Evaluating MacIntyre's "Nietzsche or Aristotle" Argument

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Abstract: The primary focus of this article is to explain how MacIntyre, as part of his project of the critique of modern morality, treats Nietzsche and his genealogical explorations of morality, and how adequate his interpretation is. This article includes an introductory elucidation of his larger project of what he himself rightly calls as disquieting and quieting suggestions (MacIntyre 2011: ch.II). This would enable us to situate our specific problem in a larger and meaningful context and make it more intelligible. It will also explain how MacIntyre places Nietzsche within his own critical endeavor to make a general claim on the enlightenment project of moral philosophy, so that he can make a radical disjunction between the Nietzschean and Aristotelian morality. It follows how MacIntyre interprets certain Nietzschean terms like "will to power" and "Ubermensch" to fit his essential articulation of Nietzsche's moral theory as a culmination of enlightenment project of individualistic morality and 'Nietzschean emotivism'. Our aim is to show that MacIntyre's emotivistic interpretation of Nietzsche is not right; however, despite the recent attempts to place Nietzsche in the virtue ethics camp alongside with Aristotle, MacIntyre has been right to present Nietzsche and Aristotle as polar opposites.

Keywords: Aristotle, Nietzsche, MacIntyre, Virtue Ethics, Emotivism.

Introduction

The primary focus of this article is to explain how MacIntyre, as part of his project of the critique of modern morality, treats Nietzsche and his genealogical explorations of morality, and how adequate his interpretation is. This article includes an introductory elucidation of his larger project of what he himself rightly calls as disquieting and quieting suggestions (MacIntyre 2011: ch.II). This would enable us to situate our specific problem in a larger and meaningful context and make it more intelligible. It will also explain how MacIntyre places Nietzsche within his own critical endeavor to make a general claim on the enlightenment project of moral philosophy, so that he can make a radical disjunction between the Nietzschean and Aristotelian morality. It follows how MacIntyre interprets certain Nietzschean terms like "will to power" and "Ubermensch" to fit his essential articulation of Nietzsche's moral theory as a culmination of enlightenment project of individualistic morality and 'Nietzschean emotivism'. Our aim is to show that MacIntyre's emotivistic interpretation of Nietzsche is not right; however, despite the re-cent attempts to place Nietzsche in the virtue ethics camp alongside with Aristotle, MacIntyre has been right to present Nietzsche and Aristotle as polar opposites.

1. MacIntyre's Critique of Modernity

MacIntyre's critical project is centered on the state of grave disorder of moral philosophy in the modernity. The characteristic feature of modern moral arguments lies in its "interminable character". Moral debate of modern times will lead to nowhere and an agreed upon solution would be just a fantasy. Different positions in a debate each will proceed to conclusions incommensurable and irreconcilable with each other. Every argument would go back to totally different premises which are the reasons behind the irreconcilability of the solutions (MacIntyre 2011: 5).

A reason for the interminability of moral debates is the "conceptual incommensurability of rival arguments in each of these debates" (MacIntyre 2011: 5). This is because the rival arguments stem from totally different normative standards which are at odds with each other. In the just war debate, for instance, the concepts of "justice and innocence" face "success and survival" and thus each of the arguments is conceptually incommensurable with its counter arguments. This holds true in most of the contemporary moral debates. Whenever we affiliate ourselves with a single position in those debates, it is certain that we cannot convince our rival party who holds a distinct but logically justified position in the debate, because we do not have a common criterion to weigh one position against other. The lack of "an unassailable criteria" prompts one to proceed with his own judgement of what is feasible and what is not in a particular situation, giving rise to the interminability of arguments from every position (ibid).

The problem whether the interminability of moral utterances of today's ethical discourses is a contingent cultural fact, or it is inherent in moral discourse itself, is of a great philosophical significance. In order to do so, as MacIntyre notes, we have to address the theory of emotivism "which is the doctrine that all evaluative judgement and more specifically all moral judgements are nothing but expressions of preference, expressions of attitude and feeling" (MacIntyre 2011: 12). C. L Stevenson is one of the main proponents of the theory of emotivism. For him, the sentence 'This is good' means roughly the same as 'I approve of this; do as well' trying to capture by this equivalence both the function of the moral judgment as expressive of the speaker's attitudes and the function of

