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The Good of Community
(co-authored with Monique Wonderly)

Nietzsche is often read as an extreme individualist whose only concern is the flourishing of exceptional individuals. Proponents of this reading typically hold either that Nietzsche is indifferent to society and the vast majority of those who constitute it or that he regards society as valuable only insofar as it is a means for the production of exceptional individuals. Julian Young cites Walter Kaufmann and Alexander Nehamas as exemplars of the first kind of individualist reading of Nietzsche and Brian Leiter and Keith Ansell-Pearson as exemplars of the second. Young has written two books devoted to rejecting these interpretations. According to Young, "Nietzsche's fundamental concern, his highest value, lies with the flourishing of community" (2006: 2). On his view, Nietzsche is not only concerned with society as a whole but holds that its interests actually *take precedence over* those of the individual. On the face of it, this is an implausible interpretation of Nietzsche, for there is nothing more apparent in his work than the high value he places on individuality and especially on individuality of the highest kind. Young grants that Nietzsche values exceptional individuals, but argues that he does so only because they play an essential role in the community. We will argue against this claim here. While we applaud Young for highlighting the often-neglected fact that the community does have import for Nietzsche, we part ways with him insofar as his view commits Nietzsche to what is essentially a *conservative* political position. We defend the more traditional and more liberal view that the good of community, the source of its value, concerns the things of value that it makes possible. The greatest of these objects of value, we take Nietzsche to claim, is true individuality and, especially, the exceptional individual, one who exhibits the highest form of individuality. In the final section, we suggest that Nietzsche's view might nevertheless be able to accommodate a richer notion of community value than is commonly supposed—one that, in important respects, is similar to the value that he attributes to the exceptional individual.

Young's Argument

Young aims to establish, then, that Nietzsche values above all else the flourishing of the whole community, in opposition to the traditional view that he cares most about the individual, and in particular, the exceptional individual. Young approaches this task by going through Nietzsche's books in chronological order and noting how *each* of them, in one manner or another, exhibits a concern with the community. Even where Nietzsche does not employ the term *community* (*das Gemeinwesen*), Young finds support for his communitarian reading in Nietzsche's use of terms such as *Volk* or people, *culture*, and *humanity (or species)*.[1] According to this reading, a community flourishes only when its members share an ethos or ideal. Young's Nietzsche is not simply a communitarian, however, but a *religious* communitarian; he takes communal flourishing to be both undergirded and partially constituted by a unifying ethos that is provided by religious myth and promoted by religious festivals.

Young's reading is most plausible in regard to *The Birth of Tragedy*. Setting out in his first book to diagnose the malaise he sensed in modern culture, Nietzsche locates its source in a scientific culture that destroys myth. "Without myth," he claims, "all cultures lose their healthy, creative, natural energy; only a horizon surrounded by myths encloses and unifies a cultural movement." Absent such a horizon, there is only a "wilderness of thought, morals, and action" (*BT* 23). Nietzsche is clearly using *horizon* here in a metaphorical sense. What a culture needs is not a limit beyond which its members cannot see, but rather a limit on the choices they can even recognize, on ways of feeling, thinking, and acting they can even consider. And myth helps to establish such a horizon, presumably, by celebrating the community's way of doing things, marking it as *the way*. So Young seems correct to take from this passage both a definition of community as "a common enterprise shaped by a shared conception of the good life" and the suggestion that if such a conception is not surrounded by myths, community disintegrates. A society thus becomes fragmented and empty, and "communally and individually, life becomes meaningless" (2006: 32). *BT* is only Nietzsche's first book, of course, and he abandoned many of the views expressed therein in subsequent writings. So the onus is on Young to persuade us that Nietzsche never abandoned his religious communitarianism.

In *Human, All Too Human*, he finds support for his communitarian reading in Nietzsche's claim that "the branch of a people [*Volk*] that preserves itself best is the one in which most men have, as a consequence of sharing habitual and undiscussable principles . . . a living sense of community" and that this involves learning the "subordination of the individual" (*HA* 224). In a later

[1] See, for example, Young's (2006) use of "society" on p. 4, "Volk" on pp. 4, 27, 139, "culture" on pp. 27, 32, and "global community" on pp. 87, 124, and 123.

addition to the same work, "The Wanderer and His Shadow," Nietzsche expresses hope for the flourishing of a *global* community when he talks about "that distant state of things in which the good Europeans will come into possession of their great task: the direction and supervision of the total culture of the earth [*gesamten Erdkultur*]" (*HA* II/2:87). Young sees this passage as evidence that "Nietzsche's highest value is global community" (2006: 81). Asking what it is "that makes Nietzsche so keen on global community," Young thinks the answer is "the obvious one that only through the consequent demilitarization [discussed in *HA* II/2:284] can there come into being an age when everyone has transcended animal aggression and can genuinely say [quoting from Nietzsche here]: 'peace all around me and goodwill to all things closest to me.'" Young interprets the following lines from the final aphorism of *HA* as claiming that "Christianity said this too early": "The time has, it seems, still *not yet come* when *all* men are to share the experience of those shepherds who saw the heaven brighten above them and heard the words: 'on earth peace, good will towards men.' —It is still *the age of the individual*" (*HA* II/2:350). Young adds that the final line here is "a difficult remark for the 'individualist' interpreter to accommodate" (2006: 82).

