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# Nietzsche's Constructive Philosophy: Self-understanding and the Sovereign Individual

Walter Duhaime

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NIETZSCHE'S CONSTRUCTIVE PHILOSOPHY: SELF-UNDERSTANDING AND THE  
SOVEREIGN INDIVIDUAL

by

WALTER DUHAIME

Under the Direction of Jessica N. Berry, PhD

ABSTRACT

There is an apparent disagreement between recent commentators who find in Nietzsche both a constructive philosophy and a compatibilist account of freedom, and Brian Leiter's reading that rejects both. The reason for this disagreement, I argue, is that Leiter's "illiberal" view is limited in scope to Nietzsche's critical philosophy, while Nietzsche also has a constructive philosophy aimed at select readers. I read Nietzsche's critical philosophy as targeting the metaphysical entities that underpin asceticism and herd values, not the mental states and processes with which these entities are associated. The "no such entity" reading preserves the resources needed to read Nietzsche as offering a replacement for the ascetic ideal—and an alternative source for life's meaning. Although few of his readers will have been born with the

drives needed to throw off herd values and enjoy compatibilist freedom, these readers are the intended audience for Nietzsche's constructive philosophy.

INDEX WORDS: Nietzsche, Compatibilism, Self-Understanding, Drives, Feelings, Sovereign

Individual

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SOVEREIGN INDIVIDUAL

by

WALTER DUHAIME

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

in the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

2015

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2015

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## **DEDICATION**

For Irene, with whom I shared this journey and celebrate its conclusion.

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Introduction

In GM II 2 Nietzsche presents a brief overview of the moral history of humanity.<sup>1</sup> He describes the long period of the “morality of custom” as the “long history of the origins of *responsibility*.” Only through the “morality of custom” was man made “necessary, uniform, like among like, regular, and accordingly predictable”—“truly calculable” (GM II 2). Nietzsche then states, with dramatic effect, that the “ripest” and “late fruit” of the tree of nature, produced at the end of this very long process, is none other than

the *sovereign individual*, the individual resembling only himself, free again from the morality of custom, autonomous and supramoral [...], in short, the human being with his own independent long will, the human being who is *permitted to promise*—and in him a proud consciousness, twitching in all his muscles, of *what* has finally been achieved and become flesh in him, a true consciousness of power and freedom, a feeling of the completion of man himself. (GM II 2)

This portrayal of the “sovereign individual” (SI) has been the stimulus for much recent work on the themes of freedom and autonomy in Nietzsche. In a recent collection of essays, several commentators argue that the SI plays a significant role in Nietzsche’s thought (Gemes and May 2009). None denies that there is irony in GM II 2 or that Nietzsche rejects the traditional reading of “free will” as “freedom to do otherwise.” In his Introduction to this collection, Simon May concludes that all of the contributors agree that “the individual, for Nietzsche, is so inextricably embedded in the natural, causal, order, that strong voluntarism can have no role in any Nietzschean concept of freedom” (Gemes and May 2009: 20). They present a variety of accounts of freedom and autonomy in Nietzsche, including freedom as an affirmative

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<sup>1</sup> I am using the translation of *The Genealogy of Morality* by Maudemarie Clarke and Alan J. Swenson, Hackett, 1998. In referring to Nietzsche’s texts I use the following notation: “GM II 2” refers to the second section of the second treatise of *The Genealogy of Morality*, where “GM” indicates the *Genealogy*, “II” indicates the second treatise of that work, and “2” is the section number of that treatise. I use the following abbreviations for the other Nietzsche texts cited in the thesis as listed in the References: *Anti-Christ* (AC), *Daybreak* (D), *Gay Science* (GS), *Beyond Good and Evil* (BGE), *Ecce Homo* (EH), and *Twilight of the Idols* (TI).

psychological relation to one's own deeds and commitments (Pippin 2009: 85), freedom as the achievement, via a political model of commanding and obeying, of a hierarchical order of the drives (Clark and Dudrick 2009: 58), freedom of will as taking responsibility for one's actions (Gemes 2009: 43), freedom as the evolving ability of our drives to organize themselves into a unified organization or "self" (Richardson 2009: 145), and freedom as related to the control over one's drives and affects required to change and increase one's perspectives (Janaway 2009: 62). These commentators argue that Nietzsche allows for a positive and compatibilist kind of freedom, i.e., that the SI (and other "Individuals" as I describe them below) does enjoy freedom, and that this freedom does not conflict with Nietzsche's fatalism.

On the other hand, Leiter offers a "deflationary" reading of the "sovereign individual" passage (Leiter 2002: 228). He argues that the account of the SI in the text quoted above is little more than an ironic portrayal of humanity's having no more to show for this long period of "morality of custom" than the ability to make promises, and that any talk of "freedom" and "free will" by Nietzsche is "revisionary" and outside "the philosophical tradition" of Kant and Hume.<sup>2</sup>

In a 2011 article, Leiter backs away from his reading of the SI passage as merely ironic, allowing that Nietzsche might intend his treatment of the SI as a "substantive ideal"—an example of a psychological constitution that is desirable, and even admirable, but not attainable by ordinary humans (Leiter 2011: 103).<sup>3</sup> The practical significance of the SI as substantive ideal

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<sup>2</sup> With regard to the "philosophical tradition," Leiter refers to "on the one hand, the broadly Kantian identification of freedom with autonomous action, meaning action arising from rational self-legislation or guidance, which grounds moral responsibility; and, on the other, the broadly Humean equation of freedom with acting on the basis of effective, conscious desires with which we 'identify' (in some sense to be specified). Neither traditional concept of freedom or free will is available to or embraced by Nietzsche the fatalist" (Leiter 2011: 102). Leiter rules out the Humean account of freedom because there are no "effective conscious desires" on Leiter's reading of Nietzsche. I will argue that this "broadly Humean equation of freedom" is present in Nietzsche's constructive philosophy.

<sup>3</sup> According to Leiter, the "substantive ideal" is first introduced by Poellner (Leiter 2011: 110). Leiter also refers to Rutherford's (2011) discussion of a Spinozan view of freedom as a "substantive ideal." These views are referred to by Leiter as "radically revisionary" (2011: n. 3) and as having "little or no resonance with those ideas of freedom that are culturally important" (2011: n. 2).

is therefore limited, and Leiter argues that the texts cited by the commentators referred to above do not provide adequate support for their arguments that Nietzsche has a positive account of freedom. As Leiter concludes, these recent articles are just more misguided attempts to portray Nietzsche as more “friendly” and less “illiberal”: “for Nietzsche does *not* believe in freedom or responsibility; he does *not* think we exercise any meaningful control over our lives; he does not think that his revisionary sense of ‘freedom’—the ‘long protracted will’ ... is in reach of just anyone, that anyone could ‘choose’ to have it....” (Leiter 2011: 117).

This sets the stage for my project. On one side we have Leiter’s view that there is no place for traditional concepts of autonomy or freedom in Nietzsche and that his presentation of the SI in GM II is merely ironic, or, at most, a “substantive ideal.” On the other, we have a number of commentators who attribute positive accounts of freedom to Nietzsche, although not the robust kind of freedom in which the agent is an “uncaused cause” (*causa sui*) or exercises choice between metaphysically open alternative courses of action. On what does this disagreement principally turn? What is the nature of these positive or “revisionary” accounts of freedom? I will argue that this freedom is “compatibilist,” i.e., that our actions are caused, but that we have some control over the causes of our actions.<sup>4</sup> This answer suggests that, like most philosophers (including Hume), Nietzsche has a constructive philosophy in addition to his

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<sup>4</sup> I consider the definitions of “compatibilist” and “incompatibilist” that I employ here to be uncontroversial. Briefly, the question is whether (causal) determinism rules out freedom. Leiter sees Nietzsche as an “incompatibilist”: if causal determinism is true, freedom of will is impossible. “Compatibilists” argue that determinism does not rule out free will. Actually, for some compatibilists (including Hume), determinism is *necessary* for free will and moral responsibility, since without it there would be no way to be sure the agent deserved to be praised or blamed, i.e., that she was the cause of her action. Importantly, as discussed in Chapter 5, Leiter does not read Nietzsche as a “classical determinist”; instead Leiter considers Nietzsche to be a “causal essentialist”: that “for any individual substance, e.g., a person or some other living organism, that substance has ‘essential’ properties that are causally primary with respect to the future history of that substance” (Leiter 2002: 83).

critical philosophy.<sup>5</sup> Nietzsche's views on freedom are not, as Leiter suggests, outside the philosophical tradition.

On Leiter's reading, Nietzsche seeks to provide an explanation of human morality, formulated as Morality in the Pejorative Sense (MPS)<sup>6</sup>, based on a theory of types and psychophysical "type-facts" (Leiter 2002: 112). Leiter characterizes Nietzsche as "a Speculative M[ethodological]-Naturalist, that is, a philosopher, like Hume, who wants to "construct theories that are 'modeled' on the sciences...in that they take over from science the idea that natural phenomena have deterministic causes" (Leiter 2002: 5). Notably, he sees Nietzsche as arguing that consciousness is epiphenomenal, that conscious mental states, including affects and feelings, have no causal effect. Leiter defends his "M-Naturalism" reading against the "laundry list" account of naturalism offered by Christopher Janaway (Leiter 2013: 576).<sup>7</sup>

Janaway considers his account of Nietzsche's naturalism to be a weaker version of the "Results Continuity" branch of M-Naturalism, "one that requires simply that explanations in philosophy...not be falsifiable by our best science" (Janaway 2007: 37), a view that he sees himself sharing with most commentators. Janaway sees Nietzsche's naturalism as aimed at the elimination of supernatural or metaphysical entities from explanations of human morality:

[Nietzsche] opposes transcendental metaphysics, whether that of Plato or Christianity or Schopenhauer. He rejects notions of the immaterial soul, the absolutely free controlling will, or the self-transparent pure intellect, instead

<sup>5</sup> I am using "constructive" (which I think of in contrast to "critical") to describe the reading I am advocating, but I think "practical" (contrasted with "theoretical") also applies.

<sup>6</sup> MPS is Leiter's account of the morality that is the object of Nietzsche's critique. MPS presupposes three descriptive claims about human agents (that the will is free, the self is knowable and all people are essentially similar) and embraces norms that harm the "highest" men while benefiting the "lowest" (Leiter 2002: 78).

<sup>7</sup> Leiter distinguishes M-Naturalism from substantive naturalism, where M-Naturalism requires that philosophical inquiry should be "continuous with empirical inquiry in the sciences" and substantive naturalism "is either the (ontological) view that the only things that exist are *natural* (or perhaps simply *physical* things); or the (semantic) view that a suitable philosophical analysis of any concept must show it to be amenable to empirical inquiry" (Leiter 2002: 5). Leiter further distinguishes two branches of M-Naturalism: "the Results Continuity branch ...requires that philosophical theories .... be supported by the results of the sciences...Methods Continuity, by contrast, demands only that philosophical theories emulate the methods of successful sciences." Leiter calls those following the Methods Continuity branch of M-Naturalism "speculative M-naturalists" (Leiter 2002: 4).

emphasizing the body, talking of the animal nature of human beings, and attempting to explain numerous phenomena by invoking drives, instincts, and affects which he locates in our physical, bodily existence. (Janaway 2007: 34)

There is a second reason for Janaway's reading: Nietzsche's training in philology.

Nietzsche believed that the grammatical structure of language has significant and unappreciated influence on our way of seeing the world. People commonly talk as if they are taking action, i.e., as if they are free to act or not, when in fact they are just reacting to being acted upon, thereby confusing the "active" with the "passive." "Mankind has in all ages confused the active and the passive: it is their everlasting grammatical blunder" (D 120). People commonly think of lightning as separate from its flash, when there is, in reality, only one event—they see a subject/object distinction where there is none. Similarly, popular morality also separates strength from expressions of strength, as if the strong were free to express strength—or not.<sup>8</sup> As Janaway explains: "The notion of a radically free subject of action is needed in order to make human beings controllable, answerable, equal, and in particular to describe inaction as a virtue of which all are capable and dominant self-assertion as a wrong for which all are culpable" (Janaway 2009: 112). Janaway sees Nietzsche as focused on eliminating the transcendental metaphysics of the herd<sup>9</sup>—including especially such entities as the "ego," "self," "soul" and

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<sup>8</sup> "For just as common people separate the lightning from its flash and take the latter as a *doing*, as an effect of a subject called lightning, so popular morality also separates strength from expressions of strength as if there were behind the strong an indifferent substratum that is free to express strength—or not to. But there is no such substratum; there is no 'being' behind the doing, effecting, becoming; 'the doer' is simply fabricated into the doing—the doing is everything" (GM I 13).

<sup>9</sup> The lower types of humanity, or "herd," are followers, who depend on their society or ancestors for their values and self-image. But not everyone is a member of the herd. There are a few exceptional humans, most notably Napoleon and Goethe, hopefully some of Nietzsche's readers, and certainly himself, to whom Nietzsche refers at different times as "knowers," "philosophers" or "experimenters." I will use "experimenters" to refer to Nietzsche's target audience, those who refuse to accept the values of the herd and are candidates for Nietzsche's practical philosophy. The members of the higher types are "dominant, authoritative or self-sufficient" (BGE 206) and ultimately determine their own values and self-image.

