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## 14 Nietzsche and Freud: The 'I' and Its Drives

The parallels of Nietzsche with Freud are a matter of common knowledge; much less well appreciated are their differences. My aim in this paper is to underscore and arrive at a better understanding of the latter. I will suggest that the agreement of Nietzsche with Freud regarding certain fundamental matters of human psychology coexists with very deep philosophical disagreement. From one angle Nietzsche and Freud can fairly be described as engaged on a common project. Closer examination reveals that their shared territory is better viewed as the result of a crossing of paths, on the way to different and mutually exclusive destinations. The disagreement of Nietzsche and Freud with one another is, I will suggest, ultimately no less intense than their argument with arch-rationalists such as Kant.

1. Viewed from an appropriate distance—on a canvas sufficiently broad to make salient their common opposition to the Kantian image of human beings—Nietzsche and Freud appear to be seeking the same kind of result: a naturalistic reconstrual of human personality which disabuses us of rationalistic prejudices, destroys illusions of spirituality, and alerts us to the necessity of embarking on a new task of self-understanding, the success of which promises some amelioration of our condition. As the familiar narrative has it, Nietzsche and Freud, following in the path of Spinoza and Hume, are engaged on a common diagnostic and therapeutic enterprise, the crux of which is exposure of the true Nature within us. Ignorance and denial of this buried motivational core is responsible for our present sickness; knowledge of it has the potential to facilitate (though it by no means guarantees) a gain in health.<sup>1</sup> The claims of both thinkers are radical, revisionary, and candidly immodest. Freud does not share Nietzsche's

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<sup>1</sup> See, famously, BGE 23, regarding the demand that “psychology again be recognized as the queen of the sciences, and that the rest of the sciences exist to serve and prepare for it. Because, from now on, psychology is again the path to the most fundamental problems” (Nietzsche 2002: 24 [KGW VI/2: 33]); and BGE 230: “To translate humanity back into nature; to gain control of the many vain and fanciful interpretations and incidental meanings that have been scribbled and drawn over that eternal basic text of *homo natura* so far; to make sure that, from now on, the human being will stand before the human being, just as he already stands before the rest of nature today, hardened by the discipline of science [...]” (Nietzsche 2002: 123 [KGW VI/2: 175]).

prophetic tone, yet both thinkers regard themselves as preparing for a new stage of modernity, profiting from the gains in knowledge and increased critical awareness accumulated over the course of the Enlightenment but offering unprecedented insight into the underlying dynamics of human existence. The transformation in self-conception urged by Nietzsche and Freud involves not just revising basic beliefs but also conceptual change: cherished notions of individual freedom and rational self-determination are shown to be empty or incoherent, and to stand in need of reconstructive surgery if they are to regain credibility.

The psychological claims on which Nietzsche and Freud concur, and which are of key importance for their shared naturalistic emancipatory ambition, centre on the notion of drive, *Trieb*. The relevant Nietzschean-Freudian conception of drive is that of an enduring motivational state with broad scope which overtakes and subsumes, without displacing, explanation in terms of reasons for action: our ordinary conception of ourselves as doing things because we believe this and desire that, is embedded in a motivational context which outstrips conscious rational awareness and yet *receives expression* through and in the agent's conscious purposes. Human action emerges from drive analysis as having a complex structure in which the end projected by the agent realizes a further end which the agent does not and normally could not recognize, let alone endorse, but in the absence of which their avowed reasons for action would have no force. Understanding agency in drive terms requires therefore a kind of double vision: we continue to see agents as acting for reasons, while also seeing that the ground of the causality of their reasons (the explanation for their having reasons for action at all, and the full explanation for those reasons being determinately thus and not otherwise) is not given within the perspective of rational agency. To invoke drive in the Nietzsche-Freud sense is thus neither to merely postulate a specific origin for desires—as when the aetiology of a want is traced back to a bodily need—nor to merely identify a causal tendency of action extending beyond the agent's awareness—as when social psychology offers functional explanation of individual actions. Drives are neither mere causal antecedents nor mere further effects of actions, but present, realized, in them.

To view agents in these terms is to impute a division within the human subject, between the agent *qua* executor of reasons for action, and the agent *qua* bearer or vehicle or medium of drive. It is natural to conceptualize this contrast in two sets of terms: as a distinction of agency and passivity (the agent is active in the first respect and passive in the second), and as a distinction of psychological appearance from psychological reality (the consciously endorsed reason is the outer shell containing and concealing the true meaning of the action).

Putting the two together, we arrive at the idea that the agent is *active* with respect to psychological *appearances*, but *passive* with respect to psychological *reality*. Devaluation of reflective consciousness, denial of free will, and the conception of intellectual activity as subservient to motivation, are familiar corollaries of the drive model.

This is an abstract, purely formal characterization of the notion of drive. The content that Freud attributes to drives has a distinctively naturalistic character—a close relation to bodily states, intense affective quality, a high degree of indeterminacy as regards its aim, insensitivity to discursive representations, independence from norms, and so forth. Nietzsche too, at some junctures, also characterizes drives in such terms, and when he does so often exhibits striking similarity with Freud. If one were to enter into the detail concerning the convergence of Nietzsche and Freud regarding substantial issues in drive psychology, there are several obvious candidates for inclusion: the similarities of Nietzsche's account of the genesis of human civilization in *On the Genealogy of Morals* with Freud's account in *Civilization and its Discontents*, both emphasizing the sacrifice of instinctual satisfaction required; the thesis that morality, as defined by the phenomenon of guilt and the operations of conscience, has its psychological origin in an act of internalization, whereby outward-directed aggressive impulses are redirected back onto the self; and the notion that, in addition to instinctual repression, a diversion of drives in a new direction, whereby psychic energies are reattached to a new content—sublimation, as Freud calls it—is responsible for the higher products of human culture, including art.<sup>2</sup>

2. The basic respect in which Nietzsche and Freud are of one mind having been stated, let us now turn to what separates them. I start with a historical observation.

Nietzsche is prominent among Freud's precursors as a champion of naturalistic depth psychology, and he undoubtedly has a place among Freud's formative influences, but there is no historical dependence as such. The historical sources of psychoanalytic theory, studies have shown, are multiple and wide-ranging. The precise extent of Freud's knowledge of Nietzsche is hard to determine, but it is unlikely that Freud at any point studied Nietzsche's writings in a systematic fashion, or if he did so, then it was some time after the inception of psychoanalysis. If we are looking for a single precursor for Freud's concept of the unconscious, then it is Schopenhauer who offers the closest approximation:

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<sup>2</sup> For detailed discussion, see Assoun 2000. Of particular interest, on sublimation, is Gemes 2009.

the central tenets of the drive model are articulated very clearly in *The World as Will and Representation*, and (I will be arguing) the features of Nietzsche's thought which set him apart from Freud are absent from Schopenhauer.

Will is considered by Schopenhauer in various forms: of relevance here is the individuated will of each human subject, which constitutes their essential core—"the primary and substantial thing", "what is real and essential in man", "the radical part of our real nature", our "true self, the kernel of our inner nature".<sup>3</sup> Though itself lacking the power of understanding, the individuated personal will is attached to a particular stock of representations: it makes the individual's decisions and determines her motives, which frequently remain unknown to the intellect, and it is this will, rather than memory, which constitutes personal identity.<sup>4</sup> Only a fraction of its operations are manifest in consciousness and self-consciousness.<sup>5</sup> Many of Schopenhauer's specific psychological hypotheses, concerning the mechanisms by means of which the contents of consciousness are determined by unconscious ends, and the pervasion of motivation by sexuality, have a striking psychoanalytic resonance.<sup>6</sup>

Schopenhauer's concept of will or drive has, of course, sources of its own, and is not be isolated from the broader current of theorizing about human personality which occupied so many Romantic idealists. What distinguishes Schopenhauer from other *naturphilosophisch* psychologists and gives his view a distinctively late modern, proto-Freudian quality, is his forthright denial of purpose and value to the source of human motivation: our drives are not for Schopenhauer the vehicles of providential metaphysical forces, raising the human subject to a higher level of perfection and uniting her with the Absolute, but bare impulses, no more internally connected to the Good than is the force of gravity. This austere conception carries over straightforwardly to Freud's vision of the psyche as, at the most basic level of its description, a neural mechanism governed by the principle of homeostasis. The blindness of Schopenhauerian will is mirrored in the non-intentionality of pleasure, as Freud con-

<sup>3</sup> WWR II, Ch. 19, "On the Primacy of the Will in Self-Consciousness", pp. 205, 215, 219, 239. Schopenhauer generally uses *Wille* where Nietzsche would talk of *Trieb*, tending to reserve *Trieb* for will in organic nature (e.g. the *Trieb* to self-preservation).