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the moral judgment as designed to influence the hearer's attitudes'(MacIntyre 2011: 13). Taking a different view point, MacIntyre (ibid) holds that "the expressions of feeling or attitude is characteristically a function not of the meaning of the sentence, but of their use on particular occasions". Emotivism, thus, is the theory of the use of moral precepts. This theory can be seen as a result of the failure of finding a rational and objective basis for moral utterances. Once the philosophers in the Enlightenment movement could not provide a rational justification for morality, there was no way other than resorting to an emotivistic reading of morality. Moral theory of emotivism has been a widely influential one throughout the modern history. Even within the frame of emotivism, the language used for the expression was completely deceptive and misleading. Instead of saying; 'Do this, because I approve of this' the expression 'You ought to do this, because this is good' which is seemingly objective is put forward. Thus, MacIntyre contends that our modern culture presupposes an emotivistic understanding:

Emotivism has become embodied in our culture. But of course in saying this I am not merely contending that morality is not what it once was, but also and more importantly what once was morality has to some large degree disappeared- and that this marks a degeneration, a grave cultural loss (MacIntyre 2011: 25).

Likewise, emotivism has become embedded in our cultural situations in a way that our moral utterances themselves are the product of an emotivistic understanding of ethical judgements. Not only the self-conscious theorization but also the everyday practices have been largely shaped by the culture of emotivism.

MacIntyre seeks to explain how different ethical projects in modernity have a deep root in emotivism and consequently how all of those projects have failed in a significant way. This includes an analysis of a seemingly radically different ethical justifications ranging from Immanuel Kant to Locke, Nietzsche and Sartre and different projects of analytic philosophers. This also includes how emotivism is expressed in our everyday making of a modern self and its resultant unintelligibility of the ethical realm (MacIntyre 2011: 35).

2. MacIntyre's Positive Project: Creating Virtue Ethics as a New Paradigm

MacIntyre's positive project centers on the notion of the virtues, which was dominant in classical societies from the Homeric age to the medieval period. Though Aristotle is a central figure in this analysis, for him, the Aristotelian tradition is not confined to the works and deliberations of Aristotle, but it includes a whole set of social facts before him in Athens and Homeric Greek, and after him the medieval Christian formulations.

MacIntyre envisages Aristotle as part of a tradition, even though a typical Aristotle would resist the attempt to view philosophy as part of a tradition. For Aristotle, human being has an essential nature by which he is defined. Human being is essentially characterized by an end or by what he calls as "human telos" (ibid: 52). So a good human life is that which is lived in a way that is apt to realize that "telos". Human telos or "Eudaimonia" is translated as blessedness, happiness, and prosperity (ibid: 148):

What constitutes the good for man is a complete human life lived at its best, and the exercise of the virtues is a necessary and central part of such a life, not a mere preparatory exercise to secure such a life (MacIntyre 2011: 149).

Aristotle explains the position of every virtue as being in the middle of two extremities, for instance "courage lies between rashness and timidity, justice between doing injustice and suffering injustice and liberality between prodigality and meanness" (MacIntyre 2011: 153). MacIntyre defines the virtues from three perspectives as follows:

A virtue is a quality that enables an individual to discharge his or her social role (Homer); a virtue is a quality that enables an individual to move towards the achievement of specifically human telos, whether natural or super natural (Aristotle, the New Testament and Aquinas), and a virtue is a quality which has a utility in achieving earthly and heavenly success (Franklin) (MacIntyre 2011: 250).

3. MacIntyre's Nietzsche: How MacIntyre Understood Nietzsche

After explaining MacIntyre's dual project of criticizing modern morality and proposing a new ethical alternative, it is time to enter into the crux of our topic; how MacIntyre understood or appropriated Nietzsche in order to reject him as a radical counterpart of Aristotelian virtue ethics. MacIntyre, after providing an extensive review of the enlightenment project of justifying morality, ends up in a radical choice between Aristotle and Nietzsche. The very title "Nietzsche or Aristotle" suggests this climax, and this is evident in the passage itself:

Either one must follow through the aspirations and collapse of the different versions of enlightenment project until there remains only Nietzschean diagnosis or Nietzschean problematic or one must hold that the enlightenment project was not only mistaken but should never have been commenced in the first place. There is no third alternative … (MacIntyre 2011: 111).

