while the wisdom that a philosopher will hold is not as applicable to the human reality that everyone lives. For the audience to be interested in philosophy, they will have to revalue their conception of philosophy. Aristotle is thus stuck in the predicament that he must show the reader what appears to be in their interest is not really so, and that what does not appear to be in their interest actually is. The magnanimous man may help us achieve a better understanding of the role of the magnificent man in the great-souled man.

Magnanimity

Magnanimity and greatness of soul are terms that are interchangeable according to some scholars. When Tessitore discusses magnanimity, he seems to be hinting at the idea that magnanimity is the same thing as being great-souled. I believe that he sees this virtue as the last one that is needed to be mastered in order to truly achieve greatness of soul. The portrayal of the magnanimous man is also the closest to Nietzsche's conceptions of the übermensch and Zarathustra. This will be explained at greater length in the upcoming chapters. The magnanimous man is the last of the three parts of the great-souled man, and he is the most important for the purpose of this study. This is not to say that the other two do not carry any weight in the blueprint of the great-souled man, but the magnanimous man is the image that has carried through the ages without being too altered or distorted. This will be the last treatment on the subject of the great-souled man in his different parts; after this, will be the culmination of the three: liberal man, magnificent man, and magnanimous man. We are now left with the ascent to the magnanimous man.

It is important to discuss briefly how Aristotle does arrive at the magnanimous man in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Aristotle begins his discussion of the ethical virtues with courage and moderation, which both deal with feelings and emotions. He then moves on to discuss actions that involve external goods in his treatment of generosity and then generosity on a larger scale, which he calls magnificence. It is from this that he continues to the discussion of "greatness of soul" or magnanimity. During this discussion however, he does not use the same technique as he does with the other virtues, instead of presenting it from a single point of view, he decides to show it through many different points of view. He is offering the reader a multifaceted portrait of the magnanimous man. If one considered how Aristotle looked at the other virtues as painting, then the portrayal of the magnanimous man would be sculpture.[37] We are made to consider the magnanimous man from different points of view in order to be able to achieve a better understanding. There are many interpretations of the magnanimous man that have arisen, this is understandable because the account that Aristotle presents us is full of ambiguity. This problem has arisen from others' attempts to flatten his depiction of the magnanimous man to make it more consistent with itself and what they believed Aristotle was trying to do. I will present the interpretation that I believe to be the most precise interpretation of them all to serve the purpose of this thesis. The interpretation that will be used is Aristide Tessitore's explanation of the magnanimous man in the text *Reading Aristotle's Ethics: Virtue, Rhetoric, and Political Philosophy*. He seems to carry an interpretation that can best be coupled with Nietzsche's übermensch.

Tessitore believes that the ambivalence of Aristotle's portrait is heightened when we try to identify the magnanimous man. Is this meant to be a description of political greatness or philosophical excellence? Tessitore believes that the answer to this question is more difficult than one would think; this is all based on Aristotle's reference to magnanimity in the *Posterior Analytics*. In this text, Aristotle presents magnanimity as having a double meaning. On one hand, he is taking one's bearings from Alcibiades, Achilles, and Ajax, the magnanimous person is thus characterized by an unwillingness to endure dishonour. On the other hand, he is using Socrates and Lysander as examples of

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[37]Aristide Tessitore, *Reading Aristotle's Ethics: Virtue, Rhetoric, and Political Philosophy,* New York, State University of New York Press, 1996, p.28

equanimity in good and bad fortunes. I will briefly discuss this, but I go back to the *Ethics* shortly since that is the text that is the basis for an understanding of the magnanimous man. It is important to examine the two sources of ambiguity in the character, the uncertain identity of the magnanimous man and the tension that lies between human greatness and healthy political life.

The examples of Alcibiades, Achilles, and Ajax are meant to be strictly political. These three examples are characters that embody a conception of greatness in battle and action. They are thus characterized by a desire for glory that shows itself in conquest and implacable resistance to dishonour. The second set of examples of magnanimity is more ambiguous because it embraces a Spartan general and an Athenian philosopher. Lysander is a character that did experience a reversal of fortune, but Tessitore believes that there is a considerable question about the extent of his equanimity. He also believes that maybe Lysander is introduced as a less perfect introduction to the less accessible but better example of Socrates. Plato never spoke of magnanimity, but he did have Socrates speak of philosophical magnificence. This was a part of his philosophical virtues; it is there that Socrates explains that nothing human seems great, even death is not something terrible if one contemplates all being and all time. Even though Socrates embodies all the vicissitudes of fortune better than Lysander does, Aristotle still suggests that this type of magnanimity is at root philosophical.

It is important to note that all the examples Aristotle uses are in conflict with their fellow citizens. Alcibiades and Lysander subordinate political allegiance to personal ambition in turning against their democratic city-states. The dishonour that caused Achilles to withdraw from battle caused the death of many Greeks, and the dishonour of Ajax's madness and suicide deprives the Greeks of a great warrior. Socrates' situation is different from these; it is his remoteness from the sensibilities of democratic Athens that resulted in his condemnation and death. Despite the existence of different types of magnanimity, the aspiration to human greatness finds itself, from the tension between citizen virtue and concern for the common good.[38] This is considered from the point of view that to maintain healthy political life, the claim that these people would embody the peak of human excellence would not be beyond question. This is what Tessitore

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[38]Ibid., p.32

considers this to be the source of the ambiguity that arises in Aristotle's explanation of this virtue in the *Ethics*.

Aristotle's reflection on the identity of the magnanimous man in the *Ethics* is more mature than the one that he gives in the *Posterior Analytics*. Gauthier believes that the explanation in the *Posterior Analytics* is a single conception of magnanimity; it is fashioned with Socrates as the more perfect example. Hardie argues that the magnanimity that Aristotle explains in the Ethics reveals itself in political and military actions, both of which are said to be distinguished by nobility and greatness. Tessitore believes that there is merit in both accounts, but he also believes that Aristotle means to have his explanation remain open-ended. There are several aspects of Aristotle's discussion that point to an extraordinary virtue that is required for political greatness. He does include several specific traits that pertain directly to political life. "The magnanimous person undertakes great and noble deeds, is willing to face great dangers, confers great benefits, and is eager to provide help to others."[39] Tessitore maintains that Hardie may be right in insisting that the preponderance of weight in Aristotle's portrait does tip towards political life.

It is true that some of the characteristics that are attached to the magnanimous man are ones that would normally be attached to a philosopher instead of a politician. Such are the magnanimous man's preference of truth over opinion, an inclination to irony, and an almost god-like aspiration for self-sufficiency. Aristotle however enables no mention of dedicated action on behalf of the common good and the philosophical activity of contemplation. The inclusion of these activities, Tessitore believes, would have helped to create a composite image, instead of having two different camps facing each other. Aristotle does refer to the political and philosophical life as the two most popular ways of life for the people most ambitious for virtue. This open-ended portrayal of human greatness is consistent with Aristotle's open-ended portrayal of human happiness at the end of Book 1. "Greatness like happiness, is an activity involving virtue and if there are several, it accords with the best and most perfect."[40] Even though Aristotle's conception of human greatness does lean towards political ideals, it does not leave out the possibility of other options like philosophy.

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[39] Ibid., p.33
[40] Ibid., p.34

Aristotle's discussion does, however, in the end point to a life of political heroes over a philosophical life of contemplation. This makes sense when one considers the fact that Aristotle believes that the *Ethics* were a sort of prolegomenon to political theory. It is however, important to consider the second layer of ambiguity that was presented also; and for that, it is important to consider the explanation presented in the *Posterior Analytics*. For the sake of this study, the identity of the magnanimous man is taken to belong to the political life with tinges of philosophical virtues, a philosopher king if you will. A brief description of the magnanimous man is thus in order to see exactly how he would be useful as a political leader of a city-state.

The great-souled man, or magnanimous man, is he who claims much and deserves much. He is someone who possesses the right disposition towards honour and disgrace. Honour is the object that is the biggest concern of the great-souled man; this is because honour is what great men claim and deserve. The great-souled man must be a good man. He has to be the best man, because the better someone is, the more that he deserves; therefore, he who is best deserves the most. Greatness of soul is a crowning ornament of the virtues: it enhances their greatness and is not able to exist without them. It is hard to be truly great souled, because one is not able to be great souled without moral nobility. Honour is the prize of virtue, and it is the tribute that we pay to the good. Therefore, greatness of soul is concerned with great honours.

The role of the great-souled man in the *Ethics* is thus very important and crucial for the jump into politics to which Aristotle alludes. If one considers the virtues that I have just discussed it is easy to see that generosity, magnificence, and magnanimity are virtues that have more value and efficiency on the political plane. For someone to be able to guide and run a city-state, one will have to be morally superior and aware. The great-souled man will know what is best for the common good because of his virtue of magnificence and be very generous towards the population that he is leading. The good man that is mentioned in the *Politics* is meant to be the great-souled man; during discussion of the *Politics,* this should be noted. The best way to show that the *Ethics* were a prolegomenon to the *Politics* is to study the transition that occurs in Book 10. The role of the great-souled man is to help us see in advance, what the leader of the city-state is supposed to be and to represent.

Shift from Morality to Politics

Francis Sparshott explains in his book, *Taking Life Seriously: A Study of the Argument of the Nicomachean Ethics*, how the shift from morality to politics occurs in Book X. Aristotle leaves the *Ethics* to pursue the second half of his philosophy of human affairs, politics. He is announcing a treatise on politics, that is for sure; but he does not introduce it so obviously. Instead of a blatant announcement of the *Politics*, Aristotle mentions the example of the *Republic* and how Socrates says that philosophers should be kings; his solution is then that philosophers should study legislation. Someone who is well brought up will be anxious to be good and need only to be instructed and encouraged, but most people are not like that. They have been brought up by force; and since people like themselves have raised them, they will need coercion. Law is how to describe a coercion that is in the interest of reason and without personal bias. Aristotle is thus stating that law does to adults what education does to children. Aristotle believes that each family should be legislated by its own head; but the ones with the requisite interest and concern should extend their efforts to the community at large.

The question still remains about whom it is that should legislate; Aristotle makes it clear that it is not practical politicians or public educators.[41] Aristotle is thus forced to start with a clean slate; he will have to compile data on how cities are organized and subject the findings to a critique that will extract the relevant principles. Sparshott mentions first that what makes it easy for people to develop proper behaviour is because there are laws that are set to punish deviations. Aristotle makes the point when discussing this that most people are not interested in the good life and this is why they are kept in order by legal control. It is important to note that the ability to be good if that is what one wants, or even the project of leading a good life, will depend on the framework of the laws already in place. The laws are meant to apply and be for the benefit of everyone; they are not directed to a certain group of people.[42]

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[41] This could be considered to be answered with his presentation of the great-souled man. He has made a point to stress that it is not the job for a practical politician or educator, he is calling for someone that will represent human excellence. Seeing as how the great-souled man has acquired all the virtues, he would be the most likely candidate.

[42] This could be considered a reference to the virtue of magnificence; this is a characteristic that is stressed in the discussion of magnificence in its earlier section. This can be taken to represent the generosity that is for the best of the people in the long term, instead of just giving that quick fix that could in the end just hinder more than better.

Sparshott also dedicates time to the study of Aristotle's use of the problematic of Plato's *Meno*. It is specifically the opening conundrum of the three ways in which virtue can be acquired. Plato believed that virtue could not be taught in a general method; this is because no one has the relevant knowledge of the relevant truths. Politics is a matter of opinion, successful hunches and experience, it cannot be taught this way. This implies that someone like Plato, someone with knowledge of timeless truths and eternal realities, can establish what virtue really is and therefore be able to teach it. Aristotle has a parallel claim to Plato's, this insistence on the extraction of historical data. Aristotle, however, replaces Plato's abstract "recollection" with a reasoning that will remain practical; it is abstracted from our actual knowledge of affairs but it is not based on a separate domain, like Plato.

Aristotle is presenting us with the world that we know, one where most people are ignorant, stupid, selfish, and will always remain the same. The task of practical politics and social engineering is thus not to remedy the situation, but to help us cope with it. The world order is never changing, not many philosophers reconcile themselves to the world, but Aristotle is one that does, even though he does use judgmental language to refer to the majority.

> The idea that most people are not deeply and continuously reflective about the conditions of social existence and are kept in line by custom and by social pressures seems reasonable enough, and it does seem to follow that social guidance and reform will be the work of a reflective minority.[43]

It is hard to accept Aristotle's claim that most people would be hedonistic if they were left to themselves, and that legislators who impose the laws prevent them from this. The self-sustaining pressures of customary morality and individual goodwill are thus left out of the picture.

Sparshott believes that the last chapter of the *Ethics* leaves a mixed impression. One of the reasons for this is because it leaves us with the image of an upper class contrasted with "banausic" people. The contrast is more potent when one sees it as how the latter is motivated by fear instead of shame. It is important to consider that this is not a class matter, but that everyone can make the effort to lead a good life even though very

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[43] Francis, Sparshott, *Taking Life Seriously: A Study of the Argument of the Nicomachean Ethics,* Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1994, p.357

few people do. The chapter also expresses the opinion that most people are pleasure loving and base; there is the further point that people do not make long term goals, but instead try to fix immediate situations with the opportunities and demands that arise from it. Aristotle's remark that most people are selfish and require coercion could be said better. Most people most of the time have to respond to the passing situations; the purpose and function of laws is thus to ensure that the immediate situation will have compatibility with the general good during these pressing moments.

We are then presented with the thesis that everyone could lead a good life if they want to, but the thesis can also be easily rejected based on the supposition that someone would want to try and improve the quality of their life, in other words, that some ways of living life are better than others. We have to remember that the Greek intellectuals saw this to make sense; they were trying to build a civilization that was more enlightened than what surrounded them. Some would find this offensive today, for how can one culture see themselves more superior than another? The alternative would be that there is no such thing as reform, nothing will count as an advance in science or philosophy, and the concept of a 'good life' would have no content outside of contemplation. All ideals would thus become empty ideals. How is one to accept that? It is possible for one to believe this, but if this is true then it means one of two things. "Either humanity has no 'function' – but we have seen that Aristotle admits that possibility, with its corollary that it renders his project nugatory – or the human ergon is such that all human lives fulfill it equally well. If the function of humanity is to live in accordance with 'reason,' it may be that all human lives are linguistically mediated, and hence saturated with 'reason' in the only sense of that term that begs no questions."[44] This is a possibility, but is one willing to accept this? The *Politics* will thus focus on the good life and the good for man.

We are all aware of who Aristotle would choose as the leader of the state, the great-souled man. This is hinted at us during different parts of the *Politics*; it is also obvious if we observe the different explanations that he gives to the three virtues that culminate into greatness of soul. If someone has mastered all the virtues and acquired them all it is then obvious that he would be the best candidate. In the *Politics,* we are able to imagine just what role he would have and how important it is. Liberality,

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[44] Ibid., p.358

magnificence, and magnanimity are definitely virtues that will be necessary to be able to guide a city-state with the good of all people in mind. The virtue of magnificence will definitely be one of the more important, this was explained earlier, how it is good to be generous and know exactly what is best. If one is to guide a city, he will have to know what is in the best interest of his people, instead of just giving frivolous things no matter how nice people will think it is at first. Aristotle has a clear idea of who he would have running his city; this was shown to us with the earlier question of what the statesman would do. When Aristotle's studies the good man, we should try to see if it is the great-souled man that he is writing about.

Chapter 3: The Politics of the Good Life

Aristotle's *Politics* is considered one of the most influential political texts of all time. His influence ran very strongly especially in the medieval period of philosophy, when philosophers like Aquinas would use it as the backdrop to his text.[45] There are also some of the first political philosophers, like Hobbes and Machiavelli[46], who wrote texts that would go directly against the Aristotelian model. This text is based on Aristotle emphasizing the goal of living virtuously as the central goal of the *Politics* from a desire to preserve freedom. The good life (or the best way of life) and the good man are thus the central ideas that must be discussed in the section, but one must remember that the good man and what is good for man are different ideas even if they may be connected together. After a brief overview of the text itself, it will become easier and more relevant to be able to differentiate the dualism that was just presented.

Aristotle undertakes to treat the communities of men in terms of the natural bases of human associations and the different ends that come from these associations. He also makes the point to distinguish the different qualifications of the statesman, king, householder and master. Plato believed that they were all the same, and the demonstration that the state is natural, because it is essential to living well, is based on the analysis of its parts: the family, the household, and village, which are obviously

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[45] Aquinas is known to have brought Aristotle to the attention of western philosophy in the medieval age. He used Aristotle's thought to help base his ideologies and dedicated much time on writing commentaries on his major works like the *Metaphysics*, and the *Nicomachean Ethics*. It is also said that Aquinas Christianized Aristotle, he developed Aristotle's legacy into an exhaustive, rigorously argued philosophical and theological system. (A. BRO, *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*, ed. Ted Honderich, New York, Oxford University Press, 1995, p.43)

[46] Hobbes wrote a lot on moral and political philosophy; he believed both to be practical and not theoretical. He also believed that morality applies to manners and habits; this seems to be a direct influence from Aristotle's philosophy. Machiavelli based his political writings on the idea that the end does justify the means, which is known to be an Aristotelian doctrine. (B.G. *The Oxford Companion To Philosophy*, ed. Ted Honderich, New York, Oxford University Press, 1995, p.369)

natural since they are vital to living at all. There is a pluralism and dynamism in Aristotle's political analysis; because there are many different kinds of states as there are characteristics in men and their situations affecting human relations or the purpose that are sought in their associations. "We see that the entire activity of the political [ruler] and the legislator is concerned with the city, and the regime is a certain arrangement of those who inhabit the city. But since the city belongs among composite things, and like other composite wholes is made up of many parts, it is clear that the first thing that must be sought is the citizen; for the city is a certain multitude of citizens."[47]

There are three main kinds of government: monarchy, aristocracy, and polity; a "constitution" is an arrangement of magistracies[48] and is thus identical with governments, whether one, the few, exercises the supreme authority or the many. These three forms of governments can be divided into different types of subspecies, but they can also be differentiated from three perversions: tyranny, oligarchy, and extreme democracy; this is dependent on whether their aim is in the common welfare or in private interest. Aristotle compares these kinds of states under six different heads, the criteria of what is best is to be sought in four different senses. In the first sense of best in the abstract, political problems are conceived mostly in terms of the education and improvement of citizens as a means to the improvement of political institutions and the way that they function. The second best, under certain circumstances, is to handle the political problems that arise fitting political institutions and their operations to the limitations and predicaments of a state. The third is the best in general, conceiving political problems in terms of the balances of powers and functions for the resolutions of problems and the conduct of political affairs. Fourth, the best in the modification or preservation of the original forms of government, the political problems here arise from the terms of prevention or furtherance of revolution.

