

view Nietzsche allows for discovery and conceptual revision and thus for the much sought-after realist constraint. It further suggests that, for Nietzsche, the will to power does not represent the end of the story. How the story will progress is beyond the scope of our inquiry. What is important for us is that the will to power is compatible with Nietzsche's perspectivism and that it plays a substantial role in facilitating Nietzsche's need for a realist constraint that is compatible with his overall anti-metaphysical realist commitments. I conclude by citing Nietzsche's articulation of his multi-perspectival conception of truth and justification.

There is *only* a perspectival seeing, *only* a perspectival "knowing"; and *the more* affects we allow to speak about a thing [...] the more complete will be our 'concept' of the thing, our 'objectivity'.⁶³

⁶³ Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, translated by Maudemarie Clark and Alan J. Swensen (Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1998), III, 12.

'The Animal That May Promise': Nietzsche on the Will, Naturalism, and Duty

THOMAS BAILEY

It is often thought that Nietzsche simply denies that agents rationally and consciously determine their actions, and that they can legitimately be held responsible, and morally evaluated, for their actions. This is perhaps unsurprising, given that in *Twilight of the Idols*, for instance, he identifies 'the error of free will' as one of 'The Four Great Errors'. 'One has stripped becoming of its innocence', he writes there, 'if being this or that is traced back to will, to intentions, to responsible acts: the doctrine of will was essentially invented for the purpose of punishment'. Such statements can be found throughout Nietzsche's writings and are often explained as symptoms of his ontology, which is standardly interpreted as reducing agency, evaluation, and being to the 'becoming' of natural forces. In this regard, appeal is often made to the section in the first essay of *On the Genealogy of Morality* in which Nietzsche writes, 'A quantum of force is just [...] a quantum of drive, will, effect – more precisely, it is nothing other than this driving, willing, effecting itself, and it can appear otherwise only through the seduction of language (and the fundamental errors of reason petrified in it), which understands and misunderstands every effecting as conditioned by an effective thing, by a "subject"'. He continues, 'there is no "being" behind the action, effecting, becoming; "the doer" is merely imagined into the action, – the action is everything'.¹

The purpose of this paper, however, is to suggest an alternative interpretation of such statements. That is, this paper attempts to demonstrate that the target of Nietzsche's criticism of 'free will' and

¹ *TI VI 7, GM I 13*. Translations of Nietzsche's texts are my own, and references employ the standard English abbreviations.

moral evaluation is a restricted one, and that his criticism is accompanied, without contradiction, by a positive account of the will and of evaluation. This positive account is shown to imply substantial revisions of the standard interpretation of his ontology and to reveal a positive ethics which has received little attention in the literature. The paper is, therefore, divided into three parts. The first part considers the particular target and nature of Nietzsche's criticism of 'free will' and moral evaluation. The second part considers the principle features of his positive account of the will, including the revisions of the standard interpretation of his ontology that it implies. The third part considers the positive ethics that he grounds upon this account.

I.

To maintain that Nietzsche simply denies that agents rationally and consciously determine their actions, and that they can legitimately be held responsible, and morally evaluated, for their actions, is, firstly, to ignore the particularity of the notion of 'free will' and of evaluation that he denies. This notion identifies the will with a *peculiar kind of cause or causal agent*, one that can provide a *complete* causal explanation of certain events, namely, human actions. Thus, in his discussion in *The Genealogy*, Nietzsche is concerned with the notion of the will that identifies it with 'an effective thing [*ein Wirkendes*]', or 'a doer [*ein Täter*]', lying 'behind' action. Such 'doers' serve to 'double the doing', he writes, such that 'the same event is posited first as cause and then once again as its effect'. In his discussion of 'The Four Great Errors' in *Twilight of the Idols*, he also identifies our belief in the will with the belief 'that we ourselves were causal in the act of will: we thought that there, at least, we were *catching* causality in the act'. He identifies the same notion of the will in *Beyond Good and Evil* when, in his critical discussion of the belief in 'immediate certainties', he asks whether willing need be thought of as 'an activity and effect on the part of a being thought of as a cause'. In another section of *Beyond Good and Evil*, he equates the notion of free will with the notion of *causa sui* and the employment of it with 'the desire to bear the whole and ultimate responsibility for one's actions and to absolve God, world, ancestors,

chance, society from responsibility for them'.² Indeed, the same critical concern is crucial to all of his critical discussions of 'free will'.³ Related to it is Nietzsche's concern with the belief that this peculiarly complete causation of the will and the motivations upon which it acts are *always* intelligible and transparent to consciousness. In his discussion of 'The Four Great Errors', for example, he is concerned with the 'illusions and will-o'-the-wisps' of the "'inner world'", including the belief 'that all the *antecedentia* of an action, its causes, were to be sought in consciousness, and could be discovered there if one searched for them – as "motives"'.⁴