This is how MacIntyre characterizes Nietzsche in his "either, or" argument. Either Nietzsche's diagnosis of enlightenment project is correct, and his supposedly emotivistic understanding is the true answer for the moral dilemma, or the enlightenment's denial of the Aristotelian ethical tradition is false and thus Aristotle's or Aristotelian ethical formulation was right. Our task in this connection is to enquire how MacIntyre was led to this conclusion, and ascertain whether he was right in his understanding. MacIntyre (2011: 113) sees Nietzsche essentially as a moral philosopher of emotivism. But unlike other emotivists, MacIntyre ascribes some privilege to him over his analytic counterparts.

The power of Nietzsche's position depends upon the truth of one central thesis; that all rational vindications of morality manifestly fail and therefore belief in the tenets of morality need to be explained in terms of a set of ra-

tionalizations that conceals the fundamentally non-rational phenomens of the will:

My own argument obliges me to agree with Nietzsche that the philosophers of enlightenment never succeeded in providing grounds for doubting his central thesis; his epigrams are deadlier than his extended arguments (MacIntyre 2011: 132).

Here MacIntyre acknowledges the fact that Nietzsche is, unlike any other philosophers, exceptional in understanding the moral dilemma of modernity. But some of his characterizations of Nietzsche are problematic and philosophically inaccurate. This includes his characterization of Nietzsche as a philosopher of emotivism and his lack of understanding of Nietzsche's real problem with morality.

4. Criticizing MacIntyre's Interpretation of Nietzsche

There are many criticisms of MacIntyre's account of Nietzsche. In this section, we will explain some of these criticisms; however, we finally argue that the virtue ethics interpretation of Nietzsche does not damage MacIntyre's contrast between Nietzsche and Aristotle.

Buket Korkut in his *MacIntyre's Nietzsche or Nietzsche's MacIntyre* identifies some of the problems with MacIntyre's portrayal of Nietzsche. He identifies three claims that have been made by MacIntyre's Nietzsche in the above passage; firstly, "The enlightenment philosophers failed to give a rational justification of morality" (Korkut 2012: 214); secondly, that "this is mainly because what these philosophers purported to be appeals to objectivity were in fact the expressions of subjective will"(Korkut 2012: 214); and thirdly that "there cannot be any rational justifications of morality because moral judgements are expressions of subjective will" (Korkut 2012: 199).

Korkut argues that MacIntyre's account of Nietzsche can be challenged if we can show that his interpretation of Nietzsche's problem with enlightenment project of morality is implausible (Korkut 2012: 200). Korkut argues that Nietzsche's moral project was very different from MacIntyre's characterization. We can look into whether this allegation is right in the light of Nietzsche's own texts. Nietzsche says in *Beyond Good and Evil*:

Morality in Europe today is herd animal morality—in other words, as we understand it merely one type of human morality beside which, before which and after which, many other types above all, higher moralities are, or ought to be, possible. But this morality resists such a possibility, such an 'ought', with all its power; it says stubbornly and inexorably, I am morality itself and nothing besides is morality (Nietzsche 2000: 305).

Based on the above-mentioned quotation, Korkut argues that Nietzsche's problem with contemporary morality was not its subjectivist nature but rather its absoluteness and appearance as an absolute frame of reference for practical life. Thus, he suggests that "Nietzsche's complaint about the Enlightenment philosophers is primarily based on a different reasoning and his problem with morality is actually different from MacIntyre's characterization of it"

(Korkut 2012: 203). He explains that philosophers before Nietzsche found themselves concentrating on predominantly epistemological problems. Even Kant, as is evident in his critique of pure and practical reason, and Hume were primarily stumbled upon what can be called 'moral knowledge'. But according to Korkut,

For Nietzsche, the problem of morality is not an epistemological problem, as (mis)understood by the Enlightenment philosophers such as Kant; the question is not how moral judgements are justified but the value of the very values that underlies such moral judgements. As opposed to the problem of knowledge, Nietzsche introduces the problem of values as the crucial task of philosophers (Korkut 2012: 203).

Thus, the primary Nietzschean criticism of the enlightenment project is that it does not question the values in the first place, and just attempts to find a rational foundation for them. Indeed, Nietzsche does not investigate the issue of truth from an epistemological perspective; rather, he questions the value of truth and asks "why not untruth" in the opening page of Beyond Good and Evil: "Granted that we want the truth: WHY NOT RATHER untruth? And uncertainty? Even ignorance? (Nietzsche 2000: 6).

