

## Nietzsche, the Self, and the Disunity of Philosophical Reason

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Nous avons psychologisé comme les fous, qui  
augmentent leur folie en s'efforçant de la comprendre.

– Baudelaire, *La Fanfarola*

This paper falls into three parts. The first section is concerned with Nietzsche's treatment of the self. Here the main point I want to make is that there is a striking lack of fit between the (non-realist or fictionalist) conception of the self that emerges from Nietzsche's theoretical discussion of the self, and the (realist, or at any rate non-fictionalist) conception of the self that is presupposed by his practical philosophy. The problem thereby created gives reason to consider Nietzsche's more general view of the relation of the practical and the theoretical, to which the second section of the paper is devoted. Here again we find, I argue, a disunity in Nietzsche, this time between, on the one hand, a view of the relation of theoretical to practical reason which belongs to modern naturalism, and, on the other, a view of the unity of reason which Nietzsche locates in the Presocratics, but which in modern philosophical terms is recognisably Kantian or post-Kantian. This clash of naturalistic and transcendental conceptions, I propose in the third section, should be regarded as reflecting Nietzsche's view of the limits of (our) philosophical reflection, and in order to clarify and develop this suggestion, I offer a reading of the Third Essay of *The Genealogy of Morals* which, I claim, allows us to

understand more exactly how and why Nietzsche's reflection terminates where it does. The paper therefore works its way through a series of three oppositions which, I argue, are to be found in Nietzsche: (i) fictionalism *vs.* non-fictionalism regarding the self (Section 1), (ii) naturalistic *vs.* Kantian views of the theoretical/practical relation (Section 2), and (iii) naturalistic *vs.* transcendentalist tendencies in Nietzsche's metaphilosophy (Section 3). My claim is that each opposition refers us on, if we are to make sense of it, to its successor; and that when we come to, and have grasped fully the depth of, the third opposition, there is, in Nietzsche's view, nowhere further for us to go philosophically.

## **1. Nietzsche on the self**

### 1.1. Nietzsche's theoretical conception of the self

Nietzsche describes the I as an illusion and a fiction. This claim is not qualified in any way – the relevant passages give every indication that it is not just the I of the philosophers, or the I as it may appear in reflection, but the I in *all* respects and contexts of consideration that is held to be illusory. Much of the textual evidence is in the *Nachlaß*,<sup>1</sup> but all of the ideas found there are also presented, with no diminution of force, in published writings,<sup>2</sup> especially the first part of *Beyond Good and Evil*, 'On the prejudices of philosophers'; it can be ruled out, therefore, that the view is merely one that Nietzsche was trying on for size.

In one regard Nietzsche's view that selfhood is illusory follows directly from his general view that consciousness is epiphenomenal: Nietzsche thinks that we take the I of self-consciousness to be a *cause* – we construe its relation to our actions in agent-causationist terms; thus if consciousness is epiphenomenal, so must be the I.<sup>3</sup> But epiphenomena are not fictions, and Nietzsche's thesis is not just

that there is an illusory *dimension* to our awareness of the self – that we have false beliefs *about* it – but that its very *existence* is a non-accidental illusion. Nietzsche's fictionalism about the self goes beyond his epiphenomenalism about consciousness, and it forms an interesting contrast with anti-realist views of the self found in the contemporary anglophone philosophical context. In Dennett, for example, the 'I' is regarded as a theoretical posit which is introduced in consequence of taking up the intentional stance, as a kind of conceptual corollary of belief and desire explanation, somewhat in the way that the laws of mechanics warrant the positing of a centre of gravity in physical objects. In Nietzsche by contrast the I is explained in terms of drives or interests which *lack* at root the cognitive, explanatory character assumed by Dennett. (1) First, our belief in the I is regarded by Nietzsche as a manifestation, perhaps the most fundamental, of our general interest in discovering in the world a platonistic, non-temporal order and structure, an interest which Nietzsche analyses sometimes as a functional matter of filtering the stimulus input to organisms and on other occasions, more deeply (and perhaps in a slightly different respect), as a wishful, resentment-motivated response to the problem of suffering.<sup>4</sup> (2) Second, the I is explained in terms of power relations between members of the composite of forces which Nietzsche proposes, in contrast with the unifying representation of self-consciousness, as the true structure of psychological reality:<sup>5</sup> Nietzsche supposes (a) that the feeling of I-ness, the sense that the I has of itself as something set over and above the psychological states that it 'owns', is a disguised sensation of power, the subject of which is in reality the presently 'dominant' or commanding member of the psychological composite; and (b) that the 'I' represents to the psychological composite the target of joint action proposed by the commanding unit of will to power, or the norm which it legislates for the collective. (3) Third, and connectedly, the fictional concept of the I has its chief importance, for Nietzsche, in relation to agency, and the distinction which it implies of doer from deed he regards as a case of motivated error, of taking the same event

twice over, once as cause (doer, substratum) and once as effect (thing done), all in the service of the slavish fiction of free will.<sup>6</sup>

The self thus emerges as fictive to a special degree: it shares the unreality of all platonistic-metaphysical conceptions, but has an additional fictivity due to its role in masking the real underlying manifold and in the moralisation of humanity's self-conception.

### 1.2. Kantian criticism of Nietzsche's theoretical conception of the self

Though the details of this picture are very much Nietzsche's, and bound up with his more general anti-metaphysical theses, in its general outline Nietzsche's theoretical view of the self is not unfamiliar, and it is open to some but not all of the criticisms standardly levelled against so-called Humean or Reductionist theories of the self.

One initial point of importance in clarifying Nietzsche's position: There is a weak sense of illusion in which one may describe an ontological commitment as illusory in so far as it naively fails to grasp that the reality of the item in question is not *sui generis* but actually *consists in* the reality of something else, to which it may be reduced. This is not what Nietzsche means. Although, on occasion, Nietzsche says things that might be taken to suggest a reductionism, whereby the I has reference on each occasion of its use to the dominant member of a psychological composite, his claim is *not* that *what we understand* by the I, the semantic content of I-thoughts, can be given in terms of statements about power relations between psychological states. This *cannot* be his view, because he himself affirms explicitly that the representation I has a primitive, transcendental status (in relation to theoretical knowledge claims) which is incompatible with reductionism: he describes our 'belief in the I as substance' as the assumption 'on which the movement of reason' depends – our attribution of reality to all other things, he says, requires the 'soul-superstition'; this superstition is, he says, the

foundation of the oldest realism (*N3*: 7[63], 140 / *KGW*: VIII-1.325), 'the basis on which we make everything *be* or understand it to *be* [nach dem wir Alles *sein* machen oder verstehen]' (*N3*: 2[91], 77 / *KGW*: VIII-1.104), and abandoning it would mean no longer being able to think, 'nicht-mehr-denken-dürfen' (*N3*: 7[63], 140 / *KGW*: VIII-1.325). And he says, in words that could have come from Leibniz or Kant, that we 'have borrowed the concept of unity from our concept of "I" – our oldest article of faith. If we didn't consider ourselves to be unities, we would never have created the concept of "thing"' (*N3*: 14[79], 246 / *KGW*: VIII-3.50).<sup>7</sup> Since Nietzsche's view is not a reductionism in the classical sense but rather (in terms of our contemporary distinctions) a kind of eliminativism, his position is not vulnerable to the sorts of epistemologically-oriented criticisms made by anti-Reductionists, when they argue that the I, the essential indexical, plays an irreducible role in our cognitive performances, which become unaccountable if we suppose the 'I' to refer merely to psychological states and their relations.

Nietzsche's account is exposed, however, to another sort of criticism. There are three ways in which eliminativist positions are standardly supported: (i) first, by arguments for *incoherence* or lack of conceptual and epistemological integrity in the conceptual item targeted for elimination; (ii) second, by arguments for its explanatory *redundancy* (in relation to some other, incompatible scheme that does the same job more economically); and (iii) third, by arguing that the item can be *explained away* (by showing that when we see how our belief in the item arises, and what function the belief serves, we will no longer hold it, or at any rate, no longer be able to understand it realistically). Now there are elements of the first and second patterns of argument in Nietzsche,<sup>8</sup> but it is fair to say that the main burden falls squarely on the third – on Nietzsche's suggestions about the motivation for, and the genesis of the error. The problem arises because any genetic explaining-away of the I, no less than a classical reduction, needs to be expressed in terms that do not presuppose the reality of that which is supposed to be explained away. There is, however, little to show, and little reason to think, that this

condition is met in Nietzsche's explanation of how the illusion of the I arises from pre-personal interests and forces of thought. What needs to be explained in the case of the I is not some common-or-garden existential belief, but a very strong, highly distinctive and highly complex reflexive unity, a capacity for constituting identity-in-difference which goes well beyond the capacity for identifying the aggregates and functional unities which can be discovered in the natural world. So the question arises, how, except in the perspective of an I, of something that takes itself to have unity of the self's sort, can a conception of unity sufficient to account for the fiction of the I be formed? (As it might be put: How can the 'idea' of the I *occur* to a unit of will to power or composite thereof – or to anything *less* than an I?<sup>9</sup>) Nietzsche sometimes talks of parts of the psychological complex as seeking to make themselves masters of the complex, in the way that an individual may take charge of a social group. No doubt parts of an aggregate can generate representations of functional integration, which can then constrain the operation of members of the aggregate in a systematic way, but this sort of structure is a long way off from reproducing the self's unity. In terms of the social analogy, it is as if one were to attempt to explain how a social group can constitute itself as an object of 'we' thoughts by referring to the mere fact of its brute physical domination by one individual member. In short, relations of power may explain the generation of many kinds of mutual representation among psychological items, but not the specific and distinctive mode of representation which is the 'I'.

Now it should be said that this criticism does not amount to a refutation of Nietzsche's picture of the self. For it can be replied, first, that conceding our epistemic dependence on the irreducible representation 'I' does not commit one to understanding it realistically, and second that the 'I' can be explained-away as a fiction generated by the power-relations of interacting elements in the psychological composite, on the grounds that functional requirements can (for all we know) give rise to representations whose content *overshoots* the functional motive that is responsible for creating them – concepts may be generated, in response to functional needs, which go beyond what is needed

to fulfil those needs. On this basis, a genetic explaining-away of the I fiction can free itself from the obligation to account for the (functionally gratuitous) complexity that the I-representation actually displays.

This reply preserves the coherence of Nietzsche's eliminativism about the self, but it is clear that it also means that the argumentative support Nietzsche is able to offer for it is limited, and so that – at least until the argument is resumed on a broader front – Nietzsche is a long way off from having a *refutation* of Kantian or other realist positions about the self. (Relevant at this point is Nietzsche's implicit acknowledgement that, in order to equip himself with an explanatory base that would be adequate to his naturalistic, eliminativist purposes, a hitherto unimagined complexity will need to be attributed to the body<sup>10</sup> – in other words, Nietzsche is aware that he does not have to hand a strong argument of the second type described above, an argument from greater explanatory economy.)

### 1.3. The conflict of Nietzsche's theoretical conception of the self with his practical conception

That Nietzsche's theoretical view of the self is not free from problems of a sort that we are familiar with in a contemporary context from assessing hard-naturalistic proposals in cognitive science, evolutionary psychology and suchlike, is a matter which I will leave aside for the moment. The point I want to dwell on now is an internal one, concerning the lack of fit between Nietzsche's theoretical view of the self and the view of the self required for Nietzsche's values.

Now there are two ways in which one might try to make this point, each involving a different construal of the idea that the self is for Nietzsche the locus of value. (1) First, one might think that there is a conflict of Nietzsche's theoretical picture of the self with his practical philosophy, on the grounds that for Nietzsche the self is the *bearer* of value, that it *is* what is valuable. (2) Alternatively, one might think that Nietzsche's theoretical picture of the self stands in conflict with the *formal*

*conditions* for valuing, more precisely, for any valuing of the specific kind that Nietzsche is engaged in promoting.

Now the first version of the criticism is not obviously successful – on the face of it Nietzsche can consistently hold that the self is in reality nothing but a composite of forces and that this composite, when it has the right kind of organisation, is what has value.

The second version of the criticism, however, does find its target (and it also reveals a sense in which the first objection is correct). When we look at Nietzsche's descriptions of what is involved in being the kind of subject that, on his account, realises value – in the sovereign individual passage in the *Genealogy*,<sup>11</sup> throughout *Zarathustra*,<sup>12</sup> and in numerous other places<sup>13</sup> – we are reminded that the 'I' plays for Nietzsche a fundamental, pervasive, and ineliminable role. This occurs in two closely connected but distinguishable ways. (1) First, the subject who values must understand himself – his self – as the *ground* of the value that he affirms. As in the case of a judgement of taste, where consciousness of one's own imaginative and responsive activity is incorporated into the object of the judgement – taste being of course appealed to by Nietzsche on many occasions as a model for valuing – it is part of what it is to entertain and affirm values in the proper non-alienated, explicitly legislative mode, that one's own contribution, the subject's act of *sponsoring*, be understood as constitutive of the 'object' that comprises one's value. (2) Second, there is a reciprocal relation in Nietzsche between valuing, self-creation, and self-affirmation: to determine such and such to be of value is to determine *oneself*, and to affirm oneself *by way of* affirming what one values, and vice versa. (Further points of this sort, regarding the role of the I in Nietzschean practical thinking, can be made with respect to the thought of *one's own life* that the subject contemplating eternal recurrence entertains, and at an even more basic level, concerning one's thought of oneself as having in the very first place a single life to lead.<sup>14</sup>)



So there is in Nietzsche's account of practical thought an 'I will' – 'I will that this be prized, etc.' – playing a transcendental role roughly analogous to that of the Kantian 'I think' of theoretical judgement. Just as the 'I think' as a *condition* of judgement does not make the I into the *topic* of judgement, so the Nietzschean 'I will' does not mean that all that is ever valued is oneself, as per practical egoism; to the contrary, an element of self-transcendence – a moment of relating to something other, by means of which a relation to self is constituted – is built into Nietzsche's picture. It is a difficult and interesting question what exactly the Nietzschean 'I will' in relation to values comprises: it amounts to more than the practical commitment that is implied trivially in any recognition of a norm, and appears to include an aesthetic or quasi-artistic dimension – the Nietzschean subject will relate to his values in something of the way that an artist relates to his works, as something distinct from himself, yet as an object of pride and ownership, for which the subject claims responsibility or with which it identifies.

In any case, however the Nietzschean 'I will' is to be understood exactly, what is ineliminable from Nietzsche's picture of valuation is the role of the I: not as substratum, nor as equipped with freedom of will in the indeterministic sense, yet as occupying the position of *ground*. Elimination of this I in favour of thinkings ascribed to complexes of will to power or any other units within the psychological composite would produce a profound self-alienation and undermine the normative dimension of valuation, i.e., the possibility of its being thought that the valuation in any sense 'gets things right'.

This allows us to see what is also correct in the first of the two criticisms. While it is true that there is no inconsistency between *our* thinking of some individual as bearing value on account of their psychological structure, if that individual is to think of *himself* as bearing value, then the I-conception is indispensable: Nietzschean man must set value on *himself*, not on some psychological structure. And since Nietzsche's ultimate philosophical purpose lies in forging individuals who set value on

(affirm) themselves, it follows that his account of the bearer of value *does* involve attributing reality to the I.

The problem, therefore, is not just that Nietzsche's theoretical view of the self falls short of furnishing the materials with which to construct the self that figures in his account of practical reason, but that it positively contradicts them. If the 'I' is at best nothing but (as he on one occasion puts it) 'a mnemonic token, an abbreviating formula' (N3: 2[193]: 96 / KGW: VIII-1.160), then it cannot *also* be what we invoke in our acts of valuation, under a Nietzschean understanding of these. Nietzsche claims that his deconstruction of the self undermines the metaphysics of egoism,<sup>15</sup> but it equally threatens to undermine his view of valuation as reflexive affirmation. To which may be added that, as a matter of historical tendency at least, the theories of practical reason which appear to consort most readily with Nietzsche's theoretical conception of the self lie in the direction of consequentialism, à la Parfit – not to mention the opening that Nietzsche's theoretical no-self-ism appears to give to Schopenhauer.

#### 1.4. The contrast with Fichte and Stirner

Now I want to underline this point by contrasting Nietzsche with two other figures, namely Fichte and Stirner, both of whom establish a deep interconnection between their respective theoretical claims about the self and the basic claims of their practical philosophy.

Fichte's account of the self (and his philosophical project as a whole) is designed to demonstrate the fundamental unity of theoretical and practical consciousness, of intellect and will, and because Fichte, like Kant, regards morality as having its necessary and sufficient ground in the structure of practical reason, his account demonstrates a necessary connection of the theoretical conception of the self with value. Moral consciousness is treated by Fichte as a privileged source of

illumination regarding self-consciousness in general, the reflexive unity of which is understood by him as necessarily connected with moral agency: the autonomy realised in moral agency is a more explicitly articulated, developed version of the very same structure as constitutes self-consciousness in general.

Stirner too upholds a deep and necessary connection between selfhood and practical norms. In Stirner this consists in something much simpler and less argumentatively structured than what is proposed in Fichte. For Stirner there is a simple and direct alignment of a purported transcendental, pre-practical 'fact' concerning the self, with the recommended axiological position. The transcendental fact in question is simply the bare fact that I am myself (that I am not merely an individual, an *Einzelne*, but a unique-and-only one, an *Einzige*), and the practical position which, he claims, follows from this fact is that nothing can figure for me intelligibly as an object of practical concern that is not in some way 'my own', my *Eigentum*, part of my *Eigenheit*, *das Meinige*.<sup>16</sup>

Fichte and Stirner are pertinent to a consideration of Nietzsche's account of the self in the following ways.

First, their integration of practical and theoretical reason throws into relief the mismatch in Nietzsche between the theoretical account of the self and practical-philosophical objectives, and at the same time Fichte and Stirner draw attention to what this incongruity consists in at bottom – namely, in the fact that there is in Nietzsche's theoretical treatment of the I no trace of a philosophical account of the self that is in the appropriate way *internal*, that expresses how the self is *for itself*. Fichte and Stirner by contrast *do* theorise the self in a way that gives its proper internal image: they attempt to grasp how the self is for itself, to picture it in philosophical theory in the light of its reflexivity. Nietzsche's theoretical picture of the self by contrast is consistently *external*, and can be entertained only for as long as the self is viewed from the outside, whence its discrepancy with the (necessarily internal) practical point of view.

Second, the contrast with Fichte and Stirner raises the question why Nietzsche should choose not to develop a theory of selfhood that is appropriately internal and that would adequately support his value theory. Fichte's and Stirner's values are, of course, not the same as Nietzsche's, but Nietzsche at least has in common with them the methodological idea that self-experience – a radical turning back on and encounter with oneself – is the fulcrum of genuinely authoritative practical thought; and, as the case of Stirner shows, there is no necessary connection between the view that self-consciousness is significant for practical reason, and a moralism of the sort that Nietzsche objects to, since Stirner is not a Kantian (even Nietzsche, as far as I can see, would be hard pushed to detect ascetic or vestigial Christian tendencies in Stirner, whose polemics against Christianity, self-denial, the fetish of autonomy, and so on, are every bit as vehement as Nietzsche's).

A key point of disagreement of Nietzsche with Fichte and Stirner should be noted. On Fichte and Stirner's accounts, practical norms, values, flow from the *pure I* – from the thin transcendental I in abstraction from any content. This is of course emphatically not Nietzsche's view. I will come back to this point in a moment.

### 1.5. A unified Nietzschean theory of the self

Before proceeding further with the question of why Nietzsche does not aim at the kind of theoretical-practical integration we find in Fichte and Stirner, it is helpful to ask what theoretical conception of the self *would* be appropriate to Nietzsche's practical purposes, and to what extent such a conception could be made consistent with other elements in Nietzsche's philosophical outlook – that is, whether a unified Nietzschean theory of the self is possible in principle.

It is, I think, not hard to see what adjustments to Nietzsche's theoretical discussion of the self are necessary to bring it into line with his practical conception. In the first place, Nietzsche's critique

of traditional metaphysical conceptions of the self does not, on the face of it, *need* to proceed any further than Kant's conclusion in the Paralogisms, namely that there is a boundary to be marked and respected between legitimate transcendental claims for the necessity of the I-representation, and illegitimate, transcendently realistic claims regarding the constitution-in-itself of a corresponding object of this representation.<sup>17</sup> This, on the face of it, would allow Nietzsche the I that he needs for practical purposes, while also leaving space for his explanation of the I-fiction to do work – the fiction explanation can be redirected, not against the I as such, but against the specific, hypostatised, platonised conception of the I that plays such an important role in Christianity and theologically contaminated philosophy. The merely transcendental, un-hypostatised I would retain a degree of (relative) spontaneity, but this is just the spontaneity that Nietzsche needs for his practical outlook, and it falls short of the absolute spontaneity and transcendental freedom that threatens to bring with it the objectionable (to Nietzsche) Kantian package of noumenalist metaphysics. Nietzsche would retain thereby the self needed for his practical purposes while being rid of the self that he objects to as a life-inimical notion.

In the light of this option, Nietzsche appears to have overshot the mark, and to have failed to absorb the Kantian lesson that there is a middle way between 'soul-substratum' and Humean impersonalism; so when Nietzsche sees it to be necessary, in order to deny that there is a 'substratum' with 'being' that constitutes the metaphysically distinct 'doer' of the deed, to affirm that on the contrary 'the doing is everything' (*GM*: Essay I, §13, 28 / *KGW*: VI-2.293), he is going from one false position to its equally false opposite and throwing out the baby with the bathwater.

What is needed in the second place for a unified Nietzschean theory of the self, is something more demanding, and which is not found ready-made in Kant. As noted, while Nietzsche needs to affirm the reality of the I, he differs from Fichte and Stirner in denying that the pure I is a sufficient source of practical normativity. What is needed by Nietzsche, therefore, is a conception on which the

I is necessarily always, and without prejudice to its reality, i.e., without being merely reducible thereto, the expression of some or other sort of pre-personal configuration: that is, a conception which holds together in a coherent manner *both* the unitary I of self-consciousness *and* the psychological manifold. This would allow it to be maintained *both* that the causality of the I is properly interpreted as involving necessarily the expression of the dominant power-unit in the psychological composite (or whatever functional arrangement Nietzschean theory tells us is involved), *and* that the thought which the Nietzschean subject must entertain when a power-unit realises itself successfully, wills values, etc., is an *I*-thought, not the thought *that* such and such a power-unit or whatever prevails presently. Such an account would explain not just why the Nietzschean subject is no more *able* to give up his I than the Freudian analysand can replace first-person thinking with thoughts about an ego and an id, but why it is *right* for him to think in I-terms.<sup>18</sup>

The task that a reconstruction of Nietzsche faces here, is not peculiar to Nietzsche – it appears also in the philosophy of psychoanalysis, as the problem of understanding how the level of commonsense psychology and self-conscious, self-determining subjectivity joins up with that of unconscious motivation.<sup>19</sup> One historical place where one can see this task at least *recognised* and to some degree embarked upon is in Schelling, in his attempt to embed the Fichtean self (the practical I) in a *naturphilosophisch* context (the I as object of theoretical reason and product of nature), and to some extent also in the German romantics (Novalis, Friedrich Schlegel, Schleiermacher).

So a unified Nietzschean theory of the self is a possibility. But it is not, in fact, what Nietzsche aims to provide. So there is an interpretative puzzle. Various explanations may be suggested for Nietzsche's disunified position. For example, it may be suggested that Nietzsche affirms a radical dissolution of the self solely for *therapeutic* ends – because, he supposes, thinking of oneself *as if* one were an aggregate of forces is somehow emancipating (analogous to the way Lacanian psychoanalysis claims that destroying the illusion of the I's centredness is a condition for therapeutic progress). This

would make Nietzsche's own theoretical picture of the self a regulative fiction. Or alternatively it may be suggested that Nietzsche considers that he *has to* deny the existence of the I in *all* senses, on the ground that *any* admission of the I as something over and above the conglomerate of psychological states, is *ipso facto* affirmation of a full-fledged Christian soul – an outlook of which there are indeed some signs in Nietzsche,<sup>20</sup> but which it is hard to see how he could make remotely plausible. Or again, it may be proposed, in a historical perspective, that the explanation lies in the way that the later nineteenth-century philosophical environment had occluded the post-Kantian transcendental tradition and made its philosophical resources unavailable to Nietzsche, a key role being played in this process by Schopenhauer on the one hand, and the naturalistic revision-cum-misunderstanding of Kant which prevailed in the first phase of neo-Kantianism on the other.

There is probably some truth to each of these suggestions, but I suggest that in any case, at the same time, the puzzle should be regarded of deeper and more general significance, on the ground that it repeats itself throughout Nietzsche's philosophy. Again and again we find what appear to be puzzling mismatches between different components of Nietzsche's outlook – between Nietzsche's apparent radical skepticism, and his apparent naturalism; between his skepticism, and the objectivity claims (in the psychological if not the normative sphere) that he appears to need for his project of a revaluation of values; between his anti-essentialism and apparent repudiation of all metaphysics, and his apparent metaphysics of will power (and perhaps also of eternal recurrence); and so on. So there is a pattern, and even if through patient analysis, reconstruction of his claims, discrimination between stages of Nietzsche's development, and so on, one can adjust the parts so that a maximally coherent picture emerges, it seems that the overall *centrifugal* character of Nietzsche's philosophy – the way the bits that compose it, though tethered together, seem to want to fly apart in opposite directions – and the consequent fact that the unity of Nietzsche's philosophy is something that we have to labour to establish, in a way that is not the case for any other modern philosopher: this is surely something that

calls for explanation (and to say that it is due to the fact that Nietzsche 'is not a 'systematic philosopher' is, of course, simply to restate the explanandum).

This brings me to the second part of the paper, where I want to see if any progress can be made towards locating this missing metaphilosophical key, and making better sense of the discrepancy between Nietzsche's theoretical and practical views of the self, by considering how Nietzsche understands the relation between theoretical and practical philosophy.

## **2. The practical/theoretical relation in Nietzsche**

There are two prominent candidates for interpreting Nietzsche's general view of the practical/theoretical relation.

### 2.1. The naturalistic model

The first is the naturalistic conception of the practical/theoretical relation, where theoretical reason is regarded as constitutively independent from practical reason, and as committed to philosophical naturalism. Practical thought is regarded on this model as constrained by theoretical reason in so far as its operations must proceed within parameters set by the facts about how things are, which the interests of practical reason play no role in determining. Beyond that, various options present themselves for construing values and practical thought. On one version, practical thinking is reducible to, a special case of, theoretical thinking, while on another, practical reason is left to its own devices by theoretical reason. On all versions, however, practical thinking is itself an *object* of theoretical reason in the sense that, it is held, there are psychological or other naturalistic explanations to be given of our acts of valuing, and these explanations are not incidental to our understanding of value



but rather tell us what our evaluations, in some good philosophical sense, really amount to. Thus, to take one example, on Brian Leiter's naturalistic interpretation of Nietzsche, which interprets Nietzsche's view of the theoretical/practical relation on the model of Hume, valuation is characterised as an activity of creative 'legislation' which has no rational connection with cognitive activity, in the sense that valuing is not an instance of cognising and its content not rationally constrained by the results of cognition. Valuing is at the same time, on Leiter's account, something that Nietzschean psychology can explain according to the methods of the natural sciences, as the empirically determined outcome of prior, non-normative efficient causal conditions.<sup>21</sup>

In Section 3 I will say something about the larger topic of Nietzsche and naturalism. The point to be made here is that the naturalistic view leads to a problem concerning the self-understanding of the Nietzschean subject. We need to ask what, on an interpretation such as Leiter's, the Nietzschean subject *understands itself* to be *doing*, when it legislates. On Leiter's Humean interpretation, the legislation of the Nietzschean subject proceeds in an axiological limbo, outside any framework of rational norms, while the subject must at the same time understand its legislation as proceeding in accordance with non-normative, natural law. What follows, on the face of it, is that the Nietzschean subject lacks any rational warrant for regarding his valuation as anything more than the expression of a natural force;<sup>22</sup> and this notion – that one could take one's values, not just when viewing oneself sideways on but also *in the very act of* legislating and endorsing them, to be nothing more than the causal effects of pre-normative psychological forces – encounters a problem of sheer inconceivability for subjects in whom the taste for justification is well established. This picture seems to require for its intelligibility a return to the pre-reflective normative innocence of the 'masters' of *Genealogy I*, leaving Nietzsche wide open to the charge of simple flight from the problems of philosophical modernity.

This criticism can be developed by returning to the case of the self and attending to an important difference between Hume and Nietzsche. Nietzsche's dual account of the self has a striking analogy with that of Hume, who famously denies in Book I of the *Treatise* that there is any idea of the self, while proceeding in Books II and III to make essential use of a fairly rich idea of the self in his analysis of the passions and of the mechanism of sympathy that provides the first plank in his moral psychology. Hume preserves philosophical consistency by holding that the idea of the self at work in the passions is a product of *imagination*, thereby imputing illusion to natural consciousness. Now the Humean-naturalistic interpreter of Nietzsche may accordingly suggest that the same solution is available for Nietzsche: it is philosophically consistent to assert both the non-existence of a self for theoretical reason and the necessity of the *assumption* of a self for *practical* purposes.

Whether this account makes Nietzsche's position consistent depends on whether it mitigates the reflexive unintelligibility that, I suggested, afflicts the Nietzschean subject of legislation on the naturalistic construal, i.e. whether it releases the Nietzschean subject from having to simultaneously affirm and deny the reality of his self. Now we can point to a deep reason why carrying over the Humean model to Nietzsche does not and should not be expected to produce the desired result. Disunity of reason in the natural consciousness of the Humean subject never surfaces *for the subject itself* – it comes to light only in Hume's study, and Hume's reflections in his study are forgotten as soon as he steps outside; so the Hume who knows that he has no self and that his reason is disunified, never gets to meet the Hume who thinks he has a self and whose reason is disunited. The results of Humean reflection never issue in a *problem* – no moment of doxastic choice ever presents itself. What keeps the situation stable for Hume is the fact that the Humean subject is a conceptually shallow creature, the course of whose practical and evaluative life is determined pre-reflectively by the causality of affect, of a kind which carries a very light theoretical load. And this is exactly *not* the situation of the enlightened Nietzschean subject, who does not receive values passively from nature

but is bound to *innovate* them, and who is consequently exposed to the full battery of reflective questions which, in the Humean subject, the operation of the passions obviates the need and leaves no scope for. The wall separating life from the study has come down for the Nietzschean subject, who is too far from nature to be protected by nature against experiencing the disunity of his reason.

It is in addition of high importance in this context that Nietzsche's values are not hedonistic but consistently *anti*-hedonistic. If it were Nietzsche's view that pleasure or desire-satisfaction provides a sufficient ground for value, then arguably there would be no difficulty, or much less difficulty, in seeing how a naturalistic theoretical self-understanding could determine a practical orientation, in so far as the transition from fact to value could be regarded (so the naturalist might argue) as effected, non-deductively yet with a kind of oblique rationality, simply by way of (the subject's assent to) the causal force of inclination, submission to the lure of pleasure. Nietzsche's view, by contrast, is that – while of course evaluation does have for him the kind of live relation to desire which the Kantian excludes – values of the kind that he advocates, *ideals*, are a great deal more than functions, reflections or derivatives of the hedonic upshot of desire-satisfaction, and cannot be reduced to such.

The overall problem with the naturalistic model, in sum, is that its prioritisation of theoretical reason, and the naturalistic constriction of theoretical reason's scope, leave the practical perspective short of the rationality which it needs in order to fulfil the exacting task which, on Nietzsche's un-Humean, non-conservative construal of our axiological predicament, practical reason faces. Arguably there are other, non-Humean, more Aristotelian versions of the naturalistic model that may avoid this implication – richer accounts of Nietzschean nature, that build normativity into it, perhaps centred on the concept of will to power<sup>23</sup> – but they create other problems, by virtue of making Nietzsche's 'naturalism' a very much less familiar kind of thing, and in any case they do not promise to help with the puzzle of Nietzsche's disunified view of the self.

## 2.2. The 'Presocratic' unity-of-reason model

The second model regards Nietzsche's philosophy as aiming to construct a unity of theoretical and practical reason in a sense to which philosophical naturalism is indifferent, and which is defined by commitment to a *methodological* principle whereby practical considerations have a legitimate role to play at a fundamental level in directing theoretical judgement.

Nietzsche's conception of a unity of the theoretical with the practical is found in his early unpublished writings on the philosophy of the Greeks – in the relatively finished text of 1873, *Die Philosophie im tragischen Zeitalter der Griechen (Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks)*, and in the collection of notes from 1875 gathered under the title *Wissenschaft und Weisheit im Kampfe (The Struggle between Science and Wisdom)*.

In the latter Nietzsche defines 'wisdom', *Weisheit*, in contrast to *Wissenschaft* or 'Socratism' (which, he says, damages ethical life: *N2*: §188, 128 / *KGW*: IV-1.174), in terms of three features:

1. illogical generalizing and rushing towards final ends, 2. the bearing which these results have upon life [Beziehung dieser Resultate auf das Leben], 3. the unconditioned importance which one ascribes to the soul [unbedingten Wichtigkeit, welche man seiner Seele beilegt]: 'One thing is needful'. (*N2*: §188, 128 / *KGW*: IV-1.174)

The wisdom of Presocratic philosophy is free, Nietzsche says, from 'the detestable pretension to happiness', and is 'related to *art*' (*N2*: §193, 133 / *KGW*: IV-1.179): 'Its solution to the riddle of the universe was frequently inspired by art', inclusive of its 'tragic element', which Nietzsche identifies as 'the attempt to understand the world on the basis of suffering' (*N2*: §195, 135 / *KGW*: IV-1.182).<sup>24</sup>

Presocratic philosophy begins with Thales' revolt against myth, and eventually, with Empedocles and Democritus, the Greeks found themselves, Nietzsche says, 'well on the way towards *assessing correctly* the irrationality and suffering of human existence': they had uncovered a new set of *possibilities* (N2: §191, 131 / KGW: IV-1.177).<sup>25</sup> These possibilities remained unexplored, however, and were later 'covered up' after Socrates aborted the Greek development by dissociating 'life' and 'knowledge', two drives that thereafter increased in power but, because they were no longer 'under a single yoke', struggled increasingly with one another (N2: §200, 143-4 / KGW: IV-1.191-3).<sup>26</sup> Nietzsche says that his *own* 'general task' is 'to show how life, philosophy, and art have a more profound and congenial relationship to each other', and he adds that he rejects, as did the Greeks, the 'false opposition' of the practical and contemplative lives (N2: §193, 134 / KGW: IV-1.180). This idea of practical-contemplative unity is one component of the comparison that Nietzsche draws repeatedly and approvingly of the Presocratic philosopher with the artist: 'the artist stands contemplatively above and at the same time actively within his work' (PTG: 62 / KGW: III-2.325).<sup>27</sup>

What Nietzsche at this stage calls 'wisdom', it may be claimed, is the standpoint of reflection which aims to unify the practical and theoretical perspectives. The philosopher who possesses or aspires to wisdom is therefore *not just* a legislator and commander, a creator of values occupied only with the practical side of things: he *also* aims to take in theoretical reason and to unify its perspective with the practical perspective. In terms of this early schema of Nietzsche's, philosophical naturalism is philosophy conceived merely as *Wissenschaft*, does not embody the unity of practical and theoretical reason, and is the Socratic antagonist of philosophy as *Weisheit*.

In 1875, therefore, Nietzsche sees himself as returning to the Presocratic task of constructing a unity of theoretical and practical reason, and I suggest that there are substantial interpretative gains to be made by regarding this conception of the task of philosophy – where practical or axiological necessity, the needs of life, have a supreme regulative status for reflection – as preserved in

Nietzsche's mature writings.<sup>28</sup> It is evident, furthermore, how this point is connected with the notion that there is a buried transcendental dimension to Nietzsche, as I have already intimated in considering what a unified Nietzschean conception of the self would look like. The unity-of-reason outlook which Nietzsche goes back to the early Greeks to recover is, in the modern philosophical context, properly associated with the transcendental tradition. Quite independently of the historical question of the extent to which Nietzsche may have been influenced by and absorbed motifs from Kant and post-Kantianism,<sup>29</sup> Nietzsche's outlook, in so far as he upholds the Presocratic ideal of philosophy, may be situated, for systemic purposes, in a line of descent from Kant – he mobilises the idea of the primacy of practical reason and, connectedly, of a non-realistic, transcendental or regulative warrant for norms.

What a transcendental reading of Nietzsche would amount to cannot be explored in detail here, but the following are brief suggestions as to what its core elements should comprise. Nietzsche's naturalistic explanations, on a transcendental account, should be regarded as of a conditional and subordinate sort, dependent on and embedded in an overarching context which cannot be constructed out of naturalistic materials – a transcendently conditioned and grounded naturalism. The doctrine of will to power may be viewed as an attempt to construct a picture of the world of the same order as those found, on Nietzsche's view, in the Presocratics (especially Heraclitus) – one which reflects a unity of practical and theoretical reason by virtue of its representing the world in a way that, Nietzsche supposes, is most conducive to the realisation of higher purposes, the flourishing of higher types and so forth.<sup>30</sup> Plausibly, other central elements of Nietzsche's philosophy – eternal recurrence, radical skepticism, the special privilege he accords to art – are better explained by supposing that Nietzsche is endeavouring to determine what it is rational to think in the light of the overriding necessity of practical existence, than by attributing to him a bedrock commitment to philosophical naturalism. A transcendental view of Nietzsche's philosophy as a whole need not – any more than, I

argued earlier, a transcendental account of the self need do so – undermine Nietzsche's anti-Kantianism; to transcendentalise Nietzsche is not to Kantianise him.

The chief limitation of this interpretative model, it would appear, lies in the difficulty that it encounters in accommodating the strain of aggressive hard naturalism which we also find in Nietzsche, and which is exemplified so clearly by his theoretical treatment of the self: Nietzsche does *not* attempt to construct a unified theory of the self, so here is one place where he does *not* do what the unity-of-reason interpretation would lead one to expect him to do. Now various explanations are possible for this fact – I suggested some earlier – and the disunity of Nietzsche's view of the self is not proof that Nietzsche is not in fact *striving* to forge a unity of reason. What it does seem to mean, however, is that, even if Nietzsche does think that unity of reason is a supreme and necessary philosophical goal, and that practical reason has rights in the theoretical domain, he does *not* think that a unity of reason can *in fact* be achieved, or at any rate, he does not himself see a way to achieve it. Another way of putting this is to say that while Nietzsche may be fully prepared to *subscribe* to the principle of the primacy of practical reason, he does not, it would appear, see a way of *applying* this principle to yield the results that the principle is intended to achieve. And the underlying reason for this, it would appear, is that Nietzsche regards the claims of naturalism as too strong to allow theoretical reason to be bent into the shape that practical reason needs it to assume.

### **3. Naturalism and transcendentalism in Nietzsche**

#### 3.1. Naturalism, transcendentalism, and the problem of consistency

The upshot of the previous section is, then, that the naturalistic model, though it coheres with Nietzsche's denial of the reality of the I, conflicts with his practical presupposition of the self, and

more generally frustrates the ambitions of Nietzsche's practical thought; while the Presocratic-cum-transcendental unity-of-reason model underwrites the rationality of the Nietzschean practical perspective, and has a strong claim to capture the general sense of Nietzsche's project, but seems obliged to recognise that Nietzsche feels the pull of naturalism in a way that forbids the realisation of a unity of reason in accordance with the interests of practical reason.

There is a strong temptation, particularly when a historical perspective is applied and it is recalled to what a great extent nineteenth-century German philosophy as a whole is dominated by the two vectors of Kantianism and naturalism and driven by the attempt to square the idealist legacy with natural science,<sup>31</sup> to regard Nietzsche's philosophy as a compound of naturalistic and transcendental elements which remain in tension with one another, and which fails to carry through on either the transcendental or the naturalistic side in the way required to achieve philosophical consistency. This would explain why, with respect to the self, Nietzsche appears to be a naturalist with regard to theoretical reason, and a non-naturalist with regard to practical reason.

Views of this kind are found in the literature on Nietzsche. On the pro-transcendental version of his inconsistency, Nietzsche's aversion to the Kantian legacy is responsible for his not having come up with the unified theory of the self (among other things) that his practical project requires. This is, roughly, the estimate of Nietzsche offered by Habermas in *Knowledge and Human Interests*, where Nietzsche is read as proceeding from a transcendental starting point, but as led astray by naturalistic misconceptions, through an overvaluation of the rationality of natural science.<sup>32</sup> Conversely, from a consistently naturalistic angle there will be a story to tell about what impeded Nietzsche's formulation of a properly naturalistic world-view; for example, Nietzsche may be regarded, I suggested earlier, as having failed to renounce his attachment to non-naturalistic, autonomistic values of sovereign individuality and so forth that a rigorously naturalistic world view is unable to make good sense of,



and to reconcile himself to the broadly utilitarian values which are all that a thoroughgoing naturalism can underpin.

However, before the negative assessment of Nietzsche as stumbling on the path to philosophical consistency – that is, to interpret Nietzsche as either (i) an inconsistent transcendentalist, (ii) an inconsistent naturalist, or (iii) simply divided between the two camps<sup>33</sup> – is accepted, we should make sure that no more charitable account of his position is available. It is, after all, not as if the assumptions needed to motivate the reading of Nietzsche as either a transcendentalist or naturalist *manqué* are ones that Nietzsche may be thought to have no objection to: to put matters in Habermas' way is to presuppose the viability of weakening and containing within transcendental bounds the epistemological authority of natural science, just as the naturalistic view of Nietzsche's shortcomings implies a confidence in the capacity of naturalism ultimately to make adequate sense of our axiological situation. The third interpretation, for its part, imputes to Nietzsche a jarring and improbable lack of metaphilosophical self-consciousness.<sup>34</sup>

An alternative, fourth view, which offers more to Nietzsche, is to regard his philosophy, not as unwittingly inconsistent and compromised, but instead as *diagnosing* the disunity in philosophical reason, *identifying* it as marking our philosophical horizon, and *displaying* it for the benefit of our self-understanding. On such a view, Nietzsche is consciously attempting to formulate the non-optimal yet *best available* combination of theoretical and practical claims within the reach of our reflection, *given* the irresolvable contradiction which he sees between the demands of theoretical and practical thought – he thus offers *local* unities of reason, in place of the global unity of reason which Nietzsche may be regarded as having considered it impossible for enlightened late moderns to achieve.

### 3.2. *The Genealogy of Morals*, Third Essay

Next I want to try to support and develop the idea that Nietzsche has philosophical insight into the naturalism/transcendentalism antinomy. My claim is that he, in at least at one place in his mature writings, makes it an *object* of philosophical understanding, in a way that, Nietzsche supposes, allows us to recognise the opposition of naturalistic and non-naturalistic self-conceptions as a (presently) untranscendable limit of reflection.

The *Genealogy* is widely supposed to provide clear support for the naturalistic interpretation of Nietzsche.<sup>35</sup> I want to suggest that, to the contrary, we find Nietzsche at the final point of his enquiry, in the concluding sections of the Third Essay, shifting out of the perspective of naturalism.

In §23 of the Third Essay Nietzsche asks where we can find a will which opposes the ascetic ideal, and notes that it will be said that our modern science supplies this opposing will, a view which Nietzsche rejects as not speaking from 'the abyss of scientific conscience', i.e., not a scientific interpretation of science (*GM*: §23, 116 / *KGW*: VI-2.414). This theme is resumed in §25, where Nietzsche expands on the idea that science does not make itself a value, and so does not supply 'the natural antagonist to the ascetic ideal'. On the contrary, Nietzsche maintains, science 'first needs a value-ideal, a value-creating power' given to it from outside, and this is none other than the ascetic ideal (*GM*: §25, 120 / *KGW*: VI-2.420). The notion, associated with the naive view of science as counter-ascetic, that science has extinguished the need to which the ascetic ideal answers – that the effect of man's internalisation of science could be to render him 'less *in need* of a transcendental solution to the riddle of his existence [*weniger bedürftig* nach einer Jenseitigkeits-Lösung seines Räthsels von Dasein]' (*GM*: §25, 122 / *KGW*: VI-2.422) – is flatly rejected by Nietzsche. While it is true that man has been degraded, by no means does this signal a release from the transcendental riddle: rather this degradation answers to the same motivation which gave birth to the ascetic ideal. Since Copernicus, man 'has become animal, literally, unqualifiedly and unreservedly an animal, man who in his earlier faiths was almost God', and his existence has come to look 'arbitrary, idle, and

dispensable in the *visible* order of things', but this experience that man now has of himself – as 'on a downward path', 'rolling faster and faster away from the centre', 'into the *piercing* sensation of his nothingness' – is simply a further ascetic experience, which has the following deep rationale: 'Suppose that everything man "knows" does not satisfy his desires but instead contradicts them [...] what a divine excuse it is to be permitted to lay the guilt for this at the door of "knowing" rather than "wishing"!' Man's self-negation through scientific understanding would amount to a '*triumph* for the ascetic ideal' (*GM*: §25, 122-3 / *KGW*: VI-2.422-3).

From this interpretation of the ascendant post-Copernican view that man is 'unreservedly an animal' as serving the ascetic ideal, it does not follow, of course, that philosophical naturalism is, on Nietzsche's view, to be rejected.<sup>36</sup> What it does mean, however, is that naturalism has been reinterpreted at this point by Nietzsche from the standpoint of practical reason, in terms of which it has been evaluated: the perspective of theoretical reason, from which we are able to grasp that our belief in naturalism has itself a naturalistic explanation and justification, has been supplemented by that of practical reason, from which our belief in naturalism appears problematic. However, since it is through naturalism that we have attained the position we are now at, and in any case no alternatives are on the table, the result is only a provisional alienation, a self-distancing, from naturalism, our commitment to which is not cancelled yet has been shown, from the standpoint of value, to aggravate rather than dispel our fundamental problem.

That with the introduction of this new perspective on naturalism in §25 an important rupture has occurred becomes clear if we recall the starting point of the book. In the Preface, Nietzsche makes it plain that the practical-axiological problem of morality has absolute priority in his investigation. The expectation which the Preface sets up is, accordingly, that naturalism should contribute to the solution of this practical problem. And up until the present point, §25, naturalism appeared to have been doing this, its theoretical explanations having – so we have been assuming – a practical point:

Nietzsche allowed us to read him as applying knowledge of nature in the manner of a physician making a diagnosis, in the tacit expectation that the same body of knowledge can be employed to supply the cure. By the end of §25, Nietzsche has indicated that this expectation is disappointed. At any rate, no way of utilising the theoretical self-knowledge that we have gained in the *Genealogy* to fix our axiological situation is now in view.

In §28, the short concluding section of the Third Essay, the question which was raised first in §13, viz., How does the ascetic ideal preserve life?, is finally given its answer, and it is to be noted that the terms of consideration are here highly simplified. Nietzsche no longer talks about man in terms of historical epochs, or about particular sub-groups or types of man, but about man in general, whom he considers solely in relation to and in terms of the ascetic ideal, such that man appears to be distinguished solely by it, as if it were his essence: he speaks of the meaninglessness of man's suffering, 'the problem of what he meant', as '*the* curse', in the singular, and of the ascetic ideal, as its (hitherto) single solution (*GM*: §28, 127 / *KGW*: VI-2.429).

The theme of suffering and its purpose appears earlier in the *Genealogy*, in §7 of the Second Essay. There Nietzsche advanced the interpretation of the Greek gods as devices created in order to give suffering a meaning and life a justification, along with the idea that what most 'arouses indignation' over suffering is its senselessness. But back in the Second Essay there was only a faint suggestion of the new idea that appears in §28. §28 presents the need for meaning as transcending the hedonic problem of suffering, and as affording a total perspective on man – man is 'defined', even more basically than by the ascetic ideal, by his need for *Sinn*. And this need to find meaning in our suffering, Nietzsche is now claiming, shows that we cannot reconcile ourselves to nature, and is the reason why we do not and cannot take ourselves to be just nature: if we could represent ourselves as being unreservedly animal, then we would not need our suffering to have meaning. §28 is therefore the second non-naturalistic moment in the Third Essay, and it makes the following crucial advance

beyond the first: while §25 merely alienates us from naturalism on the limited axiological ground that it intensifies the ascetic ideal, §28 characterises us – or at least, it claims that we *characterise ourselves* – in a way that goes beyond naturalistic understanding. It is crucial for this that when the need for meaning is introduced in §28, no attempt is made to naturalise it: it is not treated at the physiological level, not historicised or made to seem a product of history, and nothing is said about its origin – rather it is presented as standing outside the foregoing historical story of the *Genealogy*. We are thereby invited to interpret all that has preceded in the light of it, that is, to see the history of man traced in the *Genealogy* as a gradual unfolding of this need, a quasi-teleological process explained at the ground level by the need for meaning. Furthermore, we are invited to read Nietzsche's text itself as motivated by it, that is, to regard Nietzsche's own scientific construction of explanations offered in the *Genealogy* as based on, and deriving its legitimacy from, the need for meaning.<sup>37</sup>

It is also important that this new perspective on man is at the same time, at the present point in the text, a *reflexive* perspective. A comparison with *Gay Science* brings this out. In *Gay Science* Nietzsche writes in the language of a natural historian: 'Gradually, man has become a fantastic animal that has to fulfill one more condition of existence than any other animal: man *has to* believe, to know, from time to time *why* he exists; his race cannot flourish without a periodic trust in life – without faith in *reason in life*' (*GS*: §1, 75 / *KGW*: V-2.46). The perspective on our need for meaning in *Gay Science* is external – its existence is recorded as a further fact of human natural history. In §28 of the Third Essay, by contrast, this same fact is viewed and taken up from the *inside*: the need for meaning is presented not as the peculiar trait of a *species*, but rather as a practical-axiological problem, which §28, continuously with the Preface and with §25, makes us experience as *our own*: we confront it practically and not theoretically, directly and not from a distance.

My contention is therefore that Nietzsche concludes the *Genealogy* with the affirmation that we have a need that points beyond nature and that renders a non-naturalistic self-conception

inescapable for us; there is therefore within the *Genealogy*, on the face of it, a transition of its terms of explanation from the naturalism of the First and Second Essays to the concluding recognition of a trans-natural perspective in the Third. Assuming this reading to be correct, the question that must now be considered is what this implies for the interpretation of Nietzsche's metaphilosophy. In particular: Is the naturalistic interpretation of Nietzsche unable to do justice to the points in the Third Essay of the *Genealogy* that I have highlighted?

The naturalistic interpretation is not refuted by the fact that Nietzsche regards scientific understanding as motivated fundamentally by a non-cognitive drive, nor by the fact that it expresses the ascetic ideal, nor again, by its inability to independently create value.<sup>38</sup> The key question is instead what reading it can give of §28 of the Third Essay.

Note that it will not do for the naturalist to observe simply that all that has been shown, strictly, is that Nietzsche accepts the existence in us of a *representation*, the object of which is, or allows itself to be taken to be, non-natural, viz. *Sinn*, and not that Nietzsche affirms the *reality* of the representation's object. While this is true, the challenge is to make naturalistic sense of the non-naturalistic representation, and this *explanandum* is not disposed of just by being redescribed as the content of a psychological state. Pursuing this task, Leiter claims that the ascetic ideal's solution to the 'curse of meaninglessness' referred to in §28 is to be understood in terms of the following explanatory elements: first, the claim of the First Essay that suffering produces *ressentiment*; second, the later claim (Essay III, §15) that relief from *ressentiment* is achieved by blame, which facilitates discharge, the effect of which is anaesthetic; and third, the role of the ascetic priest in redirecting blame by designating a new culprit, namely oneself. In this way the ascetic ideal allows suffering to be 'overcome'. What it is, then, for suffering to 'be meaningful', on the naturalistic account, consists simply in a pattern of psychological causation described in a reductive, mechanistic and hedonistic psychology: it is straightforwardly equivalent to our having the means to achieve hedonic relief from

suffering by means of an anaesthesia-inducing discharge of affect directed at a fictional blame-object.<sup>39</sup>

There are two grounds for rejecting this account. First, it inverts the order of explanation implied by §28. Leiter's naturalistic explanation makes the need for meaning an instrumental *effect* of the *hedonic* practical problem which suffering presents: we need suffering to 'mean' something, i.e. to be taken to have a blameable cause, because and only because we need to find some or other way to end the pain of suffering. But in §28 Nietzsche presents the need for meaning as the *reason*, in a *non-hedonic* sense, why we *cannot* just live with our suffering, why merely accepting or putting up with suffering, agreeing to suffer, is for us a practical impossibility. Leiter's final *explanans* is the *painfulness* of pain; Nietzsche's is the threat of its *meaninglessness*. These are distinct ways for suffering to be 'unbearable', and Nietzsche's interest is in the non-hedonic, *Sinn*-orientated conditions which determine whether we can or cannot bear our suffering.<sup>40</sup>

Second, the concept of meaningfulness, *Sinn*, as applied to life or existence, is treated generally by Nietzsche in a way that either does not imply, or that positively precludes, its hedonistic psychological reduction. For instance, when in §7 of the Second Essay of the *Genealogy* Nietzsche introduces the theme of the meaning of suffering, his initial discussion of its hedonic dimension is quite distinctly *overtaken* by the non-hedonic language of life's 'justifying itself'. This concern for justification is credited to the Homeric Greeks, who in Nietzsche's terms elude the ascetic ideal, making it impossible to regard this justificatory concern as a *product* of the ascetic ideal's historical development. Nietzsche's claim in the Second Essay is, furthermore, directly continuous with the *Birth of Tragedy's* problem of the justification of existence, which is quite clearly not to be understood in terms of hedonistic dynamics, just as tragic affirmation is not presented in that text as a mere hedonistic necessity. Again, in the review of the *Genealogy* given in *Ecce Homo*, it is said that the ascetic ideal has been 'the only ideal' until now, when Zarathustra offers an alternative (*EH*: 114 /

KGW: VI-3.351); and since Zarathustra and the ascetic ideal address the very same need, and the appeal of the Zarathustran ideal is entirely non-hedonistic, Nietzsche must think that what makes some or other ideal necessary for us, viz. the need for meaning, cannot be anything hedonic.<sup>41</sup>

My account of Nietzsche's position in the Third Essay so far may seem to be heading towards a transcendentalist conclusion. But there is another question to be faced: *How could* Nietzsche coherently refuse to accept that our need for *Sinn* has a full naturalistic explanation? How could he think that there is anything *more* to what we call our 'need for meaning' than there is to the love of God, i.e., a will directed to a fictional object? How could Nietzsche in any way *reject* the assertion of philosophical naturalism, without a counter-assertion of *super*-naturalism?

On my understanding, however, this is the very point at which Nietzsche regards philosophical reflection as coming to a halt, and the Third Essay of the *Genealogy* is intended to show us how and why it must do so. If Nietzsche were to be a consistent naturalist, then he would have to agree that the need for *Sinn* can be explained as some kind of evolutionary or whatever *Nebenwirkung*, to be resolved back into a naturalised, mechanistic, hedonistic psychology. But – if naturalisation of the need for *Sinn* were to have the meaning for Nietzsche that it has for the consistent naturalist – Nietzsche would then have to take Freud's line, that the need for *Sinn* cannot be taken with philosophical seriousness, and his practical philosophy would crumble. Because Nietzsche instead holds fast to the internal, practical perspective from which the question of *Sinn* is genuine and ineluctable, he cannot regard the question of whether the need for *Sinn* is 'naturalisable' as a real question; the possibility that our need for *Sinn* is 'really' nothing but another natural drive or accidental by-product of such is not a real possibility; the need cannot be de-validated through an exercise of theoretical reason. But nor, on the other hand – even though the need for meaning *does have* for him the kind of status that is properly called transcendental – can Nietzsche be interpreted ultimately, comprehensively and overarchingly, as a transcendental philosopher: for he does not think



that there is anything to be *made philosophically* of our non-naturalistic self-representation – there is for him nothing that makes that representation 'true', or bestows rationality upon our need for more-than-nature, or that can, in any of the usual philosophical ways, be built upon it by way of a justified theoretical edifice; not even a weaker version of Kant's inference from the incongruity of our representations with nature to our possession of a 'faculty of reason' and corresponding 'rational vocation' can be accepted.<sup>42</sup>

So we are left by Nietzsche with a disunity of philosophical reason, but not, on the interpretation I am suggesting, with an ascription of philosophical inconsistency to Nietzsche: it is not at all that he simply fails to appreciate the conflict or decide between naturalism and transcendentalism. What makes the aporetic outcome of Nietzsche's enquiry – his discovery that our rightful search for ('Presocratic', global, theoretical-and-practical) unity of reason cannot succeed – less than fatally crippling for his ultimate philosophical ends is the potential independence, Nietzsche supposes, of the purposes of life from philosophical representations. How Nietzsche supposes this independence can be fostered and sustained – and whether the possibility of the condition he envisages can be made sufficiently convincing for us not to be drawn back into transcendental philosophy – is, of course, another story.<sup>43</sup>

## References

### *Writings by Nietzsche*

References to writings by Nietzsche are given by the following abbreviations. Page references are given first to the English translation listed below, from which quotations are taken, and then (prefixed *KGW*, and in the form, e.g., 'III-2.3', referring to Abteilung, Band and Seite) to Nietzsche, *Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, ed. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari, Berlin: de Gruyter, 1967-.

- BGE* *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future* (1886), trans. Walter Kaufmann. New York: Vintage, 1966.
- EH* *Ecce Homo* (1888), trans. R. J. Hollingdale. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1979.
- GM* *On the Genealogy of Morals* (1887), trans. Carol Diethe, ed. Keith Ansell-Pearson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.
- GS* *The Gay Science* (1882), trans. Walter Kaufmann. New York: Vintage, 1974.
- N1* [Nachlaß 1872-73] *Unpublished Writings from the Period of 'Unfashionable Investigations'*, trans. Richard T. Gray. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1999.
- N2* [Nachlaß 1872-76] *Philosophy and Truth: Selections from Nietzsche's Notebooks of the Early 1870s*, ed. and trans. Daniel Brezeale. Atlantic Highlands, N. J.: Humanities Press, 1979.
- N3* [Nachlaß 1885-88] *Writings from the Late Notebooks*, ed. Rüdiger Bittner. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- PTG* *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks* (1873), trans. Marianne Cowan. Chicago: Regnery/Gateway, 1962.
- TI* *Twilight of the Idols: or How to Philosophize with a Hammer* (1889) [with *The Anti-Christ*],

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Z *Thus Spoke Zarathustra: A Book for Everyone and No One* (1883-85), trans. R. J. Hollingdale. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969.

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<sup>1</sup> The following (by no means exhaustive) quotations from the *Nachlaß*, given in chronological order, provide a representative selection: 'If *I* have anything of a unity within me [etwas von einer Einheit in mir habe], it certainly doesn't lie in the conscious "I" [...] but somewhere else: in the sustaining, appropriating, expelling, watchful prudence of my whole organism, of which my conscious self is but a tool' (N3: 34[46], 2 / KGW: VII-3.154); 'We *imagine* that what is commanding and highest resides in our consciousness' (N3: 34[87], 6 / KGW: VII-3.168); 'The concept of the "individual [Individuum]" is false. In isolation, these beings do not exist: the centre of gravity is something changeable; the continual *generation* of cells, etc., produces a continual change in the number of these beings' (N3: 34[123], 8 / KGW: VII-3.182); 'What separates me most deeply from the metaphysicians is: I don't concede that the "I" is what thinks. Instead, I take the *I itself to be a construction of thinking* [*eine Konstruktion des Denkens*], of the same rank as "matter", "thing", "substance", "individual", "purpose", "number": in other words to be only a *regulative fiction* [*regulative Fiktion*] with the help of which a kind of constancy and thus "knowability" is inserted into, *invented into*, a world of becoming [...] but up to now philosophers have believed, like the "common people", that in "I think" there lay something or other of unmediated certainty and that this "I" was the given cause of thinking [...] However habituated and indispensable this fiction may now be, that in no way disproves its having been invented: something can be a condition of life and *nevertheless be false*' (N3: 35[35], 20-1 / KGW:

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VII-3.248); 'auch das Erkennen, das absolute und folglich auch das relative, ist ebenfalls nur eine Fiktion! Damit fällt denn auch die Nöthigung weg, ein Etwas das "erkennt", ein Subjekt für das Erkennen anzusetzen [...] diese noch von Kant nicht gänzlich aufgegebene Mythologie [...] diese Mythologie hat nunmehr ihre Zeit gehabt (KGW: VII-3.342-3); 'Starting point the *body* and physiology: why? – What we gain is the right idea of the nature of our subject-unity [die richtige Vorstellung von der Art unsrer Subjekt-Einheit] – namely as rulers at the head of a commonwealth, not as "souls" or "life forces" [nicht also "Seelen" oder "Lebenskräfte"]' (N3: 40[21], 43 / KGW: VIII-3.370); 'Seien wir vorsichtiger als Cartesius, welcher in dem Fallstrick der Worte hängen blieb. Cogito ist freilich nur Ein Wort: aber es bedeutet etwas Vielfaches: manches ist vielfach und wir greifen derb darauf los, im guten Glauben, daß es Eins sei' (KGW: VIII-3.371); 'The assumption of the *single subject* [des *Einen Subjekts*] is perhaps unnecessary; perhaps it is just as permissible to assume a multiplicity of subjects on whose interaction and struggle our thinking and our consciousness is based? A kind of *aristocracy* of "cells" in which mastery resides? Certainly an aristocracy of equals which together are used to ruling know how to command? *My hypotheses*: The subject as multiplicity [das Subjekt als Vielheit]' (N3: 40[42], 46 / KGW: VII-3.382); 'the "soul" itself is an *expression* of all the phenomena of consciousness which, however, we *interpret as the cause of all these phenomena* ("self-consciousness" is a fiction [ist fiktiv]!)' (N3: 1[58], 60 / KGW: VIII-1.21); the I is '*not* the same thing as the unitary government of our being!' and 'is, after all, only a conceptual synthesis' (N3: 1[87], 61 / KGW: VIII-1.28); the 'little word "I" is 'a mnemonic token, an abbreviating formula [Erinnerungs-Zeichen, eine abkürzende Formel]', not 'an entity [Wesen]': the 'clever feat in the invention' of the subject, of the "I" [Kunststück in der Erfindung des "Subjekts", des "Ichs"]' consists in taking it to be a cause (N3: 2[193], 96 / KGW: VIII-1.160); 'the word "I", the words "do" and "done to": these may be the horizons of our knowledge [Horizontlinien unsrer Erkenntniß], but they are not "truths" [keine "Wahrheiten"]' (N3: 5[3], 106 / KGW: VIII-1.187); the I is a constant 'falsifying

medium [fälschenden Mediums]' (N3: 5[13], 107 / KGW: VIII-1.193); "'Subject': interpreted from the standpoint of ourselves, so that the I is considered subject, cause of all doing, *doer* [...] No subject "atoms" [*Keine* Subjekt-"Atome"]]. The sphere of a subject constantly becoming *larger* or *smaller* – the centre of the system constantly *shifting* [...] No "substance", but rather something that as such strives for more strength' (N3: 9[98], 158-9 / KGW: VIII-2.55-56); "'Thinking", as posited by the theorists of knowledge, simply doesn't occur: it is a quite arbitrary fiction [...] The "mind", *something that thinks* [...] this conception is a derivative, second consequence of the false self-observation that believes in "thinking": here *first* an act is imagined that doesn't occur, "thinking", and secondly a subject-substratum [ein Subjekt-Substrat] is imagined in which every act of thinking, and nothing else, originates; i.e., *both doing and doer are fictions* [*sind fingirt*]' (N3: 11[113], 222 / KGW: VIII-2.296); 'we have become quite convinced that our concept of "I" guarantees nothing in the way of a real unity [unsere Conception des Ich-Begriffs nichts für eine reale Einheit verbürgt]' (N3: 14[79], 246 / KGW: VIII-3.50-51).

<sup>2</sup> In *Beyond Good and Evil* Nietzsche writes that along with the rejection of 'materialistic atomism' must go 'soul atomism [der Seelen-Atomistik]', i.e., 'the soul as something indestructible, eternal, indivisible, as a monad, as an *atomon*' (BGE: §12, 20 / KGW: VI-2.21). Nietzsche adds that it is however not necessary to also at the same time get rid of the soul, as do 'clumsy naturalists', for the 'soul-hypothesis' can be refined: 'such conceptions as "mortal soul", and "soul as subjective multiplicity [Seele als Subjekts-Vielheit]', and "soul as social structure of the drives and affects [Seele als Gesellschaftsbau der Triebe und Affekte]" want henceforth to have citizens' rights in science' (BGE: §12, 20-1 / KGW: VI-2.21). The critique of soul here in *Beyond Good and Evil* §12 is resumed in the analysis of will in §19 in terms of 'a commonwealth' in which 'the governing class identifies itself with the successes of the commonwealth [...] a social structure composed of many "souls" [Gesellschaftsbau vieler "Seelen"]' (BGE: §19, 26 / KGW: VI-2.27). (To which corresponds the

passage in the Nachlaß, where the 'synthetic concept "I"' is said to allow us to '*disguise from ourselves*' the duality [Zweiheit] of willing (N3: 38[8], 36 / KGW: VII-3.334.) See also Z, Part One, 'Of the Despisers of the Body': 'You say "I" and you are proud of this word. But greater than this – although you will not believe in it – is your body and its great intelligence, which does not say "I" but performs "I"' (Z: 62 / KGW: VI-1.35), and TI: 'The Four Great Errors', §3: 'And as for the ego [das Ich]! It has become a fable, a fiction [Fiktion], a play on words: it has totally ceased to think, to feel and to will!' (TI: 59 / KGW: VI-3.85).

<sup>3</sup> E.g.: GS: §354, 297-300 / KGW: V-2.272-5; BGE: §17, 24 / KGW: VI-2.24-5; TI: 'The Four Great Errors', §3, 59 / KGW: VI-3.85; N3: 34[46], 2-3 / KGW: VII-3.154; N3: 1[61], 60 / KGW: VIII-1.22; N3: 1[75], 60 / KGW: VIII-1.25; N3: 34[54], 4 / KGW: VII-3.157.

<sup>4</sup> '*On the psychology of metaphysics* [...] These conclusions are *inspired by suffering*: at bottom they are *wishes* that there might be such a world; in the same way, hatred of a world that makes us suffer expresses itself in the imagining of a different world, a *valuable one*' (N3: 8[2], 141 / KGW: VIII-1.337). Nietzsche accords a role to 'grammar' in perpetuating the belief in the I – see, e.g., GM: Essay I, §13, 28 / KGW: VI-2.293; BGE: §17 and §54 / KGW: VI-2.24-5 and VI-2.71; N3: 35[35], 21 / KGW: VII-3.248; and KGW: VIII-3.371. But I take it that, even if it enjoys some degree of autonomy, grammar is for Nietzsche not a sufficient source of illusion – we are not innocently misled by it – but rather a contributory factor, especially since he suggests in BGE: §20, 28 / KGW: VI-2.29, that the prevalence of specific 'grammatical functions' is not autonomous but lies under 'the spell of *physiological* valuations and racial conditions'.

<sup>5</sup> N3: 1[58], 60 / KGW: VIII-1.21: '*Man as a multiplicity of "wills to power"* [*eine Vielheit von "Willen zur Macht"*]. See also, e.g., N3: 14[219] / KGW: VIII-3.186.



<sup>6</sup> *GM*: Essay I, §13, 29 / *KGW*: VI-2.294-5: 'The reason the subject (or, as we more colloquially say, *the soul*) has been, until now, the best doctrine on earth, is perhaps because it has facilitated that sublime self-deception whereby the majority of the weak, the dying [...]'

<sup>7</sup> See also *N3*: 7[1], 129 / *KGW*: VIII-1.258; *N3*: 5[3], 106 / *KGW*: VIII-1.187; *N3*: 2[91], 77 / *KGW*: VIII-1.104; *TI*: 'The Four Great Errors', §3, 48-50 / *KGW*: VI-3.84-5; and *N3*: 9[98], 158-9 / *KGW*: VIII-2.55-6.

<sup>8</sup> On the first sort of argument, see *BGE*: §§16-17, 23-4 / *KGW*: VI-2.23-5, claiming that (i) the notion of 'immediate certainty' constitutively associated with 'I will' and 'I think' is a '*contradictio in adjecto*', and that (ii) the description of consciousness as involving 'I think' is an interpretation that rests on a host of epistemologically arbitrary, unsubstantiated and perhaps unsubstantiatable presuppositions.

<sup>9</sup> Nietzsche merely pushes the problem down a level when he uses reflexive locutions to describe the motivation of units of will to power, as in *N3*: 1[124], 63 / *KGW*: VIII-1.36: perspective arises in an organic being when 'not the being *but the struggle itself wants to preserve itself, wants to grow and to be conscious of itself* [sich nicht ein Wesen, sondern der Kampf selber erhalten will, wachsen will und sich bewußt sein will]'.

<sup>10</sup> *N3*: 35[55], 27 / *KGW*: VIII-1.36: philosophers are, Nietzsche conjectures, now 'learning to exchange for' the idea of the soul the 'even more mysterious' idea of the human body. See also *N3*: 2[69] / *KGW*: VIII-1.90; and *N3*: 2[91], 77 / *KGW*: VIII-1.104; and *Z*: Part One, 'Of the Despisers of the Body', 61-3 / *KGW*: VI-1.35-7.

<sup>11</sup> *GM*: Essay II, §2, 39-40 / *KGW*: VI-2.309-10.

<sup>12</sup> 'This is *my* good, this I love, just thus do I like it, only thus do *I* wish the good' (*Z*: 63 / *KGW*: VI-1.38); 'Your love of your neighbour is your bad love of yourselves [...] The "You" is older than the "I"; the "You" has been consecrated, but not yet the "I": so man crowds towards his neighbour' (*Z*: 86 / *KGW*: VI-1.73); 'Ah my friends! That *your* Self be in the action [Dass *euer* Selbst in der Handlung

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sei], as the mother is in the child: let that be *your* maxim of virtue!' (Z: 120 / KGW: VI-1.119); 'O my Will! My essential, *my* necessity, dispeller of need!' (Z: 231 / KGW: VI-1.264); 'Every soul is a world of its own [...] For me – how could there be an outside-of-me?' (Z: 234 / KGW: VI-1.268); 'You creators, you Higher Man! One is pregnant only with one's own child. / Let nothing impose upon you, nothing persuade you! For who is *your* neighbour? And if you do things "for your neighbour", still you do not create for him! / Unlearn this "for", you creators; your very virtue wants you to have nothing to do with "for" and "for the sake of" and "because". You should stop your ears to these false little words' (Z: 301 / KGW: VI-1.358).

<sup>13</sup> E.g.: 'To be answerable for oneself, and proudly, too, and therefore to have *the right to say "yes"* to oneself' (GM: Essay II, §3, 41 / KGW: VI-2.310-1); 'My judgement is *my* judgement – no one else is easily entitled to it' (BGE: §43, 53/ KGW: VI-2.56).

<sup>14</sup> The first-person dimension of Nietzschean valuation is brought out in Bernstein 1991: see esp. 204 and 207.

<sup>15</sup> N3: 1[87]: 61 / KGW: VIII-1.28: the I is 'only a conceptual synthesis – thus there is no acting from "egoism"'.

<sup>16</sup> Regarding the proper course of a human being's development, Stirner writes: 'As I find myself behind things, and that as mind, so I must later find *myself* also behind *thoughts*, namely, as their creator and *owner* [*Schöpfer und Eigner*] [...] And now I take the world as what it is to me, as *mine*, as my property [*Eigentum*]; I refer all to myself' (1995, First Part, ch. 1, 'A human life': 17). Regarding the ideal and proper condition: 'Ownness, on the contrary, is my whole being and existence, it is I myself. I am free from what I am *rid* of, owner of what I have in my *power* or what I *control*. *My own* I am at all times and under all circumstances, if I know how to have myself and do not throw myself away on others [... I] have my law in my whole nature, in myself [...] *As own* you are *really rid of everything*, and what clings to you *you have accepted*; it is your choice and your pleasure. The *own*

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man is the *free-born*' (1995, Second Part, ch. 1, 'Ownness': 143, 146, 148). Stirner acknowledges the trans-discursive character of the insight into one's ownness, which he says 'is not in any sense an *idea* like freedom, morality, humanity and the like: it is only a description of the – *owner*' (154).

<sup>17</sup> Nietzsche shows in *BGE*: §54, 66-7 / *KGW*: VI-2.71, that he is aware of Kant's position, though he seems to understand it in an idiosyncratic way: modern philosophy since Descartes, Nietzsche says, has experimented with alternatives to regarding the 'I' as the condition for the 'think' as the conditioned, and has proposed instead that 'I' is 'only a synthesis which is *made* by thinking [eine Synthese, welche durch das Denken selbst *gemacht* wird]'; so, says Nietzsche, Kant did entertain 'the possibility of a *merely apparent existence* of the subject [die Möglichkeit einer *Scheinexistenz* des Subjekts]' (an idea which Nietzsche then, perhaps in order to impute an ascetic motive, associates with Vedanta).

<sup>18</sup> For these reasons, the discussion in Reginster (2003: 71-4) seems to me not to go far enough. Reginster describes Nietzsche as wanting to construe the self as a 'unity *in* multiplicity' (p. 71) and acknowledges that 'Nietzsche continues to speak of the self as if it were an independent entity, standing over and above the multiplicity of its own drives' (pp. 73-4), but he equates the self's unity-in-multiplicity (weakly, in departure from the German idealist understanding of this notion) merely with the drives' displaying 'a certain degree of coherence and organisation' (p. 71) and affirms that for Nietzsche 'all there is to the self [...] are the drives themselves, and their relations with one another' (p. 72). In defence of this apparently Reductionist interpretation, Reginster suggests that talk of the self as an independent entity is 'just a way of speaking' (p. 74), and that Nietzsche 'believes it unnecessary to explain the unity of the self' (p. 72). It is hard to see on what basis Nietzsche, if he allows the self's unity to be something real, can rightfully deny that it requires explanation, and the claim is contradicted by Nietzsche's many attempts, discussed above, to explain away the putative unity of the

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self. Reginster's discussion proceeds purely from the third-person psychological-explanatory perspective, and does not factor in the requirements of the first-person practical point of view.

<sup>19</sup> The issue is well stated in Tugendhat 1986: 131-2.

<sup>20</sup> *N3*: 7[62], 140 / *KGW*: VIII-1.325: 'It seems to me important to get rid of *the* universe, unity, any force, anything unconditional; one could not avoid taking it as the highest agency and naming it God.' Nietzsche may also have been impressed by Frederick Alfred Lange's argument (1950, Second Book, ch. 3: 166 ff) that it is contradictory to suppose something 'absolutely simple' that yet 'has ideas'.

<sup>21</sup> See Leiter 1998: 223-4 and 2002: 95-6.

<sup>22</sup> Leiter also holds, with consistency, that '*qua* conscious self or "agent", the person takes no active part in the process' of self-creation (1998: 255).

<sup>23</sup> See Richardson 1996.

<sup>24</sup> See also *N2*: §1, 149 / *KGW*: III-4.144: the birth of tragedy has its 'corroboration in the philosophy of its contemporaries'; and *N2*: §7, 157 / *KGW*: III-4.24: 'The world that reveals itself [here: in the 'philosophical systems of the early Greeks'], is the same as the one created by tragedy.'

<sup>25</sup> See also *PTG*: 33 / *KGW*: III-2.303 and *PTG*: 40-1 / *KGW*: III-2.307-8.

<sup>26</sup> The Presocratic philosopher 'is contemplative-perceptive like the artist, compassionate like the religious, a seeker of purposes and causalities like the scientist' (*PTG*: 44 / *KGW*: III-2.311).

<sup>27</sup> See also the *Nachlaß* writings, 'Summer 1872-Early 1873', in *NI*: 19[1], 3 / *KGW*: III-4.5; 19[12], 5 / *KGW*: III-4.7; 19[24], 9 / *KGW*: III-4.12; 19[36], 13-14 / *KGW*: III-4.16-17; 19[39], 16 / *KGW*: III-4.19; 19[41], 17 / *KGW*: III-4.20; 19[42], 17 / *KGW*: III-4.20-1; 19[45] 18-19 / *KGW*: III-4.21-2.

<sup>28</sup> Habermas 1999: 'Nietzsche saw that norms of knowledge are not in principle independent from norms of action: there exists an immanent unity of knowledge and interest' (212).

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<sup>29</sup> On the historical relation, see Hill (2003). Commentators who, aside from issues of Kantian historical influence, find various transcendental affinities in Nietzsche include Habermas (discussed below), Deleuze (1983), Gerhard (1988), and Pippin (1991 and 1997).

<sup>30</sup> And which finds its post-Kantian transcendental equivalents in the conceptions of Nature – the 'higher physics' – of the Herder- and Goethe-inspired German romantics, Schelling and *Naturphilosophen* of the early nineteenth century.

<sup>31</sup> See Schnädelbach 1982.

<sup>32</sup> See Habermas 1971, ch. 12, and 1999.

<sup>33</sup> Green (2002) has argued for a view of Nietzsche as failing in his epistemology to harmonise naturalistic and transcendental factors. Much of the current discussion of naturalism and transcendentalism in Nietzsche revolves around his views of truth and knowledge. While it is certainly true that the question whether Nietzsche is a positivist, or (internal) realist, or transcendental idealist, bears closely on the question whether Nietzsche should be classified as a naturalist or transcendentalist, to think that epistemology provides the key or the primary context for deciding the latter question is, in my view, to mistake the centre of gravity of Nietzsche's philosophy (see Gemes 2001). In any case, if only for reasons of space, I have in this paper largely steered clear of these debates. For what it is worth, my sense is that Green is correct, at least in the sense that the same interpretative indeterminacy that I have been discussing re-emerges in Nietzsche's treatment of epistemological topics. In this connection, see also Han-Pile, forthcoming.

<sup>34</sup> One further interpretative possibility, which to my mind lacks plausibility but which for the sake of comprehensiveness should be mentioned, is that Nietzsche provides, or is aiming to provide, some sort of *Aufhebung* of the opposition of naturalism and transcendentalism (this being, in the eyes of many contemporary philosophers, an independently appealing philosophical target). My reading in the next section of *Genealogy* Essay III, if correct, rules this out, but clearly, the task for anyone who

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wants to make this strong claim for Nietzsche is first to show exactly how Nietzsche achieves, or attempts to achieve, this metaphilosophical synthesis, and second to explain away the relevant apparent disunities in his thought concerning the self and other topics which an *Aufhebung* would have been expected to overcome.

<sup>35</sup> See, in addition to Leiter, Williams (1993) and Geuss (1997).

<sup>36</sup> See Leiter 2002: 281-3.

<sup>37</sup> Leiter, as if half acknowledging this point, calls the need 'existential' (2002: 284), but on his account, 'existential' can mean only 'basic natural'.

<sup>38</sup> All of these considerations are acknowledged fully by Leiter (2002).

<sup>39</sup> Leiter 2002: 256-63. See also Leiter 2003: 93-7.

<sup>40</sup> To say this, note, is not to deny that it is *also* true that the need for *Sinn* presupposes, in *some* sense, the fact of suffering. Nietzsche's view of their relation is not straightforward, and consideration of the topic is complicated by the fact that meaninglessness is itself an object or form of suffering (man '*suffered* from the problem of what he meant', *GM*: Essay III, §28, 127 / *KGW*: VI-2.429). My suggestion would be that Nietzsche regards suffering in its primary, hedonic sense as *occasioning* the formation of the need for *Sinn*, indeed as *necessary* for its crystallisation, but that he regards the need for *Sinn* as then assuming a life of its own, such that, if *per impossibile* we ceased to suffer in the hedonic-Schopenhauerian sense, we would continue to stand in need of *Sinn*. Suffering thus figures twice in Nietzsche's genealogy, and in two different forms: primordially it is a matter of life's minus score on the hedonic, Schopenhauerian balance sheet; later it assumes the additional and independent form of a consequence of our finding life *sinnlos*.

<sup>41</sup> Compare Freud's peremptory treatment of the 'question of the purpose of human life' in *Civilization and its Discontents* (1961: 75-76). The very question is dismissed by Freud as a further manifestation of 'human presumptuousness' and as intellectually surpassed: 'the idea of life having a purpose stands

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and falls with the religious system'. Freud accordingly turns to the factual-explanatory, external, third-person question of 'what men themselves show by their behaviour to the purpose and intention of their lives', i.e. 'the programme of the pleasure principle', in the context of an investigation directed to determining empirically the prospects for reducing human suffering. Freud's quick way is unthinkable for Nietzsche – indeed, it is exactly what he rejects in *GM* III, §§23-28. The contrast with Freud highlights Nietzsche's commitment to the integrity of the demand for *Sinn*, and Nietzsche's distance from the hedonism which forms the axiological mainstream of philosophical naturalism.

<sup>42</sup> The peculiar, hybrid character of Nietzsche's thinking, its complex combination of naturalistic and non-naturalistic perspectives, is shown again in his attitude to the problem of evil. Nietzsche does not – as a consistent naturalist can and should – regard the problem of theodicy as disposed of in *all* its dimensions by the death of God (see Pippin 2003). Nietzsche thinks that a task corresponding to the theologian's task of furnishing a theodicy remains: it needs to be false that the world is too evil for it to have been created by God; it must be possible to avoid taking the fact of suffering as the objection to God's counter-factual existence which we, as we now are, still cannot help but take it to be. This task requires, Nietzsche thinks, a change of direction of fit: it requires not that the world be shown to be 'really thus' but that we *become otherwise*. (The important, non-naturalistic point here being that this necessity is not naturalistically intelligible.)

<sup>43</sup> I have benefited enormously from detailed comments by Ken Gemes and Brian Leiter on earlier attempts to write about the topic of naturalism and transcendentalism in Nietzsche. I am also grateful for comments on earlier partial drafts of the present paper presented at the University of Warwick, the Radcliffe Institute at Harvard, and the workshop on Nietzsche on Autonomy, Agency, and the Self held in London in 2006, and to the Arts and Humanities Research Council and the Philosophy Department of University College London for research leave that enabled the completion of this paper.