NIETZSCHE ON MIND & NATURE

EDITED BY MANUEL DRIES & P. J. E. KAIL

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Nietzsche on Mind and Nature

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and P. J. E. Kail

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Notes on Texts, Abbreviations, and Translations

German texts of Nietzsche referred to are:

KGW	*Nietzsche Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, ed. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari, 30 vols (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1967–)
KSA	*Kritische Studien-Ausgabe*, ed. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari, 15 vols (Munich, Berlin: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag and Walter de Gruyter, 1988)

The following abbreviations are used in this volume for the titles of writings by Nietzsche:

A	*The Antichrist*
BGE	*Beyond Good and Evil*
BT	*The Birth of Tragedy*
CW	*The Case of Wagner*
D	*Daybreak*
EH	*Ecce Homo*
GM	*On the Genealogy of Morality*
GS	*The Gay Science*
HH	*Human, All Too Human*
NCW	*Nietzsche Contra Wagner*
PTAG	'Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks'
TI	*Twilight of the Idols*
TL	'On Truth and Lies in a Non-Moral Sense'
UM	*Untimely Meditations*
Z	*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*

Contributors cite Nietzsche using these standard acronyms for his works, followed by a Roman numeral for a part or chapter (if any), with separately numbered sections, e.g. GM I 1, or BGE 19, or EH III Z.1.

For Nietzsche's *Nachlass* (NL), if a note is included in *The Will to Power* (a selection not made by Nietzsche but by later editors, English translation by W. Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale, New York: Random House, 1968), the contributors often cite it by WP followed by its number, by WEN (Nietzsche, *Writings from the Early Notebooks*, ed. R. Geuss and A. Nehamas, trans. L. Löb, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009) followed by page numbers, or by WLN (Nietzsche, *Writings from the Late Notebooks*, ed. R. Bittner, trans. K. Sturge, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) followed by page numbers. For all notes from NL they further provide the year, KSA volume number, followed by notebook number, and in square brackets the note number, e.g. WP 626; NL 1883–4, KSA 10, 24[10].

Translations of Nietzsche's works and notes are either by the contributors, who consulted and amended existing translations, or are noted separately in each essay.

1

Introduction

Manuel Dries and P. J. E. Kail

The chapters in the present volume discuss important aspects of Nietzsche's philosophy in connection with two major themes, namely mind and nature. Among the various aspects addressed are the following. What is Nietzsche's conception of mind? How does mind relate with the (rest of) nature? And what is his conception of nature, anyway? The contributions to this volume all express the thought that Nietzsche's views on these matters are of great philosophical value, either because those views are consonant with contemporary thinking to a greater or less extent or because they represent a rich alternative to contemporary attitudes.

Galen Strawson's chapter 'Nietzsche's Metaphysics?' (this volume) expresses the second of these alternatives and is focused on Nietzsche's conception of nature, construed in terms of Nietzsche's metaphysics. Strawson translates Nietzsche's positions into the language of modern-day metaphysics and mounts a careful explanation and defence of Nietzsche's views as he sees them. Eleven claims, he argues, make up the core of Nietzsche's metaphysics. Ten of these are 'negations'. Nietzsche abolishes [1] the idea of a persisting unitary self, [2–4] any real distinctions between objects and properties and objects and processes, [5] the divisibility of reality into causes and effects, [6] the distinctness of the laws of nature and their objects, [7] free will, [8] indeterminism, [9] dualism, and [10] any strict division between the mental and the physical. Evidently many of these 'negations' have analogues in contemporary Anglophone philosophy, but what makes Nietzsche's views different is the positive thesis that underwrites them. This is [11] Nietzsche's notorious claim that everything is 'will to power'. This doctrine informs the other ten since it is this that underwrites what Strawson calls an 'identity metaphysics'. While he acknowledges that Nietzsche 'lays great stress on differences of force or power (or rank)', Strawson places him in a long line of metaphysicians who find unity, continuity, and identity, '[w]here ordinary thought and vast tracts of metaphysics find distinctness, discreteness, (numerical) difference'. Strawson attributes to Nietzsche the idea of a 'reality-continuum', a 'becoming-reality' that cannot be divided metaphysically. Nietzsche's metaphysics is opposed to what Strawson sees as the staticism and

separatism dominant in natural language, which encapsulate the claims Nietzsche negates and which become erroneously reflected in certain metaphysical pictures. Such claims are better understood as claims about 'language, not metaphysics, I answer, with Nietzsche'. The fundamental metaphysic of the will to power embodies in Strawson the insight that the distinction between basal and power properties is only conceptual, he argues, and if basal and power properties are metaphysically identical, then 'all being is power being'. The 'only way to exist without being potent, without being disposed to have an effect on other existing things, is not to exist'.