We can think of at least two promising paths down which the individualist interpreter might try to accommodate it. The first would be to insist that the individuals about whom Nietzsche is here worried are those still filled with "animal aggression," and not the exceptional individual he values. The latter has overcome animal aggression and lives "only to know" (*HA* 34), whereas the former (because he encourages a militaristic culture) is indeed detrimental to the kind of community that is most conducive to producing Nietzsche's exceptional individual. The second path would start by noting that *HA* is an early work in which Nietzsche is still very much under the influence of Schopenhauer and therefore Christianity. To make his case, therefore, Young needs to supply evidence from Nietzsche's later works. And this, of course, he tries to do. For instance, he also finds passages in *The Gay Science* that seem to support the value of the community over that of the individual. In *GS* 55, Nietzsche goes so far as to note that previously "it was rarity . . . that made noble," but that "this standard involved an unfair judgment concerning everything usual, near, and indispensable—in short, that which most preserves the species and was the *rule* among men hitherto: all this was slandered . . . in favor of the exceptions" (*GS* 55). Nietzsche concludes this aphorism with the thought that "the ultimate form and refinement [of] noblemindedness" might be to "become the advocate of the rule." As Young reads this: "Given that the 'rule' genuinely promotes the health of the community . . . nobility consists precisely in *commitment to and defense of* the ethos of one's community rather than in opposition to it" (2006: 91). That, however, might be going too far; for it is not clear how such a commitment would fit Nietzsche's understanding of nobility in this book, which is a matter of "feeling heat in things that feel cold to everyone

else" (*GS* 55). So it makes most sense to think of the noble-minded person as defending not the community ethos itself, but the type of person slandered by thinkers from Socrates on, who takes that ethos for granted, for whom it constitutes the "horizon" of *BT* and the "undiscussable principles" of *HA*. In any case, Nietzsche is certainly engaged in that kind of defense in *GS* 76, according to which "humanity's greatest labor so far has been to reach agreement about many things and to submit to a *law of agreement*—regardless of whether they are true or false. This is the discipline of the head that has preserved humanity—but the counter-drives are still so powerful" that it is difficult to speak of humanity's future with confidence. Nietzsche locates "the greatest danger that has hovered over and still hovers over humanity" in "the outbreak of madness," by which he means the joy in breaking free of this "discipline of the head," in departing from the common faith. He finds the tendency towards such lack of discipline not in the "slow spirit," who exhibits the "virtuous stupidity" he considers an "exigency of the first order," but among the "select spirits" with whom he identifies. Therefore, Nietzsche concludes, "*We others are the exception and the danger*—we stand eternally in need of defense!—Now there is something to be said for the exception, *provided it never wants to become the rule*" (*GS* 76).

It is difficult to see why those who interpret Nietzsche as an (exceptional) individualist should have problems with these passages from *GS*. For instance, Brian Leiter's interpretation of Nietzsche's critique of morality (in the narrow or "pejorative" sense) stresses the importance of culture: Nietzsche's problem with morality is that it produces a culture that is unfit for producing higher types of humans. It would seem that Leiter's interpretation can accommodate with ease all of the aforementioned passages that Young adduces in support of his view. For all of Nietzsche's concern for culture, it still might be valuable only because and insofar as it is suitable for producing higher types. According to Young, however, this suggestion gets things precisely back to front (2006: 2).

Young argues that for Nietzsche, the higher or exceptional individual is "valuable only as a means to the flourishing of the social organism in its totality" (2006: 135). Much of his evidence for this claim concerns the communal roles and responsibilities that Nietzsche attributes to members of the higher types. In *HA*, for example, Nietzsche tells us that the "deviant natures," which serve to subvert the status quo, are vital to societal progress in that they inoculate the community with something new, enabling its evolution (*HA* I:224). Young thinks a similar story is told in *GS*, but now with more stress, as in passages we have quoted, on the necessity of a community "rule." In *BGE*, Nietzsche describes the "true philosophers" as the "commanders and legislators of values" and they are to "determine the 'where to?' and 'what for?' of people" (*BGE* 211). Presumably, if members of a higher type are endowed with the task of creating and legislating values for a people, they are *responsible* for others in the community. Young adduces similar claims from *Twilight of the Idols* in support

of this picture. He suggests that the "exceptional person" bears an "extraordinary weight of social responsibility" on his shoulders, and that the demand that such a leader has a "conscience," as expressed in *TI* I:37, 40, is clearly the demand that he has a "social conscience"—that he accept the responsibility not just for his own flourishing but for the flourishing of the community as a whole (2006: 165). The role of exceptional individuals, then, is to apply their special abilities toward the improvement of their community. Furthermore, such individuals must take this role very seriously because, according to Young, Nietzsche holds that "individuals only truly flourish, *when their own highest commitment is to the flourishing of the community as a whole*, that is, their highest personal goal is the communal good" (2006: 2, Young's italics).

Indeed, many, if not all, of the individuals for whom Nietzsche expresses admiration in his work are those who made substantial contributions to culture and community. Young points out that Nietzsche praised Wagner, at least in part, for his effort to revive the "Volk" through his music. Similarly, he argues that Nietzsche admired Goethe and Napoleon for embodying virtues reminiscent of earlier ages—virtues that promoted higher culture (2006: 76, 100). Nietzsche also regarded himself as a member of the "exceptional type," presumably as a "philosopher of the future," whose role is to create new values.[2] But granting that Nietzsche's exceptional individuals all have roles in the production of culture, and that perhaps this has not been brought out sufficiently in individualist interpretations, it simply does not follow that this is the *only* source of their value. In the next section, we look at some passages that suggest strongly that Nietzsche does not think so.