Book I tries to find the natural foundation of the state and the analysis of its parts, while Book III covers the basic principles and fundamental distinctions of political

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[47] Aristotle, *The Politics,* tr. Carnes Lord, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1984, 1274bl

[48] When the Greek city-states achieved their maturity, there came a need for what they called magistracies. It was a chronological system on a universally understood basis. In the archaic period, the chronology of monarchs and aristocrats sufficed for the area's history, and events were associated with lifetimes of well-known heroes. Thus, the constitutions of the city-states were based on the genealogy of the monarchs and aristocrats of the region at hand.

science. These two books determine and prefigure the chief possibilities of political action. The citizen and the function that the citizen holds in the function of the government define the state.[49] Aristotle believes that this definition is best fit for a democracy, and this is why he uses the term "polity" to designate the good form of democratic government. The functions of the citizen require abilities and virtues in the citizen, and for these to be properly formed and exercised will depend on equality and justice in the state. Aristotle thus repeats that the good citizen will be the same as the good man only in the perfect state. The constitution will thus depend on the citizens and on what they are, being educated to become, but it can also be formulated in terms of the general interplay of functions of government or in terms of the revolutions by which real or alleged inequalities and injustices are to be fixed.[50]

The relation between ethics and politics, as stated before, is not simple. Ethics is a part of political science, but political science is also conceived as the study of the state, for the state influences the education and formation of its citizens and the character of its citizens determines the constitution of the state. There is also no simple connection between politics and the theoretic sciences. Because knowledge affects the conditions of citizens and states, and states influence the development of science[51], there is also no simple connection between politics and the arts because of this already existing interplay. Politics is itself a science, it needs a scientific method, and legislation is an art. The constant that spans all political determination is that all states are established on a kind of equality and justice, and that politics is a practical, not a theoretic, science, whose end is not to acquire knowledge of what virtue is but to make men good.

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[49]Depending on the type of state (democracy, tyranny, oligarchy, etc.), the citizen will hold a different place in the way that things work.

[50] The constitution will be molded after the citizens' education, the function of the government and how it relates to the citizens needs, and in terms of the revolutions that have occurred and in the end created the new regime that is now dominant in the society.

[51] Scientific achievements can be profitable to the state; research could help in the elimination of different social problems. It is true that most scientific progress is at first individual, but it is often exploited by the state after the discovery is made (i.e., Einstein and the atomic bomb). The way that science advances can help a government in its economic progress and in its control of its citizens.

The Good Man

The good man in the *Politics* is the focal point of this discussion, because that is the category that reappears as the great-souled man in the work of Aristotle. Aristotle speaks of this directly in Book III, chapter 4; it is brought up during the discussion of the good citizen. As I stated earlier the good citizen will be the same as the good man in the perfect state. Aristotle was trying to figure out if the good citizen and the good man were the same, but even if their virtues are not identical, that does not mean that they cannot be at least similar enough to be able to say that they are the same. A good example of this is Aristotle's example of the sailor. When Aristotle mentions the good man, or good citizen, he compares him to a sailor, one that is a part of a larger group of people on a ship; they all have different tasks and functions. They may all have different virtues depending on their tasks on the ship, but they all hold common virtues, which is the preservation of the ship. "Although sailors are dissimilar in their capacities (one is a rower, another is a pilot, another a lookout, and others have similar sorts of titles), it is clear that the most precise account of their virtue will be that peculiar to each sort of individually, but that a common account will in a similar way fit all."[52] The citizen is treated the same way, but in the context of the state. The virtue of the citizen is to rule and to be ruled. The virtue of a man, however, is to rule and not be ruled. We must keep in mind that there are different types of rule. There is the rule that is proper to the slave, but there is also the rule over those that are similar and free. Political rule can only be learned by being ruled. Therefore, the good citizen will have to learn how to rule and be ruled. The good person also needs to carry the same capacities. The only virtue that is particular to the ruler is prudence, while all the other virtues are common to the ruler and the ruled.

The good for man is perhaps best explained as the best way of life, if one lives life the best way good is sure to be upheld. Aristotle discusses the best way of life in Book VII, Chapter 1-3. Aristotle believed that if we are to decide what is the best regime, we must first be able to assert what the best way of life is. "Concerning the best regime, one who is going to undertake the investigation appropriate to it must necessarily discuss first what the most choiceworthy way of life is."[53] This is a project that Aristotle undertakes to

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[52] Aristotle, *The Politics,* Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1984, 1276b1
[53] Ibid., 1323a1

help show that the regime of a people should reflect what they would consider to be the best life. He begins this study with a distinction between the three types of good things, those that are external, those that are of the body, and those of the soul. After a treatment of the three, Aristotle concludes that the ones concerning the soul are the most praiseworthy. "So if the soul is more honourable than both possessions and the body both simply and for us, the best state of each must necessarily stand in the same relation as these things [among themselves]."[54] It is important to note that good fortune is different from happiness; this is because no one is able to be just or sound because of good fortune.

Aristotle makes the assumption that the best way of life is one that is accompanied by virtue; this then incorporates actions that agree with the virtues that are sought. "For the present let us presuppose this much, that the best way of life both separately for each individual and in common for cities is that accompanied by virtue – virtue that is equipped to such an extent as to [allow them to] share in the actions that accord with virtue."[55] This claim poses the question whether happiness is the same for the individual as it is for the city; even though he sees this as obvious that it would be the same, it is something that he studies by taking two things.

> But the following two things are in need of investigation: one, which is the more choiceworthy way of life, that which involves engaging jointly in politics and participating in a city, or rather that characteristic of the foreigner and divorced from the political partnership; and further, which regime and which state of the city are to be regarded as best (regardless of whether participating in a city is choiceworthy for all or only for most and not for certain persons).[56]

This becomes a discussion of the best way of life being a contemplative one or an active one.

The contemplative way of life is the philosophical, while the active way of life is the one for him who is involved in the political. Both of these ways of life, according to Aristotle, are good because they must organize matters with a view to a better aim in the cases of both the individual and the regime. After discussion of war and what is noble, Aristotle concludes that this discussion of the best way of life for a regime rests in the hands of the legislators. "It belongs to the excellent legislator to see how a city, a family

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[54] Ibid., 1323bl
[55] Ibidem.
[56] Ibid., 1324al

of human beings, and every other sort of partnership will share in the good life and in the happiness that is possible for them."[57] Happiness is then a sort of action, and the actions of just and moderate persons involve an end for noble things.[58] The best way of life must be the same for the individual and the city; it is possible to have a good life that is inactive, but the opposite is also possible. It is important to clarify quickly what is meant by the inactive life, because even this life does imply movement to a degree, what I am discussing here is empirical action, but Aristotle did believe that the life of contemplation did involve movement or action, but a different understanding of the term that still relates to the footnote just mentioned. This notion of the movement or action being done without concrete empirical action is present in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, Theodor Adorno in his text, *Metaphysics: Concept and Problems,* grapples with this idea, specifically in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. This brings us into contact with the notion of the unmoved mover, let us examine this briefly.

The idea of movement comes from his discussion of matter and form, when Aristotle speaks of matter, he does have a specific definition in mind. Adorno does try to give us a definition, but he seems to be forced to let it have a double meaning that is meant to be intertwined to give its most complete definition. This is because when Aristotle speaks of matter he is not speaking of the philosophically sublimated concept of matter, or the primeval concept of the animated matter, because in both moments, the metaphysical and the physical are not strictly distinguished in all these concepts. It is then obvious that there is a difficulty in understanding this concept. "The fundamental reason for this difficulty of understanding is, no doubt, that in such concepts the meaning of the hylozoic element, that is, matter, oscillates between something archaically animated and a pure concept – an echo of both of these is contained within it."[59] We are more interested with the relationship of form and matter and how it affects the unmoved mover, how is it possible for something to move without any actual empirical action taking place.

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[57] Ibid., 1325a1

[58] The term action here translates the Latin *actio*, which is differentiated from but related to the Latin *actus* that translates as actualization, Aristotle's Greek term *energeia*. This then comes from Aristotle's idea of causality; happiness is then understood as the actualization of its potentiality through virtuous actions. It is not our common understanding of actions as such, but more their role in the causal idea; the virtuous actions are then the cause while the effect becomes happiness.

[59] Theodor Adorno, *Metaphysics: Concepts and Problems,* Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2001, p.86.

What is the quality of the relationship between the two categories? Adorno gives us this answer:

> Now, the reason given by Aristotle for this eternal quality of the relationship between the two basic categories, and thus for the eternal nature of movement itself – which, incidentally, was also conceived ontologically by Heraclitus – is none other than that both the genesis and the disappearance of this movement, and thus of the relationship between the two, can in turn only be caused by a movement. Under all conceivable circumstances, therefore, movement must be eternal.[60]

Metaphysics is concerned with the concepts of that which moves: motion, change, the eternity of movement, they are dealt by deduction of pure concepts, without taking into account their sensible content. Adorno believes that at this point we are moving from Aristotelian metaphysics to Aristotelian theology.

This theology is where Aristotle examines the unmoved mover (or the prime mover), some say that this is a model of God; it is a divinity that is for sure. When Aristotle discusses form and matter, he concludes that form is perfect being while matter is imperfect being. These are meant to work together in humans; we could say that this is the division of the soul (form) and body (matter) with which we are all familiar. Movement for Aristotle is the becoming real of the possible. Every movement then presupposes two things: a mover and a moved.[61]As stated earlier, the human is divided into two principles, which is the moving principle (the higher, the immaterial, and the spiritual) and the moved principle (the material). The mover is thus understood as the actual or the form, and the moved is understood as the potential or the matter. His theology, however, is more concerned with the contemplation of divine beings and divinity. We should also remember that metaphysics is usually understood as a critique and a resumption of theology. Adorno gives insight into this claim.

> It is a peculiarity of metaphysical thinking – it is, I might also say, one of the invariants of metaphysical thinking, which are repeated over and over again in its history – that the conceptual operations it performs, which aim initially at something like a critique of mythological beings, repeatedly end in reinstating these mythical beings, or the divinity; but it no longer does so in a belief in the

[60] Ibid, p.87.
[61] Ibid, p.83.

> direct experience or the sensible perceptibility or the substantial existence of the divinities or divinity, but on the basis of conceptual thought.[62]

This explication then brings us to the concept of *actus purus*; this is a concept that is credited to the later medieval period. The unmoved mover then is considered to be pure actuality, in other words, pure and disembodied actuality. Thinking, unlike praxis, is sufficient unto itself. The oneness of the world and the oneness of movement, as Aristotle conceives of it, from this he deduces cosmologically the absolute oneness of the unmoved mover. The notion of the absolutely single prime mover is deduced from purely logical grounds, by virtue of the theory of movement. Contemplation is then a virtue for Aristotle as I have stated earlier, but this is a virtue that does not end after the virtue is achieved, one must keep practicing it. Practical activity does end when the end is achieved, moral and political activity does not end when the goal is reached. This can be explained with the idea of the primary mover, who is absolute actualization, but he is immaterial and therefore action or movement is done without practical activity. Contemplation is an act that does not stop when the end is achieved, but it continues just like the primary mover who is pure actuality. This is type of virtue is present in his ethics; Adorno mentions this in his text. "This apotheosis also leaves its imprint on his ethics, in that the latter gives precedence to the so-called dianoetic virtues – the virtues residing in pure contemplation and self-reflection without regard to action – over all virtues. Thinking, unlike praxis, is sufficient unto itself."[63] This shows the separation of physical and mental work, this is connected with the process of the division of labour where mental work has gained preponderance over physical labour.[64] I believe that this shows that Aristotle did consider the importance of the contemplative life and how it was possible to live a fulfilled "inactive" life.

It then becomes obvious that we are not able to distinguish what the best way of life may be, partly because cities are structured by many parts that have different roles. The only thing that we can say for sure is that the best way of life must be the same with the individual and the regime, but the city itself might also dictate what that will be. We

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[62] Ibid, p.88
[63] Ibid, p.92
[64] Ibidem.

are also sure that the role of the good man is also extremely important in this outcome and how the city is run and ruled.

The role of the good man is thus crucial to the state; for a society to be well balanced and ruled by someone that comprehends the common good we will need to have a society full of good citizens. This is why the great-souled man is important in the running of the city-state, because he would be the ideal leader. We must remember that he is the culmination of the liberal, magnificent, and magnanimous man. He would thus have the virtue of generosity with knowledge of the common good and an interest in honour. He would be able to make decisions that would help the greatest number of people, and it would always be in their best interest even if they would not be able to see that at first. We must remember that there is a difference between the good man and the good for man. In the *Ethics*, Aristotle concludes that the good for man is eudaimonia, but happiness will change depending on the context that it is involved in. There will be a need for a leader who is able to judge exactly what happiness will be entailed in the situation that is being ratified.

Aristotle considered democracy to be the ideal society of the *Politics*, but it would not be a democracy by today's standards. If one wants to stay as the leader of the state, that person must put great importance on the happiness of the society, or at least the majority. The great-souled man would be able to judge better than most what the population would need to fulfill their happiness and could make sure that all his actions are honourable, and thus the common man that he would rule would admire him. The great-souled man could also play the role model for the people that he is ruling, which would make it easier for him also to rule them. Politics are usually accused of objectifying the people in the society; Aristotle believes that the great-souled man would keep the humanity in the decisions that would be made. The great-souled man is concerned with honour; we would then be lead to believe that he would treat the ones that he rules with the honour that they deserve.

Some have a hard time following the *Politics* as a text that is based in such an ancient world with different ideals and worldviews, but this is the paradox that exists in all classical political writings. Carnes Lord believes that Aristotle exhibits this paradox with the *Politics*. "For in spite of its deliberately 'practical' and therefore contemporary

orientation, the *Politics* succeeds in articulating large areas of the experience of political life with a richness and fidelity that is matched by few works written yesterday."[65] Carnes Lord states that even though this text has not received much attention, today it can give us a perspective on the intellectual underpinnings of modern political philosophy and even the social sciences. Aristotelian political science, a theory of civic authority that steers a deliberate course between value-free analysis of political phenomena and ideological prescription, provides an alternative model to the current approaches that is of more than just historical interest. This text is thus important in our understanding of politics and political theory. This politics is underlaid by the great-souled man, the first pole of comparison in this thesis.

[65]Aristotle, *The Politics,* Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1984, p.23

Chapter 4: How One Philosophizes with a Hammer

Nietzsche is one of the most controversial and influential philosophers that have appeared in the history of Western philosophy. He is considered by some as being even an anti-philosopher. His ideas were radical and aimed to go against a tradition that was firmly built and revered by most in the field. He is also credited by some to be responsible for the opening of the modern mind. He, on the other hand, declared a war on morality and tradition, he was calling for us to break from the nihilistic reality that we are living in. He believed that most of the things in the world had lost their meaning and that we had to begin a new re-evaluation of all values, if we were to ever escape this nihilistic landscape. His philosophy was about power and self-overcoming. Most consider him a very negative philosopher, but to the contrary of popular opinion, he wanted us to become lovers of life again. He held a great admiration for the ancient Greeks; this is an opinion that was obviously formed during his training in philology. Nietzsche had a very individualistic way of writing, he only wrote one complete narrative text *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, while the rest were written in the form of aphorisms, and this helped him cover many different topics all in one text.

The two next chapters both focus on Nietzsche and his work, but they play different roles in the task of this thesis. This chapter serves as a brief overview; it lays the foundation of the ethical and political philosophy of Nietzsche to help us appreciate the übermensch when it will be discussed. Since the next chapter is entirely focused on a pivotal concept of a philosopher, it is necessary to give the reader a basic understanding of the philosopher and his work as a whole. This chapter is then a necessity to the appreciation of the übermensch, to understand its importance we must know what his philosophy is as a whole. We must also keep in mind that this is a brief overview, it would be easy to be able to write many chapters to cover everything that Nietzsche has

done and written, this is why it focuses on different themes and virtues and is accompanied with a treatment of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. There are a couple of reasons why it is this text that is chosen for the treatment, first because it is where Nietzsche first mentions the übermensch, and second, because it is one of his most known works which receives the most scholarly attention of all. This chapter is thus an introduction of Nietzsche's philosophy.

Themes

The main philosophical themes or concepts that we will need to attach to Nietzsche are his gay science, his moral psychology, his perspectivism, the revaluation of all values, the will to power, and the übermensch. We will then go through these different themes with quick definitions of each; it will be limited to a paragraph apiece.

The Gay Science was the name of one of his texts, but it was also how Nietzsche conceives of and does philosophy. In other words, philosophy has to be fun. This is not to say that philosophy does not deal with very sober and serious questions, for example the meaning of life and death, how we are to live our lives, the future of humanity, and how we should think of and treat other people. Philosophy thus requires "Apollonian clarity," and it demands "Dionysian gaiety"[66] and intoxication according to Nietzsche. This notion is obvious when one reads Nietzsche; he loves what he is doing. He is in love with the words, the ideas, the way that sentences and segments flow together in his aphorisms, and in love with his own wisdom. He encourages experimentation, flirtation with hypotheses, just like philosophy as a science. This is the same with moral theories. Whatever kind of life will result from these theories, Nietzsche would believe that we have to try them in order to find out which is best. This kind of outlook on philosophy is present through his whole work; he believes that what a philosopher does is ultimately the test of what he says. He believes that the philosopher will have to live by what he says for it to carry any worth.

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[66]This can be understood as what Nietzsche describes in his "Attempt at a Self-Criticism" in *The Birth of Tragedy* as the Dionysian. He calls that a craving for beauty; it is also how Dionysus does represent joy. This is shown with the different festivals that are dedicated to him and how wine is linked to him. The gaiety that he is speaking of is more an energy that should be present in our lives, in all activities that we do.

Nietzsche appreciated the deep psychology that was present even in the most banal actions and feelings. Nietzsche believed that these deep impulses were hateful and humiliating, just like Freud would later support in the body of his work.[67] This is shown in his diagnosis of morality and Christianity in terms of *empfindlichkeit*.[68] We should not be led to think that Nietzsche believed all motivation to be ignoble; this could be believed to be based on his suggestion that there is something great in all of us; it is just waiting to be realized.[69] Nietzsche then reiterates this statement by saying that it is true of only a few of us; we are then supposed to nurture the fantasy that he is speaking of us. If we put these vague promises aside, Nietzsche's contribution to moral psychology is a keen sense of the analyzable unconscious, a sense in ourselves of complex and suspicious motivation. This applies even when we believe that our motivations are commendable. What Nietzsche says about pity is usually believed to be outrageous, but at least what he does say strikes us exactly on the mark. It is interesting to see our compassion as a mask for our sense of superiority, or at least the relief that the victim was not us. He poses such other questions as when it is that our admiration turns into envy. Nietzsche brings up many thorny personal questions that are not meant to be answered with general broad answers. Philosophical ethics tend toward the formal language of obligation; this insistence that a philosopher should first be a keen psychologist has never really been brought to the floor until Nietzsche.