The idea that all is 'will to power' can suggest a certain form of panpsychism. Very roughly put, panpsychism holds that mind is fundamental to all of nature. Strawson himself is an advocate of a particular for panpsychism, but his contribution does not touch upon the issue. Günter Abel's chapter, 'Consciousness, Language, and Nature' (this volume) expresses a view he has been developing for decades he calls 'interpretationism' that links insights from Nietzsche with results and methods from the analytical tradition. It also hints at panpsychism. Abel, drawing on Nagel, Kripke, Putnam, and Wittgenstein, shares Strawson's anti-staticist and anti-separatist inclinations. He sees Nietzsche's 'non-dualistic viewpoint' as a first step towards a better theory. Rather than establishing separate realms that are not easily reconciled, the non-dualist standpoint starts from the assumption of a continuous spectrum that comprises inorganic, organic, as well as higher-level intelligent and mental activities. For Abel, consciousness is seen as emerging out of already existing '"intelligent" activities (in the broadest sense of the term)'. He nowhere mentions panpsychism, but seems to circumvent the idea of a 'brute emergence' of consciousness. Abel finds in Nietzsche a particular version of naturalism that would be distinct from both 'transcendent metaphysics as well as biologistic and merely scientific naturalism'. A second important aspect for Abel is the move towards a metaphysic of events and processes. With reference to Davidson and Reichenbach, Abel argues that such a continuum would have to be conceived of 'highly complex, dynamic, reciprocal effects of numerous "living" and "intelligent" organizations of force'. Viewed as such, the conscious self or ego could no longer be understood as anything fixed or stable. Also, large parts of life depend rather on subjectless processes. In the same way as grammatical subjects of process sentences such as 'it rains' express nothing over and above the process itself, consciousness and the ego appear simultaneously. A further ingredient is what Abel sees as Nietzsche's functionalism. Higher-level processes (such as consciousness or self-consciousness) are no longer viewed as occurring in one specific place. As for example in Dennett's 'multiple drafts' model, they emerge from 'complex interactions of the system's components that guarantee the organization's functionality'. That which enters consciousness (very little does) depends on, and is structured by, a wealth of non-conscious, non-exogenously caused, processes that make up large parts of the endogenous functionality and regularity of the entire embodied and situated system. All of this raises the

question for Abel, as it did for Nietzsche, why consciousness evolved in the first place? Abel addresses this question in his final thesis on the function of signs and language. He agrees with the central tenet of Nietzsche that consciousness is 'really just a net connecting one person with another'. Consciousness developed for purposes of socialization, and, far from being private, functions by means of a public system of signs. Consciousness and language emerge from non-linguistic signs (such as gestures, glances, and touch), and being fundamentally social, historical, and cultural, are not reducible to organic and neurobiological processes. Abel expects promising results for a philosophy of mind that explores the semiotic-interpretive and embodied character of the phenomena of consciousness.

The topic of panpsychism is raised explicitly in Paul Loeb's contribution. In 'Will to Power and Panpsychism' (this volume), Loeb offers a new reading of BGE 36,[1] one of BGE's most contentious aphorisms. Loeb's main question is whether Nietzsche's theory of cosmological will to power, as advanced in BGE 36, commits him to panpsychism. His interest lies in the argument that Nietzsche puts forward in this aphorism and he takes issue with recent interpretations by Clark, Stack, Hill, Richardson, Young, and Poellner. Loeb shows that there are four different kinds of claims at issue in Nietzsche's argument: drive psychology, drive physics, power psychology, and power physics. What strikes Loeb as problematic is that the argument's inclusion of drive physics, 'explicitly injects panpsychism into Nietzsche's theory of cosmological will to power'. In Clark's view, Nietzsche's guarded language shows that he does not endorse the conclusion or the premises in BGE 36. He merely wants to show how philosophers cannot help but project their own values into the world. Nietzsche, who values power, finds power everywhere.