Problems for Young's Account

We begin with the second two essays of *Untimely Meditations*. Young finds in the first of these, the essay on history (*UM* II), "a sophisticated theory of cultural . . . 'health,'" according to which the three types of history serve life "provided that they interact in the right way." The "right way" is for monumental history to inspire cultural change and for antiquarian history to put "a break on the wilder uses of the 'monument,'" thus helping to "ensure that cultural change . . . takes the shape of reform rather than 'revolution.'" Finally, the role of critical history is to counteract "the ossifying effects of pure antiquarianism," thereby creating "the ground on which alone effective monuments can be constructed" (2006: 39). Young presents this theory as "important to the argument of [his] book" for two reasons: first, because it "stayed with Nietzsche all his life" (later developments being "refinements rather than rejections"), and

[2] According to Young, Nietzsche recognized that he was an exceptional individual, but lamented his destiny as a "free spirit" and longed for community (2006: 79–80).

second, because the theory "reveals the communitarian heart of Nietzsche's thinking, that his overriding concern is for 'people' or 'culture.'" Taken together, these two points have as a consequence that Nietzsche's "later concern for the production of exceptional individuals must derive from a conception of them as, in some way, promoters of communal 'health'" (2006: 39).

We raise two objections. First, Young ignores the extent of Nietzsche's concern with individuals in this essay. Nietzsche begins his discussion of the three kinds of history by discussing the kind of individual for whom each is appropriate: monumental history for the "human being who wants to create something great" and "needs exemplars, teachers and comforters," which he cannot find among his contemporaries; antiquarian history for those who wish to remain within the realm of the "habitual and time-honored"; critical history for "those who are oppressed by the affliction of the present and wish to throw off this burden" (*UM* II:2). Nietzsche's point is that the three kinds of history serve "life" when used by the appropriate type of individual. In the hands of other kinds of individuals, it may be deadly. The passages we have quoted are from the same section of the essay in which Young claims to find a "sophisticated theory of cultural 'health.'" Such a theory may also be present in that section, but we are not sure that it is and it is certainly not obvious. The overwhelming impression created by this (second) section of the essay is that Nietzsche is concerned with how history (hence culture) serves the interest of individuals in leading meaningful lives. The individuals, it seems, are the end, culture or community, the means.

Further, this impression is confirmed—and this is our second objection—by a later and very famous passage in the essay, which Young does not mention. Here Nietzsche argues, against Hegelians, that "the goal of humankind cannot possibly be found in its end stage, but only in its highest specimens [or exemplars]" (*UM* II:9). In this passage, Nietzsche expresses longing for

> a time in which we will no longer pay attention to the masses, but once again only to individuals, who form a kind of bridge over the turbulent stream of becoming. Individuals do not further a process, rather they live timelessly and simultaneously, thanks to history, which permits such a combination; they live in the republic of geniuses of which Schopenhauer once spoke. One giant calls to another across the desolate expanses of time, and this lofty dialogue between spirits continues, undisturbed by the wanton, noisy chattering of the dwarfs that crawl about beneath them. The task of history is to be their mediator and thereby continually to incite and lend strength to the production of greatness.

So, yes, Nietzsche is concerned with culture in the second *Untimely Meditation*. But it seems abundantly clear that he regards the task of culture (here exemplified by history, and especially monumental history) to be the production of great individuals.

The third *UM*, "Schopenhauer as Educator," makes the same impression. Young admits as much, claiming that it "contains some of the most extreme statements of what *appears* to be Nietzsche's 'aristocratic individualism.'" Because such statements also appear to contradict his main thesis, Young considers it important to try "to put these remarks in their proper context" (2006: 43). Although Young does not mention it, one such remark is Nietzsche's explicit claim that "the aim of all culture" is the "production of genius" (*UM* III:3). The same point (but without the explicit reference to culture) is made later in a passage, and Young does quote it, namely, that "humanity should work ceaselessly towards producing great individuals—this and only this should be its task" (*UM* III:6). After commenting that "this certainly looks like elitism of the most radical sort," Young attempts to put the remark into its "proper context" by calling attention to what Nietzsche says immediately thereafter:

> one would like to apply to society and its goals something that can be learnt from observation of any species of the animal or plant world: that the only thing that matters is the superior individual specimen [or exemplar] . . . that, when a species has arrived at its limits and is about to go over into a higher species, the goal of its evolution lies, not in the mass of its specimens and their well-being . . . but rather in those apparently scattered and chance existences which favorable conditions have here and there produced. (*UM* III:6)

The point, as we understand it, is that given how nature operates, it is not as strange as it may seem to claim, as Nietzsche does, that the task of culture is to produce great individuals and that the lives of those who cannot become great will "obtain the highest value, the deepest significance" by "living for the sake of the rarest and most valuable exemplars." Young sees it differently. Asking us to "reflect upon this Darwinian analogy," he notes that "the evolution of a species is evolution of a *total species*—not the consequence-less evolution of a couple of finer-than-usual exemplars."