Furthermore, Nietzsche observes that this particular notion of 'free will' is a necessary condition of a particular form of moral evaluation. That is, he observes that attributing a peculiarly complete causation to agents provides a ground for holding them responsible for, and morally evaluating, any aspect of their 'being this or that', as he expresses it in his discussion in *Twilight of the Idols*. In *The Genealogy*, he describes this in terms of the morality of the 'weak' or the 'lambs' – that is, of those who say, "[...] good is everyone who does not violate, who injures no one, who does not attack, who does not requite, who leaves revenge to God, who keeps himself hidden as we do, who avoids all evil and in general desires little from life, like us, the patient, humble, just". It is these 'lambs', Nietzsche writes, who 'exploit this belief for themselves and basically even maintain no belief more ardently than this one, that *the strong one is free* to be weak, and the bird of prey to be a lamb: – with this they win for themselves the right to hold the bird of prey *accountable* [*zurechnen*] for being a bird of prey'.⁵

Nietzsche also provides an account of the origins and development of this particular notion of the will and the form of evaluation of which it is a necessary condition. It originated, he maintains, under 'the morality of custom [*die Sittlichkeit der Sitte*]', a primitive period of morality which he consistently refers to as '*Sittlichkeit*', '*Sitte*', and '*sittlich*'. This morality was, according to Nietzsche, crucial to the development of *post*-customary morality, the form of moral evaluation which he is concerned to reject and for which he reserves the terms '*Moral*', '*Moralität*', and '*moralisch*'. As he writes in his discussion of 'The Four

² GM I 13, TI VI 3, BGE 16, 21. Nietzsche's discussion in BGE 16 is directed at the statement, 'I think', but the first sentence makes clear that he intends it also to concern the statement, 'I will'.

³ See also GS 127, BGE 17 and 19, TI III 5 and VI 7 and 8, and A 14 and 15.

⁴ TI VI 3. See also D 115, 116, 119, 129, and 130, and GS 335 and 360.

⁵ TI VI 7, GM I 13. See also BGE 21 and TI VI 8.

Great Errors', the errors of morality have their origins in 'the oldest and longest-lived psychology', a psychology that was originally applied not only to human behaviour, but also to every natural event. For primitive man, he writes,

every event was an action, every action the consequence of a will, the world became for it a multiplicity of doers, a doer (a 'subject') was pushed underneath every event. Man projected outside himself his three 'inner facts', that in which he believed most firmly, will, spirit, I, – he first derived the concept being from the concept I, he posited 'things' as existing in his own image, according to his concept of I as cause.⁶

This animistic conception of nature allowed primitive man to attribute his misfortunes and discomforts to the actions of natural 'spirits', actions and 'spirits' which were, in turn, thought to be intelligible in terms of, and manipulable through, man's maintenance or infringement of superstitious customs. The maintenance of these customs, Nietzsche claims, was thus the ground of the first 'morality' and of the first communities. Significantly, it established the form of moral evaluation which Nietzsche is concerned to reject, since it held, firstly, that *any* aspect of man's existence could be of concern to the 'spirits'; secondly, that man was responsible for any such aspect, by virtue of the peculiar kind of causation which he was supposed to share with the 'spirits'; and, thirdly, that instances of this causation and the motives upon which it acted were transparent to consciousness and intelligible in terms of their relation to the maintenance of customs.⁷

⁶ *TI* VI 3. See also *HH* 111 and *TI* III 5.

⁷ On the morality of custom, see, in particular, *HH* 96 and 111, *D* 9, 10, 12, 13, 15, 17, 23, 31, 33, 40, 103, 104, 105, 130, and 142, *GS* 84 and 127, *TI* III 5 and VI 7, and *A* 25. Nietzsche's conception of the morality of custom owes much to his readings in philosophy and anthropology. Among the philosophical texts which provide accounts of primitive morality and of the relation between morality and custom which are comparable with Nietzsche's, and which he had read or read secondary material about, are Spinoza's *Ethica*, Pascal's *Pensées*, Montaigne's *Essais*, Schopenhauer's *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* and *Über die Grundlage der Moral*, Mill's *On Liberty*, and Rée's *Der Ursprung der moralischen Empfindungen*. He also benefited from the anthropological accounts of primitive customs and animism in Walter Bagehot's *Physics and Politics* and John Lubbock's *The Origin of Civilisation and the Primitive Condition of Man*, both of which he first read in translation in the mid-

Nietzsche claims that these customs and this relation to nature were undermined by the modern conception of natural events as subject to causal necessity.⁸ But he insists that primitive psychology, and the form of evaluation associated with it, nonetheless persisted in metaphysical form. Indeed, he maintains that metaphysicians recognised the incompatibility between, on one hand, primitive psychology and evaluation and, on the other, the modern conception of nature. But he claims that they nonetheless continued to be convinced by primitive psychology and evaluation, which had become embedded in grammar and in 'reason'. They therefore thought it necessary to posit 'free will' as a supra-natural, but nonetheless real, cause of events, and to posit the related notions of a supra-natural I, spirit, and being and a supra-natural source of moral value. As Nietzsche writes in the chapter, "Reason" in Philosophy', in *Twilight of the Idols*,