<sup>4</sup> WWR II, 209–210 and 238–239, where the relation of the personal will to the individual's intelligible character is indicated. See Janaway 2010.

<sup>5</sup> Schopenhauer (2010 [1839]: 50–51): self-consciousness "is a very limited part of our whole consciousness, dark in its interior, with all of its objective cognitive powers completely externally directed [...] *The outside*, then, lies before its eyes with great brightness and clarity. But inside it is as obscure as a well-blackened telescope."

<sup>6</sup> See my "Schopenhauer, Will and Unconscious", Part I (Gardner 1999: 376–380).

ceives it: there is no more intrinsic purposiveness to the discharge of psychic energy in accordance with Freud's principle of constancy than there is to the objectification of will in the world as representation. For both Schopenhauer and Freud, purposiveness is therefore not a genuine property of human agency as such, but an *appearance* which arises from inside the perspective of the willing subject in consequence of our capacity for abstract representation (which is all that reason amounts to).

If Freud stands in a direct line of descent from Schopenhauer, appropriating the naturalism of his theory of will while discarding its metaphysical aspect, and if Nietzsche's project has at its foundation a critical reaction against Schopenhauer, then Nietzsche's argument with Schopenhauer may be expected to resurface in his relation to Freud. I will return to this in the final section.

3. Having begun to separate Freud from Nietzsche on a historical plane, I now want to draw attention to a vital but neglected difference between their respective psychologies. The drive model described above fits Freud squarely, but in Nietzsche's case there are complications.

Freud's metapsychology draws sharp distinctions between different parts of the mind, characterizing each in discrete functional terms, and apportioning to each a different type of mental content. The result is a clear distinction in psychoanalytic explanation between, on the one side, propositional attitudes and other states of the sort ascribed in ordinary ('folk') psychology, and on the other side, the unconscious items postulated by Freud in order to explain irrational configurations of propositional attitudes and other phenomena (dreams, obsessive-compulsive disorders, etc.) into which ordinary psychology lacks insight. The *explanantia* of psychoanalysis comprise wishes, phantasies, unconscious affects, repressed contents, instinctual representatives, thing-presentations, etc., and these entities are what give substance and determinacy to our unconscious drives. The mental states on which psychoanalytic explanations turn are therefore not propositional attitudes (in so far as they draw content from *Cs.*, it is in a radically altered, degraded form) and their interaction does not conform to the principles of rationality: the formation and transformation of unconscious representations according to the laws of primary process is a form of mental activity not straightforwardly recognizable as thinking. All this marks off the unconscious proper, *Ucs.*, from the mere preconscious, *Pcs.*, the contents of which are of a kind that can be entertained in consciousness but which are contingently inaccessible. Mental life thus divides into two interlocked but separate domains each with its own set of constitutive principles, and which are not to be confused with one another: the representations circulating in *Ucs.* are not of a kind with the beliefs that we consciously entertain about objects in the world; the

fantasies entertained in conscious day-dreaming are not the phantasies that give shape to unconscious mental life; the wishes of *Ucs.* are not of the same nature as the wish to drive a fast car or be young again; the exclusion of unwelcome thoughts from consciousness by self-distraction is not the same process as repression; and so on.

In this respect, if in no other, psychoanalysis' claim to the title of *Wissenschaft* should be upheld: Freud's metapsychological writings present a theory of the mind composed of laws and inter-defined theoretical entities, and the psychoanalytic explanation of concrete individuals, evidenced in case histories, gives explicit application to this theory.

Nietzsche is not, and does not pretend to be, *wissenschaftlich* in the same manner. Nietzsche's psychological explanations employ crucially the notion of drive, and the contrast of conscious/unconscious, but nowhere does Nietzsche set out a unified account of mental structure or formulate a basic set of psychological laws, and the various psychological analyses that Nietzsche offers are left unintegrated.<sup>7</sup> Questions that arise when we attempt to coordinate Nietzsche's psychological discussions across his texts are difficult to answer, and it would be hard to maintain that they show a steady growth of psychological doctrine comparable in any way to Freud's continual elaborations and revisions of psychoanalytic thought (narratives of Nietzsche's development focus on many things, but none, to the best of my knowledge, locate its underlying motor in psychological theory as such).

From this it cannot be inferred that Nietzsche regards systematic psychological theory as either impossible or profitless. What is however of significance—and stands in the way of the suggestion that Freud furnishes Nietzsche with the explicit metapsychology that he happens to be missing—is the fact that Nietzsche does not draw distinctions of mental kinds parallel to those drawn by psychoanalysis: Nietzsche does not reserve for unconscious states a special set of properties, and his characterizations of drives are nowise conceptually uniform.<sup>8</sup>

In some contexts Nietzsche's conception of a drive is indeed, as said earlier, in line with Freud's. References to the sexual drive provide obvious examples

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<sup>7</sup> The doctrine of will to power is, to be sure, some sort of general theory of drives, but whatever we make of it, it does not perform the function of Freud's metapsychology, as I hope to make clear.

<sup>8</sup> This point is argued convincingly and in detail by Thomas Stern, in "Against Nietzsche's Theory of the Drives" (manuscript). On Nietzsche's conception of drives, see Richardson 1996, Ch. 1, Poellner 1995: 213–229, Katsafanas 2013, and Leiter 2002: 91–105.

–“Pity and love of mankind as development of the sexual drive”<sup>9</sup>–and the extended use of cruelty in Essay Two of *On the Genealogy of Morals* parallels, as already noted, Freud’s claims concerning the role of aggression in the formation of civilization and morality.<sup>10</sup> It is also true that at certain points, such as the following, Nietzsche makes a general claim about the nature of drives that accords well with Freud’s view of the distinctively sub-rational mode of operation of the unconscious:

As every drive lacks intelligence, the viewpoint of “utility” cannot exist for it [so ist “Nützlichkeit” gar kein Gesichtspunkt für ihn]. Every drive, in as much as it is active, sacrifices force and other drives: finally it is checked; otherwise it would destroy everything through its excessiveness. Therefore: the “unegoistic”, self-sacrificing, imprudent, is nothing special—it is common to all the drives—they do not consider the advantage of the whole ego (*because they do not consider at all!* [weil sie nicht denken!]), they act “contrary to our advantage”, against the ego and often for the ego—in both cases!<sup>11</sup>

Nietzsche’s practice does not however bear out this conception consistently, and Essay Two of *On the Genealogy of Morals* is not typical: more often than not, Nietzsche attributes to unconscious items the very same kinds of properties possessed by conscious, allowable mental states. This shows itself at every turn. Nietzsche refers to drives directed at “[h]atred, delight in the misfortunes of others, the lust to rob and rule, and whatever else is called evil”,<sup>12</sup> to “the drive to appropriate and the drive to submit [*den Aneignungstrieb und den Unterwerfungstrieb*]”,<sup>13</sup> and to the virtues of “diligence, obedience, chastity, piety, justice” as drives “mostly harmful to their possessors”.<sup>14</sup> A drive is responsible for our believing that our sensations have causes: the “Ursachentrieb” “allows” sensations to appear in consciousness, rendered “meaningful”.<sup>15</sup> The drive of the preservation of the species extends in man to “*promoting the faith in life*”,

<sup>9</sup> WP 255 (1883–84), Nietzsche 1968: 148 [KGW VII/1: 704]. Also relevant are several of the contributions to *Nietzsche on Freedom and Autonomy* (Gemes/May 2009), especially those of Christopher Janaway, Simon May, John Richardson, and Maudemarie Clark and David Dudrick.