> What happens of course is that the "random mutations"—a term I shall take over to apply to Nietzsche's exceptional individuals —adapt better and breed whereas those that do not tend to die out before reproducing. So gradually the characteristics of the "higher" (more adaptive) type becomes the rule of the species rather than the exception. Later on, as we shall see, Nietzsche expresses considerable interest in eugenics. So it is possible that it is already in his mind as part of "preparing within and around oneself" for the redemption of culture—though there is no explicit mention of "breeding" in the third Meditation itself. What the biological analogy strongly suggests, however, is that the appearance of the great individual *is not an end in itself but rather a means to the redemptive evolutions of the social totality* (*UM* III:6). (2006: 49)

There are many problems with this, including the gratuitous reference to eugenics (which is not justified by other passages in the book cited in the Index under "eugenics") and the apparent interpretation of the "Darwinian analogy" in too literal a fashion. But the most important problem is the assumed either/or of the final line. Young does not explain, here or elsewhere in either book under consideration, why exceptional individuals cannot be *both* ends in themselves and means to the redemption of the community. No doubt, SE presents great individuals as means to the redemption of the community. It is only through them, by means of them, that the community is redeemed. They therefore have instrumental value in relation to the community. Perhaps Young reasons that if individuals have instrumental value in relation to the community, then the community itself must have intrinsic value. But even if this is so, it does not follow that individuals cannot be valuable in themselves. In fact, it seems that the community is redeemed through individuals precisely because they are intrinsically valuable and that it is only in giving rise to them that the community achieves something of true value.

To see this, consider the identity of these great individuals: Nietzsche calls them "those true human beings, those no-longer-animals, the philosophers, artists, and saints" (*UM* III:5), because they are the only ones who have "elevated their gaze above the horizon of the animal." Here is Nietzsche's description of animal life in the same section of the essay:

> It is truly a harsh punishment to live in the manner of an animal, subject to hunger and desires, and yet without arriving at any insight into the nature of this life, and we can conceive of no harsher fate than that of the beast of prey, who is driven through the desert by its gnawing torment, is seldom satisfied, and this only in such a way that this satisfaction turns into agony in the flesh-tearing struggle with other beasts, or from nauseating greediness and oversatiation. To cling so blindly and madly to life, for no higher reward, far from knowing that one is punished or why one is punished in this way, but instead to thirst with the inanity of a horrible desire for just this punishment as though it were happiness—that is what it means to be an animal. And if all of nature presses onward toward the human being, then in doing so it makes evident that he is necessary for its *salvation from animal existence* and that in him, finally, *existence holds before itself a mirror in which life no longer appears senseless* but appears, rather, in its metaphysical meaningfulness. (*UM* III:5) (our italics)

So animal existence is senseless, without value or meaning. It needs salvation for this very reason and it is redeemed precisely insofar as it finally gives rise to beings who transcend animality and are therefore of value. Further, Nietzsche says that the description he has just given of animal life is "the way it is for all of us" most of the time: "usually we do not transcend animality, we ourselves are those creatures who seem to suffer senselessly." Communal life,

in particular, as Nietzsche goes on to describe it, is "just a continuation of animality." It is only in the philosopher, the artist, and the saint that animality is transcended and nature achieves salvation.[3] Nature "has arrived at its goal, arrived at the place where it realizes that it has staked too much on the game of living and becoming" (*UM* III:5).

Admittedly, in SE Nietzsche is looking at nature and therefore the community through the lens of what he later called the ascetic ideal. Nature has no value, and the only way to give it value—to redeem it—is to make it into a means to its transcendence, to its opposite. We in no way suggest that this is Nietzsche's later view of things. We have discussed the two *Untimely Meditations* to counter Young's claim that it exhibits a communitarianism about which Nietzsche never changed his mind, and therefore that his later praise of exceptional individuals should be assumed to be praise for what these individuals contribute to the community. Our claim is that when he wrote *UM*, great individuals redeemed the community precisely by being intrinsically valuable, which nature and a natural community are not. We think this sets up a presumption in favor of interpreting Nietzsche's later emphasis on exceptional individuals as due to his continuing belief in their intrinsic value.[4]

One passage from the later works that suggests this, seeming to contradict Young's claim that Nietzsche regards exceptional individuals as valuable *only* insofar as they contribute to communal flourishing, is *Beyond Good and Evil* 258:

> But the essential feature of a good, healthy aristocracy is that it does *not* feel itself to be a function (whether of the monarchy or of the community) but instead feels itself to be their *meaning* and highest justification—and therefore that it accepts with good conscience the sacrifice of countless people who *for its sake* [*um ihretwillen*] have to be pushed down and reduced to incomplete human beings, into slaves, into tools. Its fundamental belief must always be that society may not exist for the sake of society, but only as the substructure and framework for raising an exceptional type of being up to its higher duty and to a higher state of *being*. In the same way, the sun-seeking, Javanese climbing plant called the sipo matador will wrap its arms around an oak tree so often and for such a

[3] In particular, "nature ultimately needs the saint, whose ego has entirely melted away and whose life of suffering is no longer—or almost no longer—felt individually, but only as the deepest feeling of equality, communion, and oneness with all living things; the saint in whom that miracle of transformation occurs that the game of becoming never hits upon, that ultimate and supreme becoming human towards which all of nature presses and drives onward for its own salvation."