Korkut also sets out a criticism against MacIntyre's misinterpretation of Nietzschean perspectivism. For him, Nietzsche's notion of perspectivism cannot be identified with a version of moral emotivism, because it does not arise from individual subjectivism. He explains further that Nietzsche does not claim that moral judgements are individual preferences, which is the basic tenet of emotivism. Rather, it has its origin in Nietzsche's recognition of the socio-historical situated-ness of morality, in the sense that different moral systems might exist for different communities at different times in history. Accordingly, in contemporary terms, Nietzsche is neither a subjectivist nor an objectivist, but an inter-subjectivist regarding morality' (ibid: 205).

Daniel W. Conway is another scholar who, in his book *After MacIntyre; Excerpts from a Philosophical Bestiary*, levelled a strong criticism against MacIntyre's understanding of Nietzsche:

the crucial disjunction that MacIntyre proposes between Nietzsche and Aristotle is neither so exclusive, nor historically compelling as he suggests. Many of the Aristotelian currents that MacIntyre chastises Nietzsche for ignoring actually inform Nietzsche's moral philosophy (Conway 1986: 206).

Conway places Nietzsche within the Aristotelian moral tradition, which MacIntyre explicitly denies. Conway (ibid) argues that Nietzsche can be seen as a "neo-Aristotelian teacher of virtues" whose main purpose is to promote an ideal of human flourishing. Conway's focus in this connection is on Nietzsche's concept of 'Ubermensch', which was for MacIntyre "at once absurd and dangerous fantasy" (MacIntyre 2011: 113). Moral individualism and radical voluntarism are the two elements that make up what may be called "MacIntyrean Nietzsche", and consequently lead him to make conclusions about the Nietzschean moral ideal "Ubermensch" (Conway, ibid: 210). Ubermensch, MacIntyre (2011: 257) states, "finds his good nowhere in the social world to

date, but only in that in himself which dictates his own new law and his own new table of virtues." According to MacIntyre, the concept of "Ubermensch" is an incoherent moral ideal, which stands aloof from all existing socio-cultural systems (ibid).

The primary objection raised by Conway is that Mac-Intyre's account is clearly in conflict with many explicit writings of Nietzsche, and "this discordance is largely attributable to MacIntyre's curious disregard for the context and rhetoric of Nietzsche's writings" (Conway 1986: 212). Nietzsche's repudiation of the concept of causal efficacy of the will, the view that the will is not a causal faculty, explained in many of his works including *Twilight of Idols*, is one important issue that MacIntyre has neglected. Because once it is repudiated, the radical voluntarism that he attaches to Nietzsche would be simply undermined. The same is the case with moral individualism.

Nietzsche explicitly protests against individualism by claiming that "the single one, 'the individual' as hitherto understood, by the people and philosophers alike, is an error after all" (Nietzsche 1990: 33). Nietzsche's notion of the historicity of human being is also a defiant rejection of moral individualism and the characterization of superman as someone who transcends socio-historical specificities. These facts testify that MacIntyre's rendition of Nietzsche's Ubermensch is loaded with serious misunderstanding of Nietzsche's holistic ideas and is not a sufficient reason to render a radical disjunction between Nietzsche and Aristotle possible. There are many reasons, for Conway, to suggest that Nietzsche and Aristotle are not competent enough to be in such a disjunctive relation. There is little textual evidence that Nietzsche directly confronts Aristotle except in some aesthetic issues. Another reason for this is the fact that MacIntyre's own admission that Nietzsche and Aristotle were against liberalism, suggests that both cannot be in a polar opposition (Conway, ibid: 215).

Conway (ibid) argues that, besides, there are enough evidence that Nietzsche was also promoting some kind of virtue ethics like Aristotle's. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* is one among the texts in which Zarathustra appears as a promoter of virtues. The main philosophical concern of Nietzsche was the promotion of virtue (Conway: ibid).

Alongside with Conway, Nietzsche specialists like Christian Daigle, Thomas Brobjer and Christine Swanton offer a virtue ethics interpretation of Nietzsche's morality. We will explain their views, and try to defend a viable and more justifiable reading of Nietzsche's virtue ethics, which is also called a "virtue ethics of becoming"; but we do not agree with these authors that his virtue ethics is identical with Aristotle's.