Nietzsche believed perspectivism, the view that every truth is an interpretation from a particular perspective. This no longer leaves the opportunity for a completely objective view to be possible, but leaves the realization that there are only perspectives. There is no world in itself, and even if it did exist, we would never know of it. Science is an example of that tacitly in the conviction that scientific theory must always follow the evidence that supports it. Science is not known to claim absolute truths, but tentative

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[67] Kathleen Higgins and Robert Solomon, *What Nietzsche Really Said,* New York, Schoken Books, 2000, p.207

[68] This term is usually translated into English as resentment, but Nietzsche preferred the translation into French of *resentiment*. This is meant to be understood as a bitter emotion that is based on injury, inferiority, oppression, or frustrated vindictiveness. This plays a central role in Nietzsche's philosophical psychology as an act of the most spiritual revenge. The term itself indicates an extreme sensitivity. *Resentiment* is a reactionary emotion; it is a bitter but frustrated response to slights of humiliation or oppression, in other words, a submerged hatred. This all becomes known when Nietzsche discusses the slave morality and how it defines the Judeo-Christian tradition.

[69] This can be understood as the actualization of potentiality, an Aristotelian doctrine.

truths instead.[70] Science is also known to go wrong when it claims itself to be the only perspective for achieving any truth; it is then that Nietzsche drops his scientism when he realizes that it is another dogmatism. Science finds itself in as much danger of dogmatism as any other discipline. We are all aware that science is not the only perspective on truth; it conflicts with aesthetic claims of truth. The two conflict, they both give rise to two different perspectives that give two different kinds of truth. The two perspectives have just as much worth, but it all depends on your purpose, on the context, on the nature of the demand for an account. The perspective is thus understood as a set of interpretations, and that is all. Nietzsche believed that perspectivism and the excitement of finding and exploring new perspectives should replace dogmatic comforts or an eternal truth. This allows us to have a new horizon of inquiry and we are able to achieve new sets of interpretations on everything.

The revaluation of all values is a theme that is very central to Nietzsche's later works. With Nietzsche, it is more specific than that, it is the revaluation of moral values. He does try to evaluate the value of life, the value of beauty, the value of suffering, the value of health, the value of compassion, and the value of happiness. His real interest, however, is to ask what the value of values are. Even if the question is ultimately unanswerable, it does not mean that the effort is not salutary. It helps us not to become dogmatic, and it will in the end open our eyes to the shifting complexity of our understanding of the world. It protects us from nihilism, because it makes us appreciate the inescapability of values in our lives.

The will to power is also a very pervasive concept in Nietzsche, and like the übermensch, it has a deep impact on its readers. Walter Kaufmann believes that it is the very core of his philosophy. "Properly understood, Nietzsche's conception of power may represent one of the few great philosophic ideas of all time."[71] Martin Heidegger also believed it to be the core of his metaphysics. It is important not to take the text, *The Will to Power*, out of play, because there is not much in Nietzsche's writings to support these

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[70] "By "science" Nietzsche means the willingness to question, to submit one's opinions to experiments, and to revise one's beliefs in the light of new evidence. Not to do this is a manifestation of irrationality, a weakness, and a lack of power." Walter, Kaufmann, Nietzsche*: Philosopher, Psychologist, and Antichrist,* Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1974 p.232.

[71] Walter Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, and Antichrist,* Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1974, p.xvi

views. This phrase does recur often in his writings; he was obviously struck by it. This notion that people often act for the sake of power instead of anything else is a thesis that could tie together most of what he says about morality, emotions, politics, and religion. Unfortunately, most of what Nietzsche writes about the will to power is found in unpublished notes and is therefore regarded as highly suspect by most scholars. Overall, the will to power is Nietzsche's expression for whatever it is those human beings fundamentally want. We want to have an impact on the world, to be able to operate in it freely, and we are truly expressing our real nature in doing so. Nietzsche believes that our efforts have this basic aim in mind; they may be diverse though we find their aims and expressions.

The übermensch is one of Nietzsche's most known concepts, even though it is hardly mentioned in the bulk of his works. One way to look at the übermensch is as grandness within us, we are to look at ourselves as the parent to something greater than ourselves. The übermensch is first mentioned in the prologue of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. He represents strength, courage, nobility, style, and refinement, and that is all. Nietzsche mentions often the works of higher men, but that is to lament that they also are human all too human. The übermensch is a regulative ideal, something to inspire and strive for, instead of being a concrete prescription for action or transformative behaviour. We will discuss the übermensch in more depth later in the text; this will suffice for the sake of the introduction of the concept.

Virtues

Virtue for Nietzsche is not the same as Aristotle; they both have different takes on a similar concept. It is commonplace to label Nietzsche an immoralist, but to the contrary, he is very much a moralist. Nietzsche's aim is to makes us better; he wants us to appreciate how we could be better, more noble. The aim of his morality is to "know thyself," this is to help us achieve the virtues that in the end make us become who we really are. This brings for the question, in each of our individual cases, should we become or be?

Nietzsche can be attached to the new coined morality of virtue ethics; this is a method of ethical decision that has been widely used since Aristotle in Western thought.

This approach differs because the primary focus is concerned with personal character, individual excellence. Nietzsche's take on individual character is different from the others, he wants the direction of ethics to shift away from God, the Socratic soul, the Kantian rational willing subject, and the utilitarian attention to the consequences of hedonism.[72] This ethical outlook then focuses on the character and integrity of the individual, their own virtues. What is meant to be the ultimate good, is a good person, a person with good character. This then brings the question of which kind of character and in the end, which virtues?

Aristotle gave us a neat and precise list of virtues; the main criterion was that a virtue was the means between the extremes. Higgins and Solomon believe that Aristotle's criterion and list do not fit together, but it has sparked a long debate that lasted until now. The most known out of the list would be courage, temperance, liberality, magnificence, magnanimity, and honour. Nietzsche's list of virtues is not exactly the same, he never does give us a list as such, but we are able to find them through his writings. Nietzsche attempts to make us look at each other, no matter how unflattering the image, to make ourselves consider ourselves in terms of our own virtues. He wants us to no longer be as concerned with others' virtues and vices, but our own. He shows us what he valued and did not value with his scathing portrayals of other philosophers and entire cultures. This is going back to the notion that Nietzsche held of the philosopher, he must live by what he says for the values to carry weight, and this is meant to give worth to the ideas themselves. The philosophical ideas are proven by how they are manifested in practice.

It is safe to say that Nietzsche admired warrior virtues, even though he was not fond of the military type. It is the spirit of competition and overcoming that he appreciated the most, but this will be discussed at a later time in the thesis. The best way to sum up how Nietzsche viewed virtue or being virtuous is "giving style to one's character." Aristotle viewed virtue as a faculty for potentiality, with Nietzsche it is harder to find. The idea of style is, for all intensive purposes, is the most direct way of describing it. Style is definitely the virtue that holds the most importance to Nietzsche; this can be taken from his discussion of slave morality. It is a known fact that he has a

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[72] Kathleen Higgins and Robert Solomon, *What Nietzsche Really Said*, New York, Schocken Books, 2000, p.177

problem with Christianity, he believes that it is a slave morality. It is also known that he preferred a polemical, offensive, unsympathetic style, this was the problem with the Christian morality, pity. The most important virtue for Nietzsche is style, because it is with this that he is able to attack with harsh insults against his foes. He is then giving style to his character. His virtues that we must consider are courage, fatalism, generosity, "hardness", honesty, integrity, responsibility, and strength. As we have just done with the themes in Nietzsche, we will now briefly overview the different virtues that he explored in his writings. Also as before, we will limit the discussion to one paragraph a virtue.

Courage for Nietzsche does not mean us overcoming fear, but instead it means a model of over-flowing, overflowing with an assertiveness that overwhelms fear. Courage for Nietzsche is not a balance, or a means between extremes; it is an excess, an overwhelming or overflowing. It is, in a way, a skilful direction of "gung-ho" emotions. It incorporates rather than excludes one's sense of honour, which has been interpreted by some as a kind of calm because of its keen sense of focus. It is its passion, and not this apparent calm, that is its virtue. There is a passage in *Twilight of the Idols* that helps to explain this.

> What does the tragic artist communicate of himself? Is it not precisely the state without fear in the face of the fearful and questionable that he is showing? ... Courage and freedom of feeling before a powerful enemy, before a sublime calamity, before a problem that arouses dread – this triumphant state is what the tragic artist chooses, what he glorifies. Before tragedy, what is warlike in our soul celebrates its Saturnalia...[73]

Fatalism, for Nietzsche, was guided towards the idea of us "living dangerously"; he may not have taken many physical risks himself, but he took many risks in his writings. In many ways, he followed his ideas to where they wanted to go. Taking risks makes one accept the consequences of those actions, this is the kind of fatalism that Nietzsche was attracted to. It also appealed to him in his analysis of the ancient Greeks, more specifically their acceptance of life in the face of absurdity and suffering. He also enjoyed considering his own miserable life, the exultations of genius in the face of his

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[73] Friedrich Nietzsche, "Twilight of the Idols" in *The Portable Nietzsche*, ed. Walter Kaufmann, New York, Penguin Books, 1954, p.530

own absurd suffering. "My formula for greatness in a human being is *amor fati*... not merely to bear what is necessary, still less conceal it... but love it."[74]

Generosity is a virtue that is not a mere overcoming of miserliness, but is an overflowing. This virtue will be linked with Aristotle later on in the thesis. Generosity is mentioned as the "gift-giving virtue" in the text *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. This virtue is not meant to be understood as mere giving, or the habit of giving. Nietzsche described true generosity as a painless giving, even a pleasurable giving. Aristotle believed that the performance of a virtue to be pleasurable, not painful, to be the test of one's virtuousness. Generosity is thus meant to reside in one's overflowing nature. This virtue will emerge as an overflow of a great-souled spirit, of one who has abundance; for example, an abundance of money will make one give indiscriminately. To say that the virtue is not this, but instead that it is a sense of duty that stands in the opposition of self-interest and personal need is to fall back into a slavish model of the virtues, made popular by Kant and Christianity, where it is the poor and not the rich in spirit that become the focus. In short, a Nietzschean virtue is first a kind of fullness, a sense of oneself on top of the world, one who is not concerned with preserving his or her position. "I love him whose soul squanders itself, who wants no thanks and returns none, for he always gives away and does not want to preserve himself."[75]

Hardness is an insistence of Nietzsche that is commonly misunderstood; it is usually seen as a part of his campaign against compassion and pity. It is meant to be understood more as part of his insistence on self-discipline. This conception is an example of one's unshakable commitment to one's task: only the most noble person will be altogether hard according to Zarathustra. "Why is there so much denial, self-denial in your hearts? So little destiny in your eyes? ... All creators are hard. ... Only the noblest is altogether hard. This new tablet ... I place over you: *become hard*!"[76]

Honesty should be understood as an overflowing of the truth, rather one's most heartfelt opinions. This type of honesty is characteristic of Nietzsche's writing; he actually prides himself on it. Honesty is not meant to be one blurting out what they think;

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[74] Friedrich Nietzsche, "Thus Spoke Zarathustra" in *The Portable Nietzsche*, ed. Walter Kaufmann, New York, Penguin Books, 1954, p.258
[75] Ibid., p.127
[76] Ibid, p.326

it is much more than Aristotle's "truthfulness". It is also different from a prohibition against lying that one would derived from the Categorical Imperative. This is a virtue that we should not be weary of perfecting. For one to tell the truth should not be an obligation, but occurs because honesty has become part of one's character. The urge to tell the truth is then not about the greatest good for the greatest number. Honesty has to do with an inner commitment.

Integrity is an integration of virtues that is highly prized by Nietzsche. Having integrity is thus not to be confused with any single virtue, for example, with being honest. One could be ruthlessly or manipulatively honest in a way that would hinder one's integrity. Integrity, for Nietzsche, is a unity of the virtues, even if those virtues are going against each other. The self is known as a dynamic tension between competing instincts and virtues; it is integrity that holds them together

Nietzsche is often listed as one of the existentialists, but his views of freedom and responsibility do not reflect strong defenders of them like Jean-Paul Sartre or Søren Kierkegaard. Nietzsche's views on freedom are complex and confusing; he rejected free will as an illusion. He also believes that responsibility is another aspect of slave morality. What most responsible reforms engage in are futile according to Nietzsche. We are not able to change ourselves. This is a claim that is hard to accept when one reads Nietzsche, seeing as how his belief that we should become who we are is still central to his thinking and writing. He may be a sceptic about many of the conceptual presuppositions of autonomy and free choice, but he still belongs to the group of existentialists based on the fact of his belief that non-self-deceptive individual choice is a part of authentic existence. He also believes that responsibility is not evenly distributed throughout the human species. He believes that the few that are the natural leaders to have a great responsibility for the development of society. In *Beyond Good and Evil*, he brings this point to the foreground. "The philosopher as we understand him, we free spirits – as the man of the most comprehensive responsibility who has the conscience for the collective evolution of mankind: this philosopher will make use of the religions in his work of education and breeding, just as he will make use of existing political and economic conditions."[77]

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[77] Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil,* New York, Penguin Books, 1973, p.72

Strength is a pervasive theme in Nietzsche; it is there that questions about constitution and responsibility do arise. These questions are complicated because of his mentions of natural strength and his reference to the will to power. It is not clear to what extent strength and the will to power are related, and Nietzsche does present conflicting views about this. He suggests that an increase in power or the feeling of power is the ultimate motivation of all things; that makes it unclear to what extent this is meant to be a state of character. If strength is taken to be a virtue, we are all aware that Nietzsche would support it, because of his repeated accusations of weakness in almost everything that he opposes. This is made obvious considering his rejection of Christianity and its belief that the meek would inherit the earth, but the idea of strength as a virtue does bring up many questions. What kind of strength? Is it to be considered as health, discipline, will power, spirituality? Nietzsche does characterize his conception of strength as virtue in his description of Goethe's ideal.

> Goethe conceived a human being who would be strong, highly educated, skilful in all bodily matters, self-controlled, reverent toward himself, and who might dare to afford the whole range and wealth of being natural, being strong enough for such freedom; the man of tolerance, nor from weakness but from strength, because he knows how to use to his advantage, even that from which the average nature would perish; the man for whom there is no longer anything that is forbidden – unless it be weakness, whether called vice or virtue.[78]

Now it is important that we view how some of these virtues and themes are present in his writings, more specifically *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. The treatment of the text will be a discussion of the story and how it develops with discussion of different aspects as they arise, our discussion will come to a conclusion with a treatment of the duality that is presented of the last man vs. the next man. This will then bring us to the discussion of the übermensch with the help of three other philosophers.

Thus Spoke Zarathustra

Thus Spoke Zarathustra is Nietzsche's most known work, and it is his only full narrative text. It contains many of his important concepts, like the übermensch, the will to power, and the eternal return. It is also the one text of his that has received the most

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[78] Friedrich Nietzsche, "Twilight of the Idols" in *The Portable Nietzsche*, ed. Walter Kaufmann, New York, Penguin Books, 1954, p. 551

scholarly attention. It is also one of the most troublesome texts that Nietzsche has written; it has been misinterpreted by many and has been difficult to understand by most that read it.[79] This may be why he called it "a book for all and none." Most of the book is Zarathustra's speeches on different philosophical themes; Lampert believe that this obscures the plotline of the book. This style is full of different allusions to different philosophical texts that are integral to the development of Western philosophy. "The erudite allusions to works spanning the Western philosophical and literary traditions also play a philosophical role, for they both reveal Nietzsche's construal of the tradition he inherited and flag points at which he views it as problematic."[80]

Heidegger believed that the plotline was essential to the kind of teaching that Zarathustra is giving. Zarathustra is attempting to instruct the crowds and the few higher men that he encounters, but his most important teaching is his education of the reader, which is done through demonstrative means. He is teaching by showing. This technique of teaching is in the same tradition as the German *Bildungsroman*; in where the character's development toward spiritual maturity is chronicled. Zarathustra is thus meant to be understood as a paradigm for the modern, the spiritually sensitive individual, one that is grappling with nihilism; this contemporary crisis in values in the wake of the collapse of the Christian worldview that assigned humanity a clear place in the world.

Nietzsche's idea of the übermensch is the one that seems to get the most attention from anyone that tackles the text, even though he only mentions it in the prologue and at a couple of other parts. The impact that it has on its reader is quite remarkable, considering how little it is discussed. The übermensch is the theme of Zarathustra's first speech; he presents it to a crowd gathered for a circus. The crowd then sees Zarathustra as a circus barker and the speech is believed to be the introduction of an act, a performance by a tightrope walker. The concept is mentioned in the first part of the text as something of a refrain to Zarathustra's speeches, but the term übermensch is never

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[79] This is partly due to Nietzsche's many uses of imagery and metaphor, it is not always easy to know what traditions or understanding of concepts that they are meant to refer to exactly. This then becomes troublesome in the comprehension of exactly what Nietzsche is trying to tell us. If one is to understand the meaning of these imageries, they are then able to achieve a greater and more complete understanding of the text.

[80] Kathleen Higgins and Magnus Bernd, "Nietzsche's Works and Their Themes" in *The Cambridge Companion to Nietzsche,* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996, p.39

mentioned after that. When the übermensch is mentioned, it is more in imagistic than explanatory terms. Zarathustra sees the übermensch as continually experimental; he is willing to risk it all for the sake of the enhancement of the human race. "Nietzsche's project too may be characterized as a version of Schiller's idea of the need for a further aesthetic education of humanity that might bring about a higher form of humanity – and *Zarathustra*, I suggest, was his greatest contribution to this campaign."[81] The übermensch aspires for greatness, but Zarathustra does not give us any more specific characterization of what constitutes the enhancement of humanity or greatness. He does contrast the übermensch to the 'last man', the human that only desires personal comfort, happiness. This person is meant to be understood as the last man literally, he is incapable of the desire that is required to create beyond oneself; there is no self-overcoming involved.

Many scholars argue about the übermensch: are we to look at him as an established set of character traits that are the most desirable, or is he meant to represent an ideal attitude? Some believe that it is a solipsistic goal, while others see him as an evolutionary goal in the Darwinian sense. Zarathustra's opening speech, besides presenting the übermensch as the ideal for humanity, places emphasis on this world as opposed to any future world. "Let your will say: the overman *shall be* the meaning of the earth! I beseech you, my brothers, *remain faithful to the earth*, and do not believe those who speak to you of otherworldly hopes!"[82] What Zarathustra is urging is to reassess the value of our own bodies, in other words, our embodiment. Our dreaming of the afterlife causes our view of the body as the source of sin and error. Zarathustra believes that the body is the ground of all meaning and knowledge, and that health and strength should be recognized as virtues.