“will” without which the ascetic ideal would not be possible.<sup>10</sup> I call this the “no such entity” reading. On this reading, Nietzsche’s account of human morality talks about physically embodied drives, instincts and affects, instead of underlying metaphysical entities.

I noted above that Leiter sees Nietzsche as seeking to explain human morality in terms of “types” and psychophysical “type-facts” while denying the causal efficacy of conscious mental states, including affects and feelings. Leiter distinguishes “the Humean Nietzsche,” “the Nietzsche who aims to explain morality naturalistically,” from the “Therapeutic Nietzsche,” “who wants to get select readers to throw off the shackles of morality” (Leiter 2013: 581). There is a role for the affects in Nietzsche’s philosophy, according to Leiter, but that role is limited to reacting to features of Nietzsche’s rhetoric, the purpose of which is to disrupt and change the feelings and perceptions of those readers who may have the drives of the higher type but falsely believe that herd values are in their interest.

On the “no such entity” reading, reflective consciousness and the affects are more than just instruments or targets of Nietzsche the writer. I read Nietzsche as having a constructive philosophy based on his readers’ affective response to and engagement with the “Therapeutic Nietzsche.” These target readers will have the drives of the higher type of person, but their drives will not yet be organized into a unified hierarchy—this is where the “therapy” and Nietzsche’s constructive philosophy is required. Here we have a significant role for the “substantive ideal” of freedom referred to by Leiter. There are text-based reasons to think that Nietzsche has a constructive philosophy, and that this constructive philosophy points to a kind of

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<sup>10</sup> Nietzsche believed that “the religions that have existed so far [...] have played a principal role in keeping [the type “man”] on a lower level (BGE 62), and that ascetic morality, and in particular Christianity, has “waged a war” against the *higher* type of person and made the drives and instincts of the higher types “evil,” casting the strongest humans as “reprehensible, as ‘depraved’” (AC 5). By the “ascetic ideal,” Nietzsche means the practice of restraining, denying, postponing or otherwise limiting our natural drives. The ascetic ideal encourages poverty, humility and chastity as practices that are considered “good” and aligned with virtue (GM III 8).



freedom—freedom that is compatibilist. When Nietzsche encourages his readers to “become who we are” and refers to the “creation of tables of what is good that are new and all our own” (GS 335), there is clearly the sense that “we” (here he is addressing his target audience) might or might not “become who we are” and that whether we realize the full powers that “we” are born with depends in some way on “us.” Elsewhere, Nietzsche talks about “What we are at liberty to do” with respect to our drives and character (D 560), including what we can do to control our drives (D 109) and to “give style” to our character (D 290). Again, he is pointing to the fact that there are things we are “at liberty” to do, even though what we do will be causally determined by our drives.

Unquestionably, the destruction of the ascetic ideal is one of Nietzsche’s aims. But there are reasons to think that Nietzsche’s philosophical interests extend beyond this critical project. As damaging as the ascetic ideal is, Nietzsche emphasizes that it has been the only source of meaning for human life and suffering:

If one disregards the ascetic ideal: man, the *animal* man, has until now had no meaning. His existence on earth contained no goal; “to what end man at all?”—was a question without answer; the *will* for man and earth was lacking [...] (GM III 28)

If we view Nietzsche’s philosophical project as limited to its critical dimension, success in lessening the grip of the ascetic ideal will deprive human life of its only source of meaning. An alternative source for the meaning of human life—a replacement ideal—is needed.

I argue (1) Nietzsche has the motivation for presenting a constructive philosophy to his readers, (2) an alternative reading of his critical program makes available the resources for developing this philosophy, and (3) this constructive philosophy points to an alternative to the ascetic ideal—a return to one’s “first nature”—that provides a kind of freedom that is compatible with Nietzsche’s fatalism. I argue that it is Nietzsche’s hope that among his target audience are

some “experimenters,” some potential “Individuals,” who might be able to acquire self-understanding, throw off herd values and come to enjoy this compatibilist freedom. In a passage unmistakable in its positive spirit, Nietzsche rallies these imagined readers:

Indeed, at hearing the news that ‘the old god is dead’, we philosophers and ‘free spirits’ feel illuminated by a new dawn; our heart overflows with gratitude, amazement, forebodings, expectation—finally the horizon seems clear again, even if not bright; finally our ships may set out again [...]. (GS V 343)

This cheerful text can be seen as arguing for the significance of the individual, the possibility of self-understanding, and an account of free will according to which an agent can act freely, even if she could not have done something other than what she did.<sup>11</sup>

Nietzsche’s constructive philosophy is still “illiberal” on my reading in that it is not available to “just anyone,” but it is positive and practical in the sense that, for those select few in Nietzsche’s audience (on the alternative, practical, picture that I advocate), Nietzsche *does* believe in freedom and responsibility; he *does* think they exercise meaningful control over their lives; and he *does* think that the revisionary sense of “freedom” that Leiter talks about—the “long protracted will”—is, from a practical standpoint, something that any of his target readers could choose to have. All three are features of the compatibilist freedom that is available to the experimenter.

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<sup>11</sup> The distinction between accounts of free will based in choice between alternative courses of action (sometimes called the “Garden of Forking Paths” model of control (McKenna 2009: 5)) and accounts of free will in which an agent plays a special kind of role in the bringing about of her freely-willed action (sometimes called the “source model” of control) is established in the free-will literature (McKenna 2009: 7). The former is often referred to as “regulative control” and the latter “guidance control” due to Fischer (1994: 132, 1998: 31). In this thesis, I argue that Nietzsche’s constructive philosophy features compatibilist freedom based on a “source model” of control. In GS 360 Nietzsche can be seen distinguishing the “driving force” of the ship, the current in the sea, from the “directing force,” the helmsman. The driving force is by far the more important, according to Nietzsche, although the directing force is commonly seen as having much more control than is actually the case. This is an ancient error, according to Nietzsche: one has mistaken the helmsman for the stream. “This seems to me to be one of my most essential steps forward: I learned to distinguish the cause of acting from the cause of acting in a certain way, in a certain direction, with a certain goal.” Nonetheless, I would argue, the “directing force” is a force, and does have causal effect in some cases.

In Chapter 2, I present the psychology that is the foundation for Nietzsche's constructive philosophy: first the physical—the body and its drives—and then the requisite mental states, both conscious and unconscious, and Nietzsche's account of behavioral and cognitive processes—acting, attending, understanding and reflecting. The highlight of this chapter is the account of self-understanding as the hierarchical organization of the drives achieved by the experimenter through her actions over time—the psychological basis of the substantive ideal referred to by Leiter as one possible reading of the SI. In Chapter 3, I show how the “no such entity” reading enables me to agree with Leiter's reading of Nietzsche's critical philosophy (aimed at the herd and MPS), while leaving associated mental processes available for developing his constructive philosophy aimed at attaining self-understanding. In Chapter 4, I compare the practical life of members of the herd to that of Nietzsche's target audience to illustrate how an experimenter can achieve the hierarchy of her drives, highlighting the freedom available to those experimenters who succeed in acquiring self-understanding. In Chapter 5, I argue that the experimenter, while not enjoying the freedom associated with alternative courses of action, does enjoy a kind of “source model” of control over her actions in virtue of having achieved an organization, unity, or hierarchy of her drives, i.e., that Nietzsche is a compatibilist. In Chapter 6, I reassess the significance of the Sovereign Individual.

## **2 NIETZSCHE'S PSYCHOLOGY**

This chapter presents my understanding of Nietzsche's psychology—the components of Nietzsche's constructive philosophy. In the first section, I describe Nietzsche's account of the human being as a collection of embodied physiological drives in a physical environment; in the second, I describe Nietzsche's account of mental states, both conscious and unconscious; and in the third, I describe Nietzsche's account of psychological processes, both behavioral and

cognitive. Here I introduce my account of self-understanding as the hierarchical organization of the drives that is the basis for the discussion in later chapters of the Individual and compatibilist freedom.

## 2.1 The Physical: Bodies, Drives and the External World

Nietzsche, who referred to himself as “a *psychologist* without equal” (EH ‘Books’ 5), subscribed to a psychology the fundamental components of which are “drives.” Nietzsche saw the self as nothing more than “how one’s innermost drives stand with respect to each other” (BGE 6), willing as the power relations of commanding and obeying that goes on in the society of one’s drives (BGE 19), understanding as relating to the behavior of one’s drives toward one another (GS 333), and knowledge as a certain stability in the organization of the drives (GS 11). Given the role of drives as the foundation of Nietzsche’s psychology, a brief discussion of them is necessary for elucidating his views on the self, self-understanding, and freedom.

We risk misunderstanding Nietzsche’s overall picture of humanity if we do not recognize that drives are physiological, not supernatural or metaphysical. Nietzsche was greatly influenced by Schopenhauer, according to whom, “[w]anting, striving, trying are to be seen as things that we do with our bodies, not as events that occur in detachment from our bodies” (Janaway 1994: 28), for whom “[a]cts of will are movements of the body caused by conscious representations of the world” (Janaway 1994: 36). Nietzsche wondered if “on a grand scale, philosophy has been no more than an interpretation of the body and a *misunderstanding of the body*” and whether “[a]ll those bold lunacies of metaphysics, especially those questions about the *value* of existence, may always be considered, first of all, as symptoms of certain *bodies...*” (GS Preface 2).

Paul Katsafanas provides a detailed discussion of Nietzsche’s drive psychology. He appeals to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, which defines a “drive” as “any internal mechanism

which sets an organism moving or sustains its activity in a certain direction, or causes it to pursue a certain satisfaction... *esp.* one of the recognized physiological tensions or conditions of need, such as hunger or thirst” (Katsafanas 2013: 727). “Drives” include what we usually refer to as “instincts,” as well as desires, wants and needs that are of a constant or recurring physiological nature—such as hunger. It is helpful to think of drives as closely related to instincts, since the drives we are born with are the drives we have today: our power to change them is limited. On my understanding of Nietzsche’s psychology, the self is a distinct collection of embodied drives that are manifested or expressed by mental states, operating in physical and social environments of objects and values.

Katsafanas notes that Nietzsche sometimes speaks of drives as if they possess the characteristics of an agent, i.e., as adopting perspectives, interpreting, evaluating, jockeying for power, etc. He attributes a dispositional account of drives to Nietzsche (Katsafanas 2013: 734).<sup>12</sup> A drive has its own intensity or power, but once “triggered” by an object in the environment, it manifests (expresses) itself in mental states that are felt by the subject, who then takes a perspective on or affective orientation toward that object. Our drives are strengthened or weakened by their interactions with objects that they encounter through the mediation of these mental states (D 119). Exactly how our drives gain strength from these interactions, according to what Nietzsche calls their “laws of nutriment,” is unknown to us, and whether or not they are strengthened is subject to these physical interactions with our environment. On Katsafanas’ account, “[d]rives manifest themselves by coloring our view of the world, by generating

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<sup>12</sup> A standard account of dispositions would talk of how a disposition is manifested, the conditions required for manifestation, and, on many accounts, the presence of an intrinsic property or “causal law” on which the disposition is based. For example, we would expect a dispositional account of bravery to say that it manifests itself when a person instantly jumps into the water to save a child being pulled out to sea. Here being faced with the child in danger is the condition required for the drive to be manifested. Our heroine could be brave, but not know it herself, if she were never faced with a situation requiring her action.

perceptual saliences, by influencing our emotions and other attitudes, by fostering desires,” i.e., by influencing how we experience the world in ways we don’t understand (Katsafanas 2013: 744).

Katsafanas’ account of Nietzsche’s psychology focuses on drives, but he points to the important role of the body in unifying the mental life of the individual human:

[W]e can deny that drives, *considered in isolation*, can reason, evaluate, interpret, while maintaining that *embodied drives*—drives considered as part of a whole organism—can reason, evaluate, and interpret. Suppose we accept Nietzsche’s claim that our views of the world are selective, emphasizing certain features at the expense of others, presenting objects as oriented toward ends of ours, presenting situations in affectively charged ways. This selective, affectively charged orientation can be understood as an *evaluative* orientation. (Katsafanas 2013: 744)

Only through a body can the drives be seen to manifest themselves in the world through affects, needs and desires. Only from within a body can the drives interact with physical objects and other bodies, compete with each other, and exercise their power by organizing into a hierarchy. Nietzsche illustrates the role of the body in interacting with our physical environment by emphasizing the effect of nutrition, location, and climate on his own physical health and sickness (EH ‘Clever’: 2). This example of the importance of changing one’s environment has both metaphorical and practical significance for Nietzsche.

