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Consciousness, Self-Control, and Free Will in Nietzsche

by

BRYAN RUSSELL

Under the Direction of Dr. Jessica N. Berry

ABSTRACT

Brian Leiter is one of the few Nietzsche interpreters who argue that Nietzsche rejects all forms of free will. Leiter argues that Nietzsche is an incompatibilist and rejects libertarian free will. He further argues that since Nietzsche is an epiphenomenalist about conscious willing, his philosophy of action cannot support any conception of free will. Leiter also offers deflationary readings of those passages where Nietzsche seemingly ascribes free will to historical figures or types. In this paper I argue against all of these conclusions. In the first section I show that, on the most charitable interpretation, Nietzsche is not an epiphenomenalist. In the second section I trace Nietzsche's alleged incompatibilism through three of his works and offer reasons to be skeptical of the claim that Nietzsche was a committed incompatibilist. Finally, I argue that Nietzsche is not being sarcastic or unacceptably revisionary when he makes positive ascriptions of free will.

INDEX WORDS: Free Will, Consciousness, Self-control, Nietzsche~~, Epiphenomenalism~~, Brian Leiter, Paul Katsafanas, Daniel Wegner, Benjamin Libet, Eddy~~ward~~ Nahmias, Alfred Mele.

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BRYAN RUSSELL

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

Master of Arts

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Georgia State University

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2011

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BRYAN RUSSELL

Committee Chair: Dr. Jessica N. Berry

Committee: Dr. Eddy Nahmias

Dr. Andrew Altman

Electronic Version Approved:

Office of Graduate Studies

College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

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I. INTRODUCTION

Highlighted by the publication of the recent collection *Nietzsche on Freedom and Autonomy* (Gemes & May 2009), a lively secondary literature has recently grown around Friedrich Nietzsche's theory of action and how it relates to his statements about autonomy, free will, and responsibility. Interestingly, much of the discussion focuses not on whether Nietzsche's view of free will is plausible but rather on what his view could possibly be considering his seemingly irreconcilable views. The most conspicuous among the mutually exclusive positions Nietzsche is alleged to hold are his endorsements of fatalism and his arguments against the coherence of the notion of moral responsibility on the one hand, and his ~~predicating~~ ascribing free will and great responsibility of certain historical character types on the other hand. In addition, his positive statements about self-control on the one hand and his alleged view that conscious willing is epiphenomenal on the other seem equally irreconcilable.

Taking all this into account, it is no surprise that reviewing the secondary literature, one finds disagreements along many lines. Some commentators hold that Nietzsche has a positive metaphysical position concerning the existence of free will (e.g., Gemes 2009, Janaway 2009, and Poellner 2009), while others (e.g., Leiter 2010, Acampora 2004) claim that Nietzsche is committed to the belief that free will, according to any of the traditional definitions, does not exist. This broad division is driven by deeper disagreements about Nietzsche's overall project and views about human psychology. Leiter 2010, for example, argues that Nietzsche cannot hold that humans have any kind of free will that is connected to the philosophical tradition because any traditional notion, whether libertarian or compatibilist, must be founded on some kind of rational self that can decide among competing motivations. Leiter 2007, however, develops a Nietzschean theory of the will according to which conscious thought is epiphenomenal—i.e., it

does not figure at all in causing our actions. Janaway (2009), on the other hand, argues that Nietzsche's view that consciousness is epiphenomenal should be discarded considering some of Nietzsche's other commitments, leaving room to attribute to him a compatibilist version of free will.

Over the course of the last decade, Brian Leiter has mounted a sustained attack on the view that Nietzsche has a philosophically important, positive conception of autonomy, free will, and responsibility. Leiter proposes two arguments for the conclusion that Nietzsche rejected all forms of free will, compatibilist and incompatibilist, and two strategies for deflating those texts where Nietzsche seemingly ascribes free will and responsibility to historical characters or types.

First, Leiter claims that Nietzsche believed that being *causa sui*, or self-caused, is a necessary condition for free will and moral responsibility (Leiter 2002: 83). Since Nietzsche argues that the idea of being *causa sui* is ridiculous, Leiter concludes that Nietzsche denies that humans can have free will or moral responsibility.

Second, in what Leiter calls the "Naturalistic Argument," he aims to show that Nietzsche's philosophy of action cannot support any concept of free will. He develops two readings of Nietzsche according to which the will is epiphenomenal. On one reading, "the will as epiphenomenal," type-facts about a person cause both the experience of willing and the relevant behavior but there is no causal link between the experience of willing and the behavior. If this reading is correct, then this fact by itself would rule out the possibility that Nietzsche could have a positive concept of free will. On the second reading, "the will as secondary cause," the will is causal but is not the ultimate cause of an action: something causes the experience of willing and then the will causes the action. Leiter argues that even if this reading is the correct one, this fact in conjunction with the fact that Nietzsche was an incompatibilist would rule out the possibility

that he has a positive conception of free will. In his most recent article on this argument, "Nietzsche's Theory of the Will," Leiter argues that both of these readings are supported by Nietzsche's texts but that we should charitably interpret him as being committed to "the will as epiphenomenal" reading since that is the view that is "most likely to be correct as a matter of empirical science" (Leiter 2007: 13).

Finally, having drawn two arguments out of Nietzsche which jointly rule out any conception of free will, Leiter is then faced with the task of either deflating those passages where Nietzsche seemingly attributes free will and responsibility to certain historical characters and types, or leveling a charge of inconsistency against Nietzsche. Leiter (2010) attempts to deflate the passages by arguing that we should read Nietzsche either as being sarcastic when making ascriptions of free will and responsibility or as engaging in the practice of persuasive definition when using these concepts, which is equivalent to exploiting the positive valence of these terms while using them in ways that are unconnected to both philosophical traditions and folk usages of the terms.

In this paper I will argue, *pace* Leiter, that a reading of Nietzsche as holding a positive conception of free will that is connected to the philosophical tradition is still available. To allow for this conclusion I will refute both of Leiter's arguments outlined above and show that his deflationary readings of those passages where Nietzsche ascribes free will and responsibility are misguided.

In the first section of the paper I attack Leiter's "Naturalistic Argument," which aims to show that Nietzsche's philosophy of action cannot support any conception of free will. Leiter (2007) argues that we should charitably read Nietzsche as committed to the position that the will is epiphenomenal. I will argue that we should interpret Nietzsche as committed to "the will as a

secondary cause" reading. To support my position I will first argue that the text that Leiter uses to support the claim that Nietzsche holds that the will is epiphenomenal does not conclusively rule out the possibility that consciousness plays some causal role. Then, drawing on work by Nahmias and Mele, I will argue that the epiphenomenalist interpretation that Leiter draws from recent psychological experiments is unwarranted, that alternative explanations of the data remain open. Then I will explain how recent experiments designed to measure the effectiveness of conscious thoughts on behavior, synthesized by Baumeister, Masicampo and Vohs (2011), lend credence to the interpretation that the will is a secondary cause. Finally I will argue that "the will as secondary cause" reading leaves room for a compatibilist conception of free will.

In the second section I consider Leiter's argument from incompatibilism. Leiter argues that Nietzsche held that being *causa sui* was a necessary condition for free will and responsibility, that he believed the idea that something could be *causa sui* was incoherent, and that, therefore, we cannot have free will or be responsible for our actions. In this section I trace Nietzsche's arguments against the compatibility of free will and his brand of fatalism through three of his works. I develop a reading according to which Nietzsche was a hard determinist and source-incompatibilist[1] during his so-called "middle period."[2] I argue, however, that Nietzsche's view on these matters changed by the time he wrote *Beyond Good and Evil* (BGE). In BGE 21 Nietzsche seemingly rejects determinism, rejects the inference from causal connections and psychological necessity to unfreedom, rejects the concept of the *free* and *unfree* will, and proposes an alternative distinction between *strong* and *weak* wills. I show that while Leiter may be correct in claiming that Nietzsche later rejected certain claims he made in this passage, the

[1] These, and other terms crucial for understanding Nietzsche's position in the free will debate, are defined in Section Two.
[2] Nietzsche's so-called "middle-period" is generally taken to include *Daybreak*, *Human, All Too Human*, and *The Gay Science*.

distinction between strong and weak wills is one that Nietzsche holds on to, and one that is connected to Nietzsche's positive ascriptions of free will and responsibility.

In the third section I will analyze and refute Leiter's deflationary readings of passages where Nietzsche seemingly ascribes free will and responsibility to certain historical characters and types. Undermining these readings is absolutely necessary for any~~ reader looking~~one to read a positive account of free will into Nietzsche, as without these instances of free will attribution, we would be left only with arguments against free will and responsibility and general skepticism about reflective agency. I will follow Leiter 2010 in focusing on the figure of the "Sovereign Individual" presented in *On the Genealogy of Morals* (GM). Nietzsche describes this "sovereign individual" as being "autonomous and supramoral" and "lord of the *free* will" and having "his own independent long will," "a true consciousness of power and freedom," and, most strikingly, "the proud knowledge of the extraordinary privilege of *responsibility*, the consciousness of this rare freedom, this power over oneself and fate" (GM 2: 2). In Leiter's first deflationary reading of this passage, he characterizes Nietzsche as being completely sarcastic in ascribing these characteristics to the sovereign individual in an attempt to mock the bourgeoisie of his time for their belief that they represented the pinnacle of human perfection (Leiter 2009~~10~~). Leiter supports this reading with the claim that the autonomous individual can lay claim only to a very modest achievement, namely that of being able to make and keep a promise, and by appeal to the fact that the sovereign individual appears only once in all of Nietzsche's writings. It would be strange, Leiter reasons, if the figure that is often held up as Nietzsche's ideal of agency (Janaway 2009, Poellner 2009) were to figure in only one passage in all of Nietzsche's works. Against this deflationary reading I argue that although some of the passage must be read as speaking from a

perspective other than Nietzsche's own,[3] the sovereign individual has characteristics which both consistently occur in other character types that are highly regarded by Nietzsche and are praised as being valuable in themselves.

In his most recent published work on the subject, Leiter proposes another deflationary reading of the sovereign individual. According to this reading the sovereign individual represents a Nietzschean ideal of agency, but this ideal still falls short of the kind of free will necessary for moral responsibility, and Nietzsche's definition of free will is unrecognizable to Humean and Kantian traditions of free will and to "folk" conceptions of free will. Leiter claims that the kind of self the sovereign individual represents "and its self-mastery is, in Nietzschean terms, a fortuitous natural artifact (a bit of 'fate'), not an autonomous achievement for which anyone could be responsible" (Leiter 2009). As such, Leiter argues, Nietzsche's ideal of freedom has no place in ~~discussions~~ the traditional philosophical discussion of free will and responsibility. I argue that Nietzsche's conception of free will and autonomy is connected to the compatibilist tradition through the concept of self-control. I point out that Leiter requires conditions for autonomy that should be rejected for philosophical reasons and because Nietzsche explicitly rejects them. I also show that Nietzsche's concept of self-control is robust enough to connect with the compatibilist tradition.

Comment [JN1]: PAGE?

II. LEITER'S NATURALISTIC ARGUMENT

In his book, *Nietzsche on Morality* (2002), Brian Leiter argues that Nietzsche's philosophy of action cannot support any conceptions of free will or responsibility. His argument grows out of his claim that Nietzsche believes that all of our conscious life is epiphenomenal

[3] Nietzsche frequently writes from multiple perspectives, even in the course of a single paragraph. As we will see, determining which (if any) of the multiple perspectives Nietzsche himself endorses is a difficult task.

(2002: 87). This claim, along with the assumption that "conscious states would have to figure in the causation of *autonomous* actions" (ibid.), leads Leiter to conclude that there can be no autonomous, or freely willed, actions according to Nietzsche.[4] In his article, "Nietzsche's Theory of the Will" (2007) Leiter refines his view. In the more recent work he does not claim that Nietzsche holds that "all our conscious life is epiphenomenal" but restricts Nietzsche's epiphenomenalism to "*the conscious mental states* that precede [an] action and whose propositional contents would make them appear to be causally connected to [an] action" (Leiter 2007: 10). Leiter's account of Nietzsche's philosophy is based on what he calls Nietzsche's "Doctrine of Types" (Leiter 2002: 91). According to the "Doctrine of Types," "each person has a fixed-psycho-physical constitution, which defines him as a particular *type* of person" (ibid.). Leiter calls the relevant psycho-physical facts "type facts" (ibid.). He elaborates, "Type-facts, for Nietzsche, are either *physiological* facts about the person, or facts about the person's unconscious drives or affects" (ibid.). Leiter claims for Nietzsche the view that these type-facts are causally and explanatorily primary with respect to a person's beliefs, actions and life-trajectory.