Another theme that is very prominent in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* is the emphasis on the importance of the will. Schopenhauer's influence on Nietzsche can be detected here, the belief that the will is more fundamental to human beings than knowledge. Nietzsche stresses the will's attempt to enhance power, while Schopenhauer puts more stress on the will's effort at self-preservation. Nietzsche mentions the will to power in

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[81] Richard Schacht, "Zarathustra/Zarathustra as Educator" in *Nietzsche: A Critical Reader,* ed. Peter Sedgwick, Cambridge, Blackwell Publishers, 1995, p.225

Thus Spoke Zarathustra, which is one of the only times that it is ever mentioned in his works.

> Indeed, the truth was not hit by him who shot at it with the word of the 'will to existence': that will does not exist. For, what does not exist cannot will; but what is in existence, how could that still want existence? Only where there is life is there also will: not will to life but – thus I teach you – will to power.[83]

The will to power is a concept that has received much attention by Nietzschean scholars and by a large spectrum of society in general. This is a concept that was easily exploited by the Nazi war effort; this idea has not had the best history outside of the world of scholarship. Many scholars have tried to set the record straight, but they are not able to agree on the importance of the will to power in the body of Nietzsche's work.

Some say that the appearance of will reveals the extent to which Nietzsche remains Schopenhaurian in his thinking, despite the changed formulation that he proposes. Some also believe that the idea of the will to power is a cornerstone of Nietzsche's thought, seeing as how many of his notes show his plans to write a book about it. Many scholars argue on whether the will to power should be viewed as a psychological observation or a metaphysical doctrine, and they also argue over whether Nietzsche intended this primarily as an explanation of human behaviour or a more general cosmological account. The discussions of will that appear in *Zarathustra* occur in connection with the eternal recurrence.

> To redeem those who lived in the past and to recreate all 'it was' into a 'thus I willed it' – that alone should I call redemption.... All 'it was' is a fragment, a riddle, a dreadful accident – until the creative will says to it, 'But thus I will it; thus shall I will it.'"[84]

Most of the plot of *Zarathustra* is concerned in the effort to formulate the idea of the eternal recurrence. Sometimes the idea is presented in the form of visions and dreams, and other times he seems reluctant to state it categorically or to even accept its implications. One of the implications, one at which he shudders, is that the petty people, who comprise most of the human race, will also recur. The eagle and the snake, Zarathustra's companions, suggest their own formulation of eternal recurrence, which is

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[82] Friedrich Nietzsche, "Thus Spoke Zarathustra" in *The Portable Nietzsche*, ed. Walter Kaufmann, New York, Penguin Books, 1954, p.125

[83] Ibid., p.227

perhaps one of the clearest suggestions of how the eternal recurrence is to give one a sense of meaning in life. Even though it is not Zarathustra's words one reads.

> And if you wanted to die now, O Zarathustra, behold, we also know how you would then speak to yourself...
> 'Now I die and vanish,' you would say, 'and all at once I am nothing. The soul is as mortal as the body. But the knot of causes in which I am entangled recurs and will create me again. I myself belong to the causes of the eternal recurrence. I come again, with this sun, with this earth, with this eagle, with this serpent – not to a new life or a better life or a similar life: I come back eternally to this same, selfsame life, in what is greatest as in what is smallest, to teach again the eternal recurrence of all things, to speak again the word of the great noon of earth and man, to proclaim the Übermensch again to men. I spoke my word, I break of my word[*Sic*]: thus my eternal lot wants it; as a proclaimer I perish. The hour has now come when he who goes under should bless himself. Thus ends Zarathustra's going under.'[85]

Seeing as how Zarathustra objects to the recurrence of the rabble is an indication of Nietzsche's elitism. Repeatedly Nietzsche and Zarathustra argue that human beings are not equal. Nietzsche objects to the democratic movements of his era in favour of more aristocratic forms of social organization that place control in the hands of the talented, of necessity these are not the majority.

Nietzsche claims to have written the first three parts of the four of *Zarathustra* in ten days, even though by looking at his notes we can see that he had plans in mind for a much longer period. The work was not originally published as a whole. Parts 1 and 2 were published together in 1883; Part 3 was published in 1884. Part 4 was published in a limited edition in 1885. Nietzsche distributed Part 4 to a few friends and told them to keep this part quiet. It was only published for the public in 1892.

Part 4 is a contrast to the other three parts. The narrator is more critical of Zarathustra and of the claims it reports. The plot is also more dominant. It involves an irreverent parody of the Last Supper and Plato's *Symposium*; it also involves many characters, called the "higher men," who personify Zarathustra's teachings. Each higher man has taken one of Zarathustra's doctrines as fundamental, to the point that it exaggerates one feature of Zarathustra's perspective. They represent a "worst case scenario" for Zarathustra as teacher.

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[84]Ibid., p.251-3
[85] Ibid, P.333

Zarathustra seems more ludicrous himself in Part 4 than the other parts. He makes the mistake in identifying the higher men; and when the higher men slip into their atheism, he reacts as a defender of faith, which is contrary to his insight. He responds to this folly with laughter. At the end of the book he claims that his pity for the higher men, which he expresses by inviting them to dine in his cave, to be his "final sin." Throwing off his error, as those burdened by original sin could not, he begins his teaching mission again, and he descends from the mountain as he did at the beginning of the book.

The next man versus the last man

The theme of the next man versus the last man is often considered as a good introduction to the übermensch. The term "next man" is interchangeable with "higher man" and übermensch. The reason why he is called the next man is because Zarathustra believes that the next man has not yet arrived in the world.

In the second *Meditation* on Schopenhauer, Nietzsche states, "the goal of humanity cannot lie in the end, but only in its highest specimens."[86] In the third meditation, Nietzsche mentions this thought again. He explains that the mass of men are basically animals without dignity, thus the goal of development cannot lie in the mass of specimens or in their well-being. It will therefore have to lie in one single great human being, the übermensch. He is not the last one in point in time, but more of an apparently scattered and accidental existence. The contrast that Nietzsche makes in *Zarathustra* between the übermensch and the "last man" further crystallizes this point.

This contrast helps introduce the concept of the role of the next man, the übermensch. Nietzsche believed that man had to be overcome. "Man is something that shall be overcome."[87] The last man is he whom Nietzsche considered to be a part of the humanity that was profoundly corrupted by Christian values. The values were a "slave morality" which taught meekness, obedience and therefore mediocrity. To overcome this situation and pave the way for his philosophy, Nietzsche proclaimed the death of God and the coming of the übermensch. Therefore, the role of the übermensch is to overcome

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[86] Walter Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, and Antichrist,* Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1974, p.173

[87] Friedrich Nietzsche, "Thus Spoke Zarathustra" in *The Portable Nietzsche,* ed. Walter Kaufmann, New York, Penguin Books, 1954, p.124

this morality and propose a radically different set of values, a joyous affirmation of life rather than pious denial.

The übermensch is the central aspect that we will examine of Nietzsche's. It is an idea that also encompasses his notions of power and overcoming. It is by far the concept that has struck most when reading Nietzsche. It is an old idea that has been modified to fit the society that he lived in. It has been interpreted differently by many through the years. The study of the übermensch will hopefully help us to begin noticing the links that he holds with the great-souled man.

The übermensch is meant to help humanity re-evaluate their values and overcome the nihilistic framework in which they live. He is the necessary step out of nihilism, an evolution that must occur if we are to ever develop as a society. Nietzsche believed that we would have to look at the society of Ancient Greece to help us come out of this nihilistic rut. Nietzsche was a philologist by trade, and held a great deal of respect for them. Before we go in depth with the übermensch, it is still important also to introduce Nietzsche's politics and exactly what they entail.

Nietzsche's Politics

It is hard to write on Nietzsche's political writings, because he does not have a political text as such. He does, however, discuss politics in different parts of his works. Tracy Strong in her essay "Nietzsche's Political Misappropriation" goes through Nietzsche's work to locate his political statements. Her essay is not meant to show Nietzsche's political allegiance, but why he lends himself to a wide range of positions. For the purpose of this thesis, we will just show Nietzsche's political statements and try to summarize his allegiance in the hope to better understand his politics.

Even though Nietzsche does not have a specific political text, he does make political statements through the body of his work. Strong believes that three themes appear when we look at what Nietzsche says about politics and the political. The first is statements that he makes about contemporary political situations. Second, he denies that morality can serve as the basis for building a society. Third, he attempts to analyse the nature of political identity. If we analyse these three themes we should be able to have a good understanding of Nietzsche's politics.

Nietzsche's political statements are more complex than most would think, even though they do not contain any particular philosophical importance. Nietzsche believed that contemporary politics are characterized by the absence of rule or political leadership. This absence is due to the increasingly generalized democratization of social relationships, this is meant to be understood as the central social phenomenon of the time. This relates to the rise of socialism, a necessary further step in the evolution of slave morality according to Nietzsche. He did not believe that social and political positions should be morally justified. His central claim is: "Social positions are not the result of desert, that is they cannot rest on a moral claim of justification."[88]

Nietzsche is not wishing for a leader, because any leader would do; people only need to be commanded. One of the greatest dangers that Nietzsche sees in the contemporary world is the existence of leaders, who stand aloof from their political world and manipulate it for themselves. "As the modern state becomes transformed from the arena of power (such as it had been in pre-Socratic Greece) into an instrument of power, Nietzsche asserts, a new kind of rationally choosing human being arises to make use of this tool."[89] Contemporary politics then becomes the instrumentalization of power for the leader's own ends.

The second theme is that moral or ethical claims cannot provide the grounding for a society. Nietzsche claims that moral systems are based on power relations, which come from politics. This idea is explicated in *On the Genealogy of Morals* and his discussion of Master morality and Slave morality. Master morality can be understood as something that rests on a nonreflective assertion of self. Character is destiny according to this morality. He will think that he is good and the conclusion will be that he who is not him, the slave, will be bad. He will also feel the need to answer the question why he oppresses, this type of morality then is the ability to give reasons that will legitimate one's actions, in other words, one gets what one deserves.

Slave morality is not just the opposite of Master morality; it has a different logic altogether. The identity of the slavish moral person rests upon two things according to Strong. "First, it is the dialectical negation of the oppression of the (once) master.

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[88] Tracy Strong, "Nietzsche's Political Misappropriation" in *The Cambridge Companion to Nietzsche,* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996, p.120

Second, for it to be possible, for it to have a result, oppression has to continue to be present in the life of the slavely moral person."[90] It can be understood as the necessity of a threat being present in the situation.

This then brings us to the third theme of his politics, the foundation to any claim to identity. Identity here is not simply understood as its common use; when Nietzsche uses it, we are to think of it more in the sense that he says what it means to be German. Identity is understood as the internal connection and necessity of any true civilization or the dominant unity that we would call will. Political identity could then be understood as the situation in which I am able to use the first person plural and the first person singular pronouns to refer to the same state. The answer of who are we and who I am are answered in the same way.

If we are to examine identity through slave morality, we see that it is premised upon negation. "If, as is the case with slave morality, one's political identity is premised upon negation, upon being the opposite of what it is not, then the nothingness at the core of that identity will eventually hollow itself out and produce the condition that Nietzsche calls 'nihilism.'"[91] Nihilism is the situation in which one has to continually call itself into question, and to continuously call its own existence into question with no grounds to justify it. The nihilist according to Nietzsche will prefer to will the void instead of being void of will. Will is the faculty of man to form the world around him to his own image. This is the problem of modernity, because the modern will according to Nietzsche is nihilistic. Strong concludes that if Nietzsche claims that the modern will is nihilistic, modern politics in turn will be nihilistic also. With this question, we can see why Nietzsche never took to write a political text, which is because if our modern will is meaningless we should try to achieve its meaning before we continue to politics. Before examining the übermensch, I believe that it is important for us to examine briefly his characterization of historicity, because this might help us facilitate our comparison to Aristotle in the conclusion section.

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[89] Ibidem.
[90] Ibid., p.122

Nietzsche's Characterization of Historicity

Nietzsche definitely did not have a traditional interpretation of history and its role in philosophy. Foucault in his essay "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History" discusses this theory of history and shows its role in Nietzsche's philosophy. He believed that his theory of history does stem from his use of genealogy in his studies. Genealogy is not necessarily against history, but it does not try to find origins.

> Genealogy does not oppose itself to history as the lofty and profound gaze of the philosopher might compare to the molelike perspective of the scholar; on the contrary, it rejects the metahistorical deployment of ideal significations and indefinite teleologies. It opposes itself to the search for "origins."[92]

Foucault then questions why Nietzsche is challenging the pursuit of origin.

The reason that he gives is because it is an attempt to capture the exact essence of things, their purest possibilities; and because this search assumes the existence of immobile forms that precede the external world of accident and succession. The genealogist is then also able to find that man has no essence.

> However, if the genealogist refuses to extend his faith in metaphysics, if he listens to history, he finds that there is "something altogether different" behind things: not a timeless and essential secret, but the secret that they have no essence or that their essence was fabricated in a piecemeal fashion from alien forms.[93]

Genealogy analysis shows also that things are not fundamental to man's nature, but more that they are created by man. The concept of liberty was an invention of the ruling class and not something that is imbedded in our nature. Truth then becomes a sort of error that cannot be refuted because it becomes hardened into an unalterable form in the long process of history. A genealogy will instead find the details and accidents that come with every beginning, it will take attention to all details no matter how petty they might be, and it will try to find the emergence of these. Foucault believed that it was important to find the relationship between genealogy and history in the traditional sense.

Foucault believes that this relationship can be traced to Nietzsche's criticism of history and his creation of what he called the historical "spirit." He is then trying to create a suprahistorical perspective:

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[91] Ibid., p.123

[92] Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History" in the *Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow, New York, Pantheon Books, 1984, p.77.

> a history whose function is to compose the finally reduced diversity of time into a totality fully closed upon itself; a history that always encourages subjective recognitions and attributes a form of reconciliation to all the displacements of the past; a history whose perspective on all that precedes it implies the end of time, a completed development.[94]

Traditional history is supposed to find its support outside of time and pretends to base its judgments on an apocalyptic objectivity; there is a need for the end of time as mentioned in the quote. Foucault believes that this is only possible because of their belief in eternal truth, the immortality of the soul, and the nature of consciousness as being identical to itself. The only way that the historical sense will be able to evade metaphysics, and thus become an instrument of genealogy, is if it is to refuse the certainty of absolutes.

Nietzsche then moves on to effective history, this differs from traditional history because it is without constants. "Nothing in man – not even his body – is sufficiently stable to serve as the basis for self-recognition or for understanding other men. The traditional devices for constructing a comprehensive view of history and for retracing the past as a patient and continuous development must be systematically dismantled."[95] This history then becomes effective because it introduces discontinuity in our being; it divides our emotions, dramatizes our instincts, multiplies our body and thus sets them out against itself.

> "Effective" history deprives the self of the reassuring stability of life and nature, and it will not permit itself to be transported by a voiceless obstinacy toward a millennial ending. It will uproot its traditional foundations and relentlessly disrupt its pretended continuity. This is because knowledge is not made for understanding; it is made for cutting.[96]

Foucault believes that these observations help us understand the traits of historical meaning as Nietzsche believed them to be. A historical tradition aims at making an event into an ideal continuity, as a natural process. Foucault states that an "effective" history deals with events in terms of their characteristics and acute manifestations. An event here is meant to be understood as the reversal of a relationship of forces, a usurpation of power. The forces that work in history are thus not meant to be controlled by destiny or regulative mechanisms, but haphazard conflicts. This way of looking at history then looks

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[93] Ibid, p.78
[94] Ibid, p.86
[95] Ibid, p.87-88
[96] Ibidem.

at singular events, and not a success of primordial successes. The attraction is then not at a conclusion. This then brings us the idea of chance, seeing as how it is focus on the randomness of singular events.

Chance is also not understood as the drawing of lots, but the stakes that are present in all attempts in mastering chance through the will to power, and in the end giving rise to an even greater risk of an even greater chance. The configuration of the world then seems to change. "The world we know is not this ultimately simple configuration where events are reduced to accentuate their essential traits, their final meaning, or their initial and final value. On the contrary, it is a profusion of entangled events."[97] This is meant to make historians confirm the belief that the present is based on profound intentions and immutable necessities. The historical sense then confirms our existence among countless random events, without a landmark or point of reference.[98]

This is why Nietzsche is known to have a different view of history than most people; this could also bring into account the necessity of the eternal recurrence in his philosophy. It is safe to note that Nietzsche's philosophy is a reaction to his culture, and thus it makes sense that his sense of history would also go against the norm. This characterization will help in the comparison of Nietzsche and Aristotle based on the idea that they did view their world differently, and why their ideas of such things as worldview could be in disagreement. This will also be brought to the discussion when we discuss their notions of becoming in the concluding chapter. It is now important for us to continue to the discussion of the übermensch, this chapter as sufficiently introduced the philosophy of Nietzsche for us to be able to appreciate its place in his thought.

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[97] Ibid, p.89.
[98] Ibidem.

Chapter 5: Übermensch

The übermensch has been translated usually as "overman" and "superman". It seems that "overman" would be the more appropriate of the two. This concept is based on overcoming, and the term "superman" seems so cliché for the society in which we live. Many, especially the Nazis, also unfortunately misinterpreted this concept. It is true that Nietzsche believed we had to destroy something in order to be able to build something new. He did not believe that we had to destroy a certain kind of man in order to make room for the evolution and improvement of another.

Nietzsche's link to anti-Semite sentiment could be attributed to his sister, Elisabeth. It is believed that it was she that introduced the work of Nietzsche to Adolf Hitler. It is a known fact that Elisabeth Nietzsche was an anti-Semite, just like Wagner. The break that occurred between Nietzsche and Wagner is believed to have been partly due to his anti-Jewish views.[99] Nietzsche himself never spoke ill of the Jewish people, some would even go as far as saying that he admired them, because of all the persecution that they had suffered and still managed to stay strong as a people.

Our study of the übermensch will be guided by three interpretations: Kaufmann, Jaspers, and Lampert. I believe that by studying these three we will be able to have a clear idea of what the übermensch is understood as and is believed to represent in the philosophy of Nietzsche. The three interpretations will also give us three different outlooks, Kaufmann (existential), Jaspers (phenomenological), and Lampert (political). By reaching to different areas of the field, we will be able to have the best understanding of the concept in all its aspects.

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[99] Kathleen Higgins and Robert Solomon, *What Nietzsche Really Said,* New York, Schoken Books, 2000, p.12

Kaufmann

Walter Kaufmann is seen as the definitive source of Nietzschean scholarly work by most when faced with the analysis of his thought. He is known as the official source of translation as well as analysis of the body of Nietzsche's work. Kaufmann has spent much time and work on the body of Nietzsche, and his text *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*, is a good example of his extensive knowledge on the subject. In the text, Kaufmann discusses the übermensch with the eternal recurrence; while this link may be very interesting and valuable, it is not conducive to the purpose of this study, and thus we will only cover his interpretation of the übermensch. It is not to say that an understanding on the connection between the übermensch and the eternal recurrence would not help in our understanding of both, but when Kaufmann was writing, he was trying to give the reader a greater understanding of the body of Nietzsche's work and not just one concept.