But Loeb points out that Clark's interpretation fails to account for the move that occupies Loeb most, namely from drive psychology to drive physics. Since this move has nothing to do with Nietzsche's valuation of power, Clark fails to explain why Nietzsche structures the argument the way he does. By contrast, Loeb argues, Poellner ignores Nietzsche's guarded language and takes his panpsychist assumption at face value. But according to Loeb Nietzsche could not possibly have accepted panpsychism because his naturalistic approach, as applied in the passages preceding BGE 36, 'commits him to rejecting panpsychism as an anthropomorphic falsification of nature and reality'. Loeb thinks that Nietzsche intended something

[1] We cite Nietzsche using the standard acronyms for his works, followed by a Roman numeral for a part or chapter (if any), with separately numbered sections. For Nietzsche's *Nachlass* (NL), we provide the year, KSA volume number (Nietzsche 1988), followed by notebook number, and in brackets the note number, e.g. NL 1887, KSA 12, 9[91].

very different in BGE 36. The move from drive psychology to drive physics is a thought experiment that helps us to see nature in a non-deified way, as inconsiderately and relentlessly enforcing nothing but power claims. In BGE 36, Nietzsche invites us to imagine, counterfactually, what the world would look like if it were constituted of nothing but the power struggle that we observe among our own psychological drives. Thus, on Loeb's reading of BGE 36, Nietzsche does not endorse panpsychism and does not contradict his own post-theological naturalism. Rather, he uses panpsychism merely as a 'heuristic device' ' that grants us a purely explanatory and analogical perspective on the radically de-anthropomorphic features of cosmological will to power'.

One obvious theme that emerges from what has been so far discussed is the rejection of forms of dualism. John Richardson's contribution, 'Nietzsche's Value Monism: Saying Yes to Everything' (this volume), attempts to show just how radical this rejection is. For him, the radicalism lies in a value monism, but not the familiar view that there is one kind of value (e.g. pleasure or happiness). It is the claim that everything has the *same* value. This may not seem a coherent position, but Richardson sees it embodied in the combination of some of Nietzsche's most famous claims, his injunction to affirm everything, in *amor fati*, the eternal return and the Dionysian. Richardson discusses some obvious objections to this radical view and then turns to Nietzsche's famous attack on the faith in opposite values. Richardson distinguishes a number of senses of this opposition and its relation to value monism. The most radical version holds that what is regarded as bad is really a kind or degree of the good. The drives that constitute 'life' are valuations and valuations of those valuing drives. Even forms of negation are themselves expressive of the will to power. Again questions of coherence emerge, and Richardson discusses how on this picture Nietzsche can 'say Yes' to everything, not merely construed as the whole but every part, and at the same time 'say No'. One answer is to relativize to perspectives, so viewed from the God's eye view all is good, and the bad is a perspectival notion. Alternatively, 'life' is essentially will to power and it is this that grounds Nietzsche's yeses and nos. All such willing is good. But Richardson sees a final problem in Nietzsche's attempt to overcome dualisms in his view that some willings can be 'against' life, his notorious doctrine of 'life against life'. Richardson is far from confident that this problem for his monism can be solved or evaded.

When talking of mind and nature a question arises about what it would be to 'naturalize' the mind. That is something already treated in Abel's chapter, and it is a prominent theme in Rex Welshon's 'Nietzsche, Consciousness, and Dynamic Cognitive Neuroscience' (this volume). Welshon sees in Nietzsche's later work some considerable anticipations of contemporary consciousness neuroscience. These comprise (a) that Nietzsche's view of conscious activity is a form of reductive monism, (b) that his views cohere with contemporary views that fly under the banner