5. Virtue Ethics and Character Development

Because of the explicit connection between virtue ethics and Aristotle, any reading of Nietzsche as a virtue ethicist would seem to presuppose that there is an underlying connection between Nietzsche and Aristotle. In fact, in a pioneering work, *Nietzsche; Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*, Walter Kaufmann (1974: 382) considers Aris-

totle's ethical ideas to have exerted an immense influence on Nietzsche's ethical deliberations. This assumption is led by the relation between the concept of "the greatness of the soul" in Aristotle and the concept of "Overman" in Nietzsche. But, even the scholars who wanted to read Nietzsche as a virtue ethicist now reject Kaufmann's assumption based on the superficiality of the argument and Nietzsche's explicit statement regarding Aristotelian ethics as an example of "morality as timidity" in *Beyond Good and Evil*.

In his paper *Nietzsche: Virtue Ethics… Virtue Politics*, Christine Daigle (2006) sets out to understand Nietzsche as part of the larger tradition of virtue ethics, trying to resolve the assumed tension between the ethics of Nietzsche and Aristotle. Daigle (2006) is interested in reading Nietzsche's ethics in connection with the twentieth century revival of virtue ethics. For him virtue ethics focuses on the character of a person rather than the conformity to an objective rule or the end or the consequences of an action. In virtue ethics, the agent's inner state becomes the point of attention rather than the outward appearance of the agent.

For Daigle (2006: 2), virtue ethics "refocus attention on the moral agent and on a determination of virtues". He is more interested in the project that focuses on moral agent because "its focus on agent and his or her character allows for the development of an ethics that has the flourishing of the individual as its strict preoccupation" (Daigle 2006: 2). Drawing on Michael Slote (1998) who identifies Nietzsche as a virtue ethicist "who thinks we should promote the good, but who has a distinctive and controversial view of what that good is", Daigle (2006: 3) forcefully argues that Nietzsche promotes a character based virtue ethics. This is despite the fact that various scholars including Brian Leiter would reject any attempt to view Nietzsche as constructing any brand of morality.

Daigle based on various texts of Nietzsche seeks to explain the central importance of character formation and flourishing. This is in favor of the idea that apart from destructing the existing moral systems, Nietzsche is looking for self-affirming and life-enhancing virtues:

In the main all those moral systems are distasteful to me which say: 'Do not do this! Renounce! Overcome thyself!' On the other hand I am favorable to those moral systems which stimulate me to do something and to do it again from morning till evening, to dream of it at night and think of nothing else but to do it well, as well as is possible for me alone. I do not like any of the negative virtues whose very essence is negation and self-renunciation (Nietzsche 2010: 304).

This passage illustrates well Nietzsche's typical stand in relation to morality. Nietzsche evidently promotes moralities that induce him to do something rather than make him abstinent from the act. When he says that he does not like negative virtues it means that he favors life enhancing and self-affirming virtues. The passages that explain both his destructive and constructive perception of morality can be found in many parts of his works:

The most general formula at the basis of every religion and morality is: 'Do this and this-and you will be happy! Otherwise…' Every morality, every religion is this imperative —I call it the

great original sin of reason, immortal unreason (Nietzsche 1990: 2).

In *Ecce Homo*, he specifically targets Christian model of morality:

At bottom my expression immoralist involves two denials. I deny first a type of man who has hitherto counted as the highest, the good, the benevolent, beneficent; I deny secondly a kind of morality which has come to be accepted and to dominate as morality in itself-decadence morality, in more palpable terms Christian morality (Nietzsche 2010: 4).

The same idea is repeated elsewhere:

We deny, and must deny, because something in us wants to live and affirm itself, something which we perhaps do not as yet know, do not as yet see! (Nietzsche 2010: 307).

The Nietzschean rejection of traditional morality is based on the fact that traditional morality tends to neglect individual potentialities and tries to forcefully conform to the historically created models of existence in which the free flourishing of life is brutally thwarted and hindered. So, the apparent nihilism is only a first step toward constructing a life affirming mode of authentic existence. For Daigle, Nietzsche's Ubermensch is the one who has perfectly realized his affirmative ethical life.

The 'Ubermensch' in Thus Spake Zarathustra, is the figure who is successful in becoming his own master. He is an overman, more than a man, a human being that is human and more. Why more? The Ubermensch is the individual who has overcome the fragmentation inherent in tradition. It is the person who has reunited himself, who has decided to live fully as he is (Daigle 2006: 10).