[4] Note that much has been written contesting both the notion of intrinsic value and its distinction from instrumental value. See, for example, Korsgaard 1983. By use of these terms, we mean only to suggest the following basic ideas: An object has intrinsic value if it is valuable in itself or for its own sake. An object is instrumentally valuable insofar as it is a means to something else of value (Zimmerman 2002).

> long time that finally, high above the oak, although still supported by it, the plant will be able to unfold its highest crown of foliage and show its happiness in the full, clear light. (*BGE* 258)

In this passage, rather than portraying the higher type as an instrument for the betterment of the community, Nietzsche seems instead to portray the community as an instrument for the existence of the higher type. More accurately, he says that the higher type must view the community in such a light, feeling itself to be the community's "*meaning* and highest justification."

One option for Young might be to say that we have confused members of the aristocracy with Nietzsche's higher or exceptional human beings. But Young cannot take this option because he thinks Nietzsche is committed to aristocracy as the ideal form of society, so long as it is an aristocracy of a spiritual kind. In fact, he thinks that "Nietzsche's 'ideal' for the future is the rebirth of something resembling the hierarchical structure of the medieval church, the rebirth of a society unified by the discipline of a common ethos, the discipline expounded and given effect through respect for the spiritual authority of those who occupy the role once occupied by the priests" (2006: 99). Young goes on to assure us that the message of these new priests will be naturalistic and life-affirming. But *BGE* 258 remains a problem for him. His new priests are going to be members of an aristocracy, and section 258 implies that they must therefore think of themselves as the "*meaning* and highest justification" of the community. Young's actual response is to suggest that taking this as Nietzsche's own belief "is inconsistent with almost everything else Nietzsche has told us about social elites." We have already provided evidence from the *Untimely Meditations*, on which much of Young's case depends, that this is not the case. But Young says that the purported inconsistency "provides a motive for reading BGE 258 in something other than the standard way" (2006: 135).[5] It is not difficult to find a way to do this, he claims, correctly noting that Nietzsche does not assert in his own voice that any member of an aristocracy *is* the "meaning and justification" of the community, but only that the aristocracy must *view* itself as such. But even if Nietzsche means only to assent to the latter claim, Young's view would still have trouble accommodating it, given his recognition that Nietzsche looks forward to an aristocracy of exceptional individuals. These individuals would have to embrace a lie, and not just any lie but a lie that, on Young's account, would prevent them from *truly flourishing*. Recall that Young takes Nietzsche to hold that "individuals only truly flourish, *when their own highest commitment is to the flourishing of the community as a whole*, that is, their highest personal goal is the communal good" (2006: 2, Young's italics). So Young cannot have it both ways: (1) that Nietzsche does not himself believe what he claims aristocrats

[5] He actually begins by presenting the standard reading of the passage as claiming that all that matters to Nietzsche is the "production of a couple of Goethes per millennium . . . *nothing else* has any value to him." This is a caricature, but we cannot deal with that now.

must believe and (2) that Nietzsche believes in an aristocracy of exceptional individuals, of which, of course, he would be a member.

In his search for a reading that is consistent with his communitarian interpretation, Young resorts to the claim that in speaking of what aristocracies must believe Nietzsche means only to *survey the past*, "noting that in healthy aristocracies, the aristocrats have a sublime arrogance, which when it collapses, leads to the decay . . . of society" (2006: 135). But this claim is quite dubious, for two reasons. First, there is nothing to signal or in any way indicate that Nietzsche is speaking only about the past in *BGE* 258 when he says that "every good and healthy aristocracy must feel itself to be the meaning and justification of the community." Furthermore, this passage echoes remarks in the preceding section, where Nietzsche writes, "Every enhancement so far in the type 'man' has been the work of an aristocratic society—and *that is how it will be, again and again*" (*BGE* 257, our italics). Nietzsche goes on to make explicit what he means by an "aristocratic society": "a society that believes in a long scale of orders of rank and differences of worth between man and man and needs slavery in some sense or other." We leave the slavery issue for the footnotes[6] to concentrate on the fact that Nietzsche makes perfectly clear here that every past and future enhancement of the type man will be the work of a society that believes in differences in worth between human beings.[7] When he then goes on in the next passage to say that members of a good and healthy aristocracy—so the ones on the top of the order of rank—must see themselves as the meaning and justification of the community, the obvious implication is that the aristocrats who will be responsible for any future enhancements of the type man must so see themselves.

As one of us has argued previously, Nietzsche thinks that only a society that believes that there are differences in rank or value between human beings will give rise to the craving for higher states of soul—the realization of which constitutes the enhancement of the human type (Clark 1999: 130; paper 9, this volume). Exceptional individuals, those who have achieved higher states of soul, should therefore regard themselves as the *telos* of society, or "the highest good made possible by social organization" (ibid. 137). Reading Nietzsche thusly in no way

[6] An unreflective reading of this passage is likely to encourage a disturbing and misguided interpretation of Nietzsche's view. As one of us notes in a previous work (Clark 1999: 125–6; paper 9, this volume), when Nietzsche writes of an aristocratic society, he refers not to a governmental institution, but to a society that believes in "an order of rank and differences in value between human beings"—and this is wholly consistent with, for example, a democratic political structure. Likewise, the term "slave" is not used literally here, as indicated by Nietzsche's more qualified phrase "slavery in some sense" in the preceding section. In fact, in other passages he extends the term *slave* even to scholars and scientists (see, for example, *HA* 283; *GS* 17). So his use of the term clearly does not commit him to the view that any group should be forced into servitude to ensure the flourishing of the exceptional type.