Kaufmann begins his discussion of the übermensch by stating that it was not Nietzsche that coined the term, but that it seems to have first appeared in the writings of Lucian. Lucian wrote in the second century AD; since Nietzsche was a classical philologist by trade, he would have been familiar with his work. Lucian would not have used übermensch, but instead *hyperanthropos*, but it was used in German by Heinrich Müller, J.G. Herder, by Goethe, and in Faust, where a spirit scorns the frightened (Part 1, line 490). Kaufmann brings all these uses to our attention to show that the term was used before, but Nietzsche did give the term a new meaning. According to Kaufmann, Nietzsche's conception relies heavily on the associations with the word über. In his *Third Meditation*, Nietzsche states that the individual is able to give meaning to his life, except if his existence remains a "thoughtless accident". For one to do this, he will have to realize his own true self, but this brings forth the question of how one is supposed to know one's true self. Kaufmann then suggests to the reader that we must not think of our true selves buried deep within us, but somewhere highly over us.

Kaufmann presents us with evidence of the connection of the ideal self over us and the übermensch with the help of a passage from the *Gay Science*.

> Nietzsche here denounces monotheism for preaching the existence of one *Normalgott* as a single norm which suggests somehow that there is also a *Normalmensch*: a norm to which all men must conform and a bar to the development of individuality. It was the advantage of polytheism, Nietzsche contends, that it allowed for a "multiplicity of norms." Hence it is also "first allowed for individuals; here the right of individuals was honoured for the first time."[100]

This raises suspicion for the reader, because there are other passages where Nietzsche says to how remarkable the *Old Testament* is for its portraits of great individuals. Kaufmann makes sure to remind the reader that the mentioning of this passage is not to show his opinion of monotheism, but to show the importance of the invention of gods, heroes, and übermensch of all kinds. This aphorism may make one believe that the übermensch is a sort of god or demigod; it is meant to be more a symbol of the repudiation of any conformity to a norm, the anti thesis to mediocrity and stagnation.[101]

Kaufmann then focuses on the theme of overcoming when discussing the übermensch. He begins with the first public appearance in *Zarathustra*, the speech when it is mentioned that man is something that shall be overcome. Other concepts that make their first public appearance in Zarathustra include the will to power and the eternal recurrence. The übermensch does carry much importance on the idea of overcoming, and is its driving force; when man overcomes himself, he then becomes the overman. Kaufmann uses a quote by Klages to help show this connection.

> Altogether, *Zarathustra*, is an enraptured and uncanny exegesis of the proposition '*über*.' Over-fullness, over-goodness, over-time, over-kind, over-wealth, over-hero, to over-drink – those are a few out of the great number of over-words, some of which are newly coined and some of which are used over again – and they are just as many variations of the one exclusively meant: overcoming. [102]

This quote is meant to help show how the übermensch cannot be disassociated from the conception of *Überwindung*, overcoming. Kaufmann also presents us with the imagery of man as a rope, what he calls man's ontological predicament, the notion that he lives between two worlds and how he is reaching for ideals that are unattainable short of

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[100] Walter Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, and Antichrist,* Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1974, p. 308
[101] Ibid., p.309
[102] Ibidem.

crossing an insuperable abyss. This notion that there lie in man creator and creature, the human and the all-too-human, the superhuman and the animalistic.[103]

This is meant to bring us to the clue of the chapter "Of Child and Marriage." According to Kaufmann, this chapter brings forth the notion that there are two kinds of marriage, the ones between creatures and the ones between creators. It is in this chapter that Nietzsche states that we should propagate ourselves upward instead of onward, in other words, procreation is not meant to be a senseless continuation of an essentially meaningless story, but that it can also be a creation. Kaufmann states that Nietzsche believes that marriage can betray one's call, but he does not reject marriage altogether. Nietzsche still believes that marriage can be creative and "holy", this is because when two become one they overcome the duality of the inward and the outward, ideal and reality. Even if the couple themselves are not at this state of being, their longing for the overman will hopefully be realized by their children that are not meant to only represent another generation, but that will surpass them. Marriage for Nietzsche is only true if they have something to live for together, educating themselves and each other, and their children.[104]

The goal of humanity then does not lie in the end, but in its highest specimens. The goal of development Nietzsche believed to lie in single great human beings; they are not necessarily the last in point of time, but their existence is scattered and accidental in appearance. In *Zarathustra*, Nietzsche also states that the philosophers, artists, and saints were clearly no longer animals. The unphilosophical and inartistic masses still remain animalistic: it is thus the man that overcomes himself, embracing his impulses, and giving style to his character who becomes truly human, enraptured by the word über, overman. Kaufmann then explains to the reader the difference with the "human, superhuman", and the übermensch. This "human, superhuman" is a different variation of the "human-all-too-human"; it is meant to refer to our own true self, while the übermensch is meant to represent the one that has transfigured his *physis* and as thus acquired self-mastery. Kaufmann then brings us a passage from the *Antichrist* that helps

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[103] Ibid., p.310
[104] Ibid., p.311

to show a hint of his views of breeding, one of the only times that he ever mentions these ideas.

> The problem I thus pose is not what shall succeed mankind in the sequence of living beings (man is an end [*Ende*]), but what type of man shall be *bred*, shall be *willed*, for being higher in value... Even in the past this higher type has appeared often – but as a fortunate accident, as an exception, never as something *willed*... From dread the opposite type was willed, bred, and *attained*: the domestic animal, the sick human animal - the Christian.
> Mankind does not represent a development toward something better or stronger or higher in the sense accepted today. "Progress" is merely a modern idea, that is, a false idea. The European today is vastly inferior in value to the European of the Renaissance: further development is altogether not according to any necessity in the direction of elevation... In another sense, success in individual cases is constantly encountered in the most widely different places and cultures: here we really do find a *higher type* that is, in relation to mankind as a whole, a kind of overman. Such fortunate accidents of great success have always been possible and *will* perhaps always be possible.[105]

This is what Kaufmann sees as one of the only mentions by Nietzsche on breeding in his finished works. It contains the claim that Christianity has only bred conformity and mediocrity; this then stopped the development of a single superior individual, and the church thus fights against all greatness of man and sends all great men to hell. He also rejects the modern notion of progress because the overman did exist in the past; there are different people that he does mention to help show this point. (e.g. Napoleon, Caesar, etc.)

The overman should not be linked to hero worship; he is the designation of a type of supreme good, as opposed to good men, modern men, and so on. "For Nietzsche, the overman does not have instrumental value for the maintenance of society: he is valuable in himself because he embodies the state of being that has the only ultimate value there is; and society is censured insofar as it insists on conformity and impedes his development."[106] Napoleon is thus not appreciated as the instrument that ended the revolutionary anarchy, but what is appreciated is the revolution that made Napoleon possible. For Nietzsche, what is to be admired of Napoleon are not his military victories, but that he represented what he believed was the "Good European". In the end, Nietzsche

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[105] Ibid., p.312
[106] Ibid., p.313-314

did not consider Napoleon to be an übermensch, because of his inhuman qualities; he had lost the nobility of his character.

Caesar came closer to the ideal of the übermensch, and again it was not because of his military victories, but because of the embodiment of the passionate man who controls his passions. He performed his deed of self-integration, self-creation, and with self-mastery in a society that was known for decadence. Kaufmann tells us that when considering the übermensch, even if we consider Nietzsche's reverence for Napoleon and Caesar, instead of his admiration for Socrates and Goethe, it still does not introduce any new conception into the account of Nietzsche's philosophy. Kaufmann shows this point with an example of the Dionysian man that is depicted with the name of Goethe at the end of the *Götzen-Dämmerung*.

> He has overcome his animal nature, organized the chaos of his passions, sublimated his impulses, and given style to his character – or, as Nietzsche said of Goethe: "he disciplined himself to wholeness, he *created* himself" and became "the man of tolerance, not from weakness but from strength," "a spirit who has *become free*." [107]

Kaufmann then shows us that the idea of the übermensch is much more than just an instrumental portrayal of man in a certain society. This makes sense if one considers that when one is done being of use to a society, he will still exist. The übermensch thus possesses an inner quality that helps him to overcome himself; it is much more than just overcoming man itself. The übermensch, Kaufmann suggests, should almost be viewed as "the Roman Caesar with Christ's soul."[108]

Jaspers

When Jaspers discusses the übermensch in his text, *Nietzsche: An Introduction to the Understanding of his Philosophical Activity*, it is done under the heading of his conception of man as a driving force. He begins with the discussion of the superior man and then moves on to the overman (which he calls the superman). Nietzsche began by placing his faith in the conception of the superior man until the übermensch took hold of

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[107] Ibid., p.316
[108] Ibidem.

him. The übermensch then shattered all ideals of man; it became the ultimate ideal that we are meant to strive towards.

Until the appearance of the übermensch, Nietzsche found the superior man to be a sufficient model. Superior men do exist, even though they are always being threatened and brought to grief. They are in danger from without and from within.[109] Jaspers brings forth the argument that seeing as how they are extraordinary, they come to ruin in society, which is in bondage to the ordinary. Society is the enemy of the great ones that have come and gone. Jaspers points out how Nietzsche loses faith in man to now also include those who have been recognized and honoured by the world; this makes him start to believe that a truly noble humanity will never materialize. Noble men then begin to lose significance to Nietzsche, whether it is as an actuality or as a developing possibility. This then leads to his discontent with superior men altogether according to Jaspers. Nietzsche's opposition to hero-worship and the need for the creation of the übermensch then follows this.

It is important for Jaspers to first discuss Nietzsche's discontent with superior men. This is important in order for us to understand the transition that has been made from their portrayal to the übermensch. According to Nietzsche, every human greatness is suspect, which is based on its reason for its ascent. Nietzsche then believes that there is a type of forgery that is perpetrated in the veneration of great men. Jaspers insists that Nietzsche does not only find the inadequacy of man in its perversions, but the highest form of mankind still has an insufficiency in its essence. The existence that he considered the highest was the heroic existence, but even the hero seems to contain flaws. "The hero is not the consummation, for he, too, still has within him what is characteristic of man as man, i.e., all the overcoming, sacrificing, and being in transition: 'This is the secret of the soul, that only after the hero has abandoned her does a dream bring her – the super-hero.'"[110] That one creates the model of the ideal man is a sign of a dishonest life.

Nietzsche believes that the philosophy of the ancient Greeks was a good example of this. "They found it necessary to invent (in the abstract) the perfect man – good, just, wise, a dialectician – in short, the scarecrow of the antique philosophers: a plant torn

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[109] Karl Jaspers, Nietzsche: An Introduction to the Understanding of his Philosophical Activity, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1965, p.163

loose from any soil, a humanity devoid of all definite regulating instincts, a virtue that rests upon merely logical grounds."[111] Jaspers believes that this sort of critical questioning of the noble man leads to the same conclusion. Nietzsche is always striving for something higher; this is why he is not able to rest on a single figure that is either imagined or real. What troubled him the most about man was his perfection, and not his sins. The superior men then do not hold the ideal that Nietzsche is searching for, but there has to be something that will be more adequate for the ideal that he is trying to achieve. We have to remember that he did oppose hero-worship, this is partly based on his belief that no man will meet the final test if perfection is required. The übermensch is the next model that he tries to use to help its chances at denying hero-worship and making sure that it is a more adequate model than the superior man.

His opposition to hero-worship is important to our understanding; Jaspers spends a little time to show how this is important in the transition of superior man to übermensch. By making someone the perfect man, one could say that it debases its own human potentialities. "On both grounds Nietzsche condemns men's unconditional subordination of their very souls to any man."[112] Jaspers then shows the reader the most frightful historical example of this, Napoleon. The problem here is when they deify the hero in the physical instead of putting it in an ideal that should be reached. "When finally the deified one even 'betrays himself openly in a loathsome manner as a Non-God who is Much-Too-Human,' then these fanatical hero-worshippers arrive at a new self-deception: they take issue with themselves and as an interpreters experience something in the nature of martyrdom."[113] The notion of hero-worship is thus unsatisfactory to Nietzsche, it is impossible according to him to be able to portray perfection in the physical. The übermensch is more of an ideal than a physical portrayal; it is because of this that he is able to abandon the superior man and leave room for the übermensch to take center stage. In many ways, the übermensch stays indeterminate; this is necessary because it will make it more difficult to portray him in a concrete physical form.

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[110] Ibid., p.165
[111] Ibidem.
[112] Ibid., p.166
[113] Ibid., p.167

Jaspers spends little time on the determinate conception of the übermensch; that is not too conducive to his project. He begins by explaining that Nietzsche abandons the superior man and the deification of any individual because of how he is unable to accept any portrayal that is determinate. "That Nietzsche abandons every kind of "superior man" and rejects every sort of deification of a specific individual is due to an impulse that never permits him to rest content with anything limited."[114] Jaspers believes that this leaves us with the big question of how man is to be surpassed; the übermensch is meant to be the answer to this. This idea of universal failure shown in every man is replied by Zarathustra, who states that since man is a failure we should continue onward and upward. The übermensch is the first concern of Zarathustra's, not man; what he loves in man is that he is a transition and a decline. Nietzsche is thus not concerned with what is visible in man or concealed, but what lies beyond him and what will be reached through him.

The übermensch then becomes our task, according to Nietzsche, it is in our nature to overcome ourselves and go beyond ourselves. "It lies within *our* nature to create a being higher than ourselves. *To create beyond ourselves!* That is what drives us to procreate, and that is the urge behind our activities and our achievements. Just as all volition presupposes a goal, man presupposes a being that, while not existing, gives purpose to his existence. Beings are to be created which in their sublimity stand far above the entire species of men."[115] Jaspers states that the creation of the übermensch is based on Nietzsche's faith. The übermensch becomes a kind of godhead; now with the declaration of the death of God we are meant to wait for the coming of the übermensch.

The image of the übermensch remains indeterminate according to Nietzsche. This is meant to be revealed to us because of the task that he lays out for us, according to Jaspers, who also believes it remains indeterminate. "He asks man to fix his gaze entirely on these heights. Speaking to those who want then to understand great men, he exhorts: 'Your strength should be great enough to see beings that stand another hundred miles *above* them!'"[116] If we are just to stick with the conception itself that would lead the activity to become purely contemplative. What is important is the activity that will be

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[114] Ibidem.
[115] Ibidem

necessary to actualize the vision that one holds. This is why the übermensch becomes the center of Nietzsche's philosophy and it comes to embody everything that he is striving to achieve. Jaspers finds this problematic to a certain extent, because it does raise an important question. "How could the development of mankind be sacrificed in order to help a superhuman being to come into existence?"[117]

The basic attitude will then call for self-sacrifice; the value of our humanity is only as a transition and a decline. It is required if we are to go beyond ourselves. Nietzsche is unable to tell us clearly how this is supposed to come about.

> He develops the idea of a self-sacrificing, out-going, and all-conquering attitude. But his infinitely general idea that all genuine human activity should have an upward propelling effect is inadvertently transformed into the biological conception of a method of breeding and cultivation from which we could expect that a new being would arise at the boundary between the existing species of man and a higher one.[118]

Jaspers finds the übermensch to be an indeterminate idea that we are meant to strive for, even though there are no clear answers from Nietzsche to question how we are to go about it. The reason why this notion of the indeterminate is useful with Nietzsche is that there are no real examples of the übermensch in history, and it is hard for someone to be able to actualize perfection while remaining human at the same time. We are to overcome ourselves, but we must continuously overcome ourselves if we are to stay true to our being. The übermensch is what will overcome man, but this may also leave us with the question: will something overcome the übermensch?

Lampert

When discussing Lampert, the reader should be reminded that the text of reference here is *Nietzsche's Teachings: an Interpretation of Thus Spoke Zarathustra.* Most of his analysis is based on the text *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*; this makes sense when one considers that this is the main text in which Nietzsche discusses the übermensch to any great extent. For the sake of this discussion, and use of Lampert's analysis of the übermensch, we will rely solely on *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* and its role in the text itself.

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[116] Ibid., p.168
[117] Ibidem.
[118] Ibidem.

Lampert does not have a specific chapter on the übermensch, but it is mentioned throughout the text just like *Zarathustra*. We will then go about his analysis in the same manner; the analysis will then guide us through *Zarathustra* as if we were analyzing the role that the übermensch carries in the text.

The first time that the übermensch is mentioned is as the meaning of the earth. He became the meaning of the earth because after the death of God, we were meant to wait for the coming of the übermensch and thus surpass ourselves. Man then becomes the transition to the übermensch. The übermensch should be considered as the consequence of the death of God. Zarathustra is descending to the world to teach man of the new meaning of the earth, now that God is gone, the übermensch. "Zarathustra descends believing that he comes at the decisive hour with the decisive choice: he returns to offer a mankind that has lost its belief in God the supreme gift of a new meaning for the earth, the superman."[119] The reason why Zarathustra had fled to the mountain was his exhaustion with the growing meaninglessness of the world through the death of God. His solitude was to give him a new love for the world and mankind now that God was dead. Lampert makes the connection of this retreat with one of Nietzsche's earlier parables of the "Madman" that knew that the death of God was imminent. This he believed would be catastrophic to mankind, and this is why he was bringing word of the solution to mankind, the übermensch.

When Zarathustra descends from the mountain he meets a solitary man, who is a saint, and is not aware of the death of God, Lampert then shows how they represent two different types of solitude.

> The old saint's solitude is a relief from mankind's perpetual unworthiness; it can be permanent and even end in solitary death, because it is shared not just by animals but by God; he need have no hope for mankind. But Zarathustra's solitude is shared only by his animals. Unlike the old saint, he must return to mankind to share the hope he has won in solitude, because for him there is nothing that could bring comfort to complete solitude.[120]

This shows that Zarathustra believes to have found the new meaning of the earth; this was needed because of the death of God and must therefore be shared with mankind.

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[119] Laurence Lampert, *Nietzsche's Teachings,* London, Yale University Press, 1986, p.17
[120] Ibidem.

Even though God is no longer there, man is still able to have a future. Zarathustra believes that he is bringing a message that will be welcomed by everyone. But he is wrong; to his surprise there are still many that believe in God.

He is not aware that the death of God must be followed by a long period of piety and nihilism, where man will show the shadows of God for a long time to come. This solution of the übermensch is then given to a population that is not aware of the problem it is supposed to solve. When Zarathustra arrives to the closest town, the people are already all gathered in the anticipation to the performance of a tightrope walker. It is then that he gives to the people his three speeches. Instead of him giving them the redemption that they all needed from this problem that Zarathustra believed to be present in society, they give reactions that in the end instruct Zarathustra. They react by laughing at him and his speeches; this shows to him that he has failed, he then attempts to win over a few followers out of the crowd instead of trying to convince everyone.