Nietzsche's Overman embodies the spirit of his ethical teachings. The greatest achievement of Overman is his overcoming of traditional understanding of not only the ethical behavior but also the human existence itself. He has the capacity to affirm the concept of eternal recurrence by which each moments of his flourishing life would be lived authentically without negating an iota of experience.

6. Nietzsche: Egoist? or Virtue Ethicist?

How the popular characterization of Nietzsche as an egoist could possibly be reconciled with our reading of him as a virtue ethicist? How various statements maintaining an existential outlook can be seen from a view of virtue ethical orientation? These are some of the problems that have to be dealt with in studying Nietzsche as a virtue ethicist.

Swanton agrees that Nietzsche was an egoist; but in his view, there are different accounts of moral egoism. In his view, we can describe Nietzsche as a virtuous egoist, a form of egoism that is virtuous and therefore not egoism at all on some conceptions of egoism. Virtuous egoism is opposed to both non-virtuous altruism and non-virtuous egoism but not to all forms of altruism (Swanton 2015: 111). Nietzsche's kind of egoism is different from various types of egoism that completely reject any sense of altruism. Ethics for Nietzsche is both egoistic and virtuous, both being internally connected together.

Nietzsche's virtuous egoism, which is inextricably related to the affirmation of life, can be articulated as the view that

"the fundamental shape of an individual's life ought to be one where her own life is affirmed by him or her" (Swanton 2015: 114).

This proposition needs to be understood in contrast to various other propositions about egoism. It should be differentiated from the statement "everyone should affirm all lives" (ibid: 115), because Nietzsche is not arguing for a super affirmation in which every life, whether it is authentically creative or not, is celebrated and affirmed. He has a definite sense of how one's life should be. He also holds that "one should be disgusted at other's mediocre non-affirming lives" (ibid: 115). He severely condemns the tendency to express disgust over other forms of life. A feeling of disgust itself is a sign of decadence. This view is also in contrast to the doctrine with an elitist connotation: "Everyone should affirm only the best or superior lives" (ibid: 116). Nietzsche cannot agree with this doctrine, because he is primarily concerned with the ethics of one's own self, but without precluding an attitude of admiration towards appreciable ways of life. But the above mentioned doctrine, rejected by Nietzsche neglects the cultivation of self and focuses on others. It should also be distinguished from something like "Each person should put her own life first in her practical reasoning and actions" (Swanton 2015: 116), because this is an instance of pure non-virtuous egoism, which Nietzsche does not hold on.

The Nietzschean virtuous egoism is also different from other strands of egoism such as evaluative and motivational egoism. Evaluative egoism holds that "Each person should evaluate her life as having superior value or worth than anyone else's" (ibid: 116). According to motivational egoism, "only the higher types [of human beings] should affirm their own lives" (ibid: 117), "Lesser human beings should promote the life affirmation of the higher types rather than affirm their own lives" (ibid), and "Everyone should affirm his own life by directly involving himself in the highest end like the redemption of his society and culture" (ibid). These differentiations make the original proposition of virtuous egoism strictly meaningful.

According to Swanton (ibid: 118), Nietzsche's virtuous egoism has a strong connection with his idea of will to power. There are questions as to how virtues and egoism go hand in hand and how Nietzschean egoistic actions are valuable. In his mature works, Nietzsche dismissed Hedonism, the idea that pleasure is intrinsically good. In his view, power and the will to power are not intrinsically good either; "rather what is good or valuable is will to power exercised well or excellently" (ibid: 120). Some forms of will to power are distorted. The criterion for this is that the distorted forms of will to power are self-denying instead of self-affirming. As will be argued below, pity is a vice in which a distorted will to power manifests itself. Swanton (ibid: 133) rejects Hunt's (1991)

view that for Nietzsche the attainment of power is the only standard by which we can evaluate the worth of people. Swanton argues that power is not the goal of the will to power, and attaining power may express a distorted, weak or unhealthy form. A passage from Daybreak explains this further:

Unegoistic!- this one is hollow and wants to be full, that one is overfull and wants to be emptied – both go in search of an individual who will serve their purpose. And this process, understood in its highest sense, is in both cases called by the same word: love – what? Is love supposed to be something unegoistic? (Nietzsche 1997: 91-92).