[7] This does not seem to be consistent with Young's interpretation. He claims that as individuals, Nietzsche values equally members of the herd and exceptional individuals. If he values the latter more, it is just because there are fewer of them.

commits him to the view that the community must be suppressed and spent for the advantages of the individual, but only that it is a prerequisite for having the value structure that *constitutes* exceptional individuals that they regard themselves as exemplifying the highest value that can come from a society.

An Alternative View

As we've said, Young claims that Nietzsche values exceptional individuals only because and insofar as they contribute to communal welfare, while his highest object of value is the flourishing of the community as a whole. In this section, our aim is twofold. First, we argue that Young's view represents an impoverished conception of the value that Nietzsche places on the exceptional individual. Second, while putting to the side the question as to whether communal flourishing is Nietzsche's highest value, we attempt to elucidate the nature of the value that he attributes to the community. We are concerned to show not merely *that* Nietzsche regards the community as valuable, but also to give an account of *why* he so regards it. We emerge with an alternative to Young's account of Nietzsche's suggested value relationship between the exceptional individual and society as a whole.

On Young's account, Nietzsche views the exceptional individual as instrumentally valuable. Let us assume his account is true. The exceptional individual then derives his value, at least in part, from his contribution to (and capacity to contribute to) another object of value, namely the community as a whole. In the preceding section, we presented evidence that that this cannot be the *sole* source of the exceptional individual's value. Nietzsche's exceptional individual is no *mere* instrument of his community, but rather its "meaning and highest justification." Nietzsche explicitly states that we "misunderstand great human beings" if we "look at them from the pathetic perspective of public utility" (*TI*, Skirmishes: 50). Similarly, the value or good of the community lies, at least in part, in its ability to produce and support exceptional individuals. Yet, Nietzsche's view may admit of an interpretation that can accommodate the possibility that the exceptional individual and the community each have instrumental value for the other, while still retaining their respective intrinsic value.[8]

[8] While it may appear suspect to attribute both *intrinsic* and *instrumental* value to an object, this is not as strange as it may seem. Harry Frankfurt, for example, noted, "It is a mistake to presume that the value of a means is exhausted by the value of the ends . . . certain kinds of activity—such as productive work—are inherently valuable not simply in addition to being instrumentally valuable but precisely because of their instrumental value" (1999: 177–8). See Korsgaard (1983) and Dorsey (2012) for more on this point. Importantly, however, not much hangs on the terminology that one prefers to employ here. Our aim in this section is to articulate a plausible view of how Nietzsche might regard the relationship between communal value and the value of the exceptional individual, one on which the community is no *mere* instrument for the production of exceptional individuals, though its value *is* integrally connected to said production.

It is noteworthy that just as he takes Nietzsche to regard exceptional individuals as only instrumentally valuable, Young attributes a similar status to art. Claiming that "Nietzsche values neither art nor philosophy for its own sake," his point is that they have value only insofar as they "create *important, socially beneficial*, art" or philosophy (2010: 426). Young cites *BGE* 208's discussion of "L'art pour l'art" in support of his claim (2010: 406). While Nietzsche certainly does denounce "art for art's sake" in this passage, he does not, pace Young, deny that art can hold value without contributing to communal flourishing. His intended meaning is made clearer in *TI*, where he again criticizes the notion of "L'art pour l'art," now specifying the object of his ridicule as "art that is altogether purposeless, aimless, and senseless." Works of art are inherently purposive; they are expressions, *communications*, of their creators. What "all art" does, Nietzsche suggests, is to "praise," "glorify," "choose," and "prefer." And this is no accident, he adds, but "the very presupposition of the artist's ability" (*TI* IX:24). In other words, the "purpose of art" is to express and communicate the artist's values.[9] Nietzsche calls "art for art's sake" a form of "nihilism" not because it denies that art need be socially beneficial, but because it denies that art has any purpose at all (*BGE* 208). His point is not that art must do something beyond being art in order to have value, much less that the value of art is contingent upon its contribution to communal flourishing, but rather that all genuine art is, by its nature, inherently purposive in the aforementioned sense.

A proponent of Young's view might argue that the communication of values that is art's purpose is meant to serve the community. After all, Nietzsche goes on to say that art "strengthens or weakens certain valuations," presumably, those of its audience. At a minimum, the success of the communication depends on proper reception by the community. Therefore, it may seem, art's very purpose betrays its instrumental value in relation to the community. But it is far from obvious that the communication of values *must* aim at the betterment of society.[10] Also, while it is clear that art typically does have instrumental value for the community, we have already denied the basis for inferring from this that art is not valuable in itself. After all, objects are sometimes bearers of both intrinsic and instrumental value.[11]

A natural corollary of Young's view that Nietzsche's *highest object of value* is the flourishing of the community would seem to be that Nietzsche regards the community as intrinsically valuable, or valuable for its own sake.[12]

[9] Young acknowledges that *TI* IX:24, along with other passages, implies that for Nietzsche, art is necessarily purposive (1992: 128; 2010: 508).

[10] Nietzsche, for example, expressly denies that the purpose of art must be "improving man," and he characterizes the tragedian, not as aiming to communicate to the masses, but as presenting his "drink of sweetest cruelty" to the "heroic man" alone (*TI* IX:24).