The übermensch is then not introduced as smoothly as Zarathustra would have liked, but we have to see what relation the übermensch has to Zarathustra and his teachings. Zarathustra's role in the beginning of the text is meant to be one of educator, but this changes after his first attempt in the city square and he then becomes a learner and solitary again. What he learns changes his perspective as teacher, with what he has to teach and what he has to learn. This, according to Lampert, guides Zarathustra to his deepening refection on his single defining virtue, the gift-giving virtue. Lampert believes that the gift-giving virtue hides a passion that becomes clear to Zarathustra because of the will to power. "The one who advocated the virtuous gift of one's self for the sake of mankind's future now gives a new name to the 'nameless' passion he feels within himself; he calls it 'the passion to rule,' while acknowledging that even this improved name is inadequate."[121] Zarathustra does not reject this masked virtue; he tries to cultivate it to remedy the deficiency of the will. Lampert states that he is preparing himself for the highest act of gift-giving, which is the act of ruling or founding.

There are many important themes of Nietzsche's that are introduced in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, namely, the übermensch, the will to power, and the eternal recurrence. The eternal recurrence is not meant to be understood as only the teaching

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[121] Ibid., p.81

loyal to the earth; it is a teaching that will found the new age from the übermensch. When Zarathustra decides to take on the labour of the übermensch, it is meant to be provisional, because the teachings of the übermensch are different from what Zarathustra teaches.

> What the superman teaches is different from what his herald teaches, for, whereas his herald teaches the austere view that all actions must be measured by the good that is the superman's coming, the superman himself comes to teach a new good, eternal return, of which the herald has no inkling. Whereas the herald teaches that the meaning of the earth lies in a future achievement, the superman teaches eternal return, with its completely different perspective now that the present is justified only by the future.[122]

The text is not meant for us to believe that we are to live life for the future übermensch, but that we will be a sub-species to this new kind of man.

Zarathustra then tries to teach his disciples and further their education as a means to the übermensch. Lampert states that later on in the text the reader is told that the disciples are not able to surpass Zarathustra towards the übermensch. It is from this that Zarathustra concludes that life is will to power, this makes one realize the importance of the will in the coming of the übermensch. This discovery of Zarathustra's, that his faith in his disciples will not create the übermensch still does not make him stop believing in the labour of the übermensch. This shows us an expansion of ambition that is unthinkable to Zarathustra; he had pictured this to be a task of his disciple, superior men.

Lampert does not really go into too much detail with the übermensch; he is preoccupied with a much greater task, to show the reader the argument of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. This does include the übermensch, but also the will to power and the eternal return with others. His analysis comes and goes as the text progresses mentioning it when the übermensch makes an appearance in Zarathustra, but he still brings us valuable points that are interesting to consider. He does show the importance of the übermensch as an ideal; whether it may be unattainable is irrelevant, since he is also meant to be a point that we should strive to achieve. It is also important to note that he does put some importance on the fact of the gift-giving virtue; this is something that will be examined at a deeper level in the conclusion. This is the only mentioning of this virtue from the three that have been examined in this chapter.

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[122] Ibid., p.82

A Definition of Sorts

All three authors that have been examined bring good points to the table. The übermensch was never strictly explained by Nietzsche, this leaves the reader open to his own interpretation. This helps in the idea that it is not a determinate idea, because there is no real set outline of the character of the übermensch, we are left with much room to expand on what we believe to be present in him. The übermensch is still what Nietzsche wanted man to become. Even though it may not happen for a while, it is still the ideal of what should happen in man's evolution. I will outline the definition of the übermensch that will be used in the concluding chapter; it will borrow from the three interpretations that we have examined. Thanks to the three treatments, we are able to bring forth a complete definition of the übermensch. We will then borrow from the interpretations of Kaufmann, Jaspers, and Lampert. As we have seen, they all focus on different themes and aspects of the übermensch, this will help us achieve a portrayal of the übermensch that is more cohesive. We would be led to believe that they have different interpretations of the übermensch; it is not as much different views but different focuses. This in turn gives the reader a different view of it, but what some believe is most important with the concept. During this definition, I will reference the appropriate authors to show what they believed to be the most worthwhile theme to be studied with the übermensch. We in turn get the best of both worlds. This is helpful to us to see how the differences of focus will help in the complete definition of the übermensch.

The theme of overcoming is crucial to the übermensch; it becomes clear why Kaufmann put so much importance on this aspect. This notion of overcoming ties in to many different sides of the übermensch; it becomes a central starting point for many things. It helps us in our understanding of the notion that self-mastery is crucial for the übermensch; we are to overcome our weaknesses and improve them. This brings to mind the text "Homer's Contest" when the spirit of competition is used as a cause of self-improvement, overcoming of one's different weaknesses. It is also important to remember that Nietzsche believed that the goal of humanity was not in its end, but in its highest specimens.

When Zarathustra describes the übermensch, we are given the imagery of the tightrope walker. Kaufmann comments on this by saying that it presents us with man's

ontological predicament, what I believe can also be described as this grandness within us. It is the duality that dwells within us, the human and the human-all-too-human or even the human and the superhuman. This image is supposed to show the reader what Nietzsche sees as man's predicament. He lives between two worlds and how he is trying to reach his ideals that are unattainable short of crossing an insuperable abyss.

Jaspers will help us in our definition of the übermensch with his treatment of the superior men. The notion of the superior men is crucial to our understanding of the übermensch, because it brings about hero-worship and to help show that man is a transition. When Jaspers discusses the superior men, he mentions how Nietzsche became unsatisfied with them. The need for something else becomes necessary; this is when the übermensch comes into play. The reason why Nietzsche was not happy with the superior men was that the historical examples (Napoleon, Caesar, etc.) in the end were not superior men because they did not show self-mastery in certain domains. This is then the reason for his opposition to hero-worship; in Nietzsche's mind, there have been no true heroes in history.

This discussion of superior men then brings forth a very interesting and important point in Jaspers' analysis, which is how the idea of the übermensch is not determinate. The übermensch comes out of the discussion of the superior men; because of this, the conclusion arises that perfection will not be possible in the physical. The übermensch is an ideal, something that we are to strive for; since perfection is not possible in the physical, we are able to leave the superior men and let the übermensch take center stage. As stated before, the übermensch is now how we are to surpass man, this is because man is a failure and we are to move onward and upward. We are now to become concerned with what lies beyond man. A reason why it is indeterminate is first because, it is beyond us and becomes hard to describe, and secondly, the übermensch still has not arrived and this then makes it hard for us to be able to determine exactly what he will be like. All that we know is that he will be better than man and definitely not a failure on the same basis as man today.

Lampert also gives different important and interesting interpretations of the übermensch. The first is the focus on gift giving in the context of *Zarathustra*. This is also important for this study because of Aristotle's discussion of liberality and

magnificence that both have a focus on gift giving and generosity in general. Zarathustra believed that the übermensch was the meaning of the earth; it was a gift to man to help given meaning to his life and the world around him. Gift giving means much more than that, as has been discussed earlier, when we look at how it is tied to will. It is meant to remedy the deficiency of the will that is present in all men. The highest act of gift giving is ruling and founding, which are activities that are closely tied to will. Another important aspect of Lampert's interpretation is the historical dimension that he mentions of the übermensch. This can be tied back also to the idea that man is a transition; the will is also important here in the coming of the übermensch. This is because the übermensch has not yet arrived, we are meant to educate ourselves in our preparation of his arrival. This also helps in what was mentioned earlier with Jaspers of how it is an indeterminate concept that represents a perfection that is impossible in the physical. This is the understanding of the übermensch that will be used in the concluding chapter; this is a description that is well rounded and contains much consideration from different points of view.

The übermensch is an idea that is pivotal in the understanding of Nietzsche's philosophy. The will to power and the übermensch go hand in hand, these are concepts that are interwoven together. This is a way for us to think of ourselves as the parent of something greater than we were, thus grandness within us. The übermensch represents strength, style, courage, refinement, and nobility. This is a transformative idea, it is also something to inspire and strive for, instead of just being a concrete prescription for action or transformative behaviour. It is not meant to be understood as an alteration of essence as in its traditional understanding, but more as an ideal as mentioned before, this is the sense that I am using. Greatness of soul was the crowing virtue for Aristotle; Nietzsche believed it to be greatness of soul as well as greatness of mind.[123] Honour is also a virtue that Nietzsche regarded with great esteem, but I believe that this virtue was directly tied with that of nobility.

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[123] Walter Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, and Antichrist,* Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1974, p.384

Conclusion: Human Excellence Compared

Aristotle and Nietzsche are philosophers who are usually not paired up together when discussing their different concepts. There is, however, a concept that interweaves into each other. The one that is most striking is their ideal conception of man; the great-souled man and the übermensch carry some similarities that help show the influence that Aristotle still held in philosophy two thousand years later. Rohatyn states that "On final evaluation, (the übermensch) appears as a disguised model of human excellence(...) Nietzsche's overman conception takes its place alongside Aristotle's *phronimos* or *spoudaios*, Butler's cool man, Smith's ideal observer, and the like; the difference between the specific conceptions of moral excellence may be vast, but the overall heading amounts to the same."[124] This statement shows that, whether the views of morality have changed in society through time, the idea remains the same.

There are different connections between the two that I will mention; some will be more obvious then others, but even the smaller connections will help give weight to the argument that Aristotle's great-souled man is still considered as the skeleton of others' conceptions of the ideal man. The case study that is studied here, Nietzsche's übermensch, is one that still resonates with Aristotle's conception at a high level. We will also show some of the differences that exist between the two to help show how changes in society modify what one may view as human excellence over two thousand years later.

The reader is wondering by now when the method discussed in the introduction was going to be used in this thesis. The reason why it still has not been used is that at first I believed that it was important to present the two philosophers with a treatment of their philosophies respectively before they were going to be compared. Now the method will take a more dominant role in our discussion; the two philosophers have been properly

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[124] Dennis Rohatyn, *Two Dogmas of Philosophy and Other Essays in the Philosophy of Philosophy*, Cranbury, N.J., Associated University Press, 1977, p.158-59

introduced to the reader and it will now be obvious what use the method has to do with this work. Aristotle and Nietzsche will now be put face to face on different themes where they differ and agree.

As stated before, the Millian joint method has two canons that will be used, the method of agreement and the method of disagreement. Seeing as this is not an experimental inquiry, the idea of agreement and disagreement could be taken to be a compare and contrast type of argument. I don't think that is what is the result, but more a result that comes from the method of agreement. Mill states that an agreement can be based on the fact that things can diverge on everything except one thing, and still be considered to be in agreement causally. Seeing as how the übermensch and the great-souled man are portrayals of human excellence respectively, the cause could be taken to be the same. This is the idea that I will follow in this concluding chapter, except that I will base it on more than one agreement, but the majority of what I believed to be similar in the beginning will prove to be disagreements.

At the beginning of this project I stated that Aristotle's great-souled man was a skeleton of the übermensch. I still hold this to be true, but for something to be a skeleton we only need one or two common points to help show its roots. I will begin with the different disagreements that they share and then move on to the couple of agreements that I have noticed to be present. This will help show the idea that things can diverge in most aspects and still be similar in cause.

Disagreement

The first disagreement to be discussed is their views on politics; they might have both believed in aristocratic systems (rule by the best), but that is about all that they would have agreed upon. As stated before, Aristotle is seen as one of the founders of democratic thought, while Nietzsche would be categorised with the dominant anarchist thinkers. Aristotle believes that politics are much more vital to human life than Nietzsche; one of his famous statements is that man is a political animal. He also wrote a work that was completely dedicated to politics, while Nietzsche did not write a political text and even political commentary is almost non-existent in the body of his work. This then becomes challenging for the writer when faced with the task of showing his political

views, and then comparing them to someone like Aristotle who has a very well founded position.

Aristotle believes that living virtuously is the central goal of the *Politics*; this is meant to be derived from our desire to preserve freedom. The communities that he studies are in terms of the natural bases of human associations and the ends that come from these associations. This is Aristotle's way to deal with politics, it is not uncommon that a philosopher will base political studies on this idea; the way that we communicate with each other can yield a lot of knowledge from these experiences, political or otherwise. Aristotle would believe that it is virtuous ends that come from our associations with each other in politics, while Nietzsche would focus more on the power relations that exist between us. Aristotle believes that we need to study morality before we are able to study and do politics. Nietzsche believes that morality cannot serve as the basis for building a society; it is usually the political regime that moulds the society in which it exists. Nietzsche then disagrees on what some would consider one of the basic building blocks of Aristotelian politics. This is not to say that Nietzsche would not agree that there could be some importance attached to morality in political decisions, but he does not believe that it should be the foundation of the building of a society. In other words, Nietzsche believes that morality should not be the basis of this construction, unlike Aristotle who would believe that it does play a major role.

Aristotle is also focused on the natural foundation of the state and the analysis of its parts; it is an exercise of morality and its relation to politics. He spends time on discussing the good man and the good for man, for Aristotle, politics represents the best way of life. Aristotle never said that all political systems were representations of the best way of life, but that political systems should try to create this for its inhabitants. This is why there is a need for someone that is great-souled to run the state and have all the virtues that are needed for this. Nietzsche would not agree with the notion that the political system represents the best way of life; this is mostly based on his notion of slave and master morality. Politics for Nietzsche are based on power struggles that occur between what we would consider the slaves and the masters in the society. He also believed that modern politics are nihilistic because of this duality, in other words, they do not focus on what should be the main issues. This disagreement is obvious when one

reads their respective works, but does not hold that much weight in the argument of their conceptions of the ideal man. One that I believe carries much more weight and is more interesting is the contrast that exists between their respective worldviews.

Worldview

We will study their conceptions of worldviews through Nietzsche's conception of *amor fati* and it can shed light on how he would have viewed Aristotle's society and view of the world. By studying the two worldviews with one concept it will be easier to see the difference, the starting point for both will be the same and therefore the difference will be proved from the same idea. It is important to first introduce the concept of *amor fati,* which is translated as the 'love of fate'. Nietzsche describes this as a way of looking at the world that will help us accept our fate. We are to not regret or resent, we are to not worry or live in fear. In other words, we are to not curse our life, but to accept it no matter what it may be. This comes from Nietzsche's belief that it is life itself, and not the pleasures and successes that are enjoyed in life, that gives life its ultimate meaning. This idea is something that we are supposed to continuously tell ourselves, it is to become our mantra.

When Nietzsche studies the Greeks, he finds that their definition of *amor fati* would be aesthetic acceptance. This is a good way of describing this idea; in the text *Ecce Homo* he gives a proper definition to this concept. "One wants nothing to be different, not forward, not backward, not in all eternity. Not merely bear what is necessary... but love it."[125] The love of fate can then be viewed as a love of necessity, a good eye to view essences. It can also be understood as what Spinoza would have called destiny, a necessary path to the future. Spinoza might not have had the same view on fate as Nietzsche, but he still would state that destiny is something that we all follow. If we are to love fate, we are then supposed to accept with enthusiasm whatever happens, whatever people do, and whatever happens to us. In short, it is to not be judgmental. This is an interesting point when we consider that Nietzsche was himself judgmental about many things (i.e., Christianity).

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[125] EH II:10,p.258

When we look at Ancient Greece and their view of fate or destiny, we are then presented with many different interpretations, especially when we study Greek tragedy. This idea of fate seems to be necessary to how the plot will develop in tragedy. A good example of this is Oedipus, he has to kill his father and marry his mother, and he has no choice about that. He did have different ways for him to do it, but the end is still meant to be the same no matter what the choices he will choose. The same is present in the example of Antigone, she had the same fate as Oedipus and yet she also had many different options to get to actualise the fate that was given to her. Heraclitus would insist that character is fate; this then makes fate not something that is imposed from the outside but something that comes from within, by the person that is moulded by his upbringing, situation, and response. Nietzsche would not say that fate is just one of these versions, but all of them at the same time.

Another point that must be considered when we examine the idea of worldviews with Aristotle and Nietzsche is how we are to understand the actual term of worldview. If we translate the term of worldview into German, we are left with the word *Weltanschauung*. This can be translated as a view of, or an opinion of. The main difference that occurs between Aristotle and Nietzsche with worldviews is that one had a good opinion of his world (Aristotle), while one rejected it (Nietzsche). In addition, if we are to look at it through *amor fati* we are then reminded that during Nietzsche's time fate was not loved by most. This is a time period that was very founded on the notion of free will over determinism, the idea of fate would then be seen as archaic and not very plausible. Nietzsche is also known as a critic of his society on many levels; his most known object of critique is the Christian morality that he believes have plagued them, and in turn, society. He was not happy with the world that he lived in and the values that they held; this is why he was calling for a re-evaluation of all values and declaring the death of God. He saw how his society was evolving towards two goals, ones that were influenced by the Christendom that ruled the morality and lives of its people. The two goals were, the renunciation of war, and the universal brotherhood, "peace on earth" and "good will to men."[126] It is well known that Nietzsche was a supporter of war because it brought out

[126] Henry Louis Mencken, *The Philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche*, Tueson, Arizona, See Sharp Press, 2003, p.96

the best in men, the spirit of competition. It was also an exercise of power; the weak are destroyed while the strong get to exercise their power. The notion of good will to men is usually tied to the idea that everyone is equal, and in return must be treated with the same considerations as the person acting; we have to ask ourselves the question "Would I want to be treated this way?" It is also well known that Nietzsche did not believe that we were equal and therefore would not believe in applying this notion of the universal brotherhood to his philosophy. He believed that there were many meek people around him, and that there should be a morality for every castes that would exist within the society.

> "The order of castes," said Nietzsche, "is the dominating law of nature, against which no merely human agency may prevail. In every healthy society there are three broad classes, each of which has its own morality, its own work, its own notion of perfection and its own sense of mastery."[127]

Aristotle, on the other hand, thought that there were many good qualities to his society; he did not write to criticise his society, but tried to improve it. He thought that Ancient Athens was a virtuous state, but there was always room to help and make it even more virtuous. The *Politics* is a study to help improve the political stage of his society; this is also shown by how he examines other city-states as examples of what has happened in the past. He is trying to prove that by studying the past we might not repeat the past's mistakes. Aristotle believes that his society is flourishing; Ancient Greece was a society that was built on the idea of wisdom and wonder. It was very exciting in all the different disciplines that had been created there, science, astronomy, philosophy, and many others.[128] One believed that to help better his society was a duty and not an option. Being virtuous was one of the biggest rewards that someone could receive. Eudaimonia was then reached through virtuous living and not something an exterior source.

When we go back to their conceptions of the ideal man, we are able to see what role the worldview may have on it. The ideal man for Aristotle is someone that is supposed to be present in society; to be great-souled one must just be able to master all

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[127]Ibidem.