For Nietzsche love is egoistic since it expresses the need to be filled, and there are strong and weak expressions of this need. These notions provide an important remark about the character behind these actions, which has a central importance in virtue ethics. This is why some of egoistic actions are perfectly compatible and even better than some of the altruistic acts. Taking another example of acting for the sake of someone else, if the intention is "expressive of being overfull and need to bestow then it is egoistic in a valuable sense" (Swanton 2015: 124). Nevertheless, if the intention is "externalizing self-contempt by loving for and through others", it is "altruistic in a non-virtuous way" and, thus, weak (ibid). A loving behavior express valuable or invaluable states in the individual depending on the character, deeper drives or motives behind it. If the drive is the expression of being "overfull" and a need to bestow, the loving is egoistic in a valuable sense. But if the motive is self-denial, self-sacrificing and externalizing self-contempt through others, it would be a non-virtuous altruism, as the person does not affirm or enhance his own life (ibid).

Pity is an instance of an altruistic act resulted from a distorted will to power, and is also an "externalized form of self-hate—an escape from a sense of vulnerability"; it is a disguised, subtle form of revenge—a repressed anger at one's own susceptibility to the fate that has befallen the one pitied" (ibid). This is how the supposed altruistic action becomes for Nietzsche an expression of suppressed hostility. In essence, Nietzsche's egoism is in some respects better than the apparent ethical boast of altruistic morality. We should note that the simplistic categorization of egoistic and altruistic acts is not applicable to Nietzsche's own conception of what we call virtuous egoism. The discussion on the problem of egoism and altruism in Nietzsche's ethical project can be summed up thus: Nietzsche's rejection of altruism and acceptance of egoism is based solely on some specific notions of both expressions, that is, a popular non-virtuous notion of altruism is rejected and a virtuous notion of egoism is accepted.

7. The Nietzschean and Aristotelian Virtue Ethics

Even if we accept the virtue ethics interpretation of Nietzsche presented above, in our view, it is not possible to consider it as identical with the Aristotelian virtue ethics. In fairness to MacIntyre, there seems to be remarkable distinctions between the Aristotelian and Nietzschean virtue ethics. In our view, the Nietzschean and Aristotelian

virtue differ in at least two respects. The first is the communal nature of the Aristotelian virtue ethics *versus* the individualistic nature of the Nietzschean one; and the second is the teleological and good-based nature of the Aristotelian virtue ethics.

Regarding the first point, for Aristotle, the virtues are acquired through taming of desires. The process of taming desires occurs in an apprentice/master relationship. Intellectual virtues like wisdom, intelligence and prudence are acquired through teaching; moral virtues or the virtues of character like courage and justice are acquired by practice and habituation (MacIntyre 2011: 154). Aristotle (1966, Sec. II.1) explains the relation between the virtues and habits as follows.

Virtue, then, being of two kinds, intellectual and moral, intellectual virtue in the main owes both its birth and its growth to teaching (for which reason it requires experience and time), while moral virtue comes about as a result of habit, whence also its name (ethike) is one that is formed by a slight variation from the word ethos (habit). … Neither by nature, then, nor contrary to nature do the virtues arise in us; rather we are adapted by nature to receive them, and are made perfect by habit.

In Aristotle's view, MacIntyre (2006, pp.3-4) maintains, "practical habituation in the exercise of the virtues has to precede education in moral theory." Only those who have acquired good habits are able "to theorize well about issues of practice." Only the practically intelligent human being, in Aristotle's view, can judge the mean in any particular situation. Such a person does not have any external criterion to guide him, but he himself is "the standard of right judgment, passion, and action." Even true theoretical moral judgments are only accessible to the good human being.

These judgments, unlike theories in the physical sciences, require more than intellectual virtues, and require participation in particular kinds of moral and political practices (MacIntyre 2006: 4).

Nietzsche, by contrast, does not accept this role for moral exemplars. As Kristjansson (2007: 102) puts the point:

Nietzsche emphatically explains how the true role of a moral exemplar is to waken yourself to your 'higher self'—the higher ideals to which you can aspire, the possibilities that lie dormant within yourself—and that you cannot take someone as your exemplar simply by undertaking to imitate him. Such an undertaking would, in Nietzsche's view, amount to an ethically impotent form of admiration: a strategy for evading a morally motivated, inwardly felt demand for self-transformation.