[11] For discussions which suggest art as a candidate for possessing both intrinsic and instrumental value, see Davies (2006) and Guest (2002).

[12] Young might deny this, arguing that his view implies that Nietzsche regards "communal flourishing" rather than the community itself as intrinsically valuable. But if Nietzsche did not view the community as valuable for its own sake, then it is difficult to see why *its* flourishing as opposed to the flourishing of any other entity would be Nietzsche's *highest* object of value.

Nietzsche surely would not deny, however, that the community, like good art, is purposive. In fact, as we argued in the previous section, he suggests that at the very least, one purpose, or *telos*, of the community is the exceptional individual. Yet, we cannot infer from the fact that one role of the community is to produce and support exceptional individuals, that the community has *only* instrumental value. On our reading of Nietzsche, just as art and the exceptional individual are both purposive and intrinsically valuable, the community might possess this pair of attributes as well.

Some of the best evidence that Nietzsche regards the community as valuable for its own sake appears in *The Antichrist's* discussion of the splendor and fall of the Roman Empire.[13] There, Nietzsche describes the Roman Empire as "the most magnificent form of organization ever to be achieved under difficult conditions, compared to which everything before or after has just been patched together, botched, and dilettantish" (*A* 58). It is reasonable to suspect that this "most remarkable artwork in the great style," such that "nothing like it has been built to this day" and that "nobody has even dreamed of building on this scale, from the standpoint of eternity," might have had intrinsic value on Nietzsche's view, and furthermore, a value that superseded that of any single individual therein.

In expressing his admiration for the Ancient Roman Empire, Nietzsche emphasizes various aspects of the *form* or *structure* of the community. He views the Roman Empire as a "tremendous structure" and as an example of "great

[13] We take it that some of the best support for Young's communitarian reading of Nietzsche comes from his discussion of this passage. The Roman Empire certainly did have an exalted upper-class, the "higher individuals" were neither divorced from their community, nor did they view it as a mere instrument for their own promotion; rather, Rome's higher type seemed to place a different sort of value on their community, deeming themselves responsible for its flourishing. Nietzsche describes these individuals as "those valuable, those masculine-noble natures that saw Rome's business as their own business, their own seriousness, their own pride" (*A* 58). Yet, the Empire, which should have stood "more enduring than bronze" would eventually fall to what Nietzsche refers to as "The Chandala Revenge" (*A* 58). On Young's account, Nietzsche means to analogize the conditions that led to the fall of the Roman Empire to a "design flaw" in the Lawbook of Manu (2006: 185; 2010: 513). The Law of Manu was a form of Indian religious legislation, the goal of which was to "eternalize the supreme condition for a thriving life, a great organization of society" (*A* 58). This code recognized and mandated a strict caste-order. The highest classes consisted of priests and warriors, while the lowest, the Chandala, were "untouchables" who were relegated to the worst and most neglected areas of society and forced to live in filth. Some might interpret Nietzsche as unequivocally endorsing the hierarchical class structure of Manu as an exemplary model, but to interpret him in this way is to miss the point of his noting the "Chandala Revenge" which weakened, and eventually broke, the glory of Rome. According to Young, Nietzsche means not to commend Manu's caste system, but rather to admonish against the creation of a persecuted underclass. The gross mistreatment of the lower individuals in any society lays the foundations for "ressentiment" and the eventual decay of the community entire. It was the creation of such a "Chandala" underclass that ultimately led to Rome's decline (Young 2006: 514). While Young's interpretation may not be the standard reading of *A* 58, we largely agree with the view as he presents it. It is also worth noting that Brian Leiter (2002) and Thomas Brobjer (1998) have also argued that Nietzsche takes a negative stance toward the Law of Manu.

architecture," explicitly identifying it as a work of art (*A* 58). Likewise, Nietzsche's condemnation of "L'art pour l'art" notwithstanding, he does seem to express praise for art's formal elements. In *BGE* 254, for example, he refers to artistic "devotion to form" as a "mark of cultural superiority." Recall that Nietzsche's object of criticism is the idea that art is purposeless. The form of an artwork can both ground its intrinsic value and help to facilitate the fulfillment of the artwork's purpose. Formalist theories of art, for example, often hold that "possession of significant form" is a necessary condition for an object to be considered art and that art has "the exhibition of form as its special or peculiar province of value" (Carroll 1999: 110). Also, consider Jose Bermudez and Sebastian Gardner's description of art's *expressive form*. They write, "A work of art's expressive form is the contribution its formal features make to its expressive capacity, understanding expression in a broad sense on which abstract ideas and ethical perspectives can be expressed no less than emotions and feelings" (Bermudez and Gardner 2003: 7–8).[14] Just as the structure or form of art might facilitate its purpose—the expression of the artist's values—the structure or form of the community might facilitate its own purpose, which on our account, is the production of goods, the highest good being the exceptional individual.[15] Nietzsche's identification of the Ancient Roman Empire as a work of art seems particularly difficult for Young's view to accommodate if he wants to maintain that the former, but not the latter, is valuable for its own sake.

If Nietzsche does view the (well-formed) community as valuable in itself, we would like to suggest that it is in virtue of its form, of the nature of its internal hierarchal structure. For Nietzsche, it might be that a community is successful or exemplary when it is structured by a ranked order of disparate components that manage to function harmoniously and productively. A perfectly structured community is, for Nietzsche, a work of art—one that promotes the flourishing of its inhabitants and importantly, produces other valuable objects. Interestingly, Nietzsche draws parallels between the structure of a community and the structure of the individual's soul.