Leiter then offers two readings according to which Nietzsche is an epiphenomenalist about consciousness. According to one reading, "the will as secondary cause" (Leiter 2007: 13), "the will is, indeed, causal, but it is not the *ultimate* cause of an action: something *causes* the experience of willing and then the will causes the action" (ibid.). Type-facts about a person are the *ultimate* cause of an action. According to another reading, "the will as epiphenomenal" (ibid.), "there is no causal link between the experience of willing and the resulting action" (ibid.); rather, "conscious states are simply *effects* of underlying type-facts about [a] person, and play no

[4] Leiter's assumption here is not contentious. Robert Kane gives voice to the same view, saying, "If conscious willing is illusory or epiphenomenalism is true, *all* accounts of free will go down, *compatibilist and incompatibilist*" (Kane: 2005).

causal role whatsoever" (Leiter 2002: 92). According to this second reading, type-facts cause both the experience of willing and the relevant behavior, but there is no causal link between the experience of willing and the behavior. Leiter supports his epiphenomenalist interpretation with (1) an argument from the phenomenology of willing, (2) an argument from false causality, and (3) an argument about the real genesis of action (Leiter 2007). These three arguments support the conclusion that Nietzsche is an epiphenomenalist about conscious willing. They are not designed to help us choose between the two epiphenomenalist readings as Leiter admits that the textual evidence for Nietzsche's epiphenomenalism is ambiguous between the two readings. To support his contention that Nietzsche is best read as subscribing to the view that "the will as epiphenomenal" reading suggests, Leiter proposes an argument from charity.

Since Nietzsche's texts are ambiguous as to which sort of epiphenomenalism he supports, Leiter claims that we should charitably interpret Nietzsche as holding the view which is (a) supported by his texts, and (b) most likely to be correct as a matter of empirical science" (Leiter 2007: 13). Leiter turns to recent empirical work by Benjamin Libet and Daniel Wegner to support his contention that "the will as epiphenomenal" reading is more likely to be correct as a matter of empirical science. The conclusions that I will come to in this section are that (1) the text that Leiter draws on to support his claim that Nietzsche is an epiphenomenalist about conscious willing is at best inconclusive; (2) the interpretation of the experimental data that Leiter relies on to support his contention that we should charitably interpret Nietzsche as being an epiphenomenalist about conscious willing is controversial; (3) there is a wealth of experimental evidence that points to the conclusion that consciousness is efficacious, if only as a secondary cause; and (4)consciousness as a secondary cause is not sufficient by itself to rule out free will.

1. The Textual Arguments

A. *Beyond Good and Evil 19*

Leiter reads section 19 of *Beyond Good and Evil* as an analysis of the phenomenology of willing. In BGE 19, Nietzsche countenances three experiences that make up what we refer to as one thing, "the will." The first is a "plurality of sensations," the second is "a ruling thought," and the third is "the affect of the command" (BGE 19). Leiter explains, "By the 'affect of the command', Nietzsche means the *feeling* that the *thought* (i.e., the propositional content, such as 'I will get up from the desk and go downstairs') brings about these other bodily feelings, i.e., of 'away from', 'towards', of, in a word, movement, and that this command is *who I am*" (Leiter 2007: 3). As Leiter notes, Nietzsche points out that in these experiences that we call willing, we both command (ourselves) and are commanded (by ourselves). We identify with the part of us that is doing the commanding, the "ruling thought." Leiter claims that Nietzsche attempts to debunk the phenomenology as a reliable guide to causation. Leiter constructs Nietzsche's argument out of the premises (1) that the ruling thought is causally determined by something other than the conscious will and (2) that being self-caused is a necessary condition for responsibility (from BGE 21). Leiter's argument concludes, "Since we have shown that the 'commandeering thought' that is part of the experience of will is not *causa sui*, it follows that the will it helps constitute is not *causa sui*, and thus any actions following upon that experience of willing could not support ascriptions of moral responsibility" (Leiter 2007: 6).

This is a strange argument if we take it to be leading to Leiter's desired conclusion: that the will is epiphenomenal. If we were to take it that way, his argument would need another

premise, namely, that in order for the will to play a causal role in the etiology of action, it must be *causa sui*. But this premise is clearly false. Just because something does not play an autonomous causal role does not mean that it is not a link in a chain of cause and effect. So, alas, what Leiter takes to be an argument against the possibility of the will playing a causal role is actually only an argument against the possibility of the will playing an *autonomous* causal role.

B. *False Causality*

Leiter constructs another argument for the epiphenomenality of conscious willing from what Nietzsche calls "false causality" in *Twilight of the Idols* (TI) (Leiter 2007: 12). In the section titled, "The Four Great Errors," Nietzsche reveals errors that we make when making inferences about causality. One error is mistaking correlation for causation. Nietzsche points out that although two events are frequently correlated, we should not infer from this that one caused the other, for there may be a "deep cause" which causes them both. Another error is thinking "that all the antecedents of an act, its causes, were to be sought in consciousness and would be found there once sought" (TI VI 3). The third error, which Nietzsche calls "the error of imaginary cause," occurs when we have a feeling and "we are never satisfied merely to state the fact that we feel this way or that: we admit this fact only—become conscious of it only—when we have furnished some kind of motivation" (TI VI 4). Nietzsche is claiming that we don't even become conscious of a feeling until we invent a cause for the way we feel *post hoc*. The fourth error is "the error of free will." Nietzsche explains in this section that people were originally considered free so that they could be held responsible in a religious sense and justifiably punished (TI VI 7). Leiter draws on the first three errors to support his conclusion that the will is epiphenomenal. In an earlier work, Leiter draws on more passages to support his point. He says,

"the theme of the 'ridiculous overestimation and misunderstanding of consciousness' (GM 2: 11) is a recurring one in Nietzsche. '[B]y far the greatest part of our spirit's activity,' says Nietzsche, 'remains unconscious and unfelt' (GS: 333; cf. GS: 354)" (Leiter 2002: 93).

If we put all of the relevant conclusions together from the passages Leiter cites, we would say that Nietzsche believes that we are systematically misled as to the effect of our conscious willing in certain circumstances, we overestimate and misunderstand our consciousness, and most of our mental life is unconscious. Even if we put all of the conclusions from these passages together, however, we would still be able to support only the claim that we *sometimes* believe our conscious willing is efficacious when it is not, not the stronger claim that we *always* make the mistake of thinking our conscious willing is efficacious when, in fact, it never is.

C. *The Real Genesis of Action*

Lastly, Leiter attempts to draw textual support for "the will as epiphenomenal" reading of Nietzsche by giving an account of what Nietzsche actually thinks the causal genesis of action is. The account Leiter puts forth is related to Nietzsche's broader view of human nature which Leiter names the "Doctrine of Types." The Doctrine of Types is defined by Leiter as "[Nietzsche's] doctrine that the psycho-physical facts about a person explain their conscious experience and behavior" (Leiter 2009: 121). The psycho-physical facts Leiter mentions are what are called elsewhere 'type-facts' and can be understood as the psychological and physiological composition that causes us unconsciously to act certain ways. These 'type-facts' refer to everything from one's metabolism to one's sex drive. Leiter's argument about type-facts relates back to the first "Great Error" discussed above. Because our conscious experience and behavior are always correlated, we assume that one of them (consciousness) caused the other (behavior).

What really happens, Leiter suggests, is that these type facts directly cause both our conscious experience and our action. While Leiter cites numerous places where Nietzsche argues that a non-conscious psycho-physical fact plays an important role in the causal genesis of certain "moral judgments" (Leiter 2009: 116),[5] many of those references don't make the stronger claim that the type fact is the *only* cause and none of the references are intended to apply to all action. It is compatible with the texts Leiter references that the type-facts are a primary cause (and may even have a great deal of direct influence on our behavior), but that the conscious will is a secondary cause—determined by the type-facts, but able to mediate between the type-fact and the action in causally relevant ways. So, once again we are left with, at best, an argument that simply denies that we have a *causa sui* conscious will.

2. The Interpretive Charity Argument

A. *How The Argument Works*

Just looking at the textual evidence and arguments Leiter provides, we seem to have no reason to think Nietzsche endorses the radical position that our conscious willing never plays a causal role in any of our actions. Leiter (2007) admits that Nietzsche's texts are generally ambiguous between the two epiphenomenalist readings. Faced with this ambiguity, Leiter proposes an argument from charity for the "will as epiphenomenal" reading. He argues that when deciding which of the two views to ascribe to Nietzsche we should "read him as holding the view that is (a) supported by his texts, and (b) most likely to be correct as a matter of empirical science" (Leiter 2007: 13). Leiter argues that the "will as epiphenomenal" reading is most likely to be correct as a matter of empirical science, and since both readings are supported in Nietzsche's texts, we should support the "will as epiphenomenal" reading. To support his

[5] BGE 6, 187; GS P2; WP 258; D 119, 542~~; TI "Skirmishes of an Untimely Man" 37;~~; GM P 2, 1: 15.

premise that the "will as epiphenomenal" view is better supported by empirical science, Leiter turns to the empirical psychological research of Daniel Wegner and Benjamin Libet. If Nietzsche's texts were as ambiguous as Leiter claims (a claim I have argued against), and the contemporary empirical science ~~uncontentiously~~ unambiguously supported the "will as epiphenomenal" reading (a claim I will argue against), then it seems we should follow Leiter in interpreting Nietzsche as an epiphenomenalist about conscious willing. I will argue, however, that the experimental data that Leiter reviews is too contentious to support unambiguously the conclusion that conscious willing is epiphenomenal. Furthermore, I will argue that experimental evidence is accumulating for the opposing view—that conscious willing is a secondary cause of action. To show that drawing the epiphenomenalist conclusion from the data that Leiter reviews is unwarranted I will look at responses to the data by Eddy Nahmias and Alfred Mele. For experimental data lending support to the conclusion that conscious willing is not epiphenomenal I will draw on a review of experiments by Baumeister, Masicampo and Vohs.

B. *Interpreting the Data*

Nahmias argues that the data from the empirical psychological studies found in Libet and Wegner is interpreted by Wegner as being evidence for the view Nahmias names "modular epiphenomenalism" (Nahmias 2010: 348). This is the view "that the neural correlates of our conscious experience of deciding or intending an action (the 'C module') are *not* causally responsible for producing that action: instead, distinct non-conscious processes or modules (the 'NC modules') cause the action, while NC modules *also* cause the activity in the C [conscious] modules" (348). If this thesis were true, then it would mean that the conscious will is an illusion. "Modular epiphenomenalism" is equivalent to the view Leiter argues that we should ascribe to

Nietzsche, “the will as epiphenomenal.” The question then is whether the experimental data supports “modular epiphenomenalism,” and, thereby, “the will as epiphenomenal” reading.

Leiter interprets Libet’s research as lending empirical support to the view that the will is epiphenomenal. Libet’s research suggests that the “the brain process to prepare for…voluntary act[s] [begins] about 400 msec. before the appearance of the conscious will to act” (Libet 1999: 51). This conclusion was reached by having a subject perform a “sudden flick of the wrist whenever he/she freely wanted to do so” (50). Whenever this flick occurred, the subject was asked to indicate the position of a rotating dial at the time they were first aware of the wish to move (W). The dial was designed to make a revolution once every 2.56 seconds (making each “second” actually represent 43 msec.).[6] During this activity, a technician noted the electrical change in the brain. This electrical change, called the readiness potential (RP) occurred in the brain 350-400 msec. before subjects reported they were aware of their wish to move. As Libet notes, however, the conscious awareness, or W value, still occurs 150 msec. before the actual motor act.

Interpretations of Libet’s experimental results are much debated. In discussing the interpretations of the data it will prove useful to set out an initial distinction between proximal and distal intentions. Both Mele’s and Nahmias’ discussions of interpretations of the Libet results rely on a distinction between proximal intentions, e.g., I will flex my wrist now, and distal intentions, e.g., I will flex my wrist in an hour (Mele 2007: 262, Nahmias 2010: 352). The first thing to note about the Libet experiment is that the effectiveness of distal intentions was not tested at all. Even if Wegner’s interpretation of the Libet studies were correct, the most we could conclude from the experimental data is that conscious willing does not play a causal role in

[6] The accuracy of the (W, #11) measurement was verified by a separate experiment where subjects were asked to report when they felt an electrical stimulus that was applied randomly. The times reported had an error of only -50 msec.

bringing about the actions correlated with proximal intentions. For all we know, conscious willing may play a significant role in bringing about actions correlated with distal intentions.

Nahmias argues that the neuroscientific evidence presented by Libet is consistent with two alternate interpretations which would leave the efficaciousness of conscious willing intact. First, Nahmias says, "the RPs might be correlated with non-conscious *urges* to move soon rather than with specific *intentions* or *decisions*" (2010: 351). So, while non-conscious urges may be the beginning of any action, consciousness may still play a causal role in determining both whether or not the urge is acted upon, via a conscious "veto" intention, and how the urge is expressed in action. This is to say that, while non-conscious urges cause actions, they may not deterministically cause particular actions. Mele makes a similar point, saying,

> This leaves it open that at -550 ms, rather than acquiring an intention or making a decision of which he is not conscious, the person instead acquires an urge or desire of which he is not conscious – and perhaps an urge or desire that is stronger than any competing urge or desire at the time, a preponderant urge or desire. It is also left open that what emerges around -550 ms is a pretty reliable causal contributor to an urge. (Mele 2007: 264)

This interpretation of Libet's experimental data resonates with a reading of *The Gay Science* (GS) 360. In this passage Nietzsche spells out what he considers to be "one of [his] most essential steps and advances" (GS 360). Here, Nietzsche distinguishes "the cause of acting" from "the cause of acting in a particular way, in a particular direction, with a particular goal." He says the cause of acting is "a quantum of dammed-up energy that is waiting to be used up somehow, for something." Among the causes of acting in particular ways, Nietzsche includes "purposes." He claims that people are accustomed to thinking of a purpose "as the *driving force*" but it is merely "the directing force." If we updated Nietzsche's language, we would equate the cause of acting, the driving force, with an unconscious urge, and the cause of acting in a particular way, the directing force, with conscious intentions. According to the etiology of action that Nietzsche

presents in this passage, then, an unconscious urge is the cause of acting and the conscious intention plays a causal role in directing the action. While Nietzsche, characteristically, downplays the relative work that the conscious intention does compared to the unconscious urge (even pointing out that quite often the conscious intention is not causal), he still allows it a role as a secondary cause.

"Another possibility," Nahmias continues, "is that early non-conscious brain activity just *is* part of the correlate of the conscious intention, or part of the necessary build-up to such intentions or decisions" (2010: 352). He explains that we should expect conscious states to be caused by "earlier complexes of events, including external stimuli and neural activity, some of which may have been caused by even earlier *conscious* processes" (ibid.). In the Libet experiments, for example, participants were given a set of instructions to follow. It is likely that the participants formed distal intentions based on these instructions to flex their wrists, note awareness of urges, *et cetera*. Their behavior then might be best explained by early conscious processes causing unconscious processes, which, in turn, may be correlated with later conscious processes.

Given the lively debate, and the plausible alternative interpretations of the Libet experiment, it does not look like this contemporary empirical research can unambiguously support a charitable interpretation of Nietzsche as holding "the will as epiphenomenal" view, contrary to what Leiter argues. Leiter, however, also cites the work of Daniel Wegner to support this interpretation, so we must consider this research as well.

Wegner takes his research to support the position that:

> [U]nconscious and inscrutable mechanisms create both conscious thought about action and the action, and also produce the sense of will we experience by perceiving the thought as cause of the action. So, while our thoughts may have deep, important, and unconscious causal connections to our actions, the experience of conscious will arises from a process that interprets these connections, not from the connections themselves. (Wegner 2002: 98)

We should note that the view Wegner expresses here is strikingly similar to the "will as epiphenomenal" view that Leiter ascribes to Nietzsche. So should Wegner's research support his view, it will also support the view that the will is epiphenomenal.

Wegner proposes that there are three qualities of thoughts that lead us to infer from them to an experience of conscious willing. These are the "*consistency*, *priority*, and *exclusivity* of the thought about the action" (Wegner 2002: 232). He explains: "For the perception of apparent mental causation, the thought should be consistent with the action, occur just before the action, and not be accompanied by other potential causes" (ibid.). Wegner cites multiple experiments that show how each of these sources can lead participants to feel that they are causing an event when they, in fact, are not. He focuses on some rather extraordinary situations where people perform seemingly voluntary movements without being consciously aware of them, and on cases where people experience a sense of agency for movements they, in fact, did nothing to cause. Leiter notes that the experimental data supports Nietzsche's contentions in TI. Leiter says, "Wegner adduces support, for example, for what Nietzsche calls the 'error of false causality'… as well as the 'error of confusing cause and effect'" (Leiter 2007: 14).

Reviewing the evidence for the epiphenomenality of conscious willing provided by Wegner, Nahmias argues that Wegner faces a dilemma. He explains, "[Wegner] must either take the evidence [he] describe[s] to suggest that the causal role of consciousness is limited in scope (and further work will delimit this scope), or use it as inductive evidence for the general rule that conscious processes are never causal" (Nahmias 2010: 351). When we were reviewing the textual arguments that Leiter furnishes from Nietzsche for the "will as epiphenomenal" conclusion, we noted that while Nietzsche presents many instances in which we are led astray as

to the causes of our actions, this does not warrant the conclusion that our conscious willing never plays a role in our actions. Nahmias presses this objection on Wegner. He says that the cases Wegner uses to support his epiphenomenalist view "demonstrate only that the experience of will is not *always* veridical, not that it is *never* veridical" (ibid.). Wegner's experimental data is consistent with a model of the brain as "a generally *reliable* system, which sometimes produces inaccurate output because of some unusual feature of the situation" (ibid.).

Having reviewed the empirical scientific evidence that Leiter draws on to support his view that the "will as epiphenomenal" reading is the view that is most likely to be correct as a matter of empirical science, and therefore, the most charitable reading of Nietzsche on this topic, we can conclude that the evidence does not decisively support Leiter's claim. Alternate interpretations, besides the epiphenomenalist interpretation, are available for the experimental data gathered from the Libet experiments and the experiments on which Wegner relies. It should be noted that Leiter recognizes alternative interpretations of the Libet experiments at least. He says, "[Mele] establishes only that there is an *alternative* interpretation, not that his alternative is correct" (Leiter 2007: 14). Leiter further notes that, even on the alternative interpretations of the Libet experiments, these experiments "show that *the causal trajectory*…leading to the action begins prior to the conscious intention to perform the action…, and that is sufficient to defeat the *causa sui* conception of freedom of the will" (ibid.). So even if Libet's experimental results do not support the "will as epiphenomenal" view, they would still rule out free will for Nietzsche, since, Leiter claims, Nietzsche is an incompatibilist and believes that in order to have free will, one must be *causa sui*. In the next section of this paper, I will address the claim that Nietzsche was an incompatibilist, but in the remainder of this section I will address Leiter's point that

though Nahmias and Mele show that alternative interpretations of the experimental data are available, they have not, thereby, shown that these alternative interpretations are correct.

Though Leiter may be right about their results, there is a growing body of experimental evidence that supports the view that conscious willing is efficacious, if only as a secondary cause (and, thereby, supports the alternative interpretations of the Libet and Wegner studies proposed by Mele and Nahmias). The fact that there are alternative interpretations of the experimental data produced by Libet and Wegner demonstrates that the data does not conclusively support the will as epiphenomenal view. The fact that a growing body of evidence supports the view that conscious willing is causal, if only as a secondary cause, lends support to the conclusion that Leiter's argument from charity for the conclusion that Nietzsche is an epiphenomenalist about conscious willing, in fact, may produce the result that we should read Nietzsche as holding that the will is a secondary cause. Leiter admits that this is a possibility, crediting Nahmias for pressing the following point: "To the extent that the Will as Epiphenomenal is not vindicated by empirical research—the verdict is plainly out—then the argument from interpretive charity may ultimately cut the other way" (Leiter 2010: 13). If the scientific evidence is stronger for the view that the will is a secondary cause then we would have to say that that is the view that is both "(a) supported by [Nietzsche's] texts, and (b) most likely to be correct as a matter of empirical science" (Leiter 2007: 13).

In an article titled, "Do Conscious Thoughts Cause Behavior?," Baumeister, Masicampo and Vohs conclude that "the evidence for conscious causation of behavior is profound, extensive, adaptive, multifaceted and empirically strong" (2011: 331). To arrive at this conclusion, the authors review hundreds of experiments in which the independent (manipulated) variable was a conscious event, such as when the experimenter instructed participants to think about something.

In the philosophical and scientific literature there remain many questions about what qualifies as a conscious thought. The authors of this article considered reportable inner states as conscious and also "fell back on the research conclusion that the unconscious can take in visual and single-word information but cannot apparently process sentences (e.g., Baars 2002)" (2011: 334).

Baumeister, Masicampo and Vohs review experiments that lend support to the conclusion that conscious thought plays a causal role in overriding automatic responses, strengthening the links between intentions and behavior, and inhibiting performance when brought too close to behavior. They cite a wealth of studies that show that consciousness plays a causal role in overriding automatic processes. The following two are representative:

> Friese et al. (2008) noted that people may have conflicts between their conscious and unconscious attitudes towards food such as chocolate (appealing but unhealthy) and fruit (healthy but variably appealing). When under the cognitive load of rehearsing an eight-digit number, people chose snacks based on unconscious attitudes. Conscious attitudes prevailed under low load (memorizing a single digit). Thus cognitive load seems to release automatic impulses to dictate actions that conscious reflection would veto. Shiv & Fedorikhim (1999) offered participants a choice between chocolate cake and carrots. Cognitive load shifted their choices in favor of the cake. Ward & Mann (2000) showed that dieters ate more when under cognitive load than when under no load, at least when food cues were present. (2011: 349)

> Participants in studies by Roberts et al. (1994) performed an antisaccade response, which requires shifting one's gaze away from a novel stimulus. Under the cognitive load of doing arithmetic, performance was poor, indicating the dominance of the normal response of automatically orienting toward the novel stimulus (instead of away, as instructed). Performance was better under low load. (2011: 350)

The authors sum up the results of these discussions, saying:

> Many of the effects in which conscious thought overrides automatic impulses also suggest its usefulness in overcoming short-term inclinations, and temptations so as to advance long-term goals, thus again treating the present as means toward a desired future. Consciousness thus helps integrate current behavior into longer time frames, thereby connecting past, present, and future and even building a coherent self. (2011: 351)[7]

[7] Nietzsche consistently praises the ability that certain strong types have to control their behavior and claims that some agents have the ability "not to react at once to a stimulus, but to gain control of all the inhibiting, excluding instincts. … [T]he essential feature is precisely not to 'will', to be able to suspend decision. All unspirituality, all vulgar commonness, depends on an inability to resist a stimulus: one must react, one follows every impulse" (TI VIII 6).

Experimental evidence was also plentiful for the conclusion that conscious thought can play a causal role in strengthening the link between intentions and behavior. The authors cite a number of studies that tested the effectiveness of implementation intentions. They explain, "[Implementation intentions] translate general, abstract intentions into specific behavioral plans, of the form 'If X happens, then I will do Y'" (2011: 336). In their research, the authors found that "dozens of careful studies have confirmed that these cause changes in behavior over and above merely intending, desiring, goal setting, and valuing." In one study, "among women who all held the goal of performing breast self-examinations, 100% of those who were randomly assigned to form specific implementation intentions to perform them actually did so, as compared to only half of the others (Gollwitzser 1999)" (2011: 336). In another, "a motivational and informational exhortation to engage in vigorous exercise raised the rate of exercising only slightly, but an implementation intention to perform the exercise more than doubled the rate (Gollwitzer 1999)" (2011: 336).[8]

The authors also found many studies that lend support to the view that consciousness can have maladaptive effects when ~~brought too close~~it is relied on to guide temporally proximate complex behavior ~~to behavior~~.[9] For example:

> In several studies, participants who were instructed to attend to their process of skilled performance (and to report on it afterward) performed worse than those whose attention was

[8]While Nietzsche does not explicitly assign consciousness the role of strengthening the link between intentions and behavior, he does praise the sovereign individual of GM 2: 2 for his "independent, protracted will" and his ability to deliver on his commitments even in the face of difficulties. It also bears noting that the sovereign individual is only possible after the process of giving man a memory and consciousness is complete. While his awareness of his "power over [himself] and over fate" has "become instinct," Nietzsche seems to view the development of consciousness and memory as necessary conditions for a type that might develop a long, unbreakable will.

[9]There are numerous passages where Nietzsche points to maladaptive effects of consciousness. In GM 2:16, Nietzsche calls consciousness "[mankind's] weakest and most fallible organ." In EH II 9, Nietzsche claims that "consciousness… must be kept clear of all great imperatives." He claims that it can be dangerous that one's goals become conscious.

> directed towards other aspects of the performance (e.g., focus on the ball) or others who were given no attentional instructions. (2011: 343)

While this study, and others, demonstrated that conscious thought can have maladaptive effects, they nonetheless demonstrate that conscious thought is efficacious.

The studies represented above, and many others, lend considerable support to the conclusion that conscious thought plays a causal role, even if only a secondary causal role. The studies that demonstrated that conscious thought plays a causal role in overriding automatic processes and those that demonstrated the effectiveness of implementation intentions lend support to the conclusion that conscious willing is efficacious. While the scientific community has not come to a consensus regarding whether or not conscious willing is efficaciousness, the experiments reviewed by Baumeister, Masicampo and Vohs lend considerable support to the conclusion that it is. The fact that the evidence for this position is accumulating supports the alternative interpretations of the Libet experiments and the experiments in Wegner (2002) offered by Nahmias and Mele. So not only are there alternative interpretations of the experiments that Leiter offers to support his claim that "the will as epiphenomenal" is the view that is most likely to be correct as a matter of empirical science, but the alternative interpretations are supported by the results of further empirical studies. These facts lend support to the contrary of the conclusion that Leiter draws. It is the view of "the will as secondary cause" that is both advanced in Nietzsche's texts and more likely to be correct as a matter of empirical science. As noted earlier, however, Leiter claims that even if this is the reading we should most charitably assign to Nietzsche, this view in conjunction with the view that Nietzsche is an incompatibilist rules out the possibility that he can believe in free will. I address Leiter's argument from incompatibilism and the claim that Nietzsche was a committed incompatibilist in the next section.

III. THE ARGUMENT FROM INCOMPATIBILISM

In the previous section we concluded that Nietzsche's philosophy of action does not rule out every kind of free will. Leiter, however, ascribes another argument to Nietzsche which, if Nietzsche supported, would be proof that Nietzsche denies that anyone may act freely or be responsible for anything. Leiter ascribes the following argument to Nietzsche:

(1) A person acts of her own free will only if she is *causa sui*.

(2) No one can be *causa sui*.

(3) Therefore, no one acts of her own free will. (Leiter 2002: 87)

To determine if Nietzsche, in fact, subscribed to the premises and conclusion of this argument I first trace Nietzsche's arguments against the compatibility of free will and his brand of fatalism through three of his works. I develop a reading according to which Nietzsche at the time of the writing of *Human, All Too Human* (HH) was a hard determinist and source-incompatibilist.[10] Accordingly, Nietzsche believed that our world is deterministic, that this fact rules out the possibility of our being the ultimate source of our actions, all of which entails that we cannot have free will nor can we be responsible for our actions. This set of beliefs matches up exactly with the argument that Leiter ascribes to Nietzsche. I argue, however, that Nietzsche's view on these matters changed by the time he wrote BGE. In BGE 21 Nietzsche seemingly rejects determinism, rejects the inference from psychological necessity to unfreedom, rejects the concept of the free and unfree wills, and proposes instead a distinction between strong and weak wills. I show that while Leiter may be correct in saying that Nietzsche later rejected certain claims he made in this passage, the distinction between strong and weak wills is one that Nietzsche holds on to and that is connected to Nietzsche's positive ascriptions of free will and

[10] Both of these terms are defined below.

responsibility. I argue that the claims Nietzsche makes in BGE and in later writings should lead us to doubt whether Nietzsche still subscribed to the first premise of the argument Leiter ascribes to him.

While we have been able to get by thus far with just a passing familiarity with key concepts in the traditional free will debate (*free will*, *moral responsibility*, *determinism*, *compatibilism*, and *incompatibilism*), fixing these concepts will prove useful for the discussion of Nietzsche's positions and possible positions in this section.

"To act with *free will* is to exercise a certain type of control over one's behavior" (~~SEP, 'Incompatibilist (Nondeterministic) Theories of Free Will'~~Clarke 2000). This definition is very thin in that it does not specify what kind of control is necessary or sufficient for free will. This, however, is a virtue of the definition since there is widespread disagreement over what kind of control is necessary or sufficient for free will. Two types of control have been central to most philosophical notions of free will: (1) an agent's control conceived of as the ability to choose which course of action she will take among various alternatives, and (2) an agent's control conceived of as the ability to play a crucial role in the production of her actions. This definition is also thin in that it does not connect the concept of free will with the concept of moral responsibility. This can also be seen as a virtue, since, importantly for our discussion of Nietzsche, free will is not always, though it is often, seen as a necessary condition for moral responsibility. It has alternatively been taken to be a necessary condition for agency—for being able to perform actions instead of merely to exhibit behavior.

For the purposes of this paper I will use P.F. Strawson's (1962) definition of *moral responsibility* as aptness for the reactive attitudes. Thus, to be morally responsible for something,

say an action, is to be deserving of a particular kind of reaction—praise, blame, or something akin to these—for having performed it.

Determinism is the thesis that the facts of the past, in conjunction with the laws of nature, entail every truth about the future. The truth of determinism, according to this definition would entail two more facts: (1) only one future is possible at any moment in time, and (2) there are causal conditions for any person's actions located in the remote past, prior to her birth, that are sufficient for each of her actions.

Compatibilism is the thesis that free will is compatible with determinism. Compatibilists can remain agnostic as to whether or not our universe is deterministic or whether or not persons have free will. They can deny that our universe is deterministic and deny that humans have free will, or can affirm that our universe is deterministic and deny that humans have free will (for reasons other than the truth of determinism), or they can deny that our universe is deterministic and affirm that humans have free will. Compatibilists, crucially, can affirm that our universe is deterministic and affirm that humans have free will, and the fact that this position is open to compatibilists is what defines them in opposition to incompatibilists.

Incompatibilism is the thesis that free will is not compatible with determinism. Incompatibilists can remain agnostic as to whether or not our universe is deterministic or whether or not persons have free will, or they can deny both propositions. Some incompatibilists, *libertarians*, affirm that humans have free will and deny that our universe is deterministic. Others, *hard determinists*, deny that humans have free will and affirm that our universe is deterministic. Incompatibilists, crucially, cannot both affirm that our universe is deterministic and affirm that humans have free will. Incompatibilists argue that determinism is a threat to the kind of control necessary for free will. They argue that determinism rules out whichever of the

following definitions of control they think are necessary for free will: (1) an agent's control conceived of as the ability to choose which course of action she will take among various alternatives or (2) an agent's control conceived of as the ability to play a crucial role in the production of her actions.

An incompatibilist who argues that determinism rules out (2) is a *source-incompatibilist*. Source-incompatibilists believe that an agent must be the *ultimate source* of her actions in order to have meaningful control of her actions and, thereby, free will. When an agent is an ultimate source of her action, some condition necessary for her action originates with the agent herself. It cannot be located in places and times prior to the agent's freely willing her action. But if determinism is true, then, for any person, there are facts of the past prior to her birth that, when combined with the laws of nature, provide causally sufficient conditions for her actions. While an agent may provide a source of her actions, it is merely a proximal source, and this source itself has a further source that originates outside of her. It is helpful to fill in the proximal source that is usually considered: a person's character. While an agent's character may be a source of her actions, she is not the source of her character (according to the determinism), and, therefore, she is not the ultimate source of her actions. The source-incompatibilist argument can be summarized as follows:

(1) A person acts of her own free will only if she is the ultimate source of her actions.

(2) If determinism is true, no one is the ultimate source of her actions

(3) Therefore, if determinism is true, no one acts of her own free will. (~~SEP. 'Compatibilism'~~McKenna 2009)

The argument that Leiter ascribes to Nietzsche bears a striking resemblance to this source-incompatibilist argument. An obvious difference is the absence of the concept of determinism in

Leiter's discussion. In order to see whether or not Nietzsche is properly characterized as a source-incompatibilist and whether or not he espoused the argument that Leiter ascribes to him, it is helpful to trace his arguments against free will through a number of his works.

1. *Human, All Too Human*

In HH, Nietzsche compares human activity to the activity of a waterfall. Both may seem to act freely, but "everything here is necessary, every motion mathematically calculable" (HH 106) and "if for one moment the wheel of the world were to stand still, and there were an all-knowing, calculating intelligence there to make use of this pause, it could narrate the future of every creature to the remotest ages and describe every track along which this wheel has yet to roll" (ibid.). Nietzsche here describes our universe as a deterministic one, one in which the facts of the past, in conjunction with the laws of nature, entail every truth about the future. Nietzsche stresses that the activity of humans is determined just as everything else is. Nietzsche also claims in this section that humans "are fixed in the illusion of free will"; though he provides no argument for why free will is an illusion in this passage, it is clear from context that Nietzsche sees determinism as a threat to free will.

In the following section, Nietzsche draws further implications for this kind of universe, saying:

> All [man's] judgments, distinctions, dislikes have thereby become worthless and wrong: the deepest feeling he had offered a victim or a hero was misdirected; he may no longer praise, no longer blame, for it is nonsensical to praise and blame nature and necessity. Just as he loves a good work of art, but does not praise it, because it can do nothing about itself, just as he regards a plant, so he must regard the actions of men and his own actions. (HH 107)

In this passage, Nietzsche equates the ability that humans have to shape themselves with the ability that a work of art or a plant has to shape itself; just as they have no ability to shape

themselves, so do we lack this ability. Because of this fact, Nietzsche claims that we are not apt targets of the reactive attitudes. The determinism of our universe makes all our praising and blaming nonsensical. So far, we have seen that when he wrote HH, Nietzsche believed that the determinism of our universe ruled out free will and moral responsibility. These facts make Nietzsche, at the time of the writing of HH, a hard determinist, an incompatibilist who affirms that our universe is deterministic and claims that this fact rules out the possibility of free will and moral responsibility.

Earlier in the same work, in a passage titled, "On the Fable of Intelligible Freedom," Nietzsche offers an argument leading to the conclusion that we are not responsible for our actions. He explains the history of errors that led to humans holding each other accountable. From holding each other accountable for the consequences of our actions, we moved to holding each other accountable for the actions themselves. From holding each other accountable for actions, we moved to holding each other accountable for the motives that we believed led to the actions. Finally, we began to hold each other accountable for our whole natures. But, at last, "one" discovers that one cannot justifiably hold someone accountable for his or her nature, "inasmuch as it is altogether a necessary consequence and assembled from the elements and influence of things past and present: that is to say, that man can be made accountable for nothing, not for his nature, nor for his motives, nor for his actions, nor for the effects he produces" (HH 39). In this passage Nietzsche presents a picture of human action according to which actions flow necessarily from the actor's character or nature, which is the necessary consequence of elements of the past and present. We cannot hold a man responsible for his own nature since it was causally determined by facts about the past and present that he could not have been responsible for bringing into existence. Nietzsche's argument is based on the premise that in order to be

responsible for something, an agent must be responsible for bringing about the conditions which brought that something about. Since we cannot be responsible for bringing about the conditions which initially formed our characters, humans are not responsible for our motives, actions, or the consequences of our actions. Nietzsche's argument in this passage mirrors the source-incompatibilist argument exactly. In contemporary terminology then, Nietzsche, the author of HH, is a hard incompatibilist and a source-incompatibilist.

In this same passage, Nietzsche claims that we feel the feelings of guilt and remorse (and presumably the other reactive attitudes) because we regard ourselves as free. Further, he claims that we can disaccustom ourselves to these feelings. He continues, "[The feeling of guilt] is a very changeable thing, tied to the evolution of morality and culture and perhaps present in only a relatively brief span of world-history" (HH 39). Finally, Nietzsche offers an error-theory for why people falsely believe in free will and moral responsibility. We believe this because we are afraid of the consequences of believing otherwise.

2. *Twilight of the Idols*

In a work considered part of his late or mature period, Nietzsche echoes some of the same points he laid out in HH, claiming that,

> No one is responsible for man's being there at all, for his being such-and-such, or for his being in these circumstances or in this environment. The fatality of his essence is not to be disentangled from the fatality of all that has been and will be…. One is necessary, one is a piece of fatefulness, one belongs to the whole, one is in the whole; there is nothing which could judge, measure, compare, or sentence our being, for that would mean judging, measuring, comparing, or sentencing the whole. But there is nothing besides the whole. That nobody is held responsible any longer…that alone is the great liberation. (TI VI 8)

Here again, Nietzsche moves from a claim about man's not being responsible for his circumstances or environment to a claim about his lack of responsibility. Here again, Nietzsche

uses the fact that man is part of a universe in which everything that happens is a necessary consequence of earlier events to support his claim that humans are not apt targets for moral judgment. In this passage, Nietzsche also suggests that it would be desirable that we not hold each other responsible anymore, if we are to take "the great liberation" as something desirable.

So it would seem from examining these two passages, one from Nietzsche's so called "middle period," and one from the so-called "late period," that Nietzsche was a hard determinist and source-incompatibilist his entire philosophical career. We should further take from these passages that he believed that humans can and should rid themselves of the practice of holding each other morally responsible and the feelings that are the results of this practice, and, if we are to take him at his word in HH, that we can do this by ridding ourselves of the belief that we have free will. There is still one more passage, however that we should address, in which Nietzsche seems to have changed his mind about some of these matters.

3. *Beyond Good and Evil* 21

BGE 21 is one of the most-quoted passages in which Nietzsche addresses free will. In this passage, Nietzsche says:

> The *causa sui* is the best self-contradiction that has been conceived so far, it is a sort of rape and perversion of logic; but the extravagant pride of man has managed to entangle itself profoundly and frightfully with just this nonsense. The desire for 'freedom of the will' in the superlative metaphysical sense, which still holds sway, unfortunately, in the minds of the half-educated; the desire to bear the entire and ultimate responsibility for one's actions oneself, and to absolve God, the world, ancestors, chance, and society involves nothing less than to be precisely this *causa sui* and, with more than Münchhausen's audacity, to pull oneself up into existence by the hair, out of the swamps of nothingness. (BGE 21)

There are many similarities between BGE 21 and the passages from HH and TI already analyzed. In BGE 21 Nietzsche claims that being self-caused is a necessary condition for a certain sort of free will and a certain sort of responsibility. This claim can be thought of as continuous with HH

39 and TI IV 8~~9~~ where he claims that because man is not responsible for his character he is not responsible for his actions. Here, unlike the passages from before and after the time of this writing, however, Nietzsche claims that being "*causa sui*" is a necessary condition *only for a certain sense of free will*, "the superlative metaphysical sense," *and a certain kind of responsibility*, "ultimate responsibility," a kind which would "absolve God, the world, ancestors, chance, and society" (~~ibid~~BGE 21~~.~~). So the structure of Nietzsche's argument remains the same from HH to BGE and on into TI; but importantly in BGE, Nietzsche narrows the scope of his conclusion. Can we infer from the fact that Nietzsche narrows the target of his argument to certain conceptions of free will and responsibility that there are other conceptions of free will and responsibility which he does not reject? We certainly cannot infer this from this fact alone, but the rest of the passage seems to support this inference.

I will quote this passage at length as Nietzsche's claims here are surprising and difficult to interpret. He says:

> Suppose someone were thus to see through the boorish simplicity of this celebrated concept of 'free will' and put it out of his head altogether, I beg of him to carry his 'enlightenment' a step further, and so put out of his head the contrary of this monstrous conception of 'free will': I mean 'unfree will', which amounts to a misuse of cause and effect. One should not wrongly reify 'cause' and 'effect' as the natural scientists do (and whoever, like them, now 'naturalizes' in his thinking), according to the prevailing mechanical doltishness which makes the cause press and push until it 'effects' its end; one should use 'cause' and 'effect' only as pure concepts, that is to say, as conventional fictions for the purpose of designation and communication—not for explanation. In the 'in itself' there is nothing of 'causal connections', of 'necessity,' or of 'psychological non-freedom'; there the effect does not follow the cause, there is no rule of 'law'. It is we alone who have devised cause, sequence, for-each-other, relativity, constraint, number, law, freedom, motive, and purpose; and when we project and mix this symbol world into things as if it existed 'in itself', we act once more as we have always acted—mythologically. The 'unfree will' is mythology; in real life it is only a matter of strong and weak wills. … It is almost always a symptom of what is lacking in himself when a thinker senses in every 'causal connection' and 'psychological necessity' something of constraint, need, compulsion to obey, pressure, and unfreedom; it is suspicious to have such feelings—that person betrays himself. (BGE 21)

There is a lot to say about this passage. The first thing to note is that Nietzsche seems to have changed his mind both about whether or not our universe is deterministic and about the consequences of determinism. I pointed out earlier that in HH Nietzsche makes an argument against the possibility of responsibility from determinism and from the fact that we are not responsible for our natures. In BGE, on the contrary, he claims that necessity and psychological unfreedom are not features of the world but rather myths we project on the world. Further, Nietzsche claims that it is a sign of some problem in a thinker when he makes an inference from causal connections or psychological necessity to compulsion to obey and unfreedom. If Nietzsche now holds that this inference is fallacious then, according to the definition of a compatibilist set out above, Nietzsche at the time he wrote BGE was a compatibilist. This does not show that Nietzsche believes that anyone has free will, as a compatibilist can affirm or deny determinism and affirm or deny free will.

In BGE 21 Nietzsche also claims that the entire way we think about causation is false and misleading. Nietzsche claims that whatever is going on in the universe, one thing that is not happening is a cause constraining its effects to obey. Distinguishing causation from constraint is a classic compatibilist move, and has been since Hobbes and Hume (cf. Hume 1739/1992: 407). Because he has suddenly entertained compatibilism, determinism is no longer part of Nietzsche's argument for the claim that we are not free (in a certain sense) or responsible (ultimately). Instead of determinism ruling out control (conceived of as the ability to play a crucial role in the production of her actions) and, thereby, free will and moral responsibility, now the fact that the idea of being *causa sui* is "self-contradictory" and a sort of "rape and perversion of logic" (BGE 21) rules out the kind of control necessary for a certain sort of free will and a certain sort of

responsibility. In BGE 21 Nietzsche has changed his argument from closely resembling the source-incompatibilist argument as presented above to something like the following:

(1) A person has free will *in the superlative, metaphysical sense* and has *ultimate* responsibility, of the sort that *absolves God, the world, ancestors, chance, and society*, for her actions only if she is *causa sui*.

(2) No one can be *causa sui* (because the concept is self-contradictory).

(3) Therefore, no one has free will *in the superlative, metaphysical sense* or *ultimate* responsibility, of the sort that *absolves God, the world, ancestors, chance, and society*, for her actions.

So to sum up, in this passage, Nietzsche claims that a superlative sort of free will and responsibility should be rejected as incoherent and impossible, that whatever processes that are going on in the universe that we normally think of as causation do not imply constraint, and that we should put out of our heads the contrary of the superlative sort of free will, namely "unfree will" because it too is based on a misunderstanding of whatever we normally think of as causation implying constraint. All of these points support a reading according to which Nietzsche entertains a compatibilist sort of free will. Compatibilists reject the stronger libertarian conception of free will and its attendant ultimate responsibility, they are wont to maintain a distinction between causation and constraint, and they will often say that it is because freedom is properly opposed to constraint that we should reject the view that the will is unfree. Not only does Nietzsche in this passage restrict the senses of free will and responsibility that he would have us reject, mention a sort of "unfree will" that we should likewise reject, and switch from incompatibilism to compatibilism, he also suggests another division of types of wills.

Nietzsche says, "The 'unfree will' is mythology; in real life it is only a matter of strong and weak wills" (BGE 21), and he defines weakness in TI as the "inability not to respond to a stimulus" (TI V 2). In the same work he claims that some agents have the power "not to react at once to a stimulus, but to gain control of all the inhibiting, excluding instincts. … [T]he essential feature is precisely not to 'will', to be able to suspend decision. All unspirituality, all vulgar commonness, depends on an inability to resist a stimulus: one must react, one follows every impulse" (TI VIII 6). The weak individual's actions are determined by whatever environmental stimulus or psychological urge happens to arise. It is useful to contrast this condition with the condition of the sovereign individual of GM 2: 2, whom Nietzsche describes as "strong enough to maintain [his commitments] even in the face of accidents" (GM 2: 2).[11] In these passages, Nietzsche suggests that agents can be distinguished by their ability to control their behavior. The question remains: Does Nietzsche think this ability is any sort of condition for free will as he conceives of it?

Genealogy 2: 2, the passage that invokes the "sovereign individual," provides a link between Nietzsche's conception of the strong will, which Nietzsche relates to self-control, and his concept of autonomy and free will. Nietzsche describes the sovereign individual as "autonomous and supramoral…, the man who has his own independent, protracted will…, and in him…a consciousness of his own power and freedom" (GM 2: 2). Nietzsche goes on to describe the sovereign individual as "master of a free will," and asks how this individual could fail to be aware of "how this mastery over himself also necessarily gives him mastery over circumstances, over nature, and over all more short-willed and unreliable creatures" (ibid.). The interpretation of

[11] In his notebooks Nietzsche speaks of great individuals controlling their affects: "Greatness of character does not consist in not possessing these affects—on the contrary, one possesses them to the highest degree—but in having them under control" (WP 928). He goes on to claim that a great individual "has the ability to extend his will across great stretches of his life" (WP 962).

this passage is very contentious among Nietzsche commentators. Here I will consider some of the subtle nuances of the passage and the various interpretations that have arisen from them.

Leiter 2007 argues against ~~this reading of this passage~~both the reading of BGE 21 that I have developed and the straight-forward reading of GM 2:2 that I began presenting. Against the reading of BGE 21 that I developed, Leiter argues that Nietzsche's rejection of the "unfree will" and his distinction between strong and weak wills are motivated entirely by his adoption of a neo-Kantian skepticism about causation, which he apparently acquired from his reading of Friedrich Lange (Leiter 2007: 6). This skepticism, Leiter claims, Nietzsche later rejected.[12] So, he argues, we should similarly reject his rejection of the "unfree will" and his distinction between strong and weak wills. While this may be the only instance of Nietzsche's rejection of the unfree will, we have seen that this is far from the only time where Nietzsche invokes the distinction between strong and weak wills. Nietzsche maintains and develops this distinction in his later works GM and TI. Further, in GM 2: 2 he makes the strong will a characteristic of a type to whom Nietzsche seemingly ascribes free will, autonomy, and responsibility.

So, while Nietzsche was a hard determinist and source-incompatibilist in his so-called "middle period," in BGE 21 Nietzsche rejects not only determinism but also the inference from psychological necessity to unfreedom. This makes him, at least at the time of writing BGE, a compatibilist. In BGE 21, Nietzsche proposes the distinction between types of wills, which he believes is to be found "in reality." Self-control is the defining feature of the strong will, while lack of self-control is the defining feature of the weak will. While Nietzsche may never argue against the unfree will again, and while he may reject the conception of causation on which his argument against unfree will depends, he continues to rely on the distinction between strong and

[12] Leiter's point that Nietzsche later rejects the neo-Kantian skepticism about causation that he entertained at the time of the writing of BGE is supported by the fact that in TI, Nietzsche again relies on a claim about necessity to argue against the claim that humans are morally responsible.

weak wills. In GM 2: 2 Nietzsche makes the strong will, self-control, a necessary condition for autonomy and free will and introduces a type that seems to have all of these characteristics, the sovereign individual. So it seems that Nietzsche believed that there is a concept of free will that his argument against free will did not rule out and one that he further believed that some humans can achieve. Leiter, for his part, offers two deflationary readings of the sovereign individual. I address both of them in the next section.

IV. DEFLATIONARY READINGS OF THE SOVEREIGN INDIVIDUAL

Leiter 2010 attempts to deflate passages where Nietzsche seemingly ascribes free will and responsibility to certain historical types or persons by arguing that we should read Nietzsche either as being sarcastic or as engaging in the practice of persuasive definition when using these concepts, which is equivalent to exploiting the positive valence of these terms while using them in ways that are unconnected to both philosophical traditions and folk notions of the terms. His primary target for these deflationary readings is the sovereign individual of GM 2: 2. It is easy to see why the sovereign individual poses a threat to Leiter's reading of Nietzsche as a hard determinist. Nietzsche seems to claim that the sovereign individual is autonomous, the "lord of the *free* will," and is conscious of his own responsibility. Furthermore, the "sovereign individual" passage seems to link the possession of the strong will with freedom, autonomy, free will, and responsibility. Finally, the sovereign individual is held up as Nietzsche's ideal of agency and free will by some Nietzsche commentators (Janaway 2009, Poellner 2009).

1. Irony

In Leiter's first deflationary reading of this passage, he characterizes Nietzsche as being completely sarcastic in ascribing free will and responsibility to the sovereign individual in an

attempt to mock the bourgeoisie of his time for their belief that they were the pinnacle of human perfection. Leiter supports this reading with the claim that the autonomous individual can lay claim only to a very modest achievement, namely that of being able to make and keep a promise and with the fact that the sovereign individual appears only once in all of Nietzsche's writings. Leiter reasons that it would be strange if the figure that is often held up as Nietzsche's ideal of agency were to appear in only one passage in all of Nietzsche's works. I offer a counterargument against Leiter's claim that Nietzsche is using the figure of the sovereign individual to mock the bourgeoisie of his time. Certainly, Nietzsche makes some apparently very uncharacteristic claims in this passage. Some of the claims are inconsistent with positions he espoused throughout his philosophical career. The conjunction of this fact and the fact that Nietzsche quite often speaks from perspectives that are not necessarily his own makes the passage especially difficult to interpret.

I argue, however, that although some of the passage must be read as if Nietzsche is speaking from a perspective other than his own, the sovereign individual has characteristics that he consistently praises in other character types and historical figures. So even if Nietzsche is not straightforwardly sharing his perspective on the qualities he ascribes to the sovereign individual, it is unlikely that Nietzsche is using this passage to mock anyone. I also offer a refutation of Leiter's claim that we should not be impressed by the sovereign individual's distinguishing feature, the ability to make and keep a promise. I argue that Nietzsche views the way that the sovereign individual maintains his commitments as a very impressive achievement. Without his premise about the attitude we should have towards the sovereign individual's promising, Leiter's conclusion is supported only by the fact that the sovereign individual appears only once in all of Nietzsche's writings.

The sovereign individual is the fruit of the long tradition that Nietzsche refers to as "the morality of custom." "The morality of custom" refers to the customs that provided the criteria for actions that were sanctioned (or 'done') and condemned (or 'not done') ~~criteria for right and wrong~~ for early human societies. Nietzsche hypothesizes that these customs played a role in early societies similar to the role played by moral codes and laws today. The work of the morality of custom in shaping humanity is what is responsible for turning humans into "animal[s] with the right to make promises." Nietzsche singles out two necessary conditions for humans acquiring the ability to promise. Leiter explains that these conditions are "first, *regularity* of behavior and, second, reliable *memory*" (Leiter 2010: 8). Regular behavior is necessary so that one can predict how one will feel, react, and think in the future, when one is supposed to deliver on one's promises. Memory is necessary because one must remember one's promise in order to uphold it. Nietzsche believes that the morality of custom imprinted both of these features onto humanity. The sovereign individual is the result of this process. Reading from GM 2: 1 and through GM 2: 2 up to this point, it seems that when Nietzsche refers to the sovereign individual and his capacity to promise, he is talking about all of humanity, since all of humanity seems to have the capacity to make and keep a promise. Most humans have a memory and behavior that is fairly regular. By the end of the passage, however, it seems like the sovereign individual is a very rare and powerful sort of human. Nietzsche refers to the sovereign individual as an "emancipated individual, with the *right* to make promises" and "master of the *free* will." He is trusted, feared, and revered. He has a "protracted and unbreakable will." He knows himself to be able to keep his word even "in the face of accidents, even 'in the face of fate.'" He honors those like himself: the strong and reliable and reserves "a kick for the feeble windbags who promise without the right to do so, and a rod for the liar who breaks his word even

at the moment he utters it." These are not qualities of all humans. They are qualities of very few humans.

The sovereign individual shares many features with a type that Nietzsche ardently hopes will come into existence in the future. In *Beyond Good and Evil* Nietzsche describes the new philosophers that he hopes will come after him, who will take it upon themselves to revaluate existing values. He says,

> To teach humanity its future as its will, as dependent on a human will, to prepare for the great risk and wholesale attempt at breeding and cultivation and so to put an end to the gruesome rule of chance and nonsense that has passed for 'history' so far…: a new type of philosopher and commander will be needed for this some day, and whatever hidden, dreadful, or benevolent spirits have existed on earth will pale into insignificance beside the image of this type. (BGE 203)

He further emphasizes the strength of soul and conscience that these philosophers will have to have in order to "bear the weight of a responsibility like this" (ibid.). It is clear from the description above that these new philosophers, like those with the ability to promise, exert a "command over the future in advance" (GM 2: 1). They "must…separate the necessary from the accidental, …think causally, … see and anticipate what is distant as if it were present, … fix with certainty what is end, what is means thereto" (GM 2: 1), just as those who have the ability to promise. They, like the sovereign individual in GM 2: 2, must have strong wills to deliver on the responsibility that they are taking on.

There are further similarities between the sovereign individual and the philosophers that Nietzsche seems to admire in BGE 212. These are comprehensive, commanding figures that Nietzsche wonders if the culture of his day can produce. He says, "[This figure] would determine even value and rank according to how much and how many things someone could carry and take upon himself, how far someone could stretch his responsibility…. [S]trength of the will and the hardness and capacity for long-term resolutions must belong to the concept of 'greatness' in the

philosopher's ideal" (BGE 212). The kind of philosopher whom Nietzsche praises, then, values those individuals who have long, protracted wills. The sovereign individual of GM 2: 2 is said to have "his own independent long will" (GM 2: 2). Further, "looking from himself toward the others, [the sovereign individual] honors the ones like him, the strong and reliable" (GM 2: 2).

So not only does this sovereign individual have a long, independent will like the philosophers of the future that Nietzsche hopes will one day come, he also values the same thing that these philosophers value, specifically, things like themselves. The fact that all these types share the feature of extended will and responsibility is especially noteworthy. Also of note is that in having a standard of value that grows out of the respect that these types have for themselves, they all share favorable characteristics with the masters of the First Essay of the *Genealogy*. All of these facts make Leiter's claim that Nietzsche is using the passage on the sovereign individual to mock the bourgeoisie of his time seem unlikely. But Leiter also argues,

> Surely it bears emphasizing that [the sovereign individual] is described as having one and only one skill: he can actually make and keep a promise! And why can he do that? Because he can remember he made it, and his behavior is sufficiently regular and predictable, that others will actually act based on his promises. (Leiter 2010: 11)

The sovereign individual, however, is characterized not just by his ability to promise, but also by how often he delivers on his commitments once made and his sense of distinction between himself and those who have weak wills.

Leiter, however, is right to point out that some of Nietzsche's claims in this passage should not be taken at face value. As mentioned earlier, Nietzsche often speaks from perspectives other than his own, sometimes more than one in the same passage. Foremost among those claims that should not be taken as Nietzsche's own are the sovereign individual's knowledge of his "power over…fate" and his knowledge that he is strong enough to uphold his word…even 'against fate'" (GM 2: 2). Throughout his philosophical career, Nietzsche

consistently affirms fatalism, and *amor fati*, love of fate, is a characteristic that he praises numerous figures for having. Acting against fate seems like a contradiction. In the case of the sovereign individual's knowledge of his power over and against fate, it seems Nietzsche is offering an interpretation of the sovereign individual's strong will and his power to uphold promises that cannot be his own. Further, the sovereign individual is described as having, "a feeling of the completion of man himself." We might wonder how Nietzsche feels about this feeling that the sovereign individual has.

Having doubted whether some of the qualities the sovereign individual is described as having are qualities that Nietzsche himself would say that the sovereign individual has, we may start to wonder about the sovereign individual's "proud awareness of the extraordinary privilege of *responsibility*" and the claim that he is "master of the *free* will." In the previous section we considered three passages in which Nietzsche argues against the possibility of responsibility or "ultimate" responsibility. But we have seen that in BGE, which is the work that appeared just before GM, Nietzsche restricted the target of his argument to "ultimate" responsibility. We have also seen that in BGE Nietzsche describes the philosophers of the future as bearing the weight of great responsibility. It is not out of the question to think that Nietzsche believed that both the philosophers of the future and the sovereign individual meet the conditions of responsibility for some sense of 'responsibility'. This responsibility would have to be distinct from *moral* responsibility, for Nietzsche says, "'autonomous' and 'moral' are mutually exclusive" (GM 2: 2). On the other hand, the sovereign individual himself is the one that has the awareness of the privilege of responsibility. We could say here that "awareness" of a fact implies that the fact is true. It seems more likely that Nietzsche would agree that the sovereign individual is indeed

responsible and aware of that fact than, for instance, that he would say that the sovereign individual's feeling that he can act against fate is accurate.

Finally there is the claim that the sovereign individual is "master of the *free* will." Does Nietzsche believe that there is a kind of free will realized by the sovereign individual that his arguments against the possibility of free will do not rule out? Or is Nietzsche presenting an interpretation that is not his own of the abilities he describes the sovereign individual as having? Unlike the awareness of responsibility and the feeling of acting against fate, Nietzsche actually describes the sovereign individual as being "master of the *free* will." It is not the sovereign individual who feels himself to be free or is aware of himself being free. This fact lends support to the conclusion that Nietzsche believes that the sovereign individual has free will. An argument could be made against this reading. There are still the arguments against free will that we covered in the previous section to deal with. But, again, in the work written just before GM, BGE, Nietzsche restricts the target of his argument to free will "in the superlative, metaphysical sense" (BGE 21). Also, in the first section of the paper, we showed that Nietzsche's philosophy of action does not rule out free will. So, we have no good grounds for ruling out the ascription of free will, and Nietzsche himself makes the ascription (as opposed to free will being a quality that the sovereign individual "feels" or "is aware of"). Even if Nietzsche were speaking from a perspective other than his own, this perspective, conceptualizing the strong will in addition to other qualities as sufficient conditions for free will, is one Nietzsche entertains in both GM and BGE.

In any event, based on the arguments presented above, we can come to the conclusion that Nietzsche is not being sarcastic when ascribing free will and responsibility to the sovereign individual. While he is probably speaking from a perspective other than his own when he

describes the sovereign individual's power to act against fate, and may be speaking from a perspective other than his own when describing the sovereign individual's privilege of responsibility, he is probably not speaking from another perspective when he describes the sovereign individual as being "master of the *free* will."

2. No Self in Self-Control

In his most recent work on Nietzsche and free will, Leiter develops another deflationary reading of the sovereign individual. Leiter admits that the sovereign individual may represent a Nietzschean ideal of agency, one involving the unity of drives. But he says,

> The question, however, naturally arises why this ideal should be associated with 'freedom' or 'free will' or 'autonomy': why not just say that Nietzsche's ideal agent has a certain pattern of coherent drives or dispositions (the pattern to be specified of course) and leave it at that. (Leiter 2010: 16)

Even though Nietzsche, as we have seen, says the sovereign individual is "master of the *free* will" that does not mean that he is referring to the same thing we are referring to when we talk about "free will." Leiter argues that Nietzsche, instead, is engaging in the practice of revisionary definition when he talks about freedom and free will. That is to say that he is exploiting the positive valence of these terms while radically altering their definitions (in this case substituting illiberal views for their traditional meanings). To show that this deflationary reading does not succeed I will first look at the passages where Leiter claims that Nietzsche is offering revisionary definitions of freedom and free will. I will show that Nietzsche is not being as revisionary as Leiter claims. In almost all cases, Nietzsche's use of the concepts of freedom and free will can be connected to traditional uses through the concept of self-control, which, as we say in the ~~lean~~ thin definition of free will offered in the second section, must be central to just about every definition of free will. Then I will address Leiter's claims that Nietzsche believes that there is no

self in the sovereign individual's self-control, that he is just a fortuitous natural artifact, and that Nietzsche's definition of free will must therefore be revisionary. I will argue that while this reading is consistent with the source-incompatibilism of Nietzsche's so-called middle period, there are textual reasons we have already covered and philosophical reasons for the ~~view the argument~~rejecting Leiter's argument.~~.~~

First, let us look at some of the passages where Leiter thinks that Nietzsche is offering revisionary definitions of freedom. Leiter starts, appropriately, with a section of TI entitled "My conception of freedom." In this passage, Nietzsche says that one undermines freedom in his sense by making "men small, cowardly, and hedonistic" (TI VII 38). He continues:

> [War] educates for freedom. For what is freedom? That one has the will to assume responsibility for oneself. That one maintains the distance which separates us. That one becomes more indifferent to difficulties, hardships, privation, even to life itself. That one is prepared to sacrifice human beings for one's cause, not excluding oneself. Freedom means that the manly instincts which delight in war and victory dominate over other instincts, for example, over those of 'happiness'. The human being who has *become free*—and much more the *spirit* who has become free—spits on the contemptible type of well-being dreamed of by shopkeepers, Christians, cows, females, Englishmen, and other democrats. The free man is a *warrior*. (ibid.)

Leiter takes from this passage that Nietzsche's vision of freedom involves being "big, brave, and indifferent to suffering" (Leiter 2010: 19) and taking on the attitude of a warrior. While Nietzsche is definitely adding some of his own preferred characteristics to the concept of "freedom" in this passage, what he says here can be connected with what we have outlined as his concept of "self-control" above. According to Nietzsche, the individual in possession of a strong will has the ability not to react to stimuli. Also, Nietzsche claims that "autonomous" and "moral" are mutually exclusive. Nietzsche seems to hold that modern humanity is overly sensitive to suffering. Our moral valuations of the world make us unable not to react to the stimulus of suffering, whether the suffering is being inflicted on others or ourselves. Nietzsche seems to hold, then, that a free human or spirit would have to be less sensitive to suffering so that he could

be free not to react to it immediately, especially if reacting to the suffering would make it less likely that one accomplishes one's projects. We should also note that Nietzsche equates freedom with a certain hierarchy of drives. This hierarchy of drives ("manly instincts" over "happiness" instincts) is the sort of arrangement that allows for self-control in the first place. Leiter will have an argument to press at this point, but before we get to that, let us look at the second passage he cites.

In the next cluster of passages Leiter cites, Nietzsche spells out the sort of freedom which he does not mean, specifically, freedom from all laws and constraints (TI VIII 41). He says that artists obey "thousands of laws at [the moment of creation], laws that defy conceptual formulation precisely because of their hardness and determinateness" (BGE 188), that artists know "only too well that their feeling of freedom, finesse and authority, of creation, formation, and control only reaches its apex when they have stopped doing anything 'voluntary' and instead do everything necessarily—in short, they know that inside themselves necessity and 'freedom of the will' have become one" (BGE 213), and that creating ourselves requires that we learn what is "lawful and necessary" as revealed by physical science (GS 335). Leiter pulls out of these passages a "theme about the equivalence of freedom and necessity" (Leiter 2010: 22) and argues that "acting under necessity" would indeed be a very revisionary definition of "freedom."

It is not so clear that that is what Nietzsche is doing here. In ~~the first passage~~TI VIII 41, Nietzsche is rejecting the conception of freedom that equates it with "letting go," and this is exactly what we would expect from a theorist who emphasizes the role of self-control in freedom as consistently as Nietzsche does. In the second pair of passages, Nietzsche describes a state that an artist can achieve in which she is creating and obeying laws so determinate that they cannot be conceptualized. This is a complex phenomenon, but I do not think it should worry us here.

Just because there are times when some people can achieve a state where they are obeying "thousands of laws" without consciously willing does not mean that freedom is equivalent to necessity for Nietzsche. When we reviewed the experiments in Baumeister et al., we saw that consciousness can sometimes interfere with the optimal function of an activity that one has performed thousands of times. In the final passage, Nietzsche makes learning the "laws of physics" (GS 335), which Leiter claims is equivalent to discovering "the laws of cause-and-effect governing particular values and particular actions" (Leiter 2010: 22), a necessary condition for "creating ourselves." Again, it seems that this is exactly what we should expect from a theorist who stresses just how often our behavior is caused by seemingly trivial situational factors and drives beneath the level of consciousness. These insights make acting freely more complicated, but do not rule out autonomous actions, and Nietzsche is not saying here, or in the other passages, that freedom is equivalent to necessity.

Finally, Leiter points to two passages about Goethe and Napoleon. In these passages Nietzsche praises Goethe for "becoming free," for his "cheerful and trusting fatalism," and for daring to allow himself "the entire expanse and wealth of naturalness" (TI VIII 49). Leiter analyzes the sense of being free offered in these passages as being "free of the wish that reality be other than it is—that is, unequal, terrible, and cruel (as Napoleon, of course, was)" (Leiter 2010: 26). Leiter is right ~~to call~~point out that Nietzsche ~~for adding~~adds illiberal elements to his definition of freedom. I have attempted to show how we might connect our modern liberal attitudes with an oversensitivity to suffering, and therefore, with an inability not to react to certain stimuli. The fact that Nietzsche adds a "cheerful and trusting fatalism" to his definition of freedom is difficult to understand. Nietzsche also praises Goethe for fighting against "the separation of reason, sensibility, feeling, will" (TI VIII 49). The unity of drives and

consciousness is a theme that many commentators hold as central to Nietzsche's definition of freedom and it does not seem too far removed from traditional compatibilist theories. One way of analyzing why a kleptomaniac is not free is by pointing to the fact that his reflective thought is not in step with his psychological drives, which seemingly produce the behavior.

So the passages that Leiter cites to show that Nietzsche has only a revisionary definition of freedom on offer turn out to be less conclusive than he intends, for they can all be connected to the concept of self-control. There is, however, one troublesome passage that, should Leiter's reading of it be correct, would threaten to undercut the connection that we have drawn between Nietzsche's definition of freedom and traditional compatibilist definitions that invoke the concept of self-control.

In *Daybreak*, Nietzsche sketches six different ways in which one can combat the vehemence of a drive. He then offers what the title of the section suggests is the "ultimate motive" for "self-mastery":

> *[T]hat* one *wants* to combat the vehemence of a drive at all, however, does not stand within our power; nor does the choice of any particular method; nor does the success or failure of this method. What is clearly the case is that in this entire procedure our intellect is only the blind instrument of *another drive,* which is a *rival* of the drive whose vehemence is tormenting us…. While 'we' believe we are complaining about the vehemence of a drive, at bottom it is one drive *which is complaining about the other,* that is to say: for us to become aware that we are suffering from the *vehemence* of a drive presupposes the existence of another equally vehement or even more vehement drive, and that a *struggle* is in prospect in which our intellect is going to have to take sides. (D 109)

Leiter offers the following interpretation of the passage:

> Even if the intellect must 'takes sides' there is no suggestion that the intellect determines which side prevails: to the contrary, the intellect is, on Nietzsche's picture, the mere 'blind instrument' of another drive. Thus, the fact that one masters oneself is *not* a product of autonomous choice by the person, but rather an effect of the underlying psychological facts characteristic of that person, namely, which of his various drives happens to be strongest. There is, as it were, no 'self' in 'self-mastery': that is, no conscious or free 'self' who contributes anything to the process. (Leiter 2010: 14)

There is an interesting suggestion in Leiter's take on the passage. He says, "the fact that one masters oneself is *not* a product of autonomous choice by the person" (ibid.). Leiter seems to suggest here that in order to have free will, one must be responsible for having the quality of self-mastery. In a footnote Leiter says, "there is no reason in Nietzsche to think being a 'higher type' is anything other than a fortuitous natural fact" (Leiter 2010: 15). Also, in his conclusion he says, "[Nietzsche] does not think that his revisionary sense of 'freedom'—the 'long protracted will' as he puts it in the passage from GM II:2 with which we began—is in reach of just anyone, that anyone could 'choose' to have it" (Leiter 2010: 27). This suggestion recalls Nietzsche's source-incompatibilist argument (outlined earlier). While it is completely compatible with a compatibilist conception of freedom that some people are born with qualities that are necessary for free will and some people are not, the source-incompatibilist holds that one must be the ultimate source of one's actions. So one must be responsible for the fact that one's character is arranged in such a way that it can lead to free actions.

Leiter's suggestion is not the only thing that we have to worry about in D 109. For, as Leiter seems to want to bring out, Nietzsche seems to be making the suggestion that the relative strength of one's drives determines what one's reflective judgment is on a matter, and, therefore, what we call "self-control" is merely "one drive which is *complaining about the other*" (D 109). Nietzsche further seems to hold that this fact ~~displaces~~ sompromises our agential control. He says:

> [T]hat one wants to combat the vehemence of a drive at all, however, does not stand within our power; nor does the choice of any particular method; nor does the success or failure of this method…. While 'we' believe we are complaining about the vehemence of a drive, at bottom it is one drive which is complaining about the other. (ibid.)

Even if it were a fact ~~The fact~~ that the fact that ~~the fact that~~ we want to combat the force of a drive is out of our power ~~is not difficult to accommodate for a compatibilist~~a compatibilist could

still accommodate this. The fact that we have a certain arrangement of desires with certain relative strengths can be out of our control as long as whether we act on these desires is within our control, or 'up to us' in a compatibilist sense of 'up to us.' But alas, Nietzsche takes even this "out of our power." When Nietzsche puts the "we" in scare quotes, and says that the drive is really doing the action that "we" think we are doing, he seems to reveal that he holds that if drives are doing all the work then there is no room for agency. What are we to do with the implications of this passage? In what follows I will argue that there are philosophical and textual reasons for rejecting Nietzsche's view that the picture of action presented in D 109 rules out self-control and agency.

One way that we could handle the passage is by dismissing it. We could support this with the premise that D was written before BGE, where Nietzsche seemed to have changed his mind about determinism or causal essentialism ruling out free will, and before GM, where Nietzsche ascribes free will to the sovereign individual based on this type's self-control and long will. Going back to our earlier discussion of whether or not we should read Nietzsche as an epiphenomenalist about consciousness, we could read this passage as one of those times where Nietzsche offers an epiphenomenalist reading of conscious willing. Since I have argued that it is more charitable to read Nietzsche as holding that the conscious will is efficacious but only as a secondary cause, we could have some grounds for dismissing this passage. However, what Nietzsche says in this passage seems to be compatible with the will as a secondary cause reading, and Nietzsche still seems to suggest that what he says here rules out agency.

In his book *Autonomous Agents*, Alfred Mele sums up two competing perspectives on the explanation of intentional action. He says,

> Matters are complicated by our having—in the philosophy of action, moral psychology, and ordinary thought—a pair of perspectives on the explanation of intentional action, a motivational and an intellectual one. Central to the motivational perspective is the idea that what agents do,

> when they act intentionally, depends on what they are most strongly motivated to do at the time…. Practical intellect, as it is normally conceived, is concerned (among other things) with weighing options and making judgments about what is best, better, or 'good enough' to do. Central to the intellectual perspective is the idea that such judgments play a significant role in explaining intentional actions of intelligent beings. (Mele 1995: 16)

So D 109 seems to support a motivational perspective on the explanation of intentional action. The best strategy for dealing with D 109 would involve finding a reading such that Nietzsche's claims about motivational force determining reflective thought could be true but that a recognizable sense of self-control was still available and agency was not ruled out. Then we could read Nietzsche as changing his mind only about whether or not his view ruled out agency, not about whether or not his view was correct. Mele proposes that, "On a popular view, self-control can be exercised both against anticipated temptation and against present temptation" (Mele 1995: 32), and he attempts to show that this kind of self-control can be accommodated by the motivational perspective outlined earlier.

Mele sums up the motivational perspective with the following quote: "The act which is performed among a set of alternatives is the act for which the resultant motivation is most positive. The magnitude of response and the persistence of behavior are functions of the strength of motivation to perform the act relative to the strength of motivation to perform competing acts" (Atkinson 1957: 361, quoted at Mele 1995: 37). This echoes what Nietzsche seems to say in D109. Mele explains that "Self-control scenarios may be distinguished along a pair of dimensions, temporal and motivational" (Mele 1985: 32). This leads to four scenarios in which an agent is commonly believed to be able to exercise self-control:

> *Scenario 1*. *S* holds a decisive judgment at *t* that it would be better to *A* later than to *B* later. At *t*, *S* is more strongly motivated to *A* later than to *B* later; but, thinking that as the time for action draws nearer he may become more strongly motivated to *B* than to *A*, he exercises self-control at *t* in support of his *A*-ing later.

> *Scenario 2*. *S* holds a decisive judgment at *t* that it would be better to *A* later than to *B* later. However, *S*'s motivational condition at *t* favors his *B*-ing later over his *A*-ing later. Recognizing this, he exercises self-control at *t* in support of his *A*-ing later.
>
> *Scenario 3*. *S* holds a decisive judgment at *t* that it would be better to *A* now than to *B* now. At *t*, *S* is more strongly motivated to *A* then than to *B* then; but, thinking that his motivational condition may shift in a *B*-favoring direction even as he is embarked upon *A*-ing, he exercises self-control at *t* in support of his *A*-ing later.
>
> *Scenario 4*. *S* holds a decisive judgment at *t* that it would be better to *A* now than to *B* now. However, *S*'s motivational condition at *t* favors his *B*-ing now over his *A*-ing now. Recognizing this, he exercises self-control at *t* in support of his *A*-ing later.

Examples of each scenario:

> *Scenario 1*. Right now I decisively judge it better to work on my thesis tomorrow than not to do so, and my relevant desires are aligned with my judgment. But thinking that, tomorrow, I may be severely tempted to procrastinate, I seek right now to arrange things in such a way as to promote my chances of working on my thesis tomorrow as I judge best today. I announce to my advisor that I will turn in pages of writing tomorrow, thinking that my desire not to lose face will help me resist temptation.
>
> *Scenario 2*. Right now I, in the grip of an intense fear of writing, decisively judge it better to begin working on my thesis next week than not to do so; but I realize that my long-standing fear of writing is so strong and so deeply entrenched that I will not start writing unless I first do something about my fear. As I recognize, the motivational power of my fear—a fear that I possess *now*—is such that I will intentionally not begin writing next week, unless I start taking ameliorative measures soon, I embark upon a program of desensitization now, hoping to attenuate my fear so that I can write next week.
>
> *Scenario 3*. Right now I decisively judge it better to work on my thesis now than not to do so. I am currently working on my thesis, and decisively judge it best that I continue doing so. But in similar circumstances in the past, I have become frozen with fear, and stopped writing. Recalling my 5-grade teacher's advice I pretend I am writing in a journal (while continuing to write).
>
> *Scenario 4*. Right now I decisively judge it better to work on my thesis now than not to do so. But right now I am more motivated not to work on my thesis than to work on my thesis; nevertheless I exercise self-control in support of my working on my thesis now.

Mele argues that the motivational perspective on the explanation of intentional action can accommodate an agent exercising self-control in all of these scenarios. An exercise of self-control in *Scenario 1* is theoretically unproblematic. Exercising self-control in this scenario is, after all, in line with my motivational structure at the time. D 109 does not rule out the possibility

of exercising self-control in this scenario. Exercising self-control in *Scenario 2* is also fairly unproblematic. Although my present fear of writing in the scenario is such that, unless diminished, I will not write next week, I may nevertheless be more motivated, presently, to take steps to ameliorate my fear than not to. And I may act, presently, as I am more motivated to act. D 109 does rule out exercising self-control in this scenario; it reminds us that exercising self-control in this scenario presupposes a drive that is complaining about my fear of writing, but ~~that will not worry us yet~~more on this point in a moment. In *Scenario 3*, my exercise of self-control is again in line with my current motivational structure, so it should not be theoretically problematic and neither will D 109 rule it out.

Scenario 4, however, is problematic. Mele argues that an exercise of self-control in this scenario is theoretically conceivable. His view has its detractors, but outlining his thought experiment and argument would take us very far afield. Also D109 seems explicitly to rule out the possibility that I may enact self-control in *Scenario 4*; indeed, I may not even become aware of the possibility that I may enact self-control unless my motivational condition shifted. Recall that Nietzsche says, "For us to become aware that we are suffering from the *vehemence* of a drive presupposes the existence of another equally vehement or even more vehement drive" (D 109). We need not rescue *Scenario 4* from D109, however. Even without the possibility of self-control in *Scenario 4*, Nietzsche's motivational perspective on the explanation of intentional action allows us to exercise self-control in a wide variety of scenarios.[13]

Having shown that self-control is still available on a motivational perspective, I now want to argue against Nietzsche's suggestion that if it is a fact that our motivational structure is out of

[13] One would only demand the self-control represented by Scenario 4 if one were interested in the "ultimate" sense of responsibility Nietzsche distinguishes from other, more ordinary types.

our hands then our actions are not up to us. Mele argues against this claim, which he restates this way:

> Critics may claim that, on the view developed here, even though agents may exert considerable control over their desires, whether they exercise self-control still depends, implausibly, on how strongly motivated they are to exercise it. It may be claimed that this dependence on motivational strength would preclude agents' having the control over their behavior that many agents in fact possess.

To counter the worry presented here, Mele invites these critics to consider a counterpart to the principle that one acts on whatever motivation is strongest. The principle reads:

> If, at *t*, an agent takes himself to be able to *A* then and firmly believes (without qualification) that it would be better to *A* then than to do anything else then that he takes himself to be able to do then, he intentionally *A*-s then, or at least tries to *A* then, provided that he acts intentionally at *t*. (Mele 1985: 56)

He then asks, "Would [this principle's] truth place *evaluative beliefs* of the sort at issue rather than *agents*, in the driver's seat?" (Mele 1985: 56) He believes, I think rightly, that critics would respond to this principle by claiming that agents acting on desires are in the driver's seat. So too, he argues, we should think about agents acting on the basis of their motivations. Just as evaluative beliefs should not force agents out of the driver's seat, neither should desires or drives. He sums up his position nicely, saying:

> If, at a fundamental level in the etiology of action, what agents do is determined by brute psychological forces, then it would seem that, at bottom, agents lack a major say in what they do. But desires suitably informed by firm evaluative beliefs are no more brutish or unreasonable than those beliefs are—and no more destructive of full-blown agency. (ibid.)

This gets us to the crux of the matter. Does Nietzsche allow for drives to be informed by our reflective consciousness? D 129 suggests that our reflective consciousness does inform our drives, even if not to the extent that we normally think it does.

In this section, titled "Alleged conflict of motives," Nietzsche analyzes what is happening when we think we are deciding whether to act on one of multiple motives. He says, "Before an

act there step into our reflective consciousness one after another of the *consequences* of various acts all of which we believe we can perform, and we compare these consequences. We believe we have resolved upon an act when we have decided that its consequences will be more favorable than those of any other" (D 129). Nietzsche goes on to explain that accurately representing and weighing the consequences of most actions is fraught with difficulties, but supposing that we can do that, "we would then in fact possess in our *picture of the consequences* of a certain action a *motive* for performing this action—yes! *one* motive!" (ibid.) Nietzsche goes on to explain how, even with this motive in hand, our resulting action is much more likely to be determined by trivial situational factors working in concert with unconscious drives. He sums up this process by saying, "I have calculated the consequences and the outcomes and in so doing have set *one* very essential motive in the battle-line—but I have not set up this battle-line itself, nor can I even see it: the struggle itself is hidden from me, and likewise the victory as victory; for, though I certainly learn what I finally *do*, I do not learn which motive has therewith actually proved victorious" (ibid.). In this passage Nietzsche debunks the ideas that our reflective consciousness decides between motives when evaluating alternative courses of action, that the motive set by our reflective consciousness is always effective, and that we could ever know whether it was the motive set by our reflective consciousness which was the motive that caused the resulting action. But while Nietzsche is quick to point out and magnify the difficulties that an agent faces in following his better or best judgment, in this passage, at least, he allows for one's reflective judgment to set a goal for action, through evaluating the consequences of alternative actions.

So, according to our reading of D 129, our drives are informed by our reflective judgment. Mele argues that this is enough for agency. According to our reading of D 109,

Nietzsche believes that the etiology of action he presents displaces our agency. We have seen that Nietzsche changes his mind about whether or not determinism rules out agency. There is also textual support for the view that Nietzsche changed his mind about whether the etiology of action that he presents rules out agency. This textual evidence also comes from BGE 21:

> It is almost always a symptom of what is lacking in himself when a thinker senses in every 'causal connection' and 'psychological necessity' something of constraint, need, compulsion to obey, pressure, and unfreedom; it is suspicious to have such feelings—that person betrays himself. (BGE 21)

In BGE 21, Nietzsche argues that neither "causal connection" nor "psychological necessity" should be thought of as implying unfreedom. D 109 presents a picture of action according to which one's exercise of self-control is determined by the relative strengths of one's drives. By the time he wrote BGE, Nietzsche seems to have changed his mind about whether or not this fact implies unfreedom. According to BGE 21 psychological necessity does not rule out agency. As Mele's argument shows, this is a good thing.

I have shown that even with the motivational perspective on the explanation of intentional action that Nietzsche seems to present in D 109, we can still accommodate a robust conception of self-control. Furthermore, I have argued that this motivational perspective need not displace the agent's agency. This is a view to which Nietzsche seems to have subscribed in D, but about which he may have changed his mind by the time he wrote BGE and GM.

V. CONCLUSION

I have concluded that (1) if Nietzsche is to be read as an epiphenomenalist about conscious willing, then he is most charitably read as holding that conscious willing is a secondary cause, that (2) Nietzsche wavered on his commitment to incompatibilism, and that (3) he was not sarcastic or unacceptably revisionary when ascribing free will and responsibility to

certain historical figures or types. These conclusions, together, make room for Nietzsche to have a positive conception of free will and responsibility. I have not completely filled out Nietzsche's conceptions of free will or responsibility, but I have established one necessary condition for Nietzschean free will—self-mastery—and shown how his conception of free will can be seen as continuous with the compatibilist tradition.

It should be noted that though I have argued against Leiter's conclusions regarding Nietzsche's position on free will, Leiter's reconstruction of Nietzsche's argument against "morality in the pejorative sense" (MPS) still retains its force. Leiter claims that Nietzsche held that any morality was objectionable "only if it (1) presupposes three *particular* descriptive claims about the nature of human agents pertaining to free will, the transparency of the self, and the essential similarity of all people ('the Descriptive Component); and/or (2) embraces norms that harm the 'highest men' while benefiting the 'lowest' ('the Normative Component')" (Leiter 2002: 78). I have argued against one premise of Leiter's reconstruction of Nietzsche's argument against MPS. I have argued that Nietzsche should not be read as arguing against the claim that "human agents possess a will capable of free and autonomous choice" (Leiter 2002: 80) Leiter can admit this point and still have a Nietzschean argument against MPS based on Nietzsche's objections to the remaining two descriptive claims and his objection to the normative claim.

Many important questions remain unanswered. It remains an important question, for instance, whether Nietzsche has a full conception of free will and autonomous action to offer. Further work could also be done towards fixing the conception of responsibility that Nietzsche might affirm. I hope to have made some headway in clearing away the objections that might threaten these projects. Regardless of the results of the remaining debates, Nietzsche will remain valuable for those interested in the contemporary free will debate since he has unique arguments

to offer incompatibilists, psychological insights about the limitations of our conscious willing which are only now being confirmed by contemporary empirical science and debated by philosophers, and a rich and nuanced conception of self-control from which compatibilists can learn.

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I have followed the following abbreviations when referring to Nietzsche's texts:

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D	*Daybreak*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge University Press, 1982)
GM	*On the Genealogy of Morals*, trans. W. Kaufmann (Modern Library, 1968)
GS	*The Gay Science*, trans. W. Kaufmann (Vintage, 1974)
HH	*Human, All Too Human*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge University Press, 1986)
TI	*Twilight of the Idols*, trans. J. Norman (Cambridge University Press, 2005)
WP	*The Will to Power*, trans. W. Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale (Vintage, 1986)

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