For Nietzsche, the role of role-modeling and moral exemplars is far more restricted than its role in Aristotle's view. The former has individualistic aspects. The role model cannot set goals for us to achieve. As Nietzsche holds, "No one can construct for you the bridge upon which precisely you must cross the stream of life, no one but you yourself alone" (ibid: 102). This is different from the communal view of the Aristotelian virtue ethics.

Regarding the second point, for Nietzsche, the virtue ethics of becoming, a term coined by Swanton (2015) to describe the Nietzschean virtue ethics, reject a definite telos for human beings. 'Becoming one self' is a continu-

ous process in which one constantly overcome his own present state of affairs without presupposing a definite end stage. It is also not about reaching a goal that is already set, which is evident in a statement by Nietzsche, "no such [as free will] substratum exists; there is no 'being' behind doing, acting, becoming… the doing itself is everything" (Nietzsche 2010: 23). In his view, "Becoming what you are presupposes that you have not the slightest inkling what you are".

The human being who doesn't wish to belong to the mass needs only to cease being comfortable with himself; let him follow his conscience, which call to him: "Be yourself! All you are now doing, thinking, desiring is not you yourself (Nietzsche 1997: 197).

The virtue ethics of becoming does not set a definite goal for us to achieve, and in fact rejects such a teleological attitude. It focuses on creating our values, not following the mess and human creativity without specifying any measure for distinction between the good and the bad. It clearly has individualistic values in line with the Enlightenment morality. This clearly contrasts with the Aristotelian virtues ethics, which is based on a substantive notion of the good.

Therefore, MacIntyre has been right to polarize Aristotle with Nietzsche, because the former was living and thinking in a context in which it was meaningful to speak about the good life and there was shared views about it; whereas, the latter did not have access to such an agreement on the good life; and thus, was just able to offer us some vague and empty notions such as life-enhancing, self-affirming and becoming, without articulating their meanings and offering us any criteria.

As shown above, intentions play a significant role in the Nietzschean virtue ethics. The self-enhancing and life-affirming intentions underlie the virtues. However, a question might arise for Nietzsche along the line that why life-affirmation counts a virtue, what its true meaning is, and what substantial impacts it will have on human relationships. Without having a shared account of the good life, Nietzsche cannot appeal to this criterion to distinguish between the distorted and correct forms of will to power. In other words, self-affirming is an empty notion. It by itself does not tell us what it really means. Nietzsche does not offer us criteria for affirmation. We do not know what kinds of life deserve to be affirmed and what kinds should be denied any worth.

By contrast, the Aristotelian virtue ethics introduces intellectual and moral virtues and ways to obtain these virtues such as the community and moral exemplars (Aristotle ibid: Sec. II.1). The Aristotelian virtue ethics is in principle communal. The individual by himself cannot know what the right thing is to do and affirm; rather, he learns from the community and moral exemplars what the virtues are. Therefore, any attempt to identify the Aristotelian and Nietzschean virtue ethics with each other because both place emphasis on the human character fails, as it does not take into account their differences outlined above.

Conclusion

We showed that MacIntyre has understood Nietzsche rightly in characterizing him as a rival of Aristotelian account of virtue ethics and conceptualizing him as a desperate culmination of modern projects of justifying morality. However, we argued that Nietzsche is far more than a moral emotivist, as is evident throughout his mature writings on ethics. As argued by the latest virtue ethical theorists, Nietzsche fits well into the virtue ethics fold. His focus on the importance of character and intentions is a great inspiration in this project. Virtue ethicists like Buket Korkut and Thomas Brobjer helped us understand how Nietzsche's writings express an inherent affirmative attitude towards a virtue ethical reading.

It was in Swanton's work that we saw a mature depiction of Nietzsche as a virtue ethicist. In her view, virtue ethics is seen as a family or genus of the ethics of which Nietzsche's or Aristotle's ethical projects are species. Swanton has argued that Nietzsche has moved away from Hedonism, and has in mind proper ways for exercising the will to power based on self-affirming and life-enhancing motives. Power is not the ultimate aim of human conduct. In the end, we argued that it is not possible to take the two figures' virtue ethics identical with each other, as the Aristotelian virtue ethics has communal and teleological aspects, while the Nietzschean virtue ethics is individualistic. Therefore, MacIntyre has been right to place us in a dilemma between Aristotle and Nietzsche, and the existence of some elements of virtue ethics in Nietzsche's moral theory does not save him from this rivalry.

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