Language belongs in its origin to the time of the most rudimentary form of psychology: we come into a crude fetishism when we bring to consciousness the basic presuppositions of the metaphysics of language, to put it plainly: of *reason*. That sees agents and actions everywhere: that believes in will as cause in general; that believes in 'I', in I as being, in I as substance and *projects* the belief in the I-substance onto all things – with this it first *creates* the concept 'thing' ... Being is thought into, *put onto*, everywhere as cause; from the conception 'I' follows first, derivatively, the concept 'Being' ... At the beginning stands the great fate of the error that the will is something that *effects*, – that will is an *ability* ... Today we know that it is merely a word ... Very much later, in a world a thousand times more enlightened, *reliability*, subjective *certainty* in the handling of the categories of reason came with surprise to philosophers' consciousness: they concluded that these could not have come from the empirical, – indeed the entire empirical stands in contradiction to them. *From where do they come, therefore?* – And in India as in Greece one has made the same mistake: 'we must have already have once been at home in a higher world (– instead of *in a very much lower*

1870's, and in W.E.H. Lecky's *History of European Morals*, which he had read in translation by 1881.

⁸ See *HH* 111, *GS* 46, and *TI* VI 3.

one: which would have been the truth!), we must have been divine, for we have reason!"⁹

With this, then, agents could continue to be held responsible for any aspect of their 'being this or that' – an agent's actions could be understood as the effects of a peculiarly complete, and now supra-natural, kind of cause, and as transparent to a supra-natural kind of consciousness, and could be evaluated according to moral values which, in order to maintain their applicability to any aspect of man's existence, were also endowed with a supra-natural origin (in the Christian God, for example).

Nietzsche's objection to this metaphysical form of 'free will' and evaluation, and to the other metaphysical notions related to it, is the incompatibilist one that they, like the primitive psychology and evaluation upon which they are based, are incompatible with the causal necessity of natural events. He consistently criticises the notion of 'free will' on incompatibilist grounds, and reserves some of his sharpest rhetoric for metaphysicians and their continued positing of primitive psychology and evaluation despite their recognition of its incompatibility with natural causal necessity.¹⁰ His similarly venomous rejection of morality is directed at those forms of evaluation which demand that an agent radically differ from what he already is or, even, from what he naturally could be – by demanding that the 'bird of prey' be a 'lamb', for example, or that man transcend his natural existence in the name of 'a higher world'. Demands such as these, Nietzsche recognises, rely upon attributing to agents the peculiarly complete causation involved in the incompatibilist notion of the will and upon evaluating them according to values grounded in something other than their natural existence.

⁹ *TI* III 5. See also *D* 31, *GS* 127 and 151, *BGE* 2, 5, 20, and 21, *D P* 3, *GM* III 25, *TI* III 6, IV, and VI 3 and 8, *A* 14, 15, 25, 38, and 39, and *EH* IV 8.

¹⁰ For Nietzsche's incompatibilist criticism of 'free will', see *HH* 39, 70, 91, 99, 102, 105, 106, 107, 133, 144, 160, 208, and 376, *AOM* 33, 50, 51, and 363, *WS* 1, 11, 12, 23, 24, 28, 43, 52, 61, 69, 81, and 183, *GS* 99 and 110, *BGE* 21 and 22, *TI* III 8, and *A* 14 and 15. Examples of Nietzsche's remarks regarding metaphysicians can be found at *BGE* 5, *D P* 3, *TI* III 6 and IX 16 and 42, and *A* 10, 12, and 52. Nietzsche also rejects that fatalism which confuses causal necessity with a compulsion, command, or constraint. For this, see *AOM* 9, *WS* 61, *GS* 109, and *BGE* 21 and 22. He provides the other standard incompatibilist criticism of 'free will', regarding its making action unintelligible, at *WS* 23.

It is often thought that Nietzsche, having rejected the metaphysics of 'free will', 'consciousness', 'morality', and 'being', aspires to articulate 'becoming' without appeal to any notions of 'free will', 'consciousness', 'morality', or 'being'. This 'becoming' is therefore often thought of as a necessary flux of natural forces or drives, conceived as radically excluding free will and moral evaluation, along with consciousness and 'being'. But Nietzsche does not articulate such a flux or aspire to, and nor should he. For him to reduce agency, evaluation, and ontology to a necessary flux of forces or drives, without free will, consciousness, morality, or being, would be for him to employ a typically metaphysical understanding of nature and of opposites, requiring free will, consciousness, morality, and being to be entirely excluded from nature. Such an exclusive relation between opposites is crucial to metaphysics, which constructed a "real world" "out of the contradiction to the actual world", as Nietzsche writes in *Twilight of the Idols*.¹¹ Metaphysics consequently holds that fundamental opposites such as freedom and unfreedom, morality and immorality, consciousness and the unconscious, and truth and falsehood have distinct ontological origins, that they originate from distinct 'real' and 'apparent', metaphysical and natural, worlds. Nietzsche, however, explicitly rejects such exclusive oppositions and conceives his project as one of accounting for 'how something can originate from its opposite', as he writes at the beginnings of both *Human, All Too Human* and *Beyond Good and Evil*.¹² Thus he does not deny the metaphysical "real world" while retaining metaphysics' conception of the 'apparent', natural world, and does not deny freedom in the name of unfreedom, morality in the name of immorality, consciousness in the name of the unconscious, or truth in the name of falsehood. He simply denies those conceptions of freedom, morality, consciousness, and truth that appeal to an origin or world distinct from the natural, and attempts to account for them and their opposites without such an appeal.