<sup>10</sup> GM II 22: “that suppressed cruelty of the animal man who has been frightened back into himself and given an inner life, incarcerated in the ‘state’ to be tamed, and has discovered bad conscience so that he can hurt himself, after the *more natural* outlet of this wish to hurt had been blocked [...]” (Nietzsche 1994: 63 [KGW VI/2: 348]).

<sup>11</sup> WP 372 (Summer 1883), Nietzsche 1968: 200 [KGW VII/1: 352]. Translation modified.

<sup>12</sup> GS 1, Nietzsche 2001: 27 [KGW V/2: 43]. In §53 Nietzsche refers to the “*Verfeinerung* of the evil drive [*den bösen Trieb*]”, Nietzsche 2001: 63 [KGW V/2: 90].

<sup>13</sup> GS 118, Nietzsche 2001: 116 [KGW V/2: 154].

<sup>14</sup> GS 21, Nietzsche 2001: 43 [KGW V/2: 65].

<sup>15</sup> TI, The Four Great Errors 4, Nietzsche 2005b: 50 [KGW VI/3: 86].

giving rise to “Oughts and Because”, teachings concerning the purpose and reason for existence.<sup>16</sup> Each drive presents a “one-sided view of the thing or event” but out of their conflict arises “a kind of justice and contract” whereby each “can assert and maintain themselves in existence and each can finally feel it is the right vis-à-vis all the others”; the drives “know very well how to make themselves felt by and how to hurt *each other*” (they may even, for all we know, exhibit “*heroism*”).<sup>17</sup> In the unpublished notebooks Nietzsche talks of “our drive to worship [*unserem anbetenden Triebe*]—that continually *proves* itself—by providing guidance”,<sup>18</sup> and of the unrest between “opposing value drives [*Werth-Trieben*]”;<sup>19</sup> “a single individual contains within him a vast confusion of contradictory valuations and consequently of contradictory drives”, implying a correspondence of drives and values;<sup>20</sup> one “seeks a picture of the world in that philosophy in which we feel freest; i.e., in which our most powerful drive feels free to function [*sich frei fühlt zu seiner Thätigkeit*]”<sup>21</sup>; “the will to *logical truth* can be carried through only after a fundamental *falsification* of all events is assumed. From which it follows that a drive rules here that is capable of employing both means, firstly falsification, then the implementation of its own point of view: logic does *not* spring from will to truth.”<sup>22</sup> In connection with perspectivism Nietzsche says: “It is our needs that interpret the world; our drives and their For and Against. Every drive is a kind of lust to rule; each one has its perspective that it would like to compel all the other drives to accept as a norm [*jeder hat seine Perspektive, welche er als Norm ...*].”<sup>23</sup>

Drives, or at least some drives, have therefore for Nietzsche a perspective or point of view and a sense of their own freedom, possess and deploy normative conceptions, and direct themselves at complex worldly states of affairs; they differ from full-blown personal agents, as ordinarily conceived, only in so far as each is defined by a single motivational aim (or ‘value’). In psychoanalytic eyes, this must be reckoned a mistake, which jeopardizes the coherence of depth psychology: Nietzsche confounds the preconscious, which is merely *descriptively* unconscious, with the *dynamic* unconscious, the contents of which could not come to consciousness in the form in which they exist in *Ucs*. It will be added

<sup>16</sup> GS 1, Nietzsche 2001: 28 [KGW V/2: 45].

<sup>17</sup> GS 333, Nietzsche 2001: 185–186 [KGW V/2: 238–239].

<sup>18</sup> WP 253 (Spring 1885), Nietzsche 1968: 146 [KGW VIII/1: 146].

<sup>19</sup> WP 351 (1887–88), Nietzsche 1968: 192 [KGW VIII/2: 366].

<sup>20</sup> WP 259 (1884), Nietzsche 1968: 149 [KGW VII/2: 181].

<sup>21</sup> WP 418 (1883), Nietzsche 1968: 224–225 [KGW VII/1: 352].

<sup>22</sup> WP 512 (1885), Nietzsche 1968: 277 [KGW VIII/3: 366].

<sup>23</sup> WP 481 (1886–87), Nietzsche 1968: 267 [KGW VIII/1: 323].



that Nietzsche fails to individuate mental parts independently of drives: Nietzsche treats each drive as defining (and as all that defines) a different mental part. In consequence of taking drive-identity as the principle of mental partition, and of attributing strategic rationality to drives, Nietzsche's psychology falls into homuncularism, with all of its attendant paradoxes.<sup>24</sup> From all of this a very different relation to ordinary psychology from psychoanalysis emerges: whereas psychoanalysis, conservatively, postulates a *background* to the attributions of common sense psychology which compensates for its limitations, extending and completing our everyday explanations, Nietzsche is engaged in *rewriting* ordinary psychology, contesting and supplanting a significant portion of its attributions.

The orthodox Freudian, sceptical of Nietzschean psychology and wishing to stress the originality of Freud's achievement, will find further grounds for criticism of Nietzsche. In addition to the absence of an explicit metapsychology, and a failure to grasp the qualitative distinctions between the conscious and the unconscious, Nietzsche's psychologizing may be charged with epistemological limitations and a lack of scientific objectivity: Nietzsche does not have, it will be said, the clinical context—the experience of transference and all that follows from it—as a means for close observation of unconscious mental life. Of equal importance is the fact that Nietzsche's psychology is not grounded on a strategy of extension of common sense psychology. Freud proceeds by getting to grips with phenomena that are already constituted as *explananda* before psychoanalysis arrives on the scene: the cast of Freud's case histories are individuals who have already avowed their own failure to understand themselves; ordinary psychology does not pretend to know why we dream about this rather than that, or why we have dreams at all; we plainly lack understanding of group behaviour, moral fanaticism, totemic practices, and so on. The explanatory needs to which psychoanalysis responds are thus fixed independently and antecedently. Nietzsche's psychological constructions are not guided by the same factors. Rather, their direction is determined by Nietzsche's value-driven selection of features of psychological life (the will to power, a hypothesis which finds no echo in Freud, may be cited as evidence of the incursions of an axiological agenda). The upshot, the proponent of psychoanalysis may say, is that even when Nietzsche's speculations do contain some important insight, they fail to meet the strict conditions of psychological knowledge.

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<sup>24</sup> If *Ucs.* shares the same content as *Cs.*, then the unconscious holds beliefs, desires, engages in practical reason, etc., i.e., amounts to a 'second mind'. And this generates paradoxes, as Sartre argued: see my *Irrationality and the Philosophy of Psychoanalysis* (Gardner 1993), Ch. 2.

Whether or not these criticisms hit the mark, an issue which I will not pursue, it should be emphasized that the fact that Nietzsche draws no qualitative distinction between conscious and unconscious mental states is not a conceptual oversight but plays a positive role in relation to his practical concerns. It allows Nietzsche (first) to articulate his psychological analyses in ways that address us at the *personal* level, somewhat in the way the French moralists impugn our integrity and Kierkegaard confronts us with our double-mindedness—as psychoanalytic explanations certainly do not<sup>25</sup>; and (second) it allows drives to be considered as *materials for self-creation*, in a way that psychoanalysis again does not—Nietzsche describes our drives in terms that permit our identification with them, our taking them up in a sense that is not possible for the contents of *Ucs*.<sup>26</sup>

4. I turn now to a second difference between Freudian and Nietzschean psychology.

There is an obvious sense in which the drive model impinges on the unity of the person. Personal unity, as ordinarily conceived, is not threatened by the existence of a mere multiplicity of desires, even when these conflict, so long as their fate stands under the control of a self which determines—blocks, restricts, endorses, etc.—their efficacy. But this controlling self—its omnipotence, if not existence—is exactly what the drive model contests.