Consider Nietzsche's description of the state in *The Genealogy of Morality* as "a ruling structure that *lives*, in which parts and functions are delimited and related to one another, in which nothing at all finds a place that has not first had placed into it a 'meaning' with respect to the whole" (*GM* II:17). Clark and Dudrick argue that Nietzsche here refers to the "*form* of the state," the "parts and functions" of which are analogous to the hierarchical order of drives that constitute the structure of the soul (2012: 294). Nietzsche indicates that the

[14] In *The Will to Power* 818, Nietzsche suggests that in the case of art, form is content: "One is an artist at the cost of regarding that which all non-artists call 'form' as content, as 'the matter itself.' To be sure, then one belongs in a topsy-turvy world: for henceforth content becomes something merely formal—our life included."

[15] Nietzsche's view might be that in order to count as art, an object must communicate values *by means of its formal properties*.

structure of one's soul both exemplifies his values and determines his status as a lower or higher type of individual. He writes, "The group of feelings that is aroused, expresses itself, and issues commands in a soul most quickly, is decisive for the whole order of rank of its values and ultimately determines its table of goods. The values of a human being betray something of the structure of its soul" (*BGE* 268). Earlier in *BGE*, Nietzsche writes,

> our body is, after all, only a society constructed out of many souls—. *L'effet c'est moi*: what happens here is what happens in every well-constructed and happy community: the ruling class identifies itself with [i.e., takes credit for] the successes of the community. (*BGE* 19) (bracketed material ours)

This passage makes explicit that Nietzsche means to analogize the individual's hierarchal psychic structure to the internal structure of a community.

Young also recognizes such an analogy in Nietzsche's work, stating that just as Plato argued "that state and soul are structurally the same" standing in relation to each other as "macrocosm to microcosm," Nietzsche holds a similar view (2006: 161–2). While there are parallels between the views of Nietzsche and Plato in this regard, it is important to note that there are also significant differences. Plato's *Republic* offers a political ideal, a vision of society wherein philosopher kings rule over a populous arranged in a pyramidal structure. Young suggests that this closely resembles Nietzsche's own view (2006: 132). We would deny this. While Nietzsche certainly endorses a societal hierarchy, he does so only in the sense that his ideal society would recognize some individuals as better or "higher" than others. This recognition in no way implies regarding exceptional individuals as political sovereigns. Yet they are exemplars of superior modes of being, and the recognition that there are such superior modes of being is what induces the craving for higher states of soul (Clark 1999: 130, 138; paper 9 in this volume)). This may be important both for potential exceptional individuals and for exemplars of lower types who will never achieve the "exceptional" status, but who can nonetheless strive to live better lives. We take the latter to be the point of the particularly elitist-sounding section of "Schopenhauer as Educator" (*UM* III:6). To be sure, Nietzsche's exceptional individual is a leader and a legislator of *values* (*BGE* 211), but it is far less clear that he is, or ought to be, a legislator of political ordinances or codes of conduct. On our view, Nietzsche does not argue for any particular type of political system.[16] We agree with Young, however, that Nietzsche wants "both in the microcosm of the soul and the macrocosm of human society at large . . . 'unity in multiplicity,'" which Nietzsche identifies with human greatness (2006: 214).

[16] Leiter (2002) states that Nietzsche "has no political philosophy in the conventional sense of theory of the state and its legitimacy" (296). This, however, is a widely contested claim. For more on the debate regarding Nietzsche's political orientation, see Sluga (2014) and Clark (1999; paper 9 in this volume).

On one promising interpretation, Nietzsche identifies the value of an individual with the structure of his soul. The exceptional individual is valuable for his own sake, and indeed has his status as "exceptional," in virtue of the harmonious and productive functioning of the elements of his internal hierarchical structure. If this is the case, then it is reasonable to suspect that for Nietzsche, the well-formed community might also be intrinsically valuable for the very same reason, namely its superior internal hierarchical structure, which is such that its parts function harmoniously and productively for some end.

For Nietzsche, then, (one source of) the value of the community as a whole and that of the individual might depend on the nature of their respective internal hierarchical structures, and notably this is not unrelated to their respective instrumental value for one another. For it is the internal organization of the community that enables it to support and produce its highest good—the exceptional individual; likewise, it is the well-structured soul of the exceptional individual that enables him to make such substantial contributions to his community.[17] Young claims that the flourishing of the community as a whole is Nietzsche's highest object of value, but he does not explain *why* it is that Nietzsche would place such value on the flourishing of the community as a whole. Why would he regard the community as more important than the individuals, especially the higher individuals, who inhabit it? We have denied that he does. But we have suggested an account that can accommodate the view that the community has a kind of intrinsic value, in addition to its instrumental value for producing exceptional individuals, and can explain why Nietzsche regards the community as intrinsically valuable in terms of what it shares with exceptional individuals.

[17] Note that this view of what grounds the intrinsic value of the exceptional individual and the community needn't commit one to a particular view of how to *quantify* or *compare* such value across entities; e.g., to a method of weighing the value of the exceptional individual versus that of the community. Thanks to John Richardson for raising this possibility in discussion.