## **2.2 The Mental: Feelings, Conscious and Unconscious**

Just as drives are the basic physical components of Nietzsche’s psychology, “feelings” are its basic mental components. Our “feelings” include our affects and desires. Importantly for Nietzsche, feelings are not metaphysical entities. Our feelings originate in our drives, but are directed through a perspective at the objects in our environment needed to satisfy our drives. Through these perspectives, which determine how one “sees” the objects in the environment

needed to satisfy the drive, our drives are strengthened or weakened by interactions with the objects that they encounter.<sup>13</sup>

Feelings have both a phenomenological dimension and an evaluative dimension. The phenomenological dimension reflects the fact that feelings are manifestations of *embodied* drives and is the force or intensity of the feeling impelling us to act in order to satisfy the drive. The evaluative dimension of our feelings has two possible sources: (1) the inclination or aversion of a drive toward an object, i.e., the “values” of the underlying drive, and/or (2) the *moral* values of one’s society and culture. Once triggered by (a representation of) an object, a drive manifests itself through a feeling that reflects its own physical force and evaluative orientation toward the object. *In themselves*, our feelings have no positive or negative *moral* value content, although the evaluative dimension of most people’s feelings also reflects a social or moral values “lens” or interpretation called the “conscience” (D 38). Thus, at least in the case of the herd, the evaluative dimension of our feelings reflects the values of the culture or society into which one is born, and are either “inherited” unconsciously or acquired consciously through social indoctrination or early childhood training. Our moral values are manifested through our conscience either consciously or unconsciously, although, as the product of our social environment, they originated in reflective consciousness.<sup>14</sup>

Consciousness, for Nietzsche, corresponds to what one might refer to as “reflective consciousness.” Consciousness is a late development in evolutionary history, according to Nietzsche, although humans act as if it had been ever-present or as if it were essential to

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<sup>13</sup> Feelings originate in and manifest our drives, and are directed at objects through perspectives. Other possible “feelings,” such as “needs,” might be either physical or mental. (Maslow’s “hierarchy of needs” demonstrates these possibilities and more.)

<sup>14</sup> This is because, on Nietzsche’s view, moral values are social values, and would not have developed without the interpersonal communication through shared concepts and language that consciousness evolved to provide. For this reason, we listen to our conscience as giving conceptually articulated commands, as evidenced by Nietzsche’s asking (in GS 345) “Why do you listen to *the words* of your conscience?” (emphasis added)

humanity (D 129). Consciousness arose as a response to the need for communication in society (GS 354) and involves mental representation shared through concepts and language (Katsafanas 2005: 1-2). As members of a society, we need to be able to judge what others are going to do, which requires that we be able to perceive how others perceive us (e.g., as a threat or not).<sup>15</sup> Others therefore act as a mirror in which we are reflected: how we “see” ourselves, our self-image, is often based on how others perceive us. This is a problem because the words of our language are limited in number and often describe only extreme states (D 115). As a result, we are seen by others (and ourselves) as having only a small number of “extreme” character traits (D 381), while “the milder, or middle degrees, not to speak of the lower degrees [of a character trait] which are continually in play, elude us, and yet it is they which weave the web of our character and our destiny” (D115).

Conscious mental processes “arrive on the scene” only after the behavior or action in question has already taken place, e.g., when things have not gone as expected and/or when a justification of our earlier behavior is needed. Nietzsche paints a negative picture of consciousness because (1) its role is more limited than we commonly think it to be (GS 333), (2) it generalizes, simplifies and falsifies (GS 354), and (3) reflecting on what we are doing can often result in more harm than good. On Nietzsche’s view, our mental processes are able to proceed unconsciously and do so most of the time: “[f]or the longest time, conscious thought was considered thought itself; only now does the truth dawn on us that by far the greatest part of our mind’s activity proceeds unconscious and unfelt [...]” (GS333). In fact, Nietzsche says that it may be only the stabilizing effect of our unconscious drives that keeps us from sometimes doing

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<sup>15</sup> Hume expressed the importance of the relation between perception of character traits and civic well-being in terms of inference: the importance of being able to infer from character to behavior in order to be able to count on each other in society and of being able to infer from action to character for the purposes of reward or punishment (Russell 2014: 17).



dangerous things: without the “preserving alliance” of the much more powerful instincts which acts as a regulator over consciousness “humanity would have long ceased to exist” (GS 11).

There is an important role for reflective consciousness in Nietzsche’s constructive philosophy, but its importance in the life of the herd has been greatly exaggerated, and even when we do consciously reflect, “the greatest part of conscious thought must still be accorded to instinctive activity” (BGE 3).

Nietzsche addresses some of the complications that result from the fact that the evaluative dimension of our feelings can arise either from our drives themselves or from our society and culture. Because our moral values are either unconsciously inherited or the result of early training, they are based on the feelings of others, and reflect the judgments and evaluations that were the original basis for *those* feelings: “[t]o trust one’s feelings—means to give more obedience to one’s grandmother and grandfather and their grandparents than to the gods that are in us: our reason and our experience” (D 35). In summary, feelings originate in an unconscious physical drive and usually remain unconscious, although they can become conscious. If they do become conscious, the same drive can be expressed by different feelings depending on the values of one’s social environment, “second nature,” or “conscience”:

*Drives transformed by moral judgments.* The same drive evolves into the painful feeling of *cowardice* under the impress of the reproach custom has imposed on this drive: or into the pleasant feeling of *humility* if it happens that a custom such as the Christian has taken it to its heart and called it *good*. That is to say, it is attended by either a good or a bad conscience! (D 38)

Thinking of animals helps to clarify the role of consciousness in human life as Nietzsche saw it. A squirrel can certainly identify food or other animals, but a squirrel is not “conscious” in the sense used by Nietzsche, since it does not possess concepts and language, or the ability to reflect and (e.g.) “decide” to skip lunch today. Any squirrel has drives that motivate it to go

where the food is and to react if it senses danger. Its drives will compete with each other and be nourished or diminished depending on their degree of satisfaction—in this it is no different from other animals and humans. But the squirrel is different from Fido, the family dog, in an important way. Fido has been “trained” by her owner through incentives that rearrange Fido’s drives by rewarding her when desirable drives are exhibited and “punishing” her when undesirable drives are displayed. Fido has been trained, through commands backed up by positive and negative reinforcement, to fetch the morning paper, something not part of Fido’s animal nature, but now part of her “second nature.” Humans have developed and learned a (more complex) set of communication symbols—a language—to meet more complex communication needs, and Nietzsche would say that we have been similarly domesticated or socialized. This enables us to take on “socializing” values and feelings, or a “second nature.” While consciousness separates us from the animals, Nietzsche believes we have an exaggerated view of the importance of reason, reflection and deliberation, compared to the broader powers that we share with (non-human) animals.

This completes my discussion of drives and feelings. In the final section of the chapter, I present my reading of Nietzsche on behavioral and cognitive processes—how action and understanding are based on drives and feelings.

### **2.3 Psychological Processes: Behavioral and Cognitive**

At the beginning of the chapter, I noted that Nietzsche saw understanding as related to the behavior of one’s drives toward one another (GS 333), willing as the power relations of commanding and obeying that goes on in the “society of one’s drives” (BGE 19), knowledge as a certain stability in the organization of the drives (GS11) and the self as nothing more than “how one’s innermost drives stand with respect to each other” (BGE 6). In these texts, Nietzsche

characterizes understanding, knowledge, willing and the self in terms of the behavior of one's drives toward each other. In the first two sections of this chapter, I presented my reading of Nietzsche on drives and the feelings that express them. In this final section, I describe how Nietzsche's account of psychological processes—both behavioral and cognitive—are based in his account of drives and feelings.<sup>16</sup>

On my view, both behavior and cognition have three psychological components: attention (physical and necessary for both), motivation/understanding<sup>17</sup> (unconscious and necessary for both), and reflection (conscious and not required for either). Because action is the key to my reading of Nietzsche's account of behavior and cognition, I will first describe the role of these three psychological components in a single action. Acting is the interaction of one's drives with the objects needed to satisfy them. Acting is important because every action results in the strengthening of some drives and the weakening of others, resulting in a change in how one's drives relate to each other.<sup>18</sup>

The first of these psychological components, "attention," is a *physical* process describing the initial contact of the embodied drive with an object in the environment. Attention results in the brain's construction of a mental representation of the content of a perception (called "awareness"), a "complex bundle of information that is often not accurate" but that is simplified

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<sup>16</sup> Each of the three psychological processes that I refer to (attention, understanding and reflection) might be considered "conscious" in common usage, but on Katsafanas' account of Nietzsche on consciousness, which I follow, only reflective consciousness (reflection) is considered to be "conscious." "Attention," as noted below, is physical, and "understanding," as I use the term, is usually not reflective. On Nietzsche's use of "consciousness," our mental processes are able to proceed unconsciously, and "the greatest part of our mind's activity proceeds unconscious and unfelt" (GS 333).

<sup>17</sup> Motivation is the unconscious component of action and behavior; understanding is the corresponding component of cognition.

<sup>18</sup> "Every moment of our lives sees some of the polyp-arms of our being grow and others of them wither, all according to the nutriment which the moment does or does not bear with it" (D 119).

to enhance effectiveness in satisfying the underlying drive (Graziano 2014: 12).<sup>19</sup> It is attention that leads to the “triggering” of a drive by an object.

The second of the three psychological components is motivation and is based in our feelings. In the previous section, I described my reading of Nietzsche on both conscious and unconscious feelings. There are three sources of motivation: (1) the force or intensity of the drive as manifested in a feeling; (2) the agent’s interpretation of her feeling based on the evaluative content of the triggered drive; and (3) the agent’s interpretation of her feeling based on the evaluative content of her conscience.

The third of the three psychological components is the agent’s conscious reflection or deliberation (Katsafanas 2014: 210). “Reflection” refers to our *conscious* mental activity, including memory, as well as deliberation and rational decision-making. Reflection can be part of the process leading to action, but it is not *required* for acting.

Katsafanas provides an account of how these three psychological processes, one physical and two mental, combine in the overall motive to act. His “vector model of willing” enables us to understand the interaction of our unconscious feelings and conscious reflection or deliberation. On Katsafanas’ account, an agent’s conscious deliberation does not suspend the force of her feelings, or result in a decision to act or a “triggering” of an action; instead, conscious deliberation gradually and incrementally strengthens or weakens the agent’s evaluative perspective on the object. Similarly, on Katsafanas’ account, the agent’s feelings, as manifestations of her drives, actually influence her reflection and deliberation. “Nietzsche argues that whereas we ordinarily conceive of reflective thought as operating in an instantaneous

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<sup>19</sup> In neuroscience, “attention” has been defined as a mechanistic “process of enhancing some signals at the expense of others.” Michael Graziano distinguishes two parts of “attention”: first, a physical process involving embodied drives and objects in the environment, and second, the brain’s representation of the content of attention, designed for efficiency, not accuracy or completeness (Graziano 2014: 112).

fashion, its effects are actually gradual and incremental...it is merely one causal factor amongst many others” (Katsafanas 2014: 206). On this account, reflective consciousness can be causally efficacious by adding to or subtracting from the cumulative motive to act.

The following example illustrates how the psychological processes discussed above result in a single action.

Attention (a physical process): It is late morning and Alice is walking home for lunch. Her hunger drive is causing Alice to be oriented to her environment in a way that favors objects likely to satisfy it. A restaurant catches her attention, and Alice’s brain represents the restaurant as something that could satisfy that drive. Her hunger drive is triggered.

Motivation (an unconscious mental process): Alice feels an attraction to the restaurant (her hunger drive), followed by a restraining feeling that it would be better to go home as she, frugal as she is, usually does (her conscience). She is aware, but not reflectively conscious, of these feelings. The force of the drive has been tempered by her inherited values, or conscience.

Reflection (a conscious mental process): At this point, Alice is not reflectively conscious of her conflicting perspectives on the restaurant. Whether or not she eats lunch at the restaurant will depend on whether her hunger drive or conscience is stronger. BUT, Alice might become conscious of her internal conflict, or e.g., remember that she already has lunch prepared at home, and pause to decide what she is going to do. If so, the result of her deliberation will enter into, not decide, the outcome of the calculation that will determine whether she eats at the restaurant or at home.

This analysis of acting enables us to see how the behavior of the human agent is based in her drives and feelings. But this example is limited to describing the consequences of a single drive seeking its satisfaction, and thus the origin of and process resulting in a single action. Each action results in the strengthening of some drives at the expense of others, creating an imbalance of power relations that will need to be worked out among the drives. Our everyday experience involves our total collection of embodied drives, constantly jostling each other in the competition for nourishment as we negotiate our physical and social environments.

But acting, and drives and feelings, are also the foundation of Nietzsche's account of cognitive processes. Paralleling my account of action, I see cognitive processes as also having three psychological components: attention, understanding and reflection. Attention and reflective consciousness also play a role in Nietzsche's account of cognitive processes, since on my reading of Nietzsche, cognitive processes—understanding and knowledge—are the result of an agent's actions over a period of time.

Since each action results in the strengthening of some drives at the expense of others, every action results in a change in the organization or power relations of the drives.

“Understanding” is the process of bringing one's drives back into balance, organization or hierarchy (GS 333), an unconscious process that can result in knowing or knowledge.<sup>20</sup>

“Understanding” refers to the “behavior of the drives towards one another” (GS 333), the on-going struggle within the “society of the drives.”

Understanding is the result of questioning our physical environment either by (1) exposing objects to many drives by moving around in our physical environment, thereby taking the perspectives of different drives on an object, or (2) changing our physical environment in order to expose our system of drives to different objects, resulting in more opportunities for satisfying different drives. I call the former “perceptual understanding” and the latter “self-understanding.” *Perceptual understanding* can result in one's perceiving an object more “objectively” and results from taking the perspectives of many drives on that object.<sup>21</sup> *Self-understanding* can result in the emerging organization and hierarchy of our drives, as our drives

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<sup>20</sup> I am referring to “understanding” and “self-understanding” to accommodate the idea that, according to Nietzsche, understanding is the process that begins with thinking and ends with knowing, where understanding is unconscious (not reflectively conscious), and knowing or knowledge is reflectively conscious. Nietzsche states that knowing and knowledge is the “peaceful coexistence” that follows the process of understanding—the end of a long process of making peace that has become conscious (GS 333).