The metaphysics of the self do not figure on Freud's agenda, but his metapsychology has clear implications for the 'I', which it reduces to an aspect of ego functioning: apperception registers the discursively formulated, more or less satisfactory outcomes of the ego's negotiations of its relations to the id and superego and of the interaction of its various components with one another, with special attention to their agreement, or lack of it, with social norms.<sup>27</sup> The self, in the sense of what we grasp as the 'I', is merely an ancillary aspect of a substantial entity that lacks any essential I-character, its relation to which the 'I' (constitutively) misrepresents:

Normally, there is nothing of which we are more certain than the feeling of our self, of our own ego. This ego appears to us as something autonomous and unitary, marked off distinctly from everything else. That such an appearance is deceptive, and that on the contrary the ego is continued inwards, without any sharp delimitation, into an unconscious

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<sup>25</sup> For an example of a passage in which 'French moralist' critique is interwoven seamlessly with depth psychology, see GS 14.

<sup>26</sup> See for example D 560.

<sup>27</sup> See Tugendhat 1986: 131–132.

mental entity which we designate as the id and for which it serves as a kind of façade—this was a discovery first made by psycho-analytic research.<sup>28</sup>

Freud's view of the 'I' is in line with Schopenhauer's treatment of self-consciousness. In the second chapter of his *Essay on the Freedom of the Will* Schopenhauer offers the following account of the structure of willing.<sup>29</sup> In the most rudimentary case, an object induces a reaction in the subject, a movement of will. At a minimum this comprises a feeling of pleasure or pain, but when the reaction extends to a projected modification of the object, and thus involves bodily movement, we can speak of the object as the motive of an action: the volition is directed at the object, which provides its content. Self-consciousness, Schopenhauer insists, plays no active role in this process: it simply registers the various movements of will. These constitute furthermore the *total content* of self-consciousness in general, according to Schopenhauer: "nothing is present to the so-called inner sense but one's own will".<sup>30</sup> Consciousness of oneself as deciding or resolving is, on Schopenhauer's account, simply a form of consciousness of a movement of will.<sup>31</sup> This minimal account agrees fully with Freud's description of consciousness, in the few places where he says anything about the topic, as merely passive.<sup>32</sup>

Nietzsche's repudiation of the 'I' is well known. In statements such as the following Nietzsche takes a more radical position than either Freud or Schopenhauer, not merely stripping the 'I' of its efficacy, or giving it reduced reality, but denying its existence outright:

I will not stop emphasizing a tiny little fact that these superstitious men are loath to admit: that a thought comes when "it" wants, and not when "I" want. It is, therefore, a *falsification* of the facts to say that the subject "I" is the condition of the predicate "think". It thinks: but to say the "it" is just that famous old "I"—well that is just an assumption or opinion, to put it mildly, and by no means an "immediate certainty".<sup>33</sup>

[T]he path lies open for new versions and sophistications of the soul hypothesis; and concepts like the "mortal soul" and the "soul as subject-multiplicity" and the "soul as a society constructed out of drives and affects" want henceforth to have civil rights in the realm of science.<sup>34</sup>

**28** *Civilization and its Discontents* (henceforth: CD), CD 64–65.

**29** Schopenhauer 2010 [1839]: 44.

**30** Schopenhauer 2010 [1839]: 51.

**31** Schopenhauer 2010 [1839]: 45–48.

**32** See for example "A note upon the 'mystic writing-pad'" (1925 [1924]), in Freud, SE 19: 227–234. (Here and hereafter, "Freud, SE" refers to the *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*.)

**33** BGE 17, Nietzsche 2002: 17 [KGW VI/2: 24–25].

**34** BGE 12, Nietzsche 2002: 14 [KGW VI/2: 20–21].

According to Nietzsche's new psychology of subjective multiplicity, each of us is "only a society constructed out of many souls [...] All willing is simply a matter of commanding and obeying, on the groundwork, as I have said, of a society constructed out of many 'souls'."<sup>35</sup> Even Schopenhauer's "I will", which, as said, amounts to only an attenuated form of self-consciousness, is classified by Nietzsche as a "superstition".<sup>36</sup>

It is possible to regard Nietzsche as simply following out and making explicit the implications of the drive model as it is formulated by Schopenhauer: if self-consciousness is reduced to a mere power of receptivity in relation to volitions, and if the contribution of transcendental subjectivity to the unity of self-consciousness (which is in any case problematic) is bracketed out, then it is not at all clear that anything remains to give reality to the idea that something identical is present in the multiplicity of acts of will.<sup>37</sup> If so, then the unity of the person reduces to the functional unity of animal individuality: movements of will, or drives, share a common subject just in so far as there is one continuous organismic boundary containing their operations and constraining them to contest one another's efficacy; nothing holds them together on the inside in the way that the 'I' was held to do. If Nietzsche regards this as amounting to elimination rather than reduction, then it is because he has a different, arguably sharper sense of our conceptual investments in the 'I'.

5. This is however another side to Nietzsche's view of the 'I'. Nietzsche's practical philosophy employs a conception of the self which is not warranted by and which appears to contradict the drive model.<sup>38</sup> Nietzsche does not recommend the Schopenhauerian annihilation of selfhood that would result from eliminating the illusion of the *I will*: on the contrary, *I-hood* is integral to the condition of higher life-affirmative existence to which we should aspire. The theme is prominent throughout Nietzsche's writings. In *Daybreak*, II, §105, "*Pseudo-egoism*", Nietzsche endorses an ideal of higher or intensified selfhood: the great majority have no selves to speak of, merely 'phantom' selves ("*das Phantom von ego*")

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<sup>35</sup> BGE 19, Nietzsche 2002: 19–20 [KGW VI/2: 27]. See also the denial that our unity owes anything to consciousness in GS 11; Nietzsche attributes it instead to "the preserving alliance of the instincts" (Nietzsche 2001: 37 [KGW V/2: 56]). And TI Errors 3: "Not to mention the I! That has become a fairy tale, a fiction, a play on words: it has stopped thinking, feeling, and willing altogether!" (Nietzsche 2005b: 178 [KGW VI/3: 85]).

<sup>36</sup> BGE 16, Nietzsche 2002: 16 [KGW VI/2: 23].

<sup>37</sup> Schopenhauer himself arguably avoids this, but only through his doctrine of the Idea of the individual, as giving necessary unity to the movements of will.

<sup>38</sup> See my "Nietzsche, the Self, and the Disunity of Philosophical Reason" (Gardner 2009), section 1.3.

that they have received from others—“no individual among this majority is capable of setting up a real ego, accessible to him and fathomed by him, in opposition to the general pale fiction”.<sup>39</sup> In *Daybreak*, II, §108, Nietzsche invokes the self in a reformulation of the Kantian formula of autonomy: once we have disposed of the moral law *qua* something that is “supposed to stand *above* our own likes and dislikes”, mankind might “*impose* upon itself a moral law”, prompted by feeling but “at its own discretion”.<sup>40</sup> A notebook entry confirms Nietzsche in the view that “*I will*” represents a different form of consciousness from mere drive, and one that is axiologically higher: “*Schopenhauer’s* basic misunderstanding of the *will* (as if craving, instinct, drive were the *essence* of will) is typical: lowering the value of the will to the point of atrophy. Also hatred against willing; attempt to see something higher, indeed that which is higher and valuable, in willing no more [...]”.<sup>41</sup>

Is Nietzsche aware of the rub between his theoretical dissolution of the self and his ethical ideal of substantial individuality? Whether he regards it as a philosophical problem in its own right is hard to determine, but there is evidence that he is at least aware that the self-representation of the practical perspective is discrepant with the theoretical drive model.

In *Daybreak*, II, §109, Nietzsche concerns himself with the available methods of “combating the vehemence of a drive”. For the first three quarters of this passage, Nietzsche details a variety of methods, six to be precise, that we may adopt with a view to defeating, or draining of force, a desire that presses on us chronically and that we wish to be rid of. We may, first, weaken the desire by avoiding opportunities for its gratification; second, secure periods of release from its pressure by imposing a regular schedule on its gratification; third, indulge it to the point of disgust and satiety; fourth, forge an association of its fulfilment with some painful experience; fifth, drain its reservoir of mental and physical energy by engaging in other activities; and sixth, generally depress our level of activity to the point of exhaustion through ascetic deprivation.