[128] The traditional understanding of worldview according to these two is different. Aristotle's society believed that society had reached its peak and the future would just be a further decline, this put into consideration with *amor fati* could help show why Aristotle would not want to accept his fate. Nietzsche's

the virtues. He is showing us what the ideal statesman would be like, and what effect he would have on the state. Statesmen are still present, but he is hoping that the statesman would be great-souled, and therefore be leading in a more ideal way by making sure that the considerations are made for the good of the people and not other ulterior motives. Politics for Aristotle were a very noble task, something that was virtuous and respected. Nietzsche believed that the politics occurring during his time were meaningless; it was not a task that he respected or believed was virtuous in any way.

Nietzsche's ideal man had not yet arrived; this world had not yet seen anything like it. He believed that some had come closer than others had to achieving this end, but there still had not been any übermensch. His ideal man then does not play a role in the society that he is writing in; he believed that most great men from the past were destroyed by their society. Unlike Aristotle, the truly great people will be destroyed by their society because they are not able to flourish completely. They are held back by the meek who define the society that this great person will live in; this is why the übermensch is meant to be more than the normal human being that is already there. Nietzsche is then not writing about this ideal to show its role in the present, but the future.

Nobility

Before Nietzsche had come up with his conception of the übermensch, he believed that the portrayal of the superior man was a sufficient model for the ideal man. Superior men did exist, even though they did experience many hardships during the time that they were in the world, but it is the society that brought them to ruin. Society is thus the enemy of these great men. It is this fact that made Nietzsche loses faith in the possibility of a truly noble humanity. Noble men also lose significance in Nietzsche from this sort of reasoning. Every human greatness then becomes suspect and this is why he believes that something greater is in order, the übermensch. He does bring up a good point of criticism against the Ancient Greeks and how their portrayal of the ideal man was lacking in some ways. The problem was that they did find it necessary to invent an ideal man in the abstract; the virtue of the virtuous man was based purely on logical

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society viewed it in terms that society's state was poor and would just get better as time progressed, thus, Nietzsche would love his newfound fate.

grounds, and there are no real world attributes of instinct or anything else that could realise virtue.

Nietzsche was trying to find a model that would apply to the real world and the emotions and instincts that rule us more than just pure abstract logical attributes. Aristotle's model of the ideal man was based mostly on logical grounds, but he believed that it was possible for it to be a reality also, for example, Socrates. He believed that one had to attain greatness in all virtues to be great-souled. He does give the students of ethics ways for them to achieve liberality, magnificence, and magnanimity, but the achievement of most of Aristotle's virtues rest upon the ideal of reason over the emotions or instincts that also control us in our everyday lives. Even the ways that he does give the reader to attain these virtues is more a description of the virtue itself; the readers are meant to take the description and use it as a model of how they are to go about achieving whatever virtue they are striving for. He also admitted that achieving greatness needed to be done in all virtues with moral nobility, because without nobility, greatness would be impossible. He does admit that it is possible, but it is something that is hard to achieve. The übermensch also involves a need for nobility; this is a virtue that they both share in common.

Nobility is a virtue that has changed through time to accommodate the society to which it is involved. It does, however, hold almost as much value at any point in time. Nietzsche was trying to create a "new nobility," according to Lampert, which would not base itself on pride of descent and the person's ancestors.[129] This "new nobility" is meant to base itself on the future instead of the past, it is supposed to redeem all of the past, because it still allows the past to be what it was. "The new nobility, while engaging in an act of founding that loves posterity, preserves in memory the whole of the human past by not letting it perish into dialectics or ignorance."[130] Lampert argues that this is a political concept, which he states has been enlarged by Zarathustra to include mostly the acts of the educator. This concept is loosely tied to the concept of the übermensch, in a way of how the übermensch is something that will occur in the future; these two are meant to be connected to a certain degree. Some would even say that the "new nobility" is more

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[129] Laurence Lampert, *Nietzsche's Teaching,* London, Yale University Press, 1986, p.206
[130] Ibid., p.206-207

important to Zarathustra than the teaching of the übermensch; Lampert finds this not to be true.

> In Zarathustra's public teaching the new nobility seems to replace the superman, its plurality and variety seeming to supplant the singularity of the one superman in whom the history of mankind would be justified. But the superman teaching cannot be replaced by the teaching on the new nobility, for the latter is not comprehensive enough; tasks once thought to be the responsibility of the superman still need to be accomplished, and they are not assigned to the new nobility.[131]

Nietzsche's conception of nobility then seems to differ a lot from what Aristotle would call noble.

Aristotle's conception of nobility is much more grounded in tradition, than Nietzsche who was determined to revolutionize the discipline of philosophy while Aristotle was more content on giving certain improvements to the discipline. For Aristotle, nobility is attached to the idea of friendship and moral excellence. This is at least where it is discussed in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, more specifically in the section on self-love. Nobility, however, is not just a moral virtue, because it requires that it be recognized by someone else; what Aristotle studies is then more noble action. Tessitore discusses this when he speaks of self-love in the role of virtue and friendship. He mentions two kinds of self-love, the first is the one that most are familiar with and usually employ in a negative way. That is the kind that people assign to the lower part of their soul, for example, money or bodily pleasures for themselves. The true kind of self-love that he is interested in, on the other hand, is not negative to any degree. The person is always trying to secure the noble by practising each of the virtues in the way that they are meant. These people, according to Tessitore, are not blameworthy to any extent, and yet they appear to be self-lovers to a great degree. This is because they take their bearings from the best part of themselves, their intelligence. "By loving and gratifying the part of their soul that is, or is most, their true self, such persons prove to be lovers of self in the truest sense."[132]

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[131] Ibid., p.207

[132] Aristide Tessitore, *Reading Aristotle's Ethics: Virtue, Rhetoric, and Political Philosophy,* New York, State University of New York Press, 1996, p.91

This is meant to spell out the consequences for friends and country of self-love properly understood. If understood properly, the person will part with money, honour, or the ideal career to help advance the good to friends and country. Aristotle believes that they would even perform the supreme sacrifice if the situation calls for it. No matter what the situation, the individual will choose the better part of the question because they want to perform what is noble through their actions. Tessitore then make the argument that this point emphasizes the extent to which self-love is compatible with friendship and patriotism. Aristotle thus shows us a complex and vast conflux between self-love and friendship and the city by appealing to the noble. For Aristotle, nobility has a requirement of the other, because one must be recognized as noble and for this, there is a need for friends. A virtue must be recognized mostly by other parties instead of oneself. Nobility is still involved in self-love and therefore is able to be recognized by the self, but not to the full extent.

Greek Values

Nietzsche, a philologist by career and thus very well versed with the society, was a great admirer of Ancient Greece. The first text that he published was entitled *The Birth of Tragedy*; this was mostly focused on Ancient Greece and their philosophy. From the beginning of his philosophical career, he was very aware of the philosophy of Ancient Greece and their main players, especially Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. If one is to read *Homer's Contest* it becomes even more apparent how he admired this ancient society because of its ideals and virtues. Many of the different aspects of Ancient Greece seem to appear in Nietzsche's philosophy. The übermensch is a 19th century equivalent of the great-souled man; the differences are more reflections of the different societies in question.

One of the things that Nietzsche admired most of Ancient Greece was the spirit of competition that was present in the society; this is known to most with the tradition of the Olympic Games. It is true that the idea of competition is something that could be linked to overcoming. It does portray an idea of self-improvement; if contestants are to win at a certain competition they will have to become better than the others that they face. There is always an ongoing need to become better to help guarantee that they will be able to

beat their opponents. Nietzsche also believed that it was competition that fuelled cultural development. This notion of competition is very important for Nietzsche; this is a motivation that he wished was still present in the society that he lived in.

When speaking of the importance of competition for Nietzsche, it is not the actual victory that matters but the struggle that takes place when one tries to reach the top. Success is thus not meant to be measured by the achievement of the goal itself, but what struggle had to take place in order to achieve the goal in question.

> *Deification of success* is truly commensurate with human meanness. Whoever has closely studied even a single success know what factors (stupidity, wickedness, laziness, etc.) have always helped – and not as the weakest factors either. It is mad that success is supposed to be worth more than the beautiful possibility which was still there immediately before."[133]

Another example of how he praises Greek values is when he mentions one that Aristotle viewed as the excess and the mean with regard to revenge in his discussion of the two kinds of Eris. "And not only Aristotle but the whole of Greek antiquity thinks differently from us about hatred and envy, and judges with Hesiod, who in one place calls one Eris evil – namely, the one that leads men into hostile fights of annihilation against one another – while praising another Eris as good – the one that, as jealousy, hatred, and envy, spurs men to activity."[134] Nietzsche here shows the reader that the society in which he lives maintains a very different opinion of what would be considered a virtue or not compared to the Ancient Greeks.

Even though there are some differences, the great-souled man and the übermensch do resemble one another as models of the ideal man, which could be summarised as a proud man capable of great actions. We are partly able to fill this idea by looking at Nietzsche's praise of the Greek values and virtues, the very ones that the great-souled man has mastered. This ideal of greatness of soul is still present in Nietzsche's writings, but it has been modified to accommodate the time that he is writing in. Nietzsche also believed that greatness of soul was not possible without greatness of mind; this is a variation that does add to his characterisation of the ideal man, but does not take anything away from it. One must remember that the society in which a writer lives will definitely

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[133] Friedrich Nietzsche, "Homer's Contest" in *The Portable Nietzsche*, ed. Walter Kaufmann, New York, Penguin Books, 1954, p.39

influence the writing as well, as how the idea is to be structured for the completion of the project. Even if Nietzsche was not aware of it, he does owe a great debt to Aristotle and more specifically his ethics.

Walter Kaufmann expands on this debt to a certain degree in his text, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, and Antichrist*. During this mention, he also shows the reader how Nietzsche did not see anything romantic about the concept of greatness of soul, and how he did not believe that greatness of soul could be separate from greatness of mind. Kaufmann starts his discussion of the debt by stating that greatness of soul is a translation of Aristotle's *megalopsychia*. He believes that this is a concept that has had a tremendous effect on Nietzsche and his criticism of Christianity. "And as Aristotle's conception apparently made a tremendous impression on Nietzsche, whose opposition to Christianity can scarcely be seen in proper perspective apart from Aristotle's ethics, it seems necessary to quote at least in part the relevant passage of the *Nicomachean Ethics*."[135] The passage that he is referring to is 1169a of the *Ethics*; this is where Aristotle describes the great-souled man.

The description of the great-souled man could be viewed as vain, based on the fact of "he who claim much and deserves much." Aristotle defends this claim by writing that the person that is vain will claim much, but does not deserve much. From this statement, we are able to see that Aristotle does condemn vanity, and he does not praise meekness and humility, which are portrayed as parts of 19th century society that Nietzsche analyzes in *Zarathustra*. Kaufmann believes that Nietzsche's debt to Aristotle's ethics is considerable, even though he did disagree with Aristotle's theory of tragedy; it is unjustifiable to say that Aristotle meant little or nothing to him. Nietzsche did clearly distinguish between Aristotle's aesthetics and ethics. "I honour Aristotle and honour him most highly – but he certainly did not hit the nail, not to speak of hitting it on the head, when he spoke of the ultimate aim of Greek tragedy."[136]

Kaufmann thinks that it is obvious that the great-souled man was modelled after Socrates, and more specifically, his behaviour in the *Apology*. He sees this as another

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[134] Ibid., p.35
[135] Walter Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, and Antichrist,* Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1974, p.382
[136] Ibid., p.384

instance of how someone's personality becomes a crucial influence in the history of ideas, and he sees this as another link between Socrates and Nietzsche. Nietzsche's conception of greatness of soul does differ from Aristotle; Nietzsche believed that greatness of soul could not be separate from greatness of mind. This is because it involves independence; without greatness of mind, it should not be permitted because it would create mischief. Kaufmann gives us a passage that shows Nietzsche explaining this idea.

> Hatred against mediocrity is unworthy of a philosopher: it is almost a question mark concerning his "right to philosophy." Just because he is the exception, he must protect the norm and encourage self-confidence in all the mediocre [*hat er die Regel in Schutz zu nehemen, hat er allem Mittleren den guten Mut zu sich selber zu erhalten*][137]

This is supposed to show that Nietzsche believed that the happiness of the weak should not be sacrificed for the happiness of the strong, even though the weak are incapacitated for ultimate happiness. It is only the strong that will attain the happiness that everyone desires. Nietzsche believed that happiness for the mediocre is being mediocre; they would be unhappy with the same hardness that most spiritual men accord themselves. Ultimate happiness is thus only represented by the few in society, the strong.

Kaufmann shows this with the introduction of the *Antichrist.*

> Let us face ourselves. We are Hyperboreans; we know very well how far off we live. "Neither by land nor by sea will you find the way to the Hyperboreans" – Pindar already knew this about us. Beyond the north, ice, and death – *our* life, *our* happiness. We have discovered happiness, we know the way, we have found the exit out of the labyrinth of thousands of years. Who *else* has found it? Modern man perhaps? "I have got lost; I am everything that has got lost," sighs modern man. *This* modernity was our sickness: lazy peace, cowardly compromise, the whole virtuous uncleaniness of the modern Yes and No... Rather live in the ice than among modern virtues and other south winds! We were intrepid enough, we spared neither ourselves nor others; but for a long time we did not know where to turn with our intrepidity. We became gloomy, we were called fatalists. Our *fatum* – abundance, tension, the damming of strength. We thirsted for lightning and deeds and were most remote from the happiness of the weakling, "resignation." In our atmosphere was a thunderstorm; the nature we are became dark – for *we saw no way*. Formula for our happiness: a Yes, a No, a straight line, a goal.[138]

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[137] Ibidem.
[138] Ibid., p.385

This points out Nietzsche's claim that modern man was failing in his attempt to attain happiness, that he is far from the state that he longed for, and that happiness consists in a state called "power." Kaufmann believes that Nietzsche's critique of modern man, of romanticism, and of Christianity is the negative counterpart of his philosophy of power. He sees all three as forms of weakness; happiness consists in power and none of those who lack power will ever find happiness.

The übermensch was meant to be a reaction to the culture that Nietzsche lived in, he was supposed to represent someone who would not value the negative aspect of the philosophy of power. In this respect, Nietzsche is showing a connection between ontology and morality. For Nietzsche, the fundamental sense of the will to power was ontological. There are historical consequences to this statement, which I will describe in the next section on becoming; for now, it is important to show this connection of ontology and ethics, and show how the übermensch is a reaction to culture. For Nietzsche, the idea of what is "good" is linked to anything that elevates the sense of power, the will to power, and power itself. What he considered "bad" was anything that proceeded from weakness, Christian morality for example. It is from this that he describes his slave and master morality; he was repulsed to live in a society that rewarded the weak, he wanted man to reject the ready-made morality and create his own system to accommodate his needs. The origin of morality is thus a transitory manifestation of the will to power. Happiness then becomes an unrestrained yielding to the will to power. I believe that the link to ontology and his morality can be seen here. His ethics of power then seems to show that he is reacting directly against the norm of his time.

The übermensch was supposed to be someone that would overcome himself at the expense of others needs be; he did not believe most Christian virtues because he believed that they went against our basic instincts. Christians believe that self-sacrifice and mutual help is itself an instinct, but Nietzsche believes this to be untrue. Nothing seems more apparent to him than the inherit selfishness of man. The übermensch should therefore be not afraid to hurt others in his quest of overcoming man. This seems to be a blatant reaction to Christian charity, a virtue that many hold to be essential to living a good life. We have to remember that Nietzsche wanted us to have an ethic of power and not reward the weak, because this will not allow culture to advance and let the strong in society

flourish. The strong man must eliminate the idea that it is disgraceful to still have a yearning to achieve even more power.

> Simply that Nietzsche preaches a mighty crusade against all those ethical ideas which teach a man to sacrifice himself for the theoretical good of his inferiors. A culture which tends to equalize, he says, is necessarily a culture which tends to rob the strong and so drag them down, for the strong cannot give of their strength to the weak without decreasing their store. There must be an unending effort to widen the gap; there must be a constant search for advantage, an infinite alertness.[139]

This alertness is thus the reaction to culture that he has prescribed for man to undertake, this is done through the notion of the übermensch and his morality of power. This is meant to be the new portrayal of the ideal man, an overcoming that is able to be done is one follows this notion of power.

The two respective portrayals of man used by both philosophers were pictures of what they considered the ideal of man. Their portrayals of human excellence are similar and yet differ at the same time; the both believed that their portrayals were the image of the ideal of man, human excellence, but what they viewed, as the best is different from each other. This could be attributed to how their societies were quite different from one another. Another difference that is worth noting would be how Aristotle's conception was meant to be accomplished in the present while Nietzsche's was an introduction to the coming of something greater than the man that was already there. Aristotle believed that the great-souled man was already present in Ancient Greece; one of his examples was Socrates, based partly by how he acted in front of the jury in the *Apology*. Nietzsche did mention superior men, but they did not in the end measure up to all the characteristics needed to be the übermensch, because with closer examination they became human-all-too-human. He thus used Zarathustra as the oracle for the coming of the übermensch, as a warning of something greater than man that would arrive.

The übermensch is meant to help us see ourselves as the parent of something greater than we are; it is grandness within us. The übermensch, however, is a regulative idea, while Aristotle's great-souled man is an idea that is more pragmatic and able to be practised immediately. Aristotle has an ideal that is meant to be transformative behaviour, while Nietzsche's conception is something that we are meant to strive for, something that

is meant to inspire us. They both also include a characteristic that is crucial in the completion of the conception of the ideal; Nietzsche has his will to power while Aristotle holds that one must attain greatness in all virtues (moral greatness) in order to become great-souled. The idea of overcoming is present in both conceptions, but the means to becoming is different. The two ideas are transformative; they are guidelines that one is meant to follow in order to better themselves. The notion of the übermensch is not as fixed as the great-souled man, but it is still a model that will evolve with time in order to be the guide for someone to transform himself or herself into a greater person.

Becoming

This overcoming is not meant to be understood in the Darwinian sense, Aristotle wrote in a time where the idea of evolution was not based on Darwin's work and research, while Nietzsche did not use this conception to his advantage in his writings. The research had not been accepted by most during Nietzsche's period and his idea of overcoming did not involve this idea of the survival of the fittest. Nietzsche's overcoming was a self-mastery of the passions and emotions, even though some could consider this to be a kind of evolution, it was a personal evolution that was not meant to be followed as the extinction of one species in order to achieve the better. He did call man the last man in his duality of the last man and the next man, but the overman was not the next step in the evolution of man, the übermensch was supposed to arrive and become superior to man in general.

This could also be understood as a becoming, the übermensch is someone that has become better than they were before the overcoming occurred. Gilles Deleuze was extremely interested in this notion of becoming. Alan Schrift quotes Deleuze and what he understood as becoming.

> What is real is the becoming itself, the block of becoming, not the supposedly fixed terms through which that which becomes passes... Becoming produces nothing other that itself... [A] becoming lacks a subject distinct from itself... Becoming is a verb with a consistency all its own; it does not reduce to, or lead back to, "appearing," "being," "equalling," or "producing."[140]

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[139]H.L. Mencken, *The Philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche*, Tucson, Arizona, See Sharp Press, 2003, p.62.

[140] Alan Schrift, "Putting Nietzsche to Work: The Case of Gilles Deleuze" in *Nietzsche: A Critical Reader.* ed. Peter Sedgwick, Cambridge, Blackwell Publishers, 1995, p.261

This stress on becoming ties back to Nietzsche's focus on the process of overcoming having more worth than the result itself. This is something that is fully expressed in his text *Homer's Contest.*

The idea of competition, or contest, plays a major role in the philosophy of Nietzsche. As stated earlier, the idea of contest for Nietzsche was not about winning, but the struggle that existed in the process of competing. When training for competition, one will develop oneself by mastering whatever skills will be needed to beat the opponent. It is this process that is the most important; the end is secondary. Nietzsche is then suggesting us an eternal becoming; Jaspers makes a point of showing us this in his text.

> Furthermore the concept of the man who becomes *more than man* is already emerging: "Only full, profound natures can dedicate themselves with a terrible passion so completely that they almost seem to step out of their humanity." The more-than-human is even now, in an evolutionary sense, mentally projected into the empty horizon of a *limitless* future and related to the idea of *eternal becoming*: "After all, we scarcely know whether humanity itself ... is not merely a stage, a period in the universal whole, in the process of becoming ... Is there no end to this eternal becoming?[141]

Nietzsche believes that it is during competition that men are their best. This makes sense when we think that during training one is trying to further them to a higher level that the situation demands. The goal of competition according to Nietzsche would then be to further ourselves, not the win itself. If we better ourselves and become better, we have achieved the goal that is wanted. This is the moment that we are the closest to becoming better humans, even to the point of surpassing the limitations of our humanity.

This theme of overcoming also shows how both philosophers believed that not all men are equal; they believed that some were superior and hence were able to reach their ideal of human excellence. This is why Aristotle believed that the great-souled man should rule the *polis*, because he was the best in society. Aristotle argued that the rule of the best is preferable to the rule of the masses. Nietzsche when trying to arrive at his conception of the übermensch mentions the idea of superior men; they were historical examples like Napoleon and Julius Caesar who in some ways carried some of the traits of

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[141] Karl Jaspers, *Nietzsche: An Introduction to the Understanding of his Philosophical Activity*, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1936, p.56

the übermensch. They did not in the end do justice to the übermensch, but they still were the closest examples that there were. As mentioned earlier, Jaspers gives a good analysis and explanation of the superior man.

Another good side note is that this notion of becoming can be mirrored in their descriptions of the ideal man. Both believe that the great-souled man or übermensch is an end that is wanted at the beginning of an evolutionary process. To be great-souled we must achieve an acquisition of all virtues; greatness of soul is the crowning one, the end. It is a process that takes time and effort; this is why so few people ever achieve this in their lifetime. There are different stages that one must climb; to every stage there is a virtue corresponding. With the great-souled man, there is liberality, magnificence, and magnanimity. In *Zarathustra*, the aphorism "On the Three Metamorphoses," Nietzsche discusses three stages of human development. It is a great link to Aristotle when he explains that each stage has its own virtue that contributes to developing an ideal that is the übermensch. This is an idea that mirrors Aristotle's great-souled man's acquisition process.

We should not forget that Nietzsche's conception of becoming is meant to be more than just something that takes time, there is much more involved in his notion of becoming. Aristotle was dealing with a duality that was very prominent in ancient philosophy, being (permanent) and becoming (transitory). Man for Nietzsche is also transitory in the sense that he will be overcome by the übermensch, as Jaspers rightly pointed out 'man is a transition.' We must also examine how it does involve the penetration of fact by the new category of temporality and the rejection of essence; and not just history, or the extension of fact or the development of an essence across sequentially ordered parts of the category of time. This then makes it necessary for us to examine the eternal recurrence and how this is implied with the rejection of essence and how history is no longer viewed to be a straight development but a cyclical one.

The eternal recurrence is entrenched in the notions of the will to power and the übermensch. Lampert dedicates a section to the eternal recurrence in his text; he is showing his readers that this notion gives us a new center of gravity. He begins by stating that the will to power names the enigmatic essence of all beings, but there are historical consequences to this ontology. This is because the will to power is not a teaching that

carries to some logical culmination of modern teachings on power that have as their end the effecting of all things possible.[142] If we look at the traditional interpretation of essence, we can see that philosophers have tried to deal with this notion of becoming by trying to understand permanence in the face of change by describing the individual itself as unchanging. One's atoms would then not alter, but reconfigure. The idea of essence is somewhat based like this with the idea that essences are the products of the drive of human reason to place an ever-changing world into a conceptual straightjacket, to turn dynamic processes into concept-mummies. The best example of this would be the most real being of them all, God, who in return, is the most mummified. This is because it is abstracted entirely from the world of changing objects, and to call this being as the cause of itself shows just how empty this conception really is.

This is where the eternal recurrence shows its greatest importance, an essence is no longer evolved across sequentially ordered parts of the category of time, it is no longer linear but cyclical, and therefore there is a rejection of essence. With the übermensch, Nietzsche gave us a conceivable and possible goal for all human effort, but we are left with one question. Once the übermensch has arrived, then what? The over-overman and then the over-over-overman and so on? Nietzsche answers this by supplying a theory that the universe does move in regular cycles, thus whatever is happening now on earth, in the universe, will be repeated over and over again, for eternity. "Man, who has sprung from the elements, will rise into superman, and perhaps infinitely beyond, and then, in the end, by catastrophe or slow decline, he will be resolved into the primary elements again, and the whole process will begin anew."[143] This is a concept that remained philosophical for Nietzsche; it was not something that he was to prove scientifically. This was also useful for his morality, this makes one assess if their life was truly good, because this concept makes one ask, "Would I live this life again exactly the same way?" This also makes one go against the universe, seeing as how the life is already doomed to be repeated, and put all thought aside of any conscious existence beyond the grave. He will then say "yes" to life and not worry about what his actions will bring beyond this life, he will act in

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[142] Laurence Lampert, *Nietzsche's Teaching*, London, Yale University Press, 1986, p.255.
[143] H.L. Mencken, *The Philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche*, Tucson, Arizona, See Sharp Press, 2003, p.69.

accordance with the laws of the sentient beings since the beginning of history. One will be concerned with immanent matters and not pure speculation.

The übermensch will then have the same guidelines as us, but they will be more acute and efficient than us, this is because he will try to fortify and develop them. He will be concerned with how to live as long as possible and avoid all things that shorten a life, by injuring the body from without or by using energy within. By doing this, he will stop trying to learn why the world exists and will devote his time to how it exists. The übermensch will then have developed senses that will give him knowledge about everything that exists on earth; this is because he has developed his senses to a higher level than we have. He will for example not spend time wondering why a certain disease has come to earth, but he will attempt to erase its existence as quickly as possible. The übermensch is thus considered a man that believes that the only knowledge that is worthwhile is one that makes life longer and more bearable. This is then the historical dimension to a certain degree; we are no longer obsessed with the past but more with us furthering our abilities to make life better for ourselves. It is an evolution of our human spirit.

The aphorism "On the Three Metamorphoses" is meant to describe the human spirit. He uses an imagery to help explicate the evolution of the human spirit with a morphing from a camel, to a lion, and finally a child. Lampert gives much insight into this first aphorism of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*; he discusses the three states of the spirit (camel, lion, child), and the two transformations (camel to lion, lion to child). These three states are necessary for his companions if they are to follow him in his quest for the übermensch. This is meant to make them stand out from the "herd," this could be linked to the idea that the great-souled man is separated from the rest of men because of his ability to acquire the virtues necessary to achieve the end of *megalopsuchia*.

Lampert points out that Zarathustra is not only just seeking out these companions with the proper spirits, but through his teachings he is hoping to create them. This first speech is intended for a general audience that is meant to draw away those who are the few suited to be his companions. The speech, as stated before, focuses on the transformations between the spirit states. He does not mention the first however, from the spirit's prior state to camel; he just declares it necessary. The other reason why he does

not explain this first transformation is that it cannot be taught; it is something that has to happen in someone. The camel spirit then comes to as a heroic spirit, that of the tightrope walker.

The camel spirit is the one that Zarathustra criticises; he gives reverence only to the lion and child spirits. Lampert states that even though the camel is not seen as a great animal, it still posses qualities that are noble and heroic. "Although the camel is a homely and domestic beast, possession of its qualities renders the spirit noble and heroic. Zarathustra already exhibits a camel spirit, one that takes upon itself what is hardest."[144] This could be understood as the search for the übermensch, this is what Nietzsche may find to be hardest. He is also trying to get followers; he must therefore be willing to bear much for the cause, a kind of generosity. The camel is necessary for the beginning of what he is prescribing, it is important for one to be able to bear himself to the cause put forth. Zarathustra is willing to bear much because of his reverence for the übermensch.

Even before this implication, the spirit must be drawn to difficult acts based on their difficulty. This I believe goes back to Nietzsche's insistence on the spirit of competition in one's life. The lion comes into play when we discuss this willingness to bear; this is because one must bear the heaviest burden of destroying exactly what it reveres. This act of destruction is meant to be the last step in the heroic spirit of the camel. No motive is meant to be attached to the act of the lion than the hard conscience of the camel as camel. The lion is thus not meant to act out of its own rage, but the rage comes from the wilful creation of the camel spirit. This is the only act that is meant to be done by the lion, but Lampert is then left wondering what makes one's spirit evolve from lion to child.

After the lion has done his single deed, the destructive act, the act will leave the spirit homeless. The lion spirit is thus changed out of need for the spirit to have a home. This is not meant to be understood as an ancestral home, but one that is built through time from what it needs and not out of rage. When the spirit has found his new home there will be no need for rage, the spirit will be born again and free of rage because it will be at home in the world and there will be no need for revolt. When the spirit has completely destroyed the created works in the world, it will be born as the child spirit. This spirit that

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[144] Laurence Lampert, *Nietzsche's Teaching*, London, Yale University Press, 1986, p.33.

is born out of destruction will also be free of the camel's need to burden itself. The child's spirit is free; it is a yes-saying spirit unlike the no-saying of the camel and lion spirit. The goal of this first speech is a renewed spirit, the child spirit has promise and potential that is still to be determined in the future. This is what is needed for the übermensch, a spirit that is a new beginning and will hopefully mature into what we know as the example of human excellence. This is not to mean that the child spirit is meant to become the übermensch, but it might at least become the father of what will in the end become the übermensch. The spirit that Nietzsche is searching for will have to go through the three different types of spirits in order to become the übermensch, this is a link that is very similar to Aristotle's great-souled man.

Nietzsche here states that there are three states, while in Aristotle's evolution to the great-souled man he mentions three major virtues. They both mention three necessary steps or states that follow from each other, whether this evolution is from camel to lion to child or liberal to magnificent to magnanimous, it amounts to the same in many ways. They both believe that each step is better than the last, and they both believe that one is needed in order to be able to move on to the next. The notion of becoming then fits into this scheme quite easily, for both philosophers, one must become one of the steps in order to move on to the next. Aristotle shows this the best with his link that he draws from his three steps. The liberal man is linked to the virtue of generosity, but the magnificent man is tied to the virtue of magnificence while it still contains generosity. For someone to be magnificent, he must still be generous also, but there is more to his virtue of magnificence because it also includes wisdom. It almost seems that each step up becomes a culmination of the virtues before with the addition of more. To be magnanimous one will also have to be wise; thus, it will be necessary for someone to be generous and wise in order to become magnanimous.

After reading this carefully one is aware that these similarities seem to be more and more superficial. It is true that they do have three steps each, but the only virtue that they do hold in common is the first, generosity. Their generosity is not the same, Aristotle is concerned with giving away material goods, while Nietzsche's gift is man towards the goal of the übermensch. It is not exactly the same, and as stated before the becoming that they use is different. Nietzsche's characterization of becoming is a reaction to his culture,

while Aristotle is using the duality that was present in his time. Generosity was a similarity that I wanted to use for this thesis to be successful in finding the similarity between the two, but like that of becoming, they are only superficially similar. Generosity is a virtue that both Aristotle and Nietzsche held in high regard, it was a stepping stone for the goal of *megalopsuchia*. With closer examination, we are lead to believe that they did both find generosity to be a virtue that they both believed to be crucial, but their notion of generosity is not the same.

Gift-Giving

The main similarity that one would believe is present between Aristotle's great-souled man and Nietzsche's übermensch is definitely their shared emphasis on the virtue of gift-giving. One of the great-souled man's virtues is generosity; this is most examined when Aristotle discusses the liberal man. It is also present in his explanation of the magnificent man, but this aspect of the great-souled man is more concerned with wisdom than generosity. The theme of gift-giving in relation to the übermensch is explained in *Zarathustra*, where it is the teachings of the übermensch that become the generous offering of the oracle to the rest of the world. In the aphorism "On the Gift-Giving Virtue" Nietzsche states that the gift-giving virtue should be considered the highest virtue. Generosity is a theme that was important to Nietzsche in all his writings, but what is interesting here is that in *Zarathustra* there is also a historical dimension added to the idea of gift-giving. Laurence Lampert mentions this link in his text *Nietzsche's Teaching*; he shows us how Zarathustra uses the virtue of gift-giving with the übermensch.

Aristotle's depiction of the liberal man focuses on the moral virtue of generosity, more specifically, as opposed to reputable opinion. Its deficiency is stinginess while its excess is wastefulness; generosity is thus the mean between these two extremes. When Aristotle does discuss this, he is more focused on the giving away of material goods, its *chremata*. This type of generosity is different from Nietzsche, but one can still see that it is the idea of the generous spirit. Aristotle and Nietzsche may not be thinking of the same type of giving, but it is still meant to be done for the same kind of ideal. For Nietzsche, the virtue of gift-giving is meant to be a contribution to the goal of the übermensch, while for Aristotle it is being recognized as magnanimous.

> Aristotle's account of liberality, magnificence, and magnanimity, culminating in the praise of "the great-souled man," is in some respects an antecedent, most particularly in the competitive desire to be superior in giving.... For Zarathustra the meaning of gift-giving lies in its contribution to the goal of the superman, whereas for Aristotle it consists in being recognized as magnanimous.[145]

In the first part of the text, Zarathustra tells us that the übermensch is the meaning of the earth, and that life in the present is meaningful only because it is a gift for the future. He does not give us any antecedents to the virtue, he sees it as a historical novelty, and it is his gift to mankind. Aristotle's praise of gift-giving does not have the historical dimension that is present in Zarathustra's teaching. Zarathustra is asking men to give themselves to the goal of the übermensch; this seems to be more dedicated than Aristotle's great-souled man who has the crown of all virtues. "Because the history of mankind depends on it, Zarathustra's emphasis on giving oneself away for the superman sounds a far more impassioned note than the deliberate, distant greatness of the man who has "the crown of the virtues," magnanimity, and who is honoured because he merits the honour."[146] The theme of generosity is still present in both authors, whether it is more superficial like the giving of material goods, or giving oneself for the goal of someone greater. It is still self-sacrifice to a certain degree.

In the aphorism "On the Gift-Giving Virtue" Zarathustra tells his followers what his single virtue means and consist in. He names his virtue so it can be shared; the source of his virtue is the passions of contempt for mankind and the longing for the übermensch. This is meant to represent the most severe kind of liberality, to give oneself as a gift to mankind's future. This is for Nietzsche, the most gracious and important gift that one can give to the world. Zarathustra's followers gave him a gift before he left the city, a gold staff. Gold then takes centre stage in the second speech of this aphorism, because it is viewed as something to have the highest value and it is not a common object.

His notion of generosity resembles that of Aristotle in the aspect that the value of something should not be based solely on its utility. Gold is then a good example to show this, because it is something that has achieved the highest value and is pursued for itself, it is an image of something that is valued for itself even though it is not common. The

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[145] Laurence Lampert, *Nietzsche's Teachings,* London, Yale University Press, 1986, p.78

followers that he has drawn out of the city are seen to have gold in their veins, moved by the gift-giving virtue are then not like the ones left behind in the city. They are meant to be seen as uncommon because they do not just calculate their private utility, their giving is then not based on the simple fact of taking. Their taking is meant to be based on the idea of giving. "In fact, the reverse is true; their taking – says the one who has taken them from the city – though insatiable, in that it desires to draw everything to itself, is a taking based on the passion to give."[147] If one is to have the gift-giving virtue, he will take only in order to give. It is the act of giving that is most noble, this is something that mirrors Aristotle and the idea that he maintains with his liberal and magnificent man. With the liberal man and the magnificent man, the notion of generosity is meant to be concerned with the act of giving solely and for the better end. The act of taking is not a part of the Aristotelian generosity; he is also concerned with the act itself. This may seem like a similarity superficially, but with closer examination, we are shown that what it is that they are both giving is different. Aristotle is stating that what one is to give are external goods and Nietzsche believes that we are to give ourselves. This difference is thus irreconcilable. What I thought would be similarities have become more differences than anything else with closer reflection.

The purpose of the use of the Millean method was to help in the quest to find similarities with a common aspect that they would have shared. I had also chosen this method because I believed that it would help in giving some consideration in the amount of time and development that had occurred between them. I still find that the similarities that I believed to be present, becoming and gift-giving, are irreconcilable and thus become difference and not the common points I once believed to be present. It is true that the übermensch and the great-souled man are their respective portrayals of human excellence, but what they hold to be moral excellence end being quite different. I believe that this concluding chapter has outlined this to a good degree. I suppose that this is a daunting task to try to find something in common with two thinkers that have so much that has happened between them in the world and their discipline. It would be near impossible for Nietzsche to prove that he has anything in common with Aristotle, except

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[146] Ibidem.
[147] Ibid., p.74

for his biological functions. This thesis then helps to show that there is not much akin between us and our foundational fathers of philosophy, but that we are probably more in disagreement with them than ever before.

They founded philosophy and the framework that we were meant to work in, but we have advanced their studies and ideas to the point that they are no longer recognizable. Nietzsche was still trying to understand the world that he lived in and further progress towards this, but that is the point, he was dealing with his culture and society. This society was very different from the one that Aristotle lived in; much has happened between these two people and has changed our perspective on everything. They were both trying to explicate what they viewed as ideal of man, but these were ideals that were meant to fit their society and not vice-versa. The idea of human excellence is something that all will strive for, but that definition will change in time because of the different reality that we will live in. Human excellence is the best human behaviour. Nietzsche believed that the übermensch was the best of human behaviour and Aristotle would have agreed with his great-souled man. Nevertheless, their portrayals will never be able to be akin to each other because of too many irreconcilable differences that exist due to many factors.

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