of embodied embedded cognitive neuroscience, and (c) is dynamic rather than computational. All of this is underwritten by Nietzsche's appeal to drives, as the fundamental explanatory category, which, Welshon argues, is consistent with contemporary views. With respect to monism, Nietzsche's view is not physicalism because Welshon sees physicalism as too firmly tied to mechanism that Nietzsche rejects. Instead there the 'mental' and the 'bodily' fall under a dynamic physiology, which is understood in terms of quanta of force. Though Nietzsche does not apply this view explicitly to neurophysiology or consciousness in general, Welshon argues that its application in Nietzsche is not unwarranted. He begins by sketching the contemporary landscape, contrasting computational models of cognition from dynamicist models. The former view mental processes as involving computing symbol types according to an algorithm. The brain is a physical system that implements a symbol system, which is divided into distinct modules running linear processes. Dynamicist models do not see consciousness and cognition as a matter of the linear computation of symbols or as involving discrete modules. Its operation is not a matter of inputs triggering linear causal processes but a set of related non-linear processes, non-linear because causal processes are conditioned by feedback from other such processes. The particular version that interests Welshon does not restrict cognitive processes to what occurs inside the skull. Cognitive processes do not simply interact with bodily processes but instead bodily processes enter into their constitution. He goes on to detail this view further before returning to Nietzsche. After noting that Nietzsche is sceptical of higher-order forms of consciousness, Welshon nevertheless identifies a more basic form of consciousness running throughout Nietzsche's later writings. This is a form of awareness involved in sensory and perceptual processes that does not involve high-order states of awareness. Welshon then pieces together some of Nietzsche's pronouncements to show how good a fit they are with contemporary embodied dynamicist views. One thing Welshon draws attention to is the fact that Nietzsche recognizes that the project of naturalizing humanity can have unsettling implications for our self-conception. One of the places where this cuts most deeply is our view of ourselves as free agents.

In 'Freedom, Resistance, Agency', Manuel Dries (this volume) revisits Nietzsche's position on freedom by linking it to Nietzsche's drive psychology. According to Dries' main thesis, Nietzsche's contribution lies not so much in his well-known rejection of metaphysical free will but rather in his drive-psychological explanation for the belief in freedom. Nietzsche links the idea of freedom to first person, experiential mental states that he sees as by-products of 'resistance scenarios'. Feelings of freedom (and of unfreedom) arise when an agent experiences and interprets affects that track/register 'successful and unsuccessful resistances'. Metaphysical freedom is merely an abstract notion, effect rather than cause of activity. As Dries shows, Nietzsche first outlines and revises this analysis in his notebooks, e.g. in notebook N VII 1 (NL 1885, KSA 11, 34[250]), and later develops it further in such

works as TI, BGE, and GM, in particular in 'My conception of freedom' (TI IX 38). Dries then emphasizes the underappreciated link between Nietzsche's analysis of freedom and his later philosophy of power. In GM II 17, for example, Nietzsche diagnoses a drive or 'instinct for freedom' that has been made latent by the ascetic ideal, only to reveal in GM II 18 that his own formula of a 'will to power' refers to nothing other than 'this instinct of freedom'. Dries suspects that it is the experiential phenomenon of freedom and not simply 'power' that constitutes the meta-value driving Nietzsche's later thought. Dries then turns to questions of agency. Drawing on recent scholarship—among others by Clark, Dudrick, Gardner, Gemes, Janaway, Katsafanas, Leiter, Reginster, Richardson, and Welshon—Dries starts out from the assumption that the self for Nietzsche is composed of competing and cooperating drives. This drive self, because it is a resistance scenario *in nuce*, composes itself and emerges from first-personal affective experiences that track, express, and feedback experiences, forming and informing the drive self of its internal and external (resistance) relationships. Dries sees what he calls two resistance axioms at work in Nietzsche's design: (1) feeling of freedom, or *self-efficacy*, is directly proportional to resistance; and (2) *value* is directly proportional to effort. Based on the above, the final part of the chapter examines a Nietzschean hypothesis of a sophisticated, non-reductive motivational theory: due to an embodied, standing *sense* of self-efficacy, and a *drive for* self-efficacy (what Nietzsche, rather obscurely, called 'will to power') agents generate, in unconscious and conscious mental simulations, the affective states that motivate action. While Nietzsche assumes that this motivational mechanism usually operates largely unreflectively in both agents that he criticizes, e.g. the ascetic, and agents that he esteems, e.g. the 'higher types', it is argued that reflective judgements and conscious reasons may also motivate via this embodied sense of self-efficacy.