Nietzsche's non-metaphysical naturalism therefore provides room for him to offer a positive compatibilist alternative to the particular notion of the will which he rejects on incompatibilist grounds, a naturalistic alternative to the form of evaluation of which this notion of the will is a necessary condition, and a more sophisticated ontology than he is standardly interpreted as offering. The following parts of this paper attempt to demonstrate that he does offer such alternatives, beginning

¹¹ *TI* III 6.

¹² *HH* 1 and *BGE* 2. See also *TI* III 4 and 6.

with his alternative account of the will and its significance for his ontology.

II.

Nietzsche offers his positive compatibilist account of the will at the beginning of the second essay of *The Genealogy*. There he conceives willing as the distinctive ability of 'the animal *that may [dürfen] promise*'. This ability to will or promise, he maintains, is the manifestation of a hierarchical organisation of other abilities (*Vermögen*), in particular the ability to remember and the ability to forget, and an inability, the inability to forget. These particular abilities and this inability therefore conflict with each other, but their hierarchical organisation ensures that, in cases of willing, the ability to remember overcomes the ability to forget, which, in turn, has overcome the inability to forget.

Thus Nietzsche claims, firstly, that the inability to forget consists of the inability to "cope [literally, finish, *fertig*]" with', or 'digest', experiences and desires, and the processes of "inanimation [*Einverseelung*]" through which they are 'digested'. By overcoming this inability, therefore, 'active forgetfulness' limits consciousness – it 'digests', or ensures the 'inhibition' of, experiences and desires, and the processes through which they are 'digested'. Forgetfulness therefore, Nietzsche writes, provides a '*present*', 'a little stillness, a little *tabula rasa* of consciousness, so that there is again space for new things, above all for the nobler functions and functionaries, for ruling, foreseeing, predetermining (for our organism is arranged oligarchically)'. In other words, forgetfulness acts as 'a doorkeeper' of consciousness, restricting it so as to make room for willing.¹³

But willing also requires 'an opposing ability, a memory', a second active ability that opposes and overcomes forgetfulness. For willing involves, Nietzsche writes, 'an active *willing-not-to-be-rid-of*, a continuous willing of something once willed, a real *memory of the will*'. In cases of willing, therefore, a willing is actively not finished with, not digested, not forgotten. This ensures that 'a world of strange new things, circumstances, even acts of will may be safely put between the original "I will", "I will do" and the actual discharge of the will, its *act*, without

¹³ GM II 1.

this long chain of will breaking'. That is, although new experiences and desires affect the willer, he is nonetheless able to remember and to act upon what he once willed. He is, Nietzsche writes, 'able to stand security for himself *as future*'. This also presupposes, Nietzsche observes, a number of other, subsidiary abilities: 'In order to dispose of the future in advance in this way, man must first have learned to distinguish necessary from chance events, to think causally, to see and anticipate the distant as if it were present, to fix with certainty what is the purpose and what the means to it, in general be able to calculate, compute'.¹⁴

Nietzsche therefore offers a compatibilist account of the will – that is, an account that does not appeal to the peculiar kind of cause or causal agent that he rejects on incompatibilist grounds. His account is also distinguished by its insistence on a reductive form of naturalism, its provision of a physiological and historical account of the being which is able to will, and its accounting for the agent's ability not to be determined to actions by its desires. These three distinctive aspects of Nietzsche's compatibilism will be considered in turn.

Firstly, Nietzsche consistently insists that apparently mental events, including those concerned with willing, are in fact physiological ones, and that mental descriptions are to be reduced to physiological ones. This is clear not only from the first sentence of the second essay of *The Genealogy*, in which he writes that 'to breed an animal *that may promise*' is 'the paradoxical task that nature has set itself with regard to man'.¹⁵ He also makes the following statement in a parenthetical discussion of the ability to forget in the third essay of *The Genealogy*.

I do not regard 'mental [*seelisch*] pain' itself as a factual existence, but only as an interpretation (causal interpretation) of factual existences that have not yet been exactly formulated: thus something that still hangs entirely in the air and is not scientifically binding [...]. If someone cannot cope with his 'mental pain', that is due, crudely put, *not* to his 'soul [*Seele*]'; more likely to his stomach (crudely put, as said: which in no way expresses a wish also to be heard crudely, understood crudely...) A strong and well-formed human digests his experiences (deeds, misdeeds included) as he digests his meals, even if he has hard bites to swallow. If he 'cannot cope' with an experience, then this kind of indigestion is as physiological as the other – and in many

¹⁴ GM II 1.