<sup>21</sup> “There is *only* a perspectival seeing, *only* a perspectival “knowing”; and *the more* affects we allow to speak about a matter, *the more* eyes, different eyes, we know how to bring to bear on one and the same matter, that much more complete will our ‘concept’ of this matter, our ‘objectivity’ be” (GM III 12).

work out their internal power relations, and is itself the result of exposing our drives to different objects by changing our physical environment.

Only by continuously exposing her drives to different objects by changing her physical environment will the experimenter gain understanding of their identity and power. This is the process of acquiring self-understanding, a process that is unconscious, since the experimenter behaves the way she does as the result of her drives, not as the result of conscious reflection, deliberation or decision. Eventually, at least in some cases, an experimenter will exercise enough of her drives by changing her environment (and the objects in it), and her strongest drive will take control and organize the rest of her drives into a hierarchy.

I now present two texts to support my reading of Nietzsche's process of understanding. The first illustrates perceptual understanding and how knowledge is achieved. The second illustrates how self-understanding and the "hierarchy of drives," important for my argument in this thesis, is achieved.

*What knowing means. Non ridere, non lugere, neque detestari, sed intellegere!*<sup>22</sup> says Spinoza [...] Yet in the final analysis, what is this *intelligere* other than the way we become sensible of the other three? A result of the different and conflicting impulses to laugh, lament and curse? Before knowledge is possible, each of these impulses must have presented its one-sided view of the thing or event; then comes the fight between these one-sided views, and occasionally out of it a mean, an appeasement, a concession to all three sides, a kind of justice and contract; for in virtue of justice and a contract all these impulses can assert and maintain themselves in existence and each can finally feel it is in the right vis-à-vis all the others. Since only the ultimate reconciliation scenes and final accounts of this long process rise to consciousness, we suppose that *intelligere* must be something conciliatory, just and good, something essentially opposed to the instincts, when in fact it is only a certain behavior of the drives towards one another (GS 333).

Four important characteristics of the unconscious process of understanding are described in this passage. First, many feelings or perspectives on the object (the manifestations of different drives) must be aired. Second, these different feelings and perspectives and their underlying

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<sup>22</sup> 'not to laugh at or lament over or despise, but to understand' Translation from note to GS 333 in Nauckhoff translation of GS.

drives must work out a working relationship or organization. Third, only the result of this long process will rise to consciousness. Fourth, although we sometimes think of understanding as something separate from and bent on controlling and opposing our drives, it is actually only an account of behavior of the drives toward one another.

In the second passage, from EH, Nietzsche uses his own life as the basis for a helpful illustration of “how you become what you are,” i.e., how to achieve the hierarchy of the drives and become an Individual:

In the meantime, the organizing, governing “idea” keeps growing deep inside—it starts commanding, it slowly leads *back* from out of the side roads and wrong turns, it gets *individual* qualities and virtues ready, since at some point these will prove indispensable as means to the whole,—one by one, it develops all the servile faculties before giving any clue as to the dominant task, the “goal,” the “purpose,” the “meaning.” [...] Rank order of abilities; distance; the art of separating without antagonizing; not mixing anything, not “reconciling” anything; an incredible multiplicity that is the converse of chaos—this was the precondition, the lengthy, secret work and artistry of my instinct. Its *higher protection* manifested itself so strongly that I had absolutely no idea what was going on inside me,—and then one day all my capacities *leapt out*, ripened to ultimate perfection. I have no memory of having made an effort. (EH ‘Clever’: 9)

Again, we see four steps. First, the experimenter, powered by the drives she was born with, explores as many of her drives and qualities as possible. Second the “governing ‘idea’”—her strongest drive—begins organizing the “converse of chaos” into a unity or organization. Third, only at the end of the process does the resulting hierarchy leap to consciousness. Fourth, the long process leading up to this went on unconsciously without reflective deliberation or conscious effort. The strongest individual drive (or drives) is the “governing idea” that “keeps growing deep inside” and only “leapt out” after a long process of giving all of one’s “individual qualities and virtues” a chance to show their strength.



As I will discuss in later chapters, the freedom that Nietzsche thinks is possible, and that Nietzsche attempts to provoke in his readers, arises when—by constantly experimenting with her environment and activating different drives—the experimenter creates the conditions that enable the emergence of her strongest drives. This freedom is characterized by its psychological structure. The experimenter will enjoy the freedom to act motivated by her unique organization of drives and powers. Although her actions will be determined by her drives, being “powered” by those drives that are most uniquely hers is a way of being powered by the drives that she “wants” to be in charge—a kind of compatibilist freedom. Since she will have achieved self-understanding of *her* drives, as embodied in *her* body, she will have become an “Individual.” This is the “substantive ideal” that Leiter refers to, described by Poellner as the result of “integrating an unusually great multiplicity of ‘drives’ and evaluative commitments into a long-lasting, coherent whole” (Leiter 2011: 110).

But understanding is only the second of the three psychological components of cognition on my account. There is one more: reflective consciousness. While understanding is unconscious and difficult to achieve, with conscious knowledge of an object or one’s most powerful drives only emerging at the end of a long process, the experimenter already has a conscious “self-image” and a set of values to go with it, as evidenced by her conscience. While understanding is unconscious, reflective consciousness does play a role in cognition, especially for the experimenter. The experimenter will question her social or values environment just as she questioned her physical environment. While understanding is the process of questioning her physical environment, reflection is the process of questioning her social environment and her values—the basis for interpreting, for seeing meaning. Reflective consciousness can play an

important role in the way the experimenter sees herself—her “self-image”—and in the way others see her—her reputation. Only if the experimenter identifies the source of her drives and feelings (through, e.g., the process of genealogy that Nietzsche illustrates in the GM), will she be able to think of her drives in new ways, perhaps changing them and, eventually, her feelings.

The objective of this chapter has been to describe the components of Nietzsche’s psychology, with emphasis on the “hierarchy of drives.” In Chapter 3, I provide an alternative reading of Nietzsche’s critical philosophy and show how a constructive reading of his philosophy, based on the experimenter’s attaining the hierarchy of the drives, is possible.

### **3 RESOURCES FOR THE EXPERIMENTER: NIETZSCHE’S CONSTRUCTIVE PHILOSOPHY**

In Chapter 2, I described the basic components of Nietzsche’s psychology. In this chapter, I first describe Leiter’s reading of Nietzsche’s critical philosophy and then provide an alternative reading that accommodates Leiter’s reading of Nietzsche’s critical philosophy yet shows how a constructive reading of Nietzsche’s philosophy is possible. Specifically, I argue that Nietzsche’s critical philosophy is best read as based on the elimination of metaphysical entities, not their associated mental processes—what I call the “no such entity” view. I then use these mental processes to provide an account of three components of Nietzsche’s constructive philosophy: the individual, self-understanding and compatibilist freedom. On my view, Nietzsche believes that there are “experimenters” who, although born into the values of the herd, refuse to accept them, and that this is the audience for whom his constructive philosophy is intended. In Chapter 4, I compare the life of these “experimenters” to that of the herd in order to illustrate how the experimenter can potentially achieve individuality, self-understanding and freedom.

### 3.1 Methodology for a Constructive Philosophy: Eliminating Metaphysical Entities

In the Introduction, I contrasted two accounts of Nietzsche's naturalism: Leiter's account, based on types and type-facts, and the "no such entity" reading, attributed to Janaway and Katsafanas. Leiter sees Nietzsche as a "speculative methodological naturalist," whose goal is to provide an explanation of human social institutions and of human morality based on the relevant psychological and physiological facts in virtue of which one belongs to a particular *type* of person. According to Leiter's "Doctrine of Types," "Each person has a fixed psycho-physical constitution, which defines him as a particular *type* of person." Leiter goes on to talk about "the relevant psycho-physical facts" as "type-facts," and that "It is type-facts, in turn, that figure in the explanation of human actions and beliefs (including beliefs about morality)" (Leiter 2002: 8).<sup>23</sup> According to Leiter, Nietzsche's arguments typically take the following form: "a person's theoretical beliefs are best explained in terms of his moral beliefs; and his moral beliefs are best explained in terms of natural facts about the type of person he is (i.e., in terms of type-facts)."

Leiter distinguishes "the Humean Nietzsche," "the Nietzsche who aims to explain morality naturalistically," from the "Therapeutic Nietzsche," "who wants to get select readers to throw off the shackles of morality" (Leiter 2013: 582). Leiter sees the role of the affects in Nietzsche's philosophy as limited to the response of his readers to the rhetorical features of his writing, through which Nietzsche seeks to gain their attention and involvement.

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<sup>23</sup> "Type-facts, for Nietzsche, are either *physiological* facts about the person, or facts about the person's unconscious drives or affects. The claim then, is that each person has certain largely immutable physiological and psychic traits that constitute the "type" of person he or she is" (Leiter 2002: 91). "Type-facts are *causally primary* with respect to the course of a person's life"—in the sense that they "causally determine that person's will"—and "type-facts are also *explanatorily primary*, in the sense that all other facts about a person (e.g., his beliefs, his actions, his life trajectory) are explicable by type-facts about the person (perhaps in conjunction with other natural facts about the circumstances or environment)." According to Leiter's reading, "consciousness is Kind-Epiphenomenal in the sense that conscious states are only causally effective in virtue of type-facts about the person (that is, not simply in virtue of their being conscious states). Put more simply: consciousness is not causally efficacious in its own right. While a person's conscious states may be part of the causal chain leading up to action, they play that role only in virtue of type-facts about the person" (Leiter 2002: 91-92). "This means that the real story of the genesis of an action begins with the type-facts, which explain both consciousness *and* a person's actions" (Leiter 2002: 92).

While Janaway grants that Nietzsche is naturalistic, he believes that there is a second theme that is more central to Nietzsche's philosophy. This is the idea, drawing on Nietzsche's philological training, that the grammatical structure of language influences our world-view and facilitates social communication and control. On Janaway's reading, Nietzsche argues that the ascetic ideal was made possible only because certain grammatical features of language (such as the subject/object and active/passive distinctions) encourage the belief in metaphysical entities (e.g., the soul) required for the initiation, propagation and practice of the ascetic ideal. "This kind of human *needs* the belief in a neutral "subject" with free choice, out of an instinct of self-preservation, self-affirmation, in which every lie tends to hallow itself" (GM I 13). The member of the herd needs to believe that she is free and, as the "doer" of her deeds, is separate from her actions in order to see the strength of her oppressor as blameworthy, and her own weakness as a voluntary achievement. Janaway reads Nietzsche as eliminating those metaphysical entities without which the ascetic ideal would not be possible, while explaining the underlying psychological processes "by invoking drives, instincts and affects which he locates in our physical, bodily existence" (Janaway 2007: 34).

Katsafanas challenges Leiter's argument that consciousness is epiphenomenal (and that conscious willing has no causal effect), by showing that the text featured in Leiter's argument ("a thought comes when 'it' wishes, not when 'I' wish" (BGE 17)) is actually, when viewed in context, arguing against the existence of a metaphysical "ego" that is constantly surveying one's inner goings-on, i.e., consciousness as a substantive faculty.<sup>24</sup> On Katsafanas's reading, this text (BGE 17) is not arguing against consciousness as a property of mental states (Katsafanas 2005:

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<sup>24</sup> This can be shown by the full sentence from which this text is taken: "A thought comes when 'it' wishes, not when 'I' wish, so that it is a falsification of the facts of the case to say that the subject 'I' is the condition of the predicate 'think'" (BGE 17). Katsafanas argues that other texts quoted by Leiter "are similarly unresponsive of his claim that consciousness is epiphenomenal." These include TI VI.3, which attacks the Will as a discrete faculty, and D 129 and GS 333, which address unconscious states, not conscious states (Katsafanas 2005: n.22).

12). Katsafanas points to BGE 12, where Nietzsche says “Between you and me, there is absolutely no need to give up ‘the soul’ itself, and relinquish one of the oldest and most venerable hypotheses...” when there are useful alternative readings (such as “mortal soul,” “soul as subject-multiplicity,” and “soul as a society constructed out of drives and affects”) that do not posit the soul as a metaphysical entity. Katsafanas sees Nietzsche telling us that “rather than assuming that ‘consciousness’ refers to a unitary faculty, we should treat ‘consciousness’ as referring to the sum total of conscious mental states” (Katsafanas 2005: 12).

In this chapter, I examine the Similarity Thesis, the Transparency Thesis and the Free Will Thesis, the three descriptive components of Leiter’s characterization of human morality—“Morality in the Pejorative Sense” (MPS)—in order to show that conceptions of the individual, self-understanding and freedom made available by the “no such entity” reading support the view that Nietzsche has both a critical and a constructive philosophy.

### **3.2 An Alternative Conception of Humanity**

The first descriptive component of MPS that I discuss is the Similarity Thesis—“that because of the similarity of all humans, one morality is appropriate for all” (Leiter 2002: 80). This is required of any system of morality because, it is held, a code of morality has to apply universally if we are to hold people accountable for their actions. Under Christianity, for instance, humans are inculcated with a “second nature”—all are assumed to share a “human essence” (GM I 13) in virtue of which humans are similar in values or “character,” and in their capacity to reason.

On Leiter’s reading, Nietzsche argues that humans are not “similar,” because they can be ranked into different “types” based on their psycho-physical make-up. Humans differ from one another in that they are constituted by different “type-facts.” What is right for one person cannot

be right for another who is not of the same type or rank. For this reason, no single morality can apply to everyone, and the Similarity Thesis cannot be correct. I do not deny that Nietzsche argues against the Similarity Thesis on the basis of there being different types of humans, and I agree that Leiter's explanation in terms of psycho-physical type-facts is successful in arguing against systems of morality making universal claims (such as MPS and the Similarity Thesis), but Leiter's explanation does not preclude a new kind of "morality" (not in the pejorative sense) that does justice to the many and varied types of human beings. My claim is that, on the "no such entity" reading, I can agree with Leiter about Nietzsche's critical philosophy while still identifying in Nietzsche the resources for a constructive philosophy based on the *individual*.

Why think that Nietzsche's constructive philosophy is based on the *individual*?

Nietzsche's hope for the disruption of the ascetic ideal depends on individuals, as he states here:

"I mean the individuals, the seed-bearers of the future, the spiritual colonizers and shapers of new states and communities" (GS 23); and here:

When the highest and strongest drives erupt in passion, driving the individual up and out and far above the average, over the depths of the herd conscience, the self-esteem of the community is destroyed... its faith in itself, its backbone, as it were, is broken: as a result, these are the drives that will be denounced and slandered the most. (BGE 201)

Nietzsche is concerned that the higher types of humans (and potential individuals) are deluded into thinking that Christianity is in their best interest, and he tries to dislodge them from that notion: "What is wanted [by Christianity] ... is nothing less than a fundamental remolding, indeed weakening and abolition of the *individual*" (D 132). Nietzsche does not assume that the mere existence of the higher types of humanity, i.e., those who have the right drives—will be enough to dislodge the ascetic ideal. It will take some therapy to encourage the higher types to become Individuals.

The strongest argument in support of individuals may be based on Nietzsche's relation to Schopenhauer.<sup>25</sup> Schopenhauer argued that the suffering that characterizes human existence is due largely to the passions, and that the passions are the source of one's individuality. The only way to overcome the inevitable pessimism of life is by eliminating these qualities and becoming one with the "larger whole": by squelching the passions through contemplation or meditation, denying one's individuality, and becoming one with the world. While Nietzsche accepted much of Schopenhauer's philosophy, he clearly wanted to combat Schopenhauer's pessimism, and perhaps the clearest example of this was his efforts in his constructive philosophy to encourage those of the higher type to embrace their feelings and their individuality. Nietzsche sees the experimenter (but not the herd) doing this by adopting as many different affects and perspectives as possible—by acquiring self-understanding. For those with the right drives, "becoming an Individual" is the process of giving one's drives a chance to show themselves by exposing them to as many objects as possible, until one's drives organize themselves into a hierarchy.

In this section, I have argued that the "no such entity" reading enables me to agree with Leiter that Nietzsche argues against systems of morality making universal claims, while claiming that Nietzsche's critique of the Similarity Thesis as targeting the metaphysical soul, or Ego, as a separate faculty (GM I 13), leaves open the possibility for other conceptions of humanity such as suggested in BGE 12, including that of the individual.

### **3.3 An Alternative Conception of the Self**

The second descriptive component of MPS is the Transparency Thesis: "that actions can be distinguished based on their respective motives" (Leiter 2002: 80). The member of the herd

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<sup>25</sup> Schopenhauer was Nietzsche's greatest teacher, and as Janaway has suggested, much can be learned about Nietzsche by examining his relationship with this teacher. Janaway sees Schopenhauer as "a recurring sub-text, and one of the key points of orientation in [Nietzsche's] often bewildering progress" (Janaway 1994: 104).

believes that she possesses a metaphysically distinct soul or self, with character traits that can't be changed but can be known by introspection or observation. This is required by any system of morality, it is held, because one can't assign praise or blame for an action without understanding why the agent did what she did, paralleling Hume's belief that for a society to function we must be able to infer a person's actions from her character in order to count on her to meet her obligations, and to infer her character from her actions in order to assess praise or blame (Russell 2014: 11-12). On Leiter's reading, Nietzsche argues that the Transparency Thesis does not hold because actions cannot be distinguished based on their motives. This is because an agent's motives for an action are determined by type-facts, which are not consciously available to the agent, and largely unknown (GS 335) (Leiter 2002: 104).

By contrast, I see Nietzsche arguing against the Transparency Thesis by arguing that there is no metaphysical entity called the "self"—no metaphysical self containing character traits or motives separate from the embodied set of drives. If one, as a member of the herd, believes that the self is an entity separate from one's embodied set of drives into which the agent has "privileged access" via introspection, or to which others can attribute character traits based on observing one's behavior, knowledge of an agent's motives *will* be impossible, since there is no such entity. But, if by the "self" we mean our embodied set of drives, then some degree of transparency or self-understanding may be available. On the "no such entity" reading, we can agree with Leiter that "the critical Nietzsche" sees one's motives as "largely unknown" and still point to the constructive Nietzsche's resources for acquiring self-understanding.

Self-understanding, which I introduced in Chapter 2, is based on the behavior of our drives toward each other and the feelings that connect them to the objects in our environment. Self-understanding is acquired through changing the perspectives of our drives by exposing them



to different objects and is unconscious. Experimenters differ from the herd in being born with different drives—drives that lead them to question their physical and social environments. Nietzsche’s constructive philosophy is aimed at these few in his audience. While there is no way that one can gain understanding of her drives by introspection (as the herd, who think that the self is a metaphysical entity, believe), Nietzsche’s hope is that some exceptional members of his audience can “choose” what lives they live by regularly changing their perspectives on and interactions with the physical world in order to exercise as many of their drives as possible—thereby acquiring self-understanding. The experimenter will continue to challenge and change her physical environment, exposing her drives to different objects, triggering her drives and adopting perspectives on objects as a result of the feelings that manifest her drives until, as a result of the process of nourishment and competition among the drives, they organize into a hierarchy.

At this point the hierarchy of one’s drives becomes available to consciousness as a self-image. This is one source of one’s self-image. But the experimenter already had a (herd) self-image, part of the “second nature” acquired through early-childhood interaction with her social environment. Both a self-image and a reputation are necessary for us to function in society, and we initially acquire a self-image as part of our early childhood training or “second nature.” The challenge now, for the experimenter who attains self-understanding, will be to revise her inherited self-image, i.e., to resolve the tension between the “new” self-image based on her “first nature” and her “old” self-image based on her “second nature.”

### **3.4 An Alternative Conception of Freedom**

The third descriptive component of MPS as characterized by Leiter is the Free Will Thesis: that “human agents possess a will capable of free and autonomous choice” (Leiter 2002:

80). This is required of any system of morality, it is held, because one can't hold an agent responsible for her action if she had no alternative—if she did not have a choice between alternative courses of action (“regulative control”), where having such a choice is assumed to be constitutive of freedom. On Leiter's reading, free will is impossible; because the concept of a *causa sui* (a self-caused cause) is an absurdity (BGE 15), and there is no “conscious self that contributes anything to the process” of which our drives take charge (Leiter 2002: 100).

As we saw in Katsafanas' discussion of Leiter's argument that consciousness is epiphenomenal, it is the ego, consciousness as a substantive faculty, that is fictional or epiphenomenal, not consciousness as a property of mental states (BGE 12). Nietzsche is in fact arguing only against a metaphysically distinct entity called “the will,” and not against freedom or free *willing per se*. In BGE 21, when Nietzsche rails against the “misconceived concepts” of “free will” and “unfree will,” calling them “basically an abuse of cause and effect,” his point is that there is no faculty or entity called “the will” to be “free” or “unfree,” other than the strong or weak drives in one's embodied system of drives, each seeking satisfaction, strength and domination over the other drives in the system.

Certainly there is no freedom of will of the kind required by MPS, since Nietzsche holds that determinism, or at least fatalism, is true and, as Leiter reads Nietzsche, that freedom would be either the freedom of a self-caused cause (*causa sui*), or the “freedom to do otherwise.” But reading Nietzsche as arguing specifically against the existence of a metaphysically distinct faculty of the will—rather than against free will in a more general sense—allows us to agree with Leiter that Nietzsche argues that the *causa sui* is an absurdity *and* that there is no conscious self that is causally effective, and *still* argue that Nietzsche leaves open the possibility for non-

metaphysical notions of willing<sup>26</sup> and for senses of freedom other than “freedom to do otherwise,” i.e., we can read Nietzsche as a compatibilist.

None of the commentators mentioned in the Introduction argues that Nietzsche allows for the ability to choose among alternative courses of action, “regulative control.”<sup>27</sup> The positive program that they point to sees the experimenter as being able to act of her own free will, even if alternative courses of action are *not* available. On the view of these commentators, Nietzsche’s positive program relies on a “source model” of control, i.e., that whether an agent’s action is free depends on whether it reflects her “true self”—whether it is truly hers. I suggest that the “substantive ideal” that Leiter offers as a deflationary reading of the Sovereign Individual is the focus of Nietzsche’s constructive or *practical* philosophy i.e., the task of integrating one’s drives and values into a cohesive and lasting whole.

While Nietzsche would think freedom of the will on the “Garden of Forking Paths” model of control *is* impossible, because he is a fatalist, Nietzsche’s thought does accommodate freedom based on a “source model” of control. This second kind of freedom is (a) present in Nietzsche’s philosophy, (b) available to those with the right drives, and (c) not incompatible with determinism. The processes of acquiring self-understanding and of questioning one’s self-image, discussed in the previous section of this chapter, enable an agent to reflect her true self in her actions, i.e., to act with the freedom of a “source model” of control.

At the beginning of this chapter I said that I would argue that Nietzsche has a constructive philosophy and that I would identify the resources that the “no such entity” reading

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<sup>26</sup> Examples of non-metaphysical notions of willing include: the power relations of commanding and obeying that goes on in the society of one’s drives (BGE 19), or as cited from (BGE 12) above. (I am ignoring non-metaphysical libertarian free will since such views would not be possible readings of Nietzsche.)

<sup>27</sup> As noted in the Introduction, McKenna describes two ways that the definition of free will has been developed in the free will literature. One concerns an agent’s alternative possibilities and “freedom to do otherwise,” what McKenna refers to as the “Garden of Forking Paths” model of control (McKenna 2009: 5). The second concerns the source of an agent’s action, what McKenna refers to as the “source model” of control (McKenna 2009: 7). Fischer refers to these as “regulative control” and “guidance control,” respectively.

makes available. I contrasted the “no such entity” reading of the three descriptive components of Leiter’s MPS with his reading. Instead of insisting on the psychological similarity of agents and the resulting appropriateness of one set of values, rules or morality, both assumptions being ridiculous according to Nietzsche, I argue that Nietzsche argues for the achievement of individuality through the attainment of self-understanding. Instead of assuming transparency of the self—that our motives and the motives of others are readily available when they are not—I argue that Nietzsche shows how self-understanding is possible, at least for those with the right drives. Finally, instead of the claim that responsibility requires alternative possibilities, when all agree such alternatives are not available in a determined world, I argue that Nietzsche looks to a different requirement for free will: identification of the action with the agent.

In Chapter 4, I will illustrate the difference between Nietzsche’s critical and constructive philosophies by contrasting the practical lives of members of the herd and experimenters.

#### **4 THE FREEDOM OF THE EXPERIMENTER**

In Chapter 3, I argued that Nietzsche has a constructive philosophy and that the way to see that Nietzsche has the psychological resources for a constructive philosophy is to see his critical philosophy as directed at the elimination of metaphysical entities, not their associated psychological processes. My aim in this chapter is to illuminate the difference between Nietzsche’s critical and constructive philosophies and to explain how, on the “no such entity” reading, freedom is possible for those experimenters who succeed in acquiring self-understanding. I do this by comparing the life of the herd, the subject of Nietzsche’s critical philosophy and Leiter’s reading, with the life of the experimenter.

#### 4.1 Morality and the Herd

Nietzsche's critical philosophy is directed at herd morality. Under the sway of a MPS, the member of the herd sees herself as moral to the degree that she subordinates her individual drives and the freedom to express them to the rule of the herd (GS 117).<sup>28</sup> Most humans, born into herd morality, readily accept its socially prescribed values. As a result, they tend to activate the same drives and hold the same values as their peers. These values determine whether good or bad conscience is associated with a particular drive and they provide members of the herd with a common self-image. The herd do what is expected of them, believing that all have a similar "first nature" or human essence, when it is their "second nature" that is similar and common.<sup>29</sup> The member of the herd sees no reason to question either her physical environment or her prescribed social values. The member of the herd goes through life believing that humans are basically similar, that her motives can be known by herself and her peers, and that she has a faculty called "the will" that is free to choose between alternative courses of action—the three descriptive components of Leiter's MPS. The result is that the member of the herd provides relatively few of her drives with the opportunity to express themselves, compete against each other, and organize themselves into a hierarchy, resulting in her failure to attain individuality, self-knowledge and freedom. Even if she does succeed in controlling and aligning her drives with the Christian values reflected in her good conscience, she will not have realized her individuality, because she will have conformed to social expectations; she will not have achieved self-knowledge, since she has not provided her most individual drives with opportunities for

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<sup>28</sup> Morality serves those interests and "plants in us the need for limited horizons and the closest tasks. It teaches a *narrowing of perspective*, and so, in a certain sense, stupidity as a condition for life and growth" (BGE 188). Indeed, Nietzsche goes so far as to say, "Morality is herd instinct in the individual" (GS 116).

<sup>29</sup> Recall that, according to Nietzsche, our drives themselves, our unconscious "first nature," have no *moral* value component. Herd and non-herd alike, we "inherit" a set of values from the culture into which we are born. "That is to say, it [a particular drive] is attended by either a good or a bad conscience!" (D 38).

satisfaction; and she will not enjoy freedom because she will not be acting in accordance with her strongest individual drives and the values that support them.

## 4.2 Life as an Experimenter

All humans born into Christian cultures either inherit herd values and feelings, or are indoctrinated with herd values as part of their early childhood education, i.e., they acquire a “second nature.” Only a few (here called “experimenters”) are born with the drives required to break away from herd values. In my discussion of drives as the physical components of Nietzsche’s psychology, I described how the drives search for objects to satisfy them without mental awareness or involvement of any kind. Our drives and their operations are largely unknown to us, how they are strengthened or weakened is likewise unknown, and, consequently, their nourishment or lack thereof is “a work of chance” (D 119).<sup>30</sup> Unlike members of the herd, who are content to stay in the same physical and social environments, and to continue activating the same drives, the experimenter—curious, questioning and skeptical because of the drives she is born with—regularly changes her environment, much like someone who visits a variety of locations in order to find one most suitable to her individual needs, or who tries different occupations in order to identify her strengths and weaknesses. On Nietzsche’s fatalistic view of the drives, there is nothing we can do directly to change the intensity of our drives, i.e., the set of drives that we are born with is not in our control and we can’t just decide to be more brave and to take specific steps toward strengthening our drive for “bravery.” Nietzsche describes in D 560 the things that “we are at liberty to do” with respect to our drives and their environment, and the

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<sup>30</sup> “[O]ur daily experiences throw some prey in the way of now this, now that drive, and the drive seizes it eagerly: but the coming and going of these events as a whole stands in no rational relationship to the nutritional requirements of the totality of the drives: so that the outcome will always be two-fold—the starvation and stunting of some and the overfeeding of others” (D 119).

extent to which humans do or do not pay attention to the environment of their drives and their power to influence them in this way.

There are three ways that changing our physical environment can change our drives indirectly: first, by “nourishing” them to different degrees, depending on the objects encountered in the environment, strengthening some drives while weakening others; second, by “triggering” or activating drives not previously manifested; and third, as a result of the “chance” nature of their nourishment, depriving a drive of nourishment and causing it to wither away. By “triggering” and (as a result) “nourishing” different drives, the experimenter will become aware of her most powerful drives through the perspectives of the mental states that express them.

Only by continuously testing her drives by changing her physical environment and exposing her drives to different objects will the experimenter gain knowledge of their identity and power. This is the process of acquiring self-understanding, a process that is unconscious (not reflectively conscious), since the experimenter behaves the way she does as the result of the drives she was born with, not as the result of conscious intention or decision. Eventually, if she has exercised enough of her drives by changing her environment (and the objects in it), the experimenter’s strongest drive(s) will take control and organize the rest of her drives into a hierarchy. Since she will have achieved self-understanding of *her* drives, as embodied in *her* body: this is the process of becoming an Individual. This is the “substantive ideal” that Leiter refers to, described by Poellner as the result of “integrating an unusually great multiplicity of ‘drives’ and evaluative commitments into a long-lasting, coherent whole” (Leiter 2011: 110).

In Chapter 2, I introduced a text from EH, where Nietzsche uses his own life as the basis for a helpful illustration of “how you become what you are,” i.e., how one becomes an Individual:

In the meantime, the organizing, governing “idea” keeps growing deep inside—it starts commanding, it slowly leads *back* from out of the side roads and wrong turns, it gets *individual* qualities and virtues ready, since at some point these will prove indispensable as means to the whole,—one by one, it develops all the servile faculties before giving any clue as to the dominant task, the “goal,” the “purpose,” the “meaning.” (EH ‘Clever’: 9)

I noted that the freedom that Nietzsche attempts to provoke in his readers, arises when—by constantly experimenting with her environment and activating different drives—the experimenter creates the conditions that enable the emergence of her strongest individual drives. The Individual will enjoy the freedom to act motivated by her unique hierarchy of drives and powers. This freedom is characterized by its psychological organization or structure. Although her actions will be determined by her drives, being “powered” by those drives that are most uniquely hers is a way of being powered by the drives that constitute her “true self,” a system of drives with which she identifies. My reading of Nietzsche is similar to Frankfurt’s hierarchical account of compatibilist freedom.<sup>31</sup> According to Frankfurt, a person who enjoys both freedom of action and freedom of will “is not only free to do what he wants to do; he is also free to want what he wants to want. It seems to me that he has, in that case, all the freedom it is possible to desire or to conceive” (Frankfurt 1988: 22).

I now shift the focus of discussion from (unconscious) self-understanding to (conscious) self-image. Like the herd, the experimenter is born into a society and a culture. Like the herd, she acquires a self-image as part of her early childhood training, and learns that her behavior

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<sup>31</sup> Frankfurt’s idea is that agents will identify with an action, A, seeing it as representing their free will to the extent that they have ‘a second order volition’ to do A. And they will have such a [second order] volition to do A, he says, so far as they want to be controlled by the desire to do A; they want it to be the desire that moves them effectively to act [emphasis added] (Frankfurt 1988: 15).



should support that self-image.<sup>32</sup> Because she acquires this self-image from her society and culture, it will reflect how others see (or want to see) her, not her own individual drives and feelings. Nietzsche observes that although each of us is comprised of a large number of drives, we generally see one another as exhibiting at most one or two character traits (D 381).<sup>33</sup> Moreover, because we often base our self-image on the way others see us, the distorted view that others have of our character will have a simplifying and negative effect on how we see ourselves (D115).<sup>34</sup> Consequently, unless we question our self-image, it will reflect the values “learned” as part of our childhood training, and will be based, not on our own drives, but on the values of our ancestors (D35).

Prior to achieving the hierarchy of her drives, herd values will determine the content of the experimenter’s conscience, i.e., what drives are approved or disapproved by her good and bad conscience, respectively. But, now that she has become an Individual and has (at least some) knowledge of the identity and power of her drives—she will no longer be happy with her self-image (the way she sees herself) or with her reputation (the way she is seen by others), both of which are likely to reflect only one or two of her drives (manifested in her behavior as character traits), which may not be those with which she identifies. The Therapeutic Nietzsche, as Leiter refers to Nietzsche’s rhetorical skills and aims, hopes to provoke the “unhappy” Individual into investigating the origins of her herd values either directly or by reading his own genealogical investigations as reported in GM. Just as the Individual changes her physical environment in order to activate more of her drives in the quest for self-understanding,

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<sup>32</sup> Our childhood education, our “second nature,” is based on the needs of society: “Education results in our second nature, which some of us snakes can throw off when our first nature has become mature” (D 455).

<sup>33</sup> We cannot directly observe a person’s drives, but we do observe the character traits exhibited in another’s behavior, where traits of character are seen to reflect a person’s drives.

<sup>34</sup> Nietzsche addresses this interesting complication in D115: “*Our opinion of ourself*, however, which we have arrived at by this erroneous path, the so-called ‘ego’, is thenceforth a fellow worker in the construction of our character and our destiny.”

Nietzsche's hope is that she will question her social environment, i.e., the values and self-image that she has inherited as her "second nature." The Individual reflects on her self-image, attempting to challenge or dislodge it, motivated by the tension between the socially-prescribed values of this "second nature" and values consistent with the knowledge that she has acquired of the identity and power of her own individual drives.

In a general way, Nietzsche speaks of the positive effect on anyone of having an "overall philosophical justification of one's way of living and thinking" (GS 289). But the Individual's self-image will need to be more than that. Her self-image will need to reflect her "character," the result of combining her own drives with the values and behavioral characteristics of her social peers, somehow brought in to balance. Nietzsche stresses the importance of "'giving style' to one's character" whereby one will "survey all the strengths and weaknesses that their nature has to offer and then fit them into an artistic plan." "Giving style to one's character" can involve (for example) surveying our strengths and weaknesses, retaining desirable parts of our second nature, hiding undesirable parts of first nature, and removing or hiding the ugly, fitting all these into an artistic plan such that even our weaknesses fit in positively: in the end it appears to be the work of a single taste—"it's enough that it was one taste" (GS 290). Nietzsche recognizes that there is value in being perceived as possessing a stable and unchanging character: "A firm reputation used to be a thing of utmost utility; and wherever society is still ruled by herd mentality it is still today most expedient for everyone to *act* as if his character and occupation are unchangeable, even if basically they are not" (GS 296).

But as the Individual gains understanding of her drives, she realizes that her strongest individual drives are reflected in her "bad conscience," while the herd values that she is increasingly questioning are reflected in her "good conscience." Because conscience is how the

herd morality and the ascetic ideal exert their control, the Individual is not free from this external control as long as her good conscience reflects Christian values. At some point, the tension between conflicting drives and values may push her to exercise her “intellectual conscience”—to question her conscience and the values it reflects.<sup>35</sup> The Individual will not be satisfied with herself unless and until she can “rely” on her “good conscience,” i.e., until her “good conscience” is aligned with the values reflective of her strongest individual drives instead of with Christian values. Nietzsche talks about the resulting need for a reversal of the values attached to good and bad conscience in GM II 24:

For all too long man has regarded his natural inclinations with an “evil eye,” so that in him they have finally become wedded to “bad conscience.” A reverse attempt would *in itself* be possible—but who is strong enough for it?—namely to wed to bad conscience the unnatural inclinations, all those aspirations to the beyond, to that which is contrary to the senses, contrary to the instincts, contrary to nature, contrary to the animal—in short the previous ideals which are all ideals hostile to life, ideals of those who libel the world. (GM II 24)

If the Individual is strong enough, she will change her self-image and see herself differently. By interpreting herself differently, she will “take responsibility” for herself, she will give herself a new meaning to replace the meaning that the ascetic ideal can no longer provide for her. By taking responsibility (an act of reflective consciousness) for herself she will have taken responsibility for her future actions, thereby exercising sovereignty over her drives.

In Chapter 3, I described how the “no such entity” reading makes resources available by looking at each of the three descriptive components of MPS. In this chapter, I have highlighted the difference between Nietzsche’s critical and constructive philosophies in order to show how the “no such entity” reading supports Nietzsche’s constructive philosophy. According to the

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<sup>35</sup>Nietzsche asks, “Why do you listen to your conscience? What gives you the right to consider such a judgment true or infallible? Your judgment that ‘this is right’ has a pre-history in your drives, inclinations, aversions, experiences and what you have failed to experience: you have to ask ‘how did it emerge there?’ and then ‘what is impelling me to listen to it?’ There are a hundred ways to listen to your conscience” (GS 335).

Similarity Thesis, members of the herd assume that there is only one type of person, and that there is a metaphysically distinct human self, or essence, which is common to all humans (TI 4). Once the experimenter rejects the common metaphysical picture of the self that is integral to the herd self-image, she is left to make what she can of her individual body and drives in the environments that she finds herself. From a practical, internal standpoint, once someone has rejected the idea that all have a common human essence or character, one has no alternative but to act as an individual agent questioning her physical and social environments until her drives organize themselves into a hierarchy and she achieves self-understanding, at which point the Individual is in a position to question her values and take responsibility for her self-image and reputation.

According to the Transparency Thesis, members of the herd assume not only that they have a metaphysical “self” or “character” that they share with all humans, but also that they have the ability to know the motives of themselves and others. The herd thinks they (can) know their strengths and weaknesses, and that—since all are similar—they can assume that their assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of others are reliable. Nietzsche says this is nonsense: we can never completely know our drives. But, from the practical standpoint, by “experimenting,” i.e., by questioning her physical and conceptual environments, the experimenter can, in rare cases, gain both perceptual knowledge and self-understanding (culminating in becoming an Individual), and a revised self-image that she is happy with (culminating in becoming a SI).

According to the Free Will Thesis, members of the herd believe that they have free will, in the sense that they believe that they have a faculty called “the will” and that it is free (self-created), and that they are justifiably held responsible for their actions because they could always have freely done something other than what they did. The critical Nietzsche argues, of course,

that this notion of free will as *causa sui* is nonsense. But, from a practical standpoint, the acquisition of self-understanding and a revised self-image can result in freedom. The first kind of freedom is structural: becoming an Individual, becoming who we are, by enabling one's drives to battle it out until one's strongest drives take control and organize the rest of one's drives into a hierarchy. The Individual continues to question her "second nature," the values that she inherited from her society. If she is strong enough, she will "take responsibility" for herself, style her character, and give herself meaning by seeing or interpreting herself differently, to replace the meaning that the ascetic ideal no longer provides. If she is both strong and lucky, she will experience a realignment of her good conscience with her first nature. This Individual who has experienced such a realignment of conscience is what Nietzsche calls the Sovereign Individual. On Nietzsche's view, freedom is not something that makes one fit to be held responsible: holding oneself responsible—seeing oneself a certain way—makes one free.

In Chapter 5, I will argue that the sovereignty of the Sovereign Individual is compatible with Nietzsche's fatalism.

## **5 SELF-UNDERSTANDING AND SELF-CONTROL: NIETZSCHE'S COMPATIBILISM**

I have argued that there are reasons to think Nietzsche has both a critical and a constructive philosophy, and that on his constructive view an experimenter can enjoy compatibilist freedom. In Chapter 4, I compared Nietzsche's critical and constructive philosophies in practice. I described how an experimenter could acquire self-understanding, the result of her drives' achieving an organizational hierarchy, thereby illustrating the freedom of the Individual in Nietzsche's philosophy. I then described how an Individual can attain a second

kind of freedom by questioning and revising her self-image by *taking responsibility* for her drives, becoming, in rare cases, what Nietzsche refers to as a Sovereign Individual. This chapter defends the claim that this freedom is compatibilist by showing that the constructive Nietzsche can respond to the objections to compatibilism cited by Leiter and other incompatibilists.

## 5.1 Nietzsche on Freedom

On Leiter's reading, Nietzsche argues against Morality in the Pejorative Sense (MPS) by arguing that the freedom required for the Free Will Thesis of MPS does not exist. Leiter attributes two arguments against freedom of the will to Nietzsche, the "*causa sui* argument" and the "naturalistic argument." The *causa sui* argument targets the herd's belief that the will acts independently of causal determination—it is a self-caused cause. Nietzsche refers to the *causa sui* argument as "thoroughly absurd" (BGE 15) and "the best self-contradiction that has ever been conceived" (BGE 21). The "naturalistic argument," based on Leiter's theory of type-facts, argues that the conscious will has no causal role in action. Only type-facts are causally efficacious, and type-facts explain both the person's consciousness (e.g., when a thought enters her consciousness) and action. The conscious will is epiphenomenal and has no causal effect (Leiter 2002: 92-93). Leiter sees Nietzsche as an incompatibilist, since (as I discuss below) even though he does not see Nietzsche as a "classical determinist," he does argue that the causal efficacy of type-facts rules out any role for the conscious will—and the freedom required by the Free Will thesis. In contrast, I will argue that the process of becoming an Individual (based on achieving a hierarchical organization of one's drives) is importantly similar to Frankfurt's hierarchical account of freedom of will and that the constructive Nietzsche, as represented in the experimenter, can also be seen to exhibit a compatibilist account of freedom of will.

## 5.2 Leiter against Compatibilism

Leiter recognizes that compatibilists (including Hume) have argued that causal determinism does not rule out freedom and moral responsibility—all that is required is that the will be determined in the right sort of way. On a compatibilist reading, type-facts could explain the causal history of an action performed freely in virtue of, e.g., the person's identifying with that causal history. Leiter discusses three objections to hierarchy-based accounts<sup>36</sup> of compatibilism: (1) the compatibilist is unable to come up with an account of the source of the second-order desires featured in accounts like Frankfurt's; (2) the compatibilist faces the specter of an infinite regress in choosing between competing second-order desires; (3) on Nietzsche's account the agent has no way of knowing the sources of her actions because the sources generally cited are epiphenomenal and the real causes are type-facts (not available to consciousness and unknown to the agent), so no one could identify with them.<sup>37</sup> And he argues, "after a quarter of a century of philosophical debate, it should be plain that hierarchical accounts of free will have failed...indeed it is striking that all philosophical accounts of free will (at least the one's designed to underwrite moral responsibility) are dismal failures" (Leiter 2002: 94).

Now we come to an interesting complication. As suggested earlier, Leiter does not characterize Nietzsche as a "determinist"<sup>38</sup> or "fatalist" as those terms are usually understood, but as a "causal essentialist." "Causal Essentialism" is the view that "for any individual substance (e.g., a person or some other living organism) that substance has "essential" properties that are causally primary with respect to the future history of that substance, i.e., they non-

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<sup>36</sup> As noted earlier, my reading of Nietzsche shares relevant features with Frankfurt's structural account of compatibilist freedom.

<sup>37</sup> Leiter cites Watson 1987 and Velleman 1992 on objections (1) and (2).

<sup>38</sup> Leiter distinguishes between "classical determinism," "classical fatalism" and "causal essentialism." (2002, 82-83). "Classical Determinism" is the view that "for any event  $p$  at a time  $t$ ,  $p$  is necessary given the totality of facts prior to  $t$ , together with the actual laws of nature." "Classical Fatalism" is the view that "whatever happened had to happen, but not in virtue of the truth of classical determinism."

trivially determine the space of possible trajectories for that substance” (Leiter 2002: 82-83). “Causal Essentialism” combines features of determinism (it’s based on type-facts that have causal efficacy) and fatalism (the outcome is set by the drives, but there is some room for variation depending on the environment). On Leiter’s view, Nietzsche is a “Causal Essentialist” (a kind of fatalist) who holds that human agents do not possess the kind of freedom required for moral responsibility.

But Leiter is aware that his own attribution of Causal Essentialism opens up a way to think of Nietzsche as a compatibilist, based on the fact that some of what happens depends, at least in part, on values and the environment. As Leiter notes: on its face, causal essentialism appears to provide the basis for a compatibilist account in “the conceptual space between Causal Essentialism (the heart of Nietzsche’s fatalism) and Classical Determinism” (Leiter 2002: 98). It turns out that Leiter does not specifically address the “conceptual space” argument. Instead he (takes a step back and) invokes Galen Strawson’s much broader “Impossibility of Moral Responsibility” argument. Strawson’s broad-gauged argument can be stated rather simply, and is claimed to be effective against any conception of freedom intended to underwrite moral responsibility—of the sort that grounds non-consequentialist desert—whether based on determinism, indeterminism, or (presumably) causal essentialism.

Leiter paraphrases Strawson’s argument: “If, in other words, we are not *causa sui*, then everything about our will (and, consequently, about our actions) is causally determined by something about the ‘way we already are’—including those operations of will in which we attempt to alter ‘the way we already are’” (Leiter 2002: 90). Strawson provides the following summary of his argument:

- (1) You do what you do, in any situation in which you find yourself, because of the way you are.



So

- (2) To be truly morally responsible for what you do you must be truly morally responsible for the way you are—at least in certain crucial mental respects.

But

- (3) It is not possible for you to be truly morally responsible for the way you are, without having intentionally brought it about that you are as you are now, and that you have brought this about in such a way that you can now be said to be truly responsible for being the way you are now. This sets one off on an infinite regress.

According to one commentator, this argument has drawn many responses and persuaded few (Clarke 2005: 13). I will describe two points raised by Randolph Clarke against this argument that need to be addressed by Strawson before more readers should find it convincing. The first is that the argument leaves out a key premise that, once identified, should require that Strawson provide further argument. The second concerns the definition of “moral responsibility.”

Clarke makes the point that: “Accounts of free action are often meant to be accounts of how it can be that, even if it is not up to an agent how she is mentally, her action can be still up to her, [i.e., that] she can still have a choice about whether she performs that action, even when she acts for a reason” (Clarke 2005: 16). Since Strawson’s argument does not allow for the possibility of any such choice, Clarke suggests that the following two additional premises need to be inserted between Strawson’s premises (1) and (2), in order to highlight this disagreement with his opponents.

- (O) When you do what you do because of the way you are, to be truly morally responsible for what you do, either (a) you must be truly morally responsible for the way you are, at least in certain crucial mental respects, or (b) it must be up to you whether if you are that way, in certain crucial mental respects, then you perform that action;

and

- (P) When you do what you do because of the way you are, it is not possible for it to be up to you whether if you are that way, in certain crucial respects, then you perform that action.

Clarke suggests that, since Strawson accepts (P) and many of his opponents reject it, he needs to provide an argument for it if he is to convince them of his argument. However, Clarke also points out that followers of Frankfurt's hierarchical account of compatibilism, usually referred to as "semi-compatibilists," reject (O). Semi-compatibilists accept that the ability to do otherwise is incompatible with determinism, but hold that responsibility does not require the ability to do otherwise: responsibility is compatible with determinism (Clarke 2005: 19).

The second objection raised by Clarke relates to Strawson's definition of "true moral responsibility" as "responsibility of such a kind that, if we have it, then it makes sense, at least, to suppose that it could be just to punish some of us with (eternal) torment in hell and reward others with (eternal) bliss in heaven" (Strawson 1994: 216). Clearly, the kind of freedom that would be required to underwrite this kind of responsibility is a high bar, although Strawson thinks that many feel they have it. Nonetheless, Strawson's argument does require that one be "truly morally responsible" for "the way you are" in this "heaven and hell" sense, so it is not surprising that moral responsibility turns out to be impossible. As Clarke points out, the question is whether a less severe characterization of moral responsibility, perhaps one described in terms of appropriateness of reactive attitudes of praise and blame backed up by suitable rewards and punishments, might adequately characterize genuine moral responsibility, and if so, whether the kind of freedom that would be required to underwrite this characterization might be possible (Clarke 2005: 22).

I have cited arguments that have been raised against Strawson's Impossibility of Moral Responsibility argument, the argument that Leiter calls on for support in arguing that

compatibilism has been decisively disproven and that any attempts to argue that Nietzsche could be a compatibilist are doomed. But even if Leiter's arguments against compatibilism are seen to be convincing, Clarke's article shows that Strawson does not engage with the kind of compatibilist that I take Nietzsche to be, nor is the notion of "heaven and hell" moral responsibility that Strawson employs relevant to the discussion of the experimenter in Nietzsche's constructive philosophy.<sup>39</sup> Now that I have argued that Leiter has not shown that compatibilism is a non-starter, I move on to argue that Nietzsche's constructive philosophy, as described in Chapters 2-4, is compatibilist. I argue that the "conceptual space" between determinism and Causal Essentialism *does* provide the experimenter with the opportunity for compatibilist freedom.

### 5.3 Responding to the Classical Incompatibilist Argument

Here is an overview of the second part of this chapter.<sup>40</sup> As outlined by Michael McKenna, there are two incompatibilist arguments. In order to argue that Nietzsche is a successful compatibilist, I must show that he can respond to the incompatibilist claim that for an agent to be free, either (1) she could have done otherwise, or, (2) if it is an action for which the agent has no alternatives, that it was in fact the agent who caused it—that it is truly her action. Some compatibilists argue that an agent can act freely even if she is unable to do otherwise by offering a "deep self" or "mesh" analysis of freedom that is based on the interrelationship of the various components of an agent's psychology at the time of her action. Incompatibilists then question (1) whether that psychological structure is up to the task expected of it or (2) whether

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<sup>39</sup> I should note that this notion of "heaven and hell" moral responsibility is a feature of Christian herd morality (and a target of Nietzsche's critical philosophy) and that Strawson also reflects Christian beliefs in "heaven and hell" in his argument. Similarly, Strawson follows Nietzsche in rejecting the *causa sui* notion of free will.

<sup>40</sup> This second part of the chapter relies for its overall structure on the summary outline of incompatibilist arguments—and the account of efforts of contemporary compatibilists to respond to these arguments—contained in Michael McKenna's *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (SEP) articles "Compatibilism" and "Compatibilism: State of the Art," (SEP-Supplement) both dated 2009.

the structure, in itself, shows that the agent is the “ultimate source” of her action—that the action is truly hers and reflective of her self. I argue that this first question, in Nietzsche’s case, refers to the process of “becoming an Individual” through the experimenter’s drives’ adopting a hierarchy with the drive(s) she most identifies with in charge, and that the second question relates to the Individual’s taking responsibility for herself by interpreting or seeing herself a certain way, i.e., consistent with the values of the drives with which she identifies.

Here is the CLASSICAL INCOMPATIBILIST argument (CIA):<sup>41</sup>

1. If a person acts of her own free will, then she could have done otherwise.
2. If determinism is true, no one can do otherwise than one actually does.
3. Therefore, if determinism is true, no one acts of her own free will.

According to Nietzsche’s constructive philosophy, the experimenter acts freely even if she could not have done otherwise. Nietzsche is seen as arguing against the first premise of the CIA by arguing that freedom does not require alternative possibilities. On my reading of Nietzsche, the process of acquiring self-understanding provides the resources to respond to the CIA.<sup>42</sup>

Although our actions are determined by our drives, being “powered” by those drives that are most uniquely our own is a way of being powered by the drives that we “want” to be in charge. The key to freedom is therefore to become an Individual—to successfully become, or realize, our own set of drives—“to become who we are” (GS 335). This kind of freedom is structural: “becoming who we are” is the process of enabling our drives to “battle it out” until our strongest drive takes charge and a hierarchy emerges. The establishment of this hierarchy, commanded by our “most nourished” and strongest drives reflects an organization of our drives that is similar in structure to the hierarchy of desires that is the foundation of Frankfurt’s account of

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<sup>41</sup> McKenna 2009: 6.

<sup>42</sup> I see conscious self-understanding, self-image, as enabling Nietzsche to respond to the second incompatibilist argument, the Source Incompatibilist Argument (SIA) addressed below.

compatibilism. The experimenter of Nietzsche's constructive philosophy can attain a kind of freedom based on a "source model" of control in virtue of the fact that her strongest and most personal drives are at the top of the hierarchy of her drives, rather than on the availability of alternatives. Both Nietzsche and Frankfurt can be seen to respond to the first premise of the CIA: The agent who desires to desire what she desires (whose second-order desires are aligned with her first-order desires) is similar to the case of the Nietzschean agent whose drives are controlled by the drives she identifies with. In each case, the resulting structure is key.

Not surprisingly, given the parallels between this account of freedom and Frankfurt's, the account I attribute to Nietzsche needs to be able to respond to the objections that have been leveled at Frankfurt. The first, "hierarchical problem," can be expressed as follows: if a person can have conflicting first-order desires that require resolution at the second-order level, why think the person could not have conflicting second-order desires requiring in turn a deciding third-order desire—with further possible stalemates? Frankfurt's account (and by extension, Nietzsche's) is incomplete, and "needs supplementing to avoid a spiraling recurrence of challenges to an agent's freedom," i.e., the threat of an infinite regress (McKenna 2009: 27, discussing Watson 1975). Like Frankfurt, Nietzsche's account of freedom features an organization or hierarchy—a hierarchy of drives. On my account, however, the constructive Nietzsche can respond to this objection because the number of any human's drives is finite and freedom is a function of the relations among the full set of drives. Any potential regress would end if and when the experimenter's drives formed a hierarchy and she became an Individual.

The second objection, the "mesh problem," is that the interrelationship or structure of desires that is the key feature of this kind of compatibilism may not, in itself, be enough to ensure the freedom of the agent. As McKenna describes it: "According to Frankfurt, if freely

willed action for which an agent is morally responsible is purely a function of the relation between an agent's will and her second-order volitions, then it does not matter in any way how an agent came to have that particular mesh. But cases can be constructed that seem to suggest that it does matter how an agent came to have a particular mesh between her first-order and her second-order desires" (McKenna 2009: 27). Cases can be constructed in which the agent would appear to meet the requirements for acting freely on Frankfurt's account but where the agent would not be acting freely, based on our intuitions, e.g., in cases of hypnosis and brainwashing.

<sup>43</sup> The problem here is the threat of manipulation. Leiter describes this objection in terms of the compatibilist not being able to know the source of her second-order desires or (an additional objection specific to his account) the sources of her actions (since they are type-facts and unknowable to her).

The fact that Nietzsche's account relies on self-understanding based on the power relations of the feelings that manifest her drives, as interpreted through her values, makes the experimenter (or, if her drives have organized themselves into a hierarchy, the Individual) less subject to manipulation than the herd. In fact, Nietzsche would argue that most people, being members of the herd, are manipulated, because they are motivated by socially accepted drives and not by those with rank within their own drive hierarchy. Nonetheless, even if a person becomes an Individual, a deterministic interpretation could be given that the resulting action or formation of the Individual is the result of the agent's drives (including the fact that she happened to have been born with the right drives) combined with her environment. That is why becoming an Individual is necessary but not sufficient for the freedom (sovereignty) of the Individual—she could still be manipulated. Nietzsche seems to acknowledge this by requiring

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<sup>43</sup> Frankfurt does respond to the mesh problem by requiring that an agent's identification must be *active*. Her stance towards her own will is that it *determines* itself (1994). She and it are fully integrated. When an agent's will is so fashioned, then she reveals her self in it; she regards it *wholeheartedly* (McKenna 2009: 5).

*conscious* (social) self-knowledge of the Individual, i.e., reflective questioning of her values and motives. The Source Incompatibilist Argument expresses this further challenge.

#### **5.4 Responding to the Source Incompatibilist Argument**

Premise 1 of the CIA implies that free will requires the ability to choose among alternative courses of action—what is often called “regulative control” in the free will literature. Since on both Nietzsche’s and Frankfurt’s account an agent can act of her own free will without choosing among alternative courses of action, neither is relying on “regulative control” as the basis for free will: they are relying on “guidance control”—arguing in effect that the agent’s action reflects her true self, even though she could not have done otherwise. According to McKenna, anyone hoping to answer the incompatibilist by arguing that freedom does not require alternative possibilities must still address the Source Incompatibilist Argument’s requirement that the contribution that the agent makes to the production of her action must be significant enough to constitute acting on her own free will.

The compatibilist must address the SOURCE INCOMPATIBILIST argument (SIA):

1. A person acts of her own free will only if she is its [her own free will’s] ultimate source.
2. If determinism is true, no one is the ultimate source of her actions.
3. Therefore, if determinism is true, no one acts of her own free will.

Since both Frankfurt and Nietzsche are defending compatibilist accounts of freedom, we must see each as challenging either premise 1 or premise 2 of the SIA. On my reading, here is where Nietzsche and Frankfurt part company.

According to McKenna, given the accepted definition of “ultimate,” no compatibilist can deny the truth of premise 2. For this reason Frankfurt argues against premise 1 by arguing that an agent can be responsible for her action even if she is not its ultimate source (McKenna 2009:

28). But a few participants in recent free will debates have argued against the second premise of the SIA by arguing that, even if determinism is true, it is possible to be the ultimate source of one's action, on the grounds that the standard reading of "ultimate source" is too strong. These philosophers offer an alternative reading of "ultimate" that is contextual—limited in scope—and that does not extend back into history indefinitely. Stimulated by McKenna's suggestion that "[p]erhaps there is some room for compatibilists to resist the second premise instead of the first by offering a positive account of being an ultimate source of one's action" (McKenna 2009: 8) and by articles by McKenna (2009) and Clarke (2005) that argue against the incompatibilist reading of the ultimacy requirement, I defend a compatibilist reading of Nietzsche by seeing him as arguing against the second premise of the SIA.

McKenna sees two ways to develop and defend a contextual sense of ultimacy: the first is communication-based, or social; the second is expressivist or narrative (McKenna 2008: 15). Nietzsche, of course, has much to say about the communication-based or social dimension of life. As discussed earlier, conscious self-knowledge or self-image is something we acquire at an early age. But the ability to navigate our communication-based or social environment is not an adequate basis for freedom for Nietzsche, since conscious self-knowledge (self-image) is available to all humans, including members of the herd.

Nietzsche, I argue, takes on premise 2 by arguing that the person, who is both an Individual and takes responsibility for her actions, has become the "ultimate" source of her actions. Nietzsche can be seen as embracing the second of the two alternatives for limiting the scope of "ultimacy" discussed by McKenna: the expressive or narrative approach. On this approach, attributed to Fischer and Ravizza (1998), an agent takes responsibility for her self by seeing herself in a certain way, according to a story or narrative that makes sense of her life. On



my reading of Nietzsche, the Individual engages in a similar activity when she “gives style to her character,” “surveying strengths and weaknesses, retaining desirable parts of our second nature, hiding undesirable parts of first nature...fitting all these into an artistic plan such that even our weaknesses fit in positively: in the end it appears to be the work of a single taste” (GS 290). Nietzsche can still argue that the agent is the “ultimate” source of her actions because he limits the sense of “ultimate”: it is not the “heaven and hell” sense of “ultimate” of Strawson. With the scope of “ultimate” limited to life on this earth, one *can* be the ultimate source of one’s will.

My reading of Nietzsche focuses on the role of reflective consciousness, and by taking a context-dependent definition of “ultimacy” and “ultimate source,” enables us to argue that the Nietzsche of his constructive philosophy is compatibilist. There are two requirements for ascribing responsibility—a knowledge component and a willing component: we must be satisfied that the agent knew what she was doing and willed the action (wanted to do it). In this regard, perhaps the key idea regarding sovereignty, the Individual, and self-understanding is that we can never have *knowledge* of our actions or of another’s actions, since we can’t get beyond our own perspectives. But an Individual can attain *self-knowledge* (i.e. self-understanding) of her drives and feelings. The knowledge of an action needed to ascribe responsibility to an agent, either by the agent herself or by an observer or judge, is never available. But self-understanding is possible, and this enables the Individual to take responsibility for her future and actions. She is both an Individual and free.

In Chapter 6, I reassess the significance of the Sovereign Individual.

## 6 A REASSESSMENT OF THE ROLE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SOVEREIGN INDIVIDUAL

Leiter offers two possible “deflationary” readings of the account of the SI in GM II. The first is the “wholly ironic” reading. On the second, “the ‘sovereign individual’ does indeed represent an *ideal* of the self, one marked by a kind of self-mastery foreign to less coherent selves (whose momentary impulses pull them this way and that), but such a self, and its self-mastery is, in Nietzschean terms, a fortuitous natural artifact (a bit of ‘fate’), not an autonomous achievement for which anyone could be responsible” (Leiter 2011: 104). Either reading, in Leiter’s opinion, enables us “to understand how and why Nietzsche, the fatalist and arch-skeptic about free will, would have created the figure of the ‘sovereign individual’” (Leiter 2011: 104).

I have argued that, even if the achievement of the substantive ideal is “a bit of fate,” it plays a significant role in Nietzsche’s constructive philosophy as an illustration of the possible and achievable “fate” of the experimenters, those readers born with the drives of the investigator, the questioner, the skeptic. The SI embodies the goal of what I see as Nietzsche’s constructive philosophy: (1) the SI is an Individual—her drives have organized into a unified hierarchy; and (2) the SI is reflectively conscious and sovereign over her drives in that she has developed non-desire based motivation, and has taken responsibility for her “long will,” i.e., her drives’ ability to deliver on future promises. The SI does embody the “substantive ideal” that Poellner first described as “[success in] integrating an unusually great multiplicity of ‘drives’ and evaluative commitments into a lasting, coherent whole” (Leiter 2011: 110).

Katsafanas observes that “[a]lthough explicit discussions of the sovereign individual are confined to GM II 2, the entirety of GM II and GM III appeal to the capacities exemplified by this [sovereign] individual (Katsafanas 2014: 190). It is not unreasonable to think that Nietzsche

would see the “substantive ideal,” as exemplified by the SI, playing a role in his vision of a constructive or practical philosophy based on experimenters responding to what Leiter calls the “Therapeutic Nietzsche.”

It is indisputable that there is irony in GM II 2’s portrayal of the SI. But the irony centered on promising is surely more complex than Leiter suggests. This account of the development of the institution of promising is significant for the account of autonomy in Nietzsche because, following Searle’s discussion, promising is a classic example of “non-desire based motivation,” where “non-desire based motivation,” power over our own drives, is key to autonomy and necessary for power over others (Searle 2001: 198). This account of promising sheds light on Nietzsche’s account of the SI and provides the basis for a reading of the SI passage that is not ironic, unless one reads it as doubly ironic. As Katsafanas emphasizes, “promising” is not to be taken lightly. The promisor must be strong enough to maintain her commitments in the face of temptations, and to refrain from acting upon her drives: “[t]he promisor has a capacity to will” (Katsafanas 2014: 191).

There are textual reasons to put less emphasis on the ironic reading of the SI and more on the “substantial ideal.” As Nietzsche suggests in his discussion of GM in EH, each of its three parts has its own rhetorical strategy. “In each case, a beginning that *should* be deceptive: cool, scientific, even ironic, intentionally foreground, intentionally evasive” (EH ‘Books’ GM). Once he has secured our emotional involvement, he launches into his intended message; in the case of GM II, that “conscience” is the result of cruelty turned inward. The strongest example of irony in GM II 2 may well be the discussion of “conscience.” I suggest that the “surprise,” with regard to “conscience,” is not its appearance as the italicized last word of GM II 2, but that the alternative “revaluation” of “conscience” in the last section of GM II (section 24)—where “good

conscience” is in alignment with (instead of opposition to) “first nature”—is all that is needed to change an ironic caricature into a replacement for the ascetic ideal. The achievement of sovereignty is the “achievement” (through self-understanding of one’s drives and character) of the “revaluation of conscience”—throwing off the ascetic ideal and replacing it with the “substantive ideal” illustrated in GM II 2 as the Sovereign Individual.

In this thesis I have attempted to show that Nietzsche does believe in freedom and responsibility, Nietzsche does think his target readers can exercise meaningful control over their lives, and Nietzsche does think that his revisionary sense of “‘freedom’—the ‘long protracted will’” (Leiter 2011: 27) is in reach of anyone, or at least of any of the readers he is hoping to reach. This freedom is compatibilist, not the “freedom to do otherwise” or “*causa sui*” versions that are the target of his critical philosophy, and the “responsibility” is personal—taken by oneself for oneself, not social or moral or involving the ascription of praise or blame. The control that is available to the experimenter is “guidance control,” the control that comes from acting from drives and perspectives that are one’s own, not based on values inherited from society. But this control over our drives and ultimately, over how we are seen by others, is meaningful, in that it results in a reinterpretation of our drives and creation of new values—replacing those provided by the ascetic ideal. Last, this freedom is available to those in Nietzsche’s target audience who possess the right drives, since any of these “experimenters”<sup>44</sup> can succeed in becoming an Individual, and, if lucky, a Sovereign Individual. What more can be expected of a constructive or practical philosophy?

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<sup>44</sup> “We are experimenters: let us also want to be them!” (D 453)

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