The notion of a drive is of course central to Nietzsche's naturalized psychology. This notion is discussed in Paul Katsafanas's 'Value, Affect, and Drive' (this volume). Here Katsafanas discusses the relation between drives and values. Matters are far from straightforward since Nietzsche appears to hold that (a) pre-reflective drives are associated with values and (b) one's reflective values are explained by drives. However, one's reflective values are often in *conflict* with one's drives. So what then is the relation between them? Katsafanas begins his discussion by examining the notion of drive. According to Katsafanas, drives have four features. They are dispositions that generate affective orientations, structuring perception, saliencies, and sometimes the course of the agent's reflective thought. They admit of an aim/object distinction, where the aim is that of an ongoing activity (say aggressive activity) and particular objects of that aim (e.g. playing a violent video game). Third, drives *express* this aim. Fourth, drives are constant, not ceasing when some object is attained. Katsafanas then discusses the views of John Richardson, Maudemarie Clark and David Dudrick, and Peter Poellner to arrive at his own refined position about the relation between drives and values. This is captured by saying 'an agent values X iff (i) the agent has a

drive-induced affective orientation toward X and (ii) the agent does not disapprove of this affective orientation'. This captures the idea that one values more than mere objects, does not make values necessarily based on reasons, and allows for us to distinguish between merely having a disposition towards something and valuing it. He then turns to examine how drives explain values by examining Schopenhauer's account of how the will to reproduce produces a delusion, which Nietzsche terms variously a 'staining' or 'colouring', before considering some objections to this account.

Nietzsche famously claims to be the 'first psychologist' and one way in which this claim is manifested is in his psychological approach to morality. Peter Poellner examines Nietzsche's psychology of *ressentiment* and its role in the critical project of the *Genealogy*. Nietzsche argues that what we take to be the problematic morality of the 'slaves' emerges because of the operation of *ressentiment*. But just because it emerges in that psychology does not by itself constitute an objection to it (otherwise Nietzsche would be guilty of the genetic fallacy). There are a number of possible responses to this charge. Poellner's '*Ressentiment* and the Possibility of Intentional Self-Deception' (this volume) examines two of them. The first of these is to see *ressentiment* not merely as causally operative but partly constitutive of the problematic morality. A second is to view the role of *ressentiment* as a very frequent attendant of the problematic morality. Poellner begins by probing the concept of *ressentiment*. At its core it is a psychological condition that involves pain or discomfort at frustration caused by something other than one's self. This motivates a desire for mastery, which *expresses* itself in a new evaluative orientation. Poellner amplifies this notion of expression, partly by criticizing R. Jay Wallace's (2007) recent interpretation and then offering his own. He understands the evaluations as involving what he calls 'object-mastery', which involves not merely the contents of the new valuation but their special relation of mastery of those against whom they were originally formed. *Ressentiment* therefore figures in a way that involves an intentional but unconscious diminution of the 'masters'. Poellner then lays out some conditions that Nietzsche's account must meet if it is to be successful, before turning to make precise the sense in which the relevant moralizers are *self-deceived*. With respect to the critical edge to Nietzsche's *Genealogy*, Poellner's account makes *ressentiment* operative not merely causally but in conceptual contents that relate to different patterns of motivation. But what is objectionable in this? Poellner argues that *ressentiment* is an intrinsically undesirable state and that morality both expresses and masks.

The project that Nietzsche engages discussed in Poellner's chapter can be said to be a naturalistic one but one that is relatively innocent of any substantive commitments about nature *per se*. Many of the chapters in this volume read Nietzsche taking a stance on the nature of 'nature', but Nietzsche's published writings steer clear of articulating a substantive conception of the metaphysics of nature. But if they do so steer clear, can we read Nietzsche as expressing any kind of naturalistic attitude in his writings? The question of the nature of Nietzsche's naturalism is taken up in

P. J. E. Kail's chapter, 'Nietzsche and Naturalism' (this volume). Kail's chapter discusses the sense in which it is correct to call Nietzsche a naturalist without seeing Nietzsche engaged in a metaphysical project of articulating the nature of nature. One key aspect of Nietzsche's naturalism shows up in Nietzsche's explanatory aspirations. Nietzsche thinks that we can understand human beings as intelligibly continuous with animal nature. This yields a relatively untendentious conception of the 'natural' in naturalism, one similar to another great naturalist, namely David Hume. Kail then turns to consider some recent challenges to understanding Nietzsche as a naturalist. One such challenge, from Richard Schacht (2012a, 2012b), is directed to Brian Leiter's interpretation of Nietzsche's naturalism. Schacht claims that the centrality of causation to Leiter's characterization of naturalism is at odds both with Nietzsche's own attitude to causation and the 'developmental character' of Nietzsche's naturalism. A second challenge, laid down in recent work by Maudemarie Clark and David Dudrick (2007, 2012), holds that Nietzsche believes that the normativity that is both crucial and distinctive of humanity and philosophy is beyond the reach of naturalism. Kail argues that Schacht's objections mistake causation for a particular reductive conception of causation (mechanism) and, like Welshon, sees drives as fundamentally explanatory and causal to boot. Shorn of conflation of the causal with the mechanical Nietzsche's naturalism can be understood as causal in character, and that there is nothing in the developmental character of Nietzsche's naturalism that precludes appeal to causation. This point carries over to Clark and Dudrick's resistance to a fully naturalized reading of Nietzsche, where Kail points to evidence to suggest that Nietzsche must be committed to the idea that the normative must be ultimately intelligible in terms of the natural, even if it cannot be reduced to it.