¹⁵ GM II 1.

cases only one of the consequences of that other. – With such a conception one can, speaking between ourselves, still be the strictest opponent of all materialism...¹⁶

Nietzsche therefore maintains that apparently mental events are in fact physiological ones, and that descriptions of mental pain and forgetfulness, particularly descriptions which attribute 'causal' features to them (presumably regarding their causing or being caused by physical facts), are not descriptions of mental facts, but merely inadequate descriptions of physiological ones. Indeed, his physiology is primarily concerned with providing adequate physiological descriptions of apparently mental events, and particularly with providing a physiological description of willing. This not only explains why he strictly opposes that materialism which would reduce every apparently mental event to an event in the *stomach* (a reduction which can be found in some of the popular German materialist texts of the 1850s and 1860s).¹⁷ It also explains why he does not simply deny the mental or reduce it to a manifestation of a universal and necessary flux of forces or drives, as the standard interpretation of his ontology maintains. Instead, although he rejects conceptions of the mental which conceive it in terms which are incompatible with natural causation, he opposes 'clumsy naturalists who can hardly touch "the soul" without losing it', as he writes in the first part of *Beyond Good and Evil*. He continues, 'the way to new forms and refinements of the soul-hypothesis stands open: and concepts such as "mortal soul" and "soul as multiplicity of the subject" and "soul as social structure of drives and affects" want henceforth to have civic rights in science'.¹⁸ With these concepts, Nietzsche maintains, a description of the mental can be provided which is compatible with natural causation but which does not 'lose' the mental. His physiology of 'life' or 'spirit', and, in particular, of the 'life' or 'spirit' that can will, is intended to provide such a description.

Thus, in a section slightly later in the first part of *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche again rejects the notion of the will that conceives it as a

¹⁶ GM III 16.

¹⁷ For example, Jacob Moleschott, in his *Physiologie des Stoffwechsels in Pflanzen und Thieren* and its popular companion volume, *Lehre der Nahrungsmittel*, both published in 1850, and Ludwig Büchner, in his *Kraft und Stoff*, published in 1855, make such reductive claims. Nietzsche knew of them through F.A. Lange's *Geschichte des Materialismus*, which he read soon after it was published in 1865.

¹⁸ BGE 12.

peculiar kind of cause or causal agent. But here he also describes willing as revealing, in the affects that it gives rise to, that 'our body is only a social structure of many souls'. In willing, he claims, 'we are at the same time commander and obeyer, and as obeyer, we know the feelings of constraint, compulsion, pressure, resistance, motion which usually begin immediately after the act of will'. If these affects of obedience are ignored, and only 'the affect of command' is attended to, then, Nietzsche writes, 'the willer believes wholeheartedly that willing *suffices* for action', that action can be attributed to "freedom of will". But this misinterpretation of willing in terms of the notion of a peculiar kind of cause or causal agent ignores 'the feelings of pleasure of the successful executive instruments, the serviceable "under-wills" or under-souls' which are also required to explain the ability to will. Nietzsche maintains that a physiology of this 'social structure of many souls' and its ability to will can be provided, and, indeed, that it is these 'relations of mastery under which the phenomenon "life" results'.¹⁹

Nietzsche returns to this 'life' in a later section of *Beyond Good and Evil*. Here he again insists on his reductive form of naturalism, expressed here as a 'task': 'to translate man back into nature [...] to make man henceforth stand before man as he today stands, hardened by the discipline of science, before *other* nature'. This requires, he maintains, that mental descriptions such as 'honesty, love of truth, love of wisdom, sacrifice for knowledge' be rejected as 'flattering colours and over-painting' that obscure the 'basic text *homo natura*'. But he also insists here that 'the "spirit [*Geist*]'", a 'commanding something [...which] wills to be master in and around itself and to feel itself master', can be accounted for in terms of 'needs and abilities [...which] are the same as physiologists posit for everything which lives, grows, and multiplies itself'. Again claiming that 'the "spirit" is more like a stomach than anything else', he here describes its 'will to be master in and around itself' in terms of its epistemological 'digestion' of the external world. This manifests, he writes, 'a strong tendency to assimilate the new to the old, to simplify the diverse, to overlook or push away the wholly contradictory'. He continues, 'Its intention in this is the incorporation of new "experiences", the classification of new things under old divisions, – growth, therefore; more precisely, the *feeling* of growth, the feeling of increased force'. A spirit may also manifest 'a suddenly erupting decision for ignorance' and hence restrict its 'digestion' of the external world. It may also 'let itself be deceived' or 'deceive other spirits'.

¹⁹ BGE 19.

Nietzsche maintains that 'all this is necessary according to the degree of its force of appropriation, its "digestive force", to speak in metaphor'.²⁰

These outlines of a physiology of 'life' or 'spirit' are therefore concerned with describing a natural being which manifests a tendency to maintain itself over time, an ability to will and to know, and conscious events such as those involved in willing knowing. Although this self-maintenance, willing, and knowing give rise to affects of increased force or of the command and obedience of its 'souls' which can be understood as this being's fundamental 'intention', Nietzsche does not understand this 'intention' as irreducibly teleological. Similarly, he does not understand apparently mental descriptions such as those attributing 'intentions' to willing as comprising irreducibly teleological descriptions of actions, as comprising an irreducible psychology. To claim that, for example, 'metaphysicians posited "free will" as a complete and supra-natural kind of causation in order to defend primitive psychology and evaluation from the recognition of natural causal necessity' would, according to Nietzsche, not provide an adequate naturalistic description of an event. He instead endeavours to provide reductive, physiological descriptions of such apparently mental events and of the fundamental 'intentions' of certain organic beings, descriptions that are concerned only with natural causation.

This is revealed in the section of *Beyond Good and Evil* in which Nietzsche insists that 'life itself is will to power'. Here he also criticises conceptions of life that appeal to 'superfluous teleological principles'. 'Will to power' is, then, not a principle of ontological or psychological teleology, but is, rather, a principle of 'morphology' or 'physio-psychology', the terms that Nietzsche employs at the end of the first part of *Beyond Good and Evil* to distinguish his reductive form of naturalism, his physiology, and his principle of 'will to power' from the 'moral prejudices' that have informed psychology hitherto.²¹ With this, Nietzsche insists on a naturalism that does not deny the mental, but that is committed to describing it and the physiology of the being that appears to manifest it without teleology. Similarly, his description of the fundamental 'intention' of certain organic beings is concerned only with identifying the tendency of such beings to manifest self-maintenance, the ability to will and to know, and consciousness.

Nietzsche also provides a historical account of the development of this kind of organic being, an account which also is not teleological and

which, once again, concerns the morality of custom. In *Beyond Good and Evil*, he writes of the morality of custom that, 'this tyranny, this arbitrariness, this severe and grandiose stupidity has *trained* the spirit; it seems that slavery, in the cruder and in the more refined sense, is the indispensable means also for spiritual discipline and breeding [*geistigen Zucht und Züchtung*]'.

In *The Genealogy*, he is more specific, claiming that the morality of custom trained man in promising according to 'the oldest and most primitive relation among persons that there is, [...] the relation between buyer and seller, creditor and debtor'. Regarding this relation, he writes, 'Precisely here *promises* were made; precisely here a memory was *made* for him who promises; precisely here, one may suspect, will be found a place of hard, cruel, and painful things'. Nietzsche maintains that this relation informed relations between individuals, between the community and individuals, and between the community and the 'spirits' of nature.²² By providing a training according to this relation, the morality of custom overcame the singularity and arbitrariness of the primitive 'human animal' – for the morality of custom, Nietzsche writes in *Daybreak*, "evil" signifies the same as "individual", "free", "arbitrary", "unusual", "unforeseen", "incalculable". Thus the morality of custom, and the relation between creditor and debtor, overcame forgetfulness, the 'partly dull, partly scattered understanding' of the primitive 'human animal', and made man '*calculable, regular, necessary*, also in his own representation of himself' and able to promise.²³

Nietzsche's compatibilism is therefore reductively naturalistic and is accompanied by a historical physiology of the ability to will. The third distinctive aspect of his compatibilism is its allowing for an agent's action not to be determined by the agent's desires. That is, Nietzsche does not follow many compatibilist accounts in maintaining that action can be provided with an adequate explanation, merely in terms of desires and beliefs about the means to their satisfaction. Correspondingly, he

²² BGE 188, GM II 8. On the relation between creditor and debtor as the relation between community and individual, see GM II 3, 9 and 10, and on this relation as the relation between the community and the 'spirits' of nature, see HH 111, D 23, and GM II 19, 20, 22, and 23.

²³ GM II 3, D 9, GM II 1. On the impersonality of the morality of custom, see also HH 99, AOM 89, WS 40, D 14 and 496, GS 46, 76, 117, 143, and 328, and GM II 2, and, on the training of the ability to will under the morality of custom, see GM II 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, and 15. On Nietzsche's distinction between 'breeding [*Züchtung*]', which alters nature, and 'taming [*Zähmung*]', which suppresses it, see BGE 188, GM II 1, 2, 3, and 15, TI VII 2, 3, 4, and 5, and A 3.

²⁰ BGE 230. On spirit, knowledge, and the ability to will, see also TI VIII 6.

²¹ BGE 13, 23. See also GS 109, BGE 22, GM III 7, and A 2.

does not conceive practical reasoning merely as instrumental reflection regarding the ranking of desires and the truth of beliefs about the means to their satisfaction. Rather, he allows for motivations that are unrelated to these desires and beliefs, and accounts for them in terms of the agent's ability to 'forget' its desires and experiences. Indeed, this ability to 'forget' not only enables the agent to act upon motivations which are unrelated to its desires, but also entails that, even for it to engage merely in instrumental reflection regarding its desires, it must temporarily 'forget' them and can act upon a motivation related to them only by an 'active willing'. This 'active willing' is an element of action that is, for Nietzsche, additional to the agent's desires, beliefs, and instrumental reflection even in cases when the agent acts upon motivations related to its desires.

This third distinctive aspect of Nietzsche's compatibilism can therefore be understood as its 'Kantian' aspect, in two senses. Firstly, Nietzsche identifies two kinds of freedom which parallel those which Kant calls 'negative' and 'positive': the 'negative' freedom to act upon, but not be determined by, motivations related to one's desires, and the 'positive' freedom to act on motivations unrelated to these desires. (Kant's distinction is, of course, closely related to his distinction between 'heteronomy' and 'autonomy'.)²⁴ Secondly, Nietzsche's account of 'active willing' as necessary for both kinds of freedom, although it does not follow Kant in appealing to a 'transcendental' spontaneity, is paralleled by Kant's claim that both require the ability 'not be determined to an action by an incentive *except so far as the human being has incorporated [aufnehmen] it into his maxim, (has made it into a universal rule, according to which he wills to conduct himself)*'.²⁵ Nietzsche's account of the will is therefore significant in articulating a conception of agency and practical reason that is both compatibilist and 'Kantian' in these two senses. The ethical significance of his allowing for motivations which are unrelated to the agent's desires will be the concern of the following, concluding part of this paper.

²⁴ See Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, 5:29, 5:32, 5:33, and 5:117-118. Translations of Kant's texts are my own, and references are to the *Akademie* edition, except the reference to the *Critique of Pure Reason*, which refers to the first (A) and second (B) editions.

²⁵ Kant, *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*, 6:24. See also *Critique of Pure Reason*, A534/B562, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, 4:446, *Critique of Practical Reason*, 5:33, 5:60, 5:62, and 5:117-118, and *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*, n. to 6:57.

III.

As the first part of this paper has demonstrated, Nietzsche rejects that form of moral evaluation which makes, at least, unrealistic, and, at most, impossible, demands regarding any aspect of an agent's 'being this or that'. But that Nietzsche does not thereby reject all ethical evaluation, and that he in fact grounds a positive ethics upon the ability to will, is clear from the following passage, once again from the beginning of the second essay of *The Genealogy*.

The 'free' man, the possessor of a long unbreakable will, also has in this possession his *measure of value*: looking out from himself upon others, he honours or he despises; and just as he necessarily honours his equals, the strong and reliable (those who *may* promise), – therefore, everyone who promises like a sovereign, weightily, seldom, slowly, who is stingy with his trust, who *distinguishes* when he trusts, who gives his word as something that can be relied upon because he knows himself strong enough to uphold it against accidents, even 'against fate' –: just as necessarily he will hold his kick ready for the feeble windbags who promise but may not, and his switch for the liar who breaks his word at the very moment he has it in his mouth. The proud knowledge of the extraordinary privilege of *responsibility* [*Verantwortlichkeit*], the consciousness of this rare freedom, this power over oneself and fate, has in him sunk down to his lowest depths and become instinct, the dominating instinct [...]²⁶

According to Nietzsche, therefore, the ability to will provides the being that is able to will with a '*measure of value*'. This can be understood in terms of Nietzsche's physiology of 'life' or 'spirit', and, in particular, of 'will to power' as the tendency of certain organic beings to manifest self-maintenance, the ability to will and to know, and conscious events. The consciousness of this tendency, Nietzsche maintains, is an 'instinct, the dominating instinct' of such organic beings, and he writes in the next section of *The Genealogy* that this tendency, particularly in the form of the ability to will, entails 'that one *may affirm oneself*'.²⁷ It is this necessary self-affirmation of the being with the ability to will which is,

²⁶ *GM* II 2.

²⁷ *GM* II 3.

for Nietzsche, the ground of a form of the 'noble' ethics that he describes in the first essay of *The Genealogy* and in *Beyond Good and Evil*. This involves characteristically noble self-affirmation.²⁸ But, by 'looking out from himself upon others', the being with the ability to will also uses his measure of value to distinguish and affirm those who are equally able to will.²⁹ The noble willer therefore does not merely evaluate action's consequences for his or others' interests, but also evaluates agents of actions according to his measure, the ability to will.³⁰ By distinguishing his equals in willing, he also establishes a sphere of those to whom he has duties and regarding whom he has rights, duties and rights that are also given content by the constant mutual measurement of the ability to will. Thus, in a typical passage from *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche writes,

egoism belongs to the essence of the noble soul, I mean the immovable faith that to a being such as 'we are' other beings must be subordinate by their nature, and sacrifice themselves to us. [...] Under circumstances which make it hesitate at first, it admits that there are equals-in-rights with it; as soon as it is clear as to this question of rank, it moves among these equals and equals-in-rights with the same certainty in modesty and tender reverence as it has in intercourse with itself [...] it honours *itself* in them and in the rights it concedes them, it does not doubt that the exchange of honours and rights, as the *essence* of intercourse, likewise belongs to the natural condition of things. The noble gives as it takes, out of the passionate and sensitive instinct of requital that lies in its ground.³¹

Nietzsche frequently refers to, but does not elaborate on, this 'instinct of requital' in *Beyond Good and Evil* and *The Genealogy*. But, in the Preface to *The Genealogy*, he refers to two sections which analyse it in some detail: the section of *Human, All Too Human* in which he first distinguishes noble from slave moralities, and one of two successive

sections in *Daybreak* in which he provides lengthy analyses of requital in terms of the ability to will.³² The section of *Daybreak* begins,

On the natural history of duty and right. – Our duties – are the rights of others over us. How have they acquired these rights? By taking us to be capable of contracting and of requiring, positing us as similar and equal to them, and consequently entrusting us with something, training, reproving, supporting us. We fulfil our duty – that is: we justify that representation of our power according to which everything was shown to us, we give back in the measure in which one gave to us. It is therefore our pride which bids us do our duty, – when we do something for others in return for something they have done for us, we will the restoration of our autocracy, – for they have intervened in our sphere of power and would have continued to have their hand in it if we did not practise, with 'duty', a requital, that is, intervene in their power.³³

Thus Nietzsche holds that one's duties and rights are determined by the power that one is 'posited' as having by oneself and by others. He also insists here that this posited power concerns precisely the ability to will. He writes, 'the feeling of duty depends upon our having the same *belief* in regard to the extent of our power as others have: that is, that we *are able* to promise certain things and bind ourselves to perform them ("freedom of will")'. One's duties and rights thus correspond precisely with one's posited ability to will, and to determine these duties and rights 'constantly needs the refined tact of a balance', to weigh the shifting degrees of one's own and others' posited ability to will. Nietzsche includes benevolence among these duties and rights, as a concern with maintaining a 'sphere of power' extended to include the spheres of subordinate, unequal others, but he insists that duties and rights extend no further beyond one's equals than this.³⁴

Nietzsche locates the origins of this 'instinct of requital' in the relation between creditor and debtor under which the morality of custom trained the spirit with the ability to will. It was under this relation, he writes, that 'person first kicked out at person, here person first *measured*

²⁸ See *BGE* 21, 260 and 287, *GM* I 2 and 10, and *TI* VIII 6.

²⁹ See *BGE* 224, 259, 260, 262, 263, 265, 272, and 293, and *GM* I 10 and 11.

³⁰ See *GS* 3, *BGE* 32, 190, 191, 260, and 287, and *GM* I 2.

³¹ *BGE* 265.

³² In *GM* P 4, Nietzsche refers to, among other sections, *HH* 45 as prefiguring *GM*'s analysis of the noble and the slave, *D* 112 on justice, and *HH* 96 and 99, and *AOM* 89, on the morality of custom.

³³ *D* 112.

³⁴ *D* 112. On requital, see also *HH* 44, *D* 113, and *GS* 13.

himself against person'. He maintains that this relation resulted in fundamental value of the person who was able to will, and that this value has been carried over into a post-customary ethics. Thus he writes at the beginning of the second essay of *The Genealogy* that the morality of custom's 'ripest fruit is the *sovereign individual*, like only to himself, liberated again from the morality of custom, the autonomous and *übersittlich* individual (for "autonomous" and "*sittlich*" are mutually exclusive), in short, the man who has his own independent long will, who *may promise* – and in him a proud consciousness, quivering in every muscle, of *what* has at length been achieved and become flesh in him, a consciousness of his own power and freedom, a feeling of mankind's completion.³⁵

Nietzsche's positive ethics therefore does not, as is often claimed, affirm the 'autonomy' of the radically singular individual, beyond both community and duty, or the individual's 'freedom' to discharge its drives and forces, unencumbered by culture, morality, or conscience. Rather, the '*responsibility*' that Nietzsche identifies, and that, he claims, 'the sovereign man calls [...] his *conscience*', grounds duties that necessarily govern the being with the ability to will.³⁶ In this, Nietzsche is once again 'Kantian'. That is, he grounds duties in the 'positive' freedom of the will such that, just as in Kant's reciprocal relation between freedom and duty, the fulfilling of duties *proves* the 'positive' freedom of the will.³⁷ These duties are therefore valid for the agent irrespective of the agent's particular desires and interests — they are, in Kant's terms, 'categorical imperatives'.³⁸ Nietzsche's account is also 'Kantian' in relating these duties to a form of mutual respect among equals, equals who are identified precisely by the 'positive' freedom of their ability to will.³⁹ Nietzsche differs from Kant, however, in maintaining that the ability to will is a matter of degree and that it and the duties that govern it are determined by constant mutual measurement and positing. According to Nietzsche, therefore, duties govern only those whose ability to will they are posited to prove. This explains why he refers to 'the doctrine "*equal rights for all*"' as a 'poison'. This doctrine,

³⁵ *GM* II 8, 2.

³⁶ *GM* II 2.

³⁷ See Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, 5:28-30.

³⁸ See Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, 4:414-416, and *Critique of Practical Reason*, 5:20-21 and 5:31-32.

³⁹ See Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, 4:429 and 4:433-434, and *Critique of Practical Reason*, 5:76-77.

he writes in *Twilight of the Idols*, 'appears to be preached by justice itself, whereas it is the *end* of justice... "Equal for equals, unequal for unequals" – *that* would be the true voice of justice: and what follows from it, "Never make unequals equal"'.⁴⁰

Nietzsche therefore claims not only that agents can rationally and consciously determine their actions, but also that they can legitimately be held responsible, and morally evaluated, for their actions. This evaluation is, of course, not an instance of the form of moral evaluation which would make unrealistic or impossible demands regarding any aspect's of an agent's 'being this or that'. It is, rather, an evaluation of an agent in terms of the motivations, and therefore the ability to will, which his actions are posited to manifest. At the very least, this positive ethics, like the positive account of the will upon which it is grounded, reveals that Nietzsche's moral philosophy is much more sophisticated than it is often thought to be.

⁴⁰ A 43, *TI* IX 48. See also *HH* 92, *WS* 26, and *GM* II 8.