The stance adopted by Nietzsche in detailing these techniques is the one found in any stoic manual of management of the passions or self-help guide: we *look down* on drives from above, where ‘above’ means from where *I* am, the *personal* rather than sub-personal standpoint of the judging and willing agent, set to intercede in the goings-on of his or her psychology. From this standpoint, the

<sup>39</sup> D 105, Nietzsche 1982: 61 [KGW V/1: 90–91].

<sup>40</sup> D 108, Nietzsche 1982: 63–64 [KGW V/1: 94]. For passages which leave no doubt concerning the ‘I’-centric shape of Nietzschean value, see GS 338 and GS 345.

<sup>41</sup> WP 84, (Autumn 1887) [KGW VIII/2: 99]. Translation modified.

drive figures as a would-be usurper: it wishes to “play the master”<sup>42</sup> and can be regarded as suffering from confusion regarding its own proper psychological status (whence its perceived illegitimacy).

Nietzsche draws particular attention to the connection of this top-down perspective with a sense of one’s own value:

The same method is also being employed when a man’s pride, as for example in the case of Lord Byron or Napoleon, rises up and feels the domination of his whole bearing and the ordering of his reason by a single affect as an affront: from where there then arises the habit and desire to tyrannise over the drive and make it as it were gnash its teeth. (“I refuse to be the slave of any appetite,” Byron wrote in his diary).<sup>43</sup>

Having explicated the six methods, Nietzsche abruptly—in mid-sentence, without breaking stride—loops back reflexively on the presiding *I*, with the following contention:

[...]: *that one desires to combat the vehemence of a drive at all, however, does not stand within our own power; nor does the choice of any particular method; nor does the success or failure of this method. What is clearly the case is that in this entire procedure our intellect is only the blind instrument of another drive which is a rival of the drive whose vehemence is tormenting us: whether it be the drive to restfulness, or the fear of disgrace and other evil consequences, or love. While “we” believe we are complaining about the vehemence of a drive, at bottom it is one drive which is complaining about another [...].*<sup>44</sup>

The effect is deflating and disorienting: the sensation of Byronic self-mastery which Nietzsche has been stoking is dissipated. We find ourselves dispossessed in a sense in which we were not at the outset, for we began by pitting ourselves against a power that resisted our will, but have learned that whatever we might reckon as an exercise of our will is in truth of the very same order as that which we previously took to be subordinate to it.

So far, so Freudian. But Nietzsche takes one further step. Concluding the passage, Nietzsche observes that, because our suffering from a drive “presupposes the existence of another equally vehement or even more vehement drive”, “a *struggle* is in prospect in which our intellect is going to have to take sides [*in welchem unser Intellekt Partei nehmen muß*].”<sup>45</sup> This last clause is crucial. Nietzsche has confronted the first-person practical standpoint of putatively self-

<sup>42</sup> D 109, Nietzsche 1982: 65 [KGW V/1: 96].

<sup>43</sup> D 109, Nietzsche 1982: 64 [KGW V/1: 95]. See also the first paragraph of BGE 257, concerning the inner pathos of distance required for enhancement of the type ‘man’.

<sup>44</sup> D 109, Nietzsche 1982: 64 [KGW V/1: 96–97].

<sup>45</sup> D 109, Nietzsche 1982: 65 [KGW V/1: 97].

determining agency with the third-person theoretical standpoint of sub-personal psychological analysis, and allowed the former to collapse in favour of the latter, but he does not give the third person the last word: in his coda, as we turn to the future, practical necessity returns and our personal status is restored, for we are intellects that are “going to have to take sides”.<sup>46</sup>

If we are aware of ourselves as *having to* take sides, it follows that Schopenhauer’s analysis of self-consciousness is incomplete. The problem of course is that, at this point, though we are in no doubt that we must *understand ourselves* to have the task of taking sides, we are no longer clear what this amounts to, or in what way it can be true that we have this capacity, since the very notion of ‘taking sides’—that is, the concept of a relation to a drive of something that is *not itself* a drive, as distinct from a relation *among* drives—has been shown to make sense only from within a perspective that the drive model eliminates. The puzzle is therefore as follows: Granted the double inescapability of both (1) a first-person practical perspective in which we must take it to be *up to us* what is to be done with and about our drives, and (2) a third-person theoretical perspective in which *drives decide* what happens or is done with us, what mediation is possible? In short, where next?

Nietzsche does not say. Later sections in Book II of *Daybreak* reinforce the perplexing finality of §109. In §119 Nietzsche blocks the supposition that the *Intellekt* could at least cognitively master the drives: they supervene on physiological processes in irrational ways, that we could not hope to grasp, such that there is “no *essential* difference” between the way that drives are expressed in dream and our awareness of them in waking experience<sup>47</sup>; nothing “can be more incomplete” than an individual’s “image of the totality of *drives* which constitute his being”.<sup>48</sup> Since the tangle of drives cannot be rendered transparent, the notion of a judgement-based, drive-transcendent intervention in one’s volitional processes—even if there were a presiding ‘I’ to undertake it—is empty. And in §129 Nietzsche repeats the exercise in self-alienation of §109, telling us that in certain cases of conflicts of motives, “what I finally *do*” may be the effect of

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<sup>46</sup> As coheres with the broader argument of Book II of *Daybreak*, which has arrived, in the conclusion of the immediately preceding section, at the point where we are to consider *choosing* the moral law. That the self is an illusion is indicated in other passages in the vicinity of §109: mankind confuses “the active and the passive”—it mistakes being *acted upon* for acting (D 120, Nietzsche 1982: 76–77 [KGW V/1: 113]); we naively accord plain truth to “*I will*” (D 124, Nietzsche 1982: 77 [KGW V/1: 114]); “the so-called ‘ego’ [das sogenannte ‘Ich’]” is merely one element in the construction of character (D 115, Nietzsche 1982: 72 [KGW V/1: 106]).

<sup>47</sup> D 119, Nietzsche 1982: 75 [KGW V/1: 111].

<sup>48</sup> D 119, Nietzsche 1982: 74 [KGW V/1:109].

“something quite invisible to us” of which we are “quite unconscious”—all the while sustaining a contrast of “unconscious processes” with the standpoint of an ‘I’ that anxiously calculates consequences and outcomes, forms a unified “picture of the consequences”, and reflects in preparation for the act which it takes itself to have resolved upon.<sup>49</sup>

Now at this point two routes are open. On the one hand we might seek an interpretation that renders Nietzsche’s claims consistent. For instance, we might look for an interpretation of the ideal of the ‘real ego’ that does not presuppose the reality of an effective *Intellekt*,<sup>50</sup> or deny that Nietzsche is obligated to recognize a tension here at all.<sup>51</sup> The alternative is to release Nietzsche’s position from the threat of inconsistency by construing it as frankly aporetic—and to then go on to explain why in Nietzsche’s terms, that is, with his specific philosophical objectives in view, such a result can be allowed to stand.<sup>52</sup>

I cannot substantiate the claim here, but it seems to me that in Nietzsche’s works at large there is no sustained attempt at a positive dissolution of the conflict dramatized in *Daybreak*, II, §109, and that attempts to locate a consistent non-aporetic position in Nietzsche, however ingenious, go against the grain, letter, and spirit of Nietzsche’s texts. As a brief indication of the difficulties that lie in wait for such interpretations, it is striking that Nietzsche in *Daybreak*, II, §119, describes the very vocabulary in which he conceives drives—viz., as self-interested homunculi-agents which (or who) desire gratification, exercise and discharge their strength, and seek to fill their emptiness—as “all metaphors [*es ist Alles Bilderrede*]”.<sup>53</sup> Nietzsche appears to be saying that our very concept of a drive is conditioned by the ‘I’ in the sense (first) that drives are grasped as things that figure for the ‘I’ in so far as it sets itself in relation (resisting, etc.) to them, with the consequence (second) that if we raise up drives and have them supplant the ‘I’, then we are bound to give them its conceptual character, and so

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49 D 129, Nietzsche 1982: 129–130 [KGW V/1: 116–118].

50 See Gemes 2009, which interprets Nietzsche’s conception of genuine selfhood in terms of subservience to a single “master drive”. In my view, Nietzsche is not rigorously third personal and does not suppose it meaningful to attribute ‘master’ status to a drive and to identify the achievement of selfhood with its hegemony independently from the perspective of self-consciousness. It seems to me, for example, that the passage in *Ecce Homo* (EH, Why I Am So Clever 9) from which Gemes quotes as supporting his view (Gemes 2009: 47) makes sense only when Nietzsche’s unconscious (master) drive—to complete the ‘task of *revaluing values*’—is viewed in the perspective of what Nietzsche can call *his life* and affirm as such: “Nach dieser Seite hin betrachtet ist mein Leben einfach wundervoll” (KGW VI/3: 292–293).

51 For consideration of this possibility, see Anderson 2013.

52 See my (2009).

53 D 119, Nietzsche 1982: 74 [KGW V/1: 110].



to think of them in terms that are literally false.<sup>54</sup> Taken at face value, then, Nietzsche's idea, espoused by contemporary eliminativists, seems to be that the conceptual scheme of intentional psychology is incapable of representing the true inner causes of behaviour. And given the mountain of remarks in Nietzsche concerning the superficiality and epistemic incompetence of consciousness, this would hardly be a surprising conclusion for him to have reached; consciousness could not have been expected to determine correctly the nature of the mind.<sup>55</sup> But if that is so, then Nietzsche's position seems doubly strange: the psychological substrate in favour of which the 'I' was eliminated has turned out to itself have only a limited kind and degree of reality; we seem to be moving sideways, from one fiction to another, rather than out of fiction into psychological truth. Nietzsche hints as much in *Beyond Good and Evil*:

By putting an end to the superstition that until now has grown around the idea of the soul with an almost tropical luxuriance, the *new* psychologist clearly thrusts himself into a new wasteland and a new suspicion [...] the new psychologist knows by this very token that he is condemned to *invention*—and, who knows?, perhaps to *discovery*.<sup>56</sup>

If only for reasons of this sort, concerning the resistance of Nietzsche's texts to regimentation and the heavy interpolations required in order for Nietzsche to emerge as a thinker with a positive systematic account, it seems to me better to say that what we get (and are meant to get) from Nietzsche is not a solution to the puzzle presented in *Daybreak*, II, §109, but clarified and indeed intensified awareness of the more general conflict which it exemplifies, that of the deliverances of the will to truth and the needs of life: the opposition of theoretical reason and practical reason, I suggest, subsumes the opposition of the drive model and the 'I', of which it is a specific instance; the drive-transcendent perspective of the 'I' belongs with the other fundamental illusions, constitutive

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**54** BGE 17: "It thinks: but to say the 'it' is just that famous old 'I'—well that is just an assumption or opinion, to put it mildly, and by no means an 'immediate certainty'. In fact, there is already too much packed into the 'it thinks': even the 'it' contains an *interpretation* of the process, and does not belong to the process itself. People are following grammatical habits here in drawing conclusions, reasoning that 'thinking is an activity, behind every activity something is active, therefore—'." (Nietzsche 2002: 17–18 [KGW VI/2: 25]). And TI, The Four Great Errors 3: "There are no mental causes whatsoever [gar keine geistigen Ursachen]!" (Nietzsche 2005b: 178) [KGW VI/3: 85].

**55** As claimed explicitly in D 115: "*We are none of us* that which we appear to be in accordance with the states for which alone we have consciousness and words [...] we misread ourselves in this apparently most intelligible of handwriting on the nature of ourselves" (Nietzsche 1982: 71–72 [KGW V/1: 105–106]).

**56** BGE 12, Nietzsche 2002: 14–15 [KGW VI/2: 21].

errors, that have grown out of the needs of life. Priests and philosophers have however raised this error to a higher power, and their hypostatization and valorization of the ‘I’ has been internalized. Consequently, there is reason to confront it with the drive model: the ‘I’ may be ineliminable, but undermining the integrity of the concept of a self-legislating and drive-transcendent ‘I’ helps to dislodge the (Judeo-Christian, Kantian) modes of evaluation associated with it.<sup>57</sup> Whether the drive model might itself positively assist in value creation—a possibility which Nietzsche seems not to rule out<sup>58</sup>—exposing the conflict of theoretical knowledge and practical existence serves a purpose: it reorients us towards the needs of life, free from the illusion that our practical problems are amenable to theoretical solutions.<sup>59</sup> I will say some more about this in the next section.

For the narrower purpose of differentiating Nietzsche from Freud, it does not matter ultimately which of the two alternatives is accepted. On either view, Nietzsche is committed to something that is not to be found in Freud: not the existence of a full-blown entity but an ineliminable, quasi-transcendental *neces-*

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<sup>57</sup> Tom Stern has suggested to me that it also allows us to recapture innocence of a sort, in so far as we shake off the burden of an intrinsically morally characterized self. The return to innocence is hailed in TI, *The Four Great Errors* 8, where it concludes an extended attack on the will in the name of psychological explanation.

<sup>58</sup> As hinted in the quotation above from BGE 12, concerning the “new psychologist”—which one may read in light of Nietzsche’s experimental attitude towards scepticism (GS 51). I am grateful to Tom Stern for drawing my attention to other relevant passages: GS 335 presents a three-part movement: in the name of “physics” Nietzsche (i) decomposes our notion of intellectual conscience into homuncular elements, (ii) turns this conclusion against the categorial imperative, and (iii) refers this result, again in the name of “physics”, to the practical perspective, our interest in becoming “those we are” and creators of new values (Nietzsche 2001: 187–188 [KGW V/2: 240–244]). In D 560 Nietzsche (again invoking the personal stance) invites us to contemplate our drives and to recognize that we are at liberty to cultivate them in different ways.

<sup>59</sup> Central to this reorientation is an aesthetic turn, of which we find no equivalent in Freud. It is helpful to compare Nietzsche in this regard with Schiller, who is preoccupied with very similar issues of psychological constitution and personal unity, and whose analysis of human personality in terms of the form-drive and sense-drive in the *Letters on Aesthetic Education* no doubt impressed itself on Nietzsche, its influence being clearly visible in *The Birth of Tragedy*. Schiller recognizes a problematic complexity in the structure of personality which does not appear in Kant, and his conception of a drive is consistently non-psychoanalytic. Schiller however does not think that the complexity of drive-structure impugns the reality of the ‘I’: it can for Schiller be contained within, and must be understood in terms of, the unity of the ‘I’ (which is the crux of the transcendental argument for the possibility of the play-drive that he offers in *Letters* 18–22). And because for Schiller there is no aporia in selfhood as such, wholeness of human personality can in principle be achieved, by aesthetic means. Nietzsche by contrast invokes the aesthetic as compensation for disunity, or so I have argued in Gardner 2013.

sity, that of the first-person practical point of view, incongruent with the theoretical image of the mind.

6. I have argued for two principal differences of philosophical psychology between Nietzsche and Freud. First, Nietzsche does not draw the distinction of psychological parts and corresponding kinds of mental state drawn by Freud. This makes Nietzschean psychology revisionary (in relation to ordinary psychology) in a way that psychoanalysis is not. Second, Nietzsche adopts a complex stand regarding the reality of the 'I', which he excises from the theoretical psychological picture while affirming its ineliminability from the first-person practical point of view, in contrast to Freud, who does not see the 'I' as raising any issues not resolved in his metapsychology. In addition I have indicated the connection of Nietzsche's differences from psychoanalysis with his practical orientation: Nietzsche's psychological analyses are intended to work in concert with his ethical aims. Finally, I have cast doubt on the assumption that Nietzsche regards his drive psychology in unequivocally realist terms, a contrast with Freud that can again be attributed to Nietzsche's practical ambitions, in so far as his new psychology aims ultimately not at true explanation for its own sake, but at therapeutic results.<sup>60</sup> The contrast of Nietzsche with Freud on issues of practical philosophy, their difference of axiology rather than philosophical psychology, is what I want to expand on in this final section.

Nietzsche's contemptuous repudiation of happiness as an ethical value is well known.<sup>61</sup> Freud's theorizing about practical matters—which to be sure does not amount to a moral philosophy, but which involves a commitment to a scale of value—refers to nothing else. Indeed Freud asserts that facts of pain and pleasure, suffering and satisfaction, are the sole considerations to which it makes sense to refer in estimation of the human condition, now that the question of the meaning of life has, with the vanishing of religious belief, itself become meaningless:

The question of the purpose of human life has been raised countless times; it has never yet received a satisfactory answer and perhaps does not admit of one. Some of those who have asked it have added that if it should turn out that life has *no* purpose, it would lose all value for them. But this threat alters nothing. [...] [O]nly religion can answer the question

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**60** Psychoanalysis aims of course at therapeutic results, but it also aims at theoretical truth for its own sake.

**61** E.g., BGE 198, BGE 200, BGE 225, BGE 228. Whether Nietzsche does, or could, find some place for some conception of happiness is not the issue here: the point is just that he rejects it as a value in the (key, intentional object) sense of something *at which* one may aim and *from which* life-affirmation may derive.

of the purpose of life. One can hardly be wrong in concluding that the idea of life having a purpose stands and falls with the religious system.

We will therefore turn to the less ambitious question of what men themselves show by their behaviour to be the purpose and intention of their lives. What do they demand of life and wish to achieve in it? The answer to this can hardly be in doubt. They strive after happiness; they want to become happy and to remain so. This endeavour has two sides, a positive and a negative aim. It aims, on the one hand, at an absence of pain and unpleasure, and, on the other, at the experiencing of strong feelings of pleasure. In its narrower sense the word “happiness” only relates to the last. In conformity with this dichotomy in his aims, man’s activity develops in two directions, according as it seeks to realize—in the main, or even exclusively—the one or the other of these aims.

As we see, what decides the purpose of life is simply the programme of the pleasure principle. This principle dominates the operation of the mental apparatus from the start.<sup>62</sup>

Proceeding on this basis, *Civilisation and its Discontents* argues that the suffering which is specifically due to civilization (and which, Freud notes, so many of his contemporaries complain of) is functionally necessary: it is fixed by the invariant psychological constitution of human beings, the quantity and quality of our instinctual input, in conjunction with the objective circumstances of social order, the arrangements required to control aggression, and it is roughly justified on a utilitarian calculus; lifting the restrictions of civilized life would bring no overall gain.

The programme of becoming happy, which the pleasure principle imposes on us, cannot be fulfilled; yet we must not—indeed, we cannot—give up our efforts to bring it nearer to fulfilment by some means or other. Very different paths may be taken in that direction, and we may give priority either to the positive aspect of the aim, that of gaining pleasure, or to its negative one, that of avoiding unpleasure. By none of these paths can we attain all that we desire. Happiness, in the reduced sense in which we recognize it as possible, is a problem of the economics of the individual’s libido.<sup>63</sup>

Some limited scope remains for remedial action, therefore. Freud accordingly criticizes certain institutions as dysfunctional—the norms of modern marriage, he argues, are responsible for an undue level of sexual dissatisfaction,<sup>64</sup> and religion does not deliver on its hedonic promises<sup>65</sup>—but it is not Freud’s view that a

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<sup>62</sup> CD, 74–75.

<sup>63</sup> CD, 82.

<sup>64</sup> “‘Civilized’ Sexual Morality and Modern Nervous Illness” [1908], in Freud, SE 9: 177–204.

<sup>65</sup> CD, 83–84: “Its technique consists in depressing the value of life and distorting the picture of the real world in a delusional manner [...] by forcibly fixing them in a state of psychical infantilism and by drawing them into a mass-delusion, religion succeeds in sparing many people an individual neurosis. But hardly anything more.”

revision of our values can mitigate significantly the suffering arising from the renunciation of instinctual satisfaction which civilization presupposes, which is bound to remain at a roughly constant level; and since nothing else could give it sense, axiological change is not for Freud a meaningful possibility. There is consequently in Freud no analogue of Nietzsche's non-utilitarian notions of individual and cultural flourishing, or of failure thereof, and Freud does not suggest that we are tending to a nihilistic climax; rather, it is modern warfare, a very material threat, that poses the main danger for Freud.<sup>66</sup> Again, Freud does not follow Nietzsche's critique of modern secular reason: since the comforts of religion were of very limited efficacy, Freud sees nothing to regret in the hegemony of the will to truth. Because Freud's pessimistic, stoical conservatism derives directly from his empirical claims concerning (i) the universal and unalterable laws governing human psychology, and (ii) the social structures which they necessitate,<sup>67</sup> it can be challenged on terms that Freud would accept only by disputing one or both of the latter (as attempted in the Frankfurt School).

What is responsible for this very considerable difference of outlook? No mystery attaches to Freud's utilitarianism, the grounds of which are familiar and transparent, and which can plausibly be viewed as the default position for a naturalist of Freud's sort. The question is rather why Nietzsche, given that he too rejects so much of what is required for any non-utilitarian scheme of values, is so uncompromisingly opposed to Freud's axiological standpoint.

There is an obvious suggestion to be made concerning the root of Nietzsche's anti-hedonism. We may return to Nietzsche's dissatisfaction with Schopenhauer, and observe that the pessimism of Schopenhauer's that Nietzsche resists so fiercely is grounded on hedonic considerations. There is for Schopenhauer an intrinsic wrongness ('injustice') to individuated existence as such, but what converts this metaphysical 'fact' into a motive for denial of the will to live is the phenomenal suffering to which it directly gives rise: the structure of willing, Schopenhauer argues, entails *a priori* the impossibility of happiness, to which the miserable character of human life bears witness *a posteriori*.

Nietzsche does not endorse Schopenhauer's analysis of pleasure and pain, but he does not dispute Schopenhauer's account of the balance sheet of human weal and woe; in those terms Nietzsche allows Silenus the last word. Nietzsche's counter-pessimistic strategy focusses instead on the *reception* of suffering, the way that it is *construed*, and which determines its bearing on the will. A passage

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<sup>66</sup> "Thoughts for the Times on Death and War" [1915], in: Freud, SE 14: 273–300, esp. Part I, "The Disillusionment of War".

<sup>67</sup> See Deigh 1986.

in *The Gay Science* puts the point in focus. After noting that we moderns have relatively reduced acquaintance with bodily pain, Nietzsche observes that

‘pain is hated much more now than formerly; one speaks much worse of it; indeed, one can hardly endure the presence of pain *as a thought* and makes it a matter of conscience and a reproach against the whole of existence’.<sup>68</sup>

In this passage Nietzsche implies that our inability to tolerate suffering is mere squeamishness on our part (which we might be cured of by a strong blast of real first-order pain), but his fully developed view, set forth in *On the Genealogy of Morals*, is that suffering has become intolerable to modern man not, or not just, because of the exaggerated delicacy of his sensibility—a simple matter of mental fabric—but because of his unmet demand that suffering *have meaning*, a property that Nietzsche connects closely with rational explanation and justification.<sup>69</sup> The complexity that Nietzsche identifies in suffering sets him in disagreement with Freud, for whom “[in] the last analysis, all suffering is nothing else than sensation”.<sup>70</sup>

Now the interesting—and very difficult—question is what Nietzsche makes of this insight, more exactly, what stand he wants to take regarding the need for *Sinn*. The plain therapeutic implication of Nietzsche’s diagnosis is that the beliefs and dispositions responsible for our incapacity to tolerate suffering need to be exorcised, and clearly it is a central ambition of Nietzsche’s to eradicate the notion that suffering shows existence to be something evil (by inducing us either to interpret suffering in a different way or to desist from interpreting it at all). But two quite opposite rationales for undertaking to eliminate the need for *Sinn* are possible, one of which is entirely consistent with the hedonic axiology of Schopenhauer and Freud. If the problem is simply that we suffer twice over, our second-order suffering weighing on us more heavily than our first-order pain, then there is a *hedonic* reason for targeting the *Sinn*-needing disposition, namely, on account of its disutility. This of course cannot be Nietzsche’s view: Nietzsche does not recommend (as Freud well might) that we attempt to cease asking for suffering to have meaning because doing so makes us unhappier than we might otherwise be. But in that case, there is a hard question that

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<sup>68</sup> GS 48, Nietzsche 2001: 61 [KGW V/2: 88].

<sup>69</sup> See especially §28 of the Third Essay (discussed in my (2009), section 3.2). That Nietzsche distinguishes mere sensitivity from need-for-*Sinn* in its modern, rationalistically conditioned form is shown by the fact that he attributes the former, but not of course the latter, to the unsocratized Homeric Greeks: BT 3, Nietzsche 1993: 23 [KGW III/1: 32].

<sup>70</sup> CD, 77.

Nietzsche must answer, and that appears to expose a tension in his position. In the name of which value(s) does Nietzsche reject utility? Had Nietzsche expounded a positive ethics, equipped with a justification independent of his anti-hedonism, then the question might have a clear answer, but we do not of course find anything so cut and dried in Nietzsche; on the contrary, if we want to determine what Nietzsche's values amount to, then we need to work in the other direction, that is, extrapolate his values from his critiques of hedonism, Kantianism, and so on. Nor is the question answered by the thesis that values are (to be) created, for—aside from the point that it is not clear why desire satisfaction could not be created *as a value*—it is precisely the intelligibility of value-creation that, for the Freudian ethical naturalist, stands in need of explanation and justification: before we can get to the point of positing (say) 'becoming what one is' or 'real ego-hood' as a value, we first need to know that it *makes sense* to envisage anything *other* than hedonic facts as candidates for the Good. To regard Nietzsche in this way, as under pressure to justify his rejection of a hedonic axiology, does not require, note, that we interpret him as a fully committed naturalist: it arises simply from his having apparently stripped out of existence all of the features that would rationalize any conception of value that goes beyond desire-satisfaction. So, to repeat, there is a puzzle: Whence for Nietzsche the freedom from natural fact required in order to espouse values other than desire satisfaction? Or, as it might also be put, whence the very idea of value *as opposed to fact*? In one sense, of course, the answer to the question is plain: *history* has made available to Nietzsche a non-naturalistic conception of value. Nietzsche has as keen a sense as any rationalist of the 'queerness' of value, the spectacular alteration in the order of things effected by the emergence of a value-positing creature, the work of imagination and hallucinations of depth required in order for human beings to experience and interpret the world as an axiological domain. This explains very well why Nietzsche should think that we, having acquired a taste for trans-natural values, cannot be satisfied with mere desire-satisfaction—our problem lies, Nietzsche shows, one step back, in our inability to form desires, our finding no *reason to desire*<sup>71</sup>—but it does not explain why Nietzsche thinks that he is within his rights to, as it were, carry on playing the same game as his anti-naturalistic predecessors, the game that Freud clear-sightedly throws over.

If this is right, then Nietzsche faces a dilemma: either he condemns hedonic axiology on the basis that it does not answer to our need for *Sinn*, in which case he is obliged to grant the latter validity, which seems contrary to Nietzsche's

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71 See Pippin 2010, Ch. 1.

aim of detaching life affirmation from rational reflection; or he follows Freud in repudiating the need for *Sinn* and treating it purely as an object of psychological and historical explanation, in which case he has no grounds for refusing a hedonic axiology.

The problem reveals itself most acutely when we consider Nietzsche from Freud's perspective, but this does not represent the limit of its interest, for what has been brought to light is the extreme thinness of the line that Nietzsche is trying to walk between, on the one hand, an axiology of the self in the modern (Rousseauian, Kantian, post-Kantian, German Romantic) tradition, which attempts to meet the demands of reflection, and on the other, the naturalistically reduced conceptions of value that are all that appear to remain when the grounds of non-naturalistic conceptions of the Good have been removed.

Earlier I suggested that the Freudian will take a critical view of Nietzsche's depth psychology, and the same, I have just argued, occurs in the sphere of value: viewed psychoanalytically, Nietzsche's project of axiological transformation falls outside the bounds of natural possibility and has nothing to recommend it; we are not defective for life in any way that it makes sense to lament or that could be fundamentally overcome; suffering has *Sinn* enough by virtue of being scientifically explicable; the relief that psychoanalysis brings by showing that our anxieties, neuroses and so on derive from natural sources is as much as can be hoped for. If this leaves existential demands unsatisfied, then these must be reckoned a trick of the light, an optical illusion created by our constitutive introversion and underpinned by two millennia of slave metaphysics. Since Nietzsche knows perfectly well that the needs of the spirit are infected with error—it is his own insight that, with the internalization of the instincts, the inner world expands and becomes populated with fictive entities<sup>72</sup>—the puzzle lies in his refusal to accept that in the cold light of the present day we can no longer justifiably allow our axiological expectations to be conditioned by anything other than hard, scientifically attested psychological fact.

This critique of Nietzsche's axiological project raises many questions which cannot be pursued here, but there is one important point to be made concerning the connection of Nietzsche's rejection of hedonist axiology with his difference from Freud concerning the 'I'. If Nietzsche's diagnosis is correct, then relinquishing the possibility of non-hedonic value comes at a much heavier price than Freud supposes—the implications are, as Schopenhauer supposes, catastrophic,

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72 GM II 16. And TI, The Four Great Errors 3: "The 'inner world' is full of illusions and phantasms" (Nietzsche 2005b: 178) [KGW VI/3: 85], and BGE 16, Nietzsche 2002: 16 [KGW VI/2: 23].



and Freud is quite mistaken in thinking that the threat of life's losing all meaning 'alters nothing'. This immediately gives Nietzsche leverage: if our need for *Sinn*, or at any rate, our incapacity to tolerate hard unadorned natural fact, is a fixed parameter, then it is *practically necessary* that we work within it, that is, that we employ (in the spirit of "I *must* go on dreaming lest I perish"<sup>73</sup>) whatever axiological devices are required in order for life to preserve itself. But in appealing at this point to *practical necessity* as a ground for value creation, it is absolutely necessary that Nietzsche *affirm* the value and the *authority* of the standpoint of life—since this is exactly what Schopenhauer will dispute. (What is it to invoke 'practical necessity', Schopenhauer will object, but to repeat, insanelly, the error of the *Wille zum Leben* that his philosophy has incontrovertibly exposed?) And it is at this point that we see how important the drive-transcendent 'I' is to Nietzsche, for it is from and *only* from its perspective that the standpoint of life presents itself as valid, and can assert itself as *rightful*, as mere drive cannot. The transcendence of theoretical reason by practical consciousness—the movement whereby life projects itself beyond the facts of suffering—is available only to a self-determining 'I' which, even when theoretical reason has concluded that the game is not worth the candle, can still elect to will.<sup>74</sup> If this is correct, then there is in Nietzsche an echo of Kant's 'primacy of practical reason' and of Fichte's *Thathandlung*—on a very different basis and in a very different form, to be sure, but a recognizably transcendentalist residue nonetheless.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> GS 54, Nietzsche 2001: 63 [KGW V/2: 91].

<sup>74</sup> See BGE 56: the "world-affirming individual", who wills eternal recurrence, "needs himself—and makes himself necessary [...] *circulus vitiosus deus*" (Nietzsche 2002: 50–51) [KGW VI/2: 73]. It is no accident that Schopenhauer explicitly declares that philosophy is exclusively theoretical and denies privileges to the 'practical point of view' (it is simply, as explained above, inner theoretical consciousness); see WWR I, 271, 285, and Schopenhauer 2010 [1840], §4. Freud is of the same view, implicitly.

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