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2

Nietzsche's Metaphysics?

Galen Strawson

1 Eleven Claims[1]

[1] There's no persisting and unitary self.

[2] There's no fundamental (real) distinction between objects on the one hand and their propertiedness on the other.

[3] There's no fundamental (real) distinction between the basic or basal properties of things and the power properties of things.

[4] There's no fundamental (real) distinction between objects or substances on the one hand and processes and events on the other.

[5] Reality isn't truly divisible into causes and effects.

[6] Objects aren't governed by laws of nature ontologically distinct from them.

These claims are central to Nietzsche's metaphysics. He also holds that

[7] there's no free will

as ordinarily understood, although I won't say much about this, and that

[8] nothing can ever happen otherwise than it does

—a position which is often called 'determinism', although the name is not apt in Nietzsche's case. Finally (for now) he inclines towards the ancient—but also very modern—view that there is a fundamental (non-trivial) sense in which

[9] reality is one

[1] When I cite an author I give the date of first publication or first composition. Translations of quoted passages may differ from cited translations. Citations of Nietzsche use the standard acronyms for his published works followed by a Roman numeral for a part or chapter (if any), and a section number (if any). References to Nietzsche's *Nachlass* (NL) give the year and KSA volume number (Nietzsche 1988) followed by the notebook number, and, in brackets, the note number. Passages included in *The Will to Power* are identified by WP followed by section number; passages included in *Writings from the Late Notebooks* (Nietzsche [1885–8] 2003) are identified by WLN followed by the page number.

and towards what is arguably the most plausible—although difficult—view of the nature of reality, i.e. the hard-nosed stuff-monist[2] view that

[10] reality is suffused with—if it does not consist of—mentality in some form or sense.

One reason for attributing [10] to him is his recurrent attraction to the idea that

[11] everything is 'will to power',

for it seems that to endorse [11] is already to endorse [10] in some form; to say that everything is in *some* respect mental; to deny that everything is a matter of power or force conceived of in some wholly non-mental way.[3]

Here, I propose, we have the core of Nietzsche's metaphysics. I'm only going to consider concrete reality. I'm going to put aside [11], which is controversial,[4] except to note that it entails [3], whether or not it entails [10], given that will to power is itself a power or force. For if power is the fundamental nature of reality, reality can't have some other nature distinct from power that is the ground of its power.[5]

Of [1]–[10], I think the first seven negative claims are certainly true, and that the final three positive claims are very probably true.[6] Nietzsche is known as a 'perspectivist' who is sceptical of the notion of truth, a word which he likes to put in inverted commas, sceptical, indeed, of the whole project of metaphysics, and he has a rich variety of purposes (protreptic and other) in expressing himself in this way. At the same time it's not seriously in doubt that he is in his mature thought prepared to assert all of [1]–[8], at least. He doesn't think his views on these matters are only ever 'true' in inverted commas, or true only from the perspective of some drive or

[2] According to stuff monism there is only one kind of stuff (e.g. material stuff), although there may be many things. According to thing monism there is strictly speaking only one thing. Spinoza is an exemplary thing monist.

[3] In 1883–4 Nietzsche notes, correctly, that the view that 'substance is experienceless is only a hypothesis! Not based on experience!' (WP 626; NL 1883–4, KSA 10, 24[10]). 'Thus feeling is a property of substance,' he energetically continues; 'there are feeling substances.' In 1885 he notes famously that '*this world is the will to power—and nothing else besides*' (WLN: 39; NL 1885, KSA 11, 38[12]). In 1886 he recommends a monist line of argument that would allow one to 'define all efficient force as: will to power' (BGE 36). In 1887 he favours the view that 'in all events a will to power is operating' over standard mechanistic views of nature (GM II 12). Much earlier, he proposes that 'the push, the impact of one atom upon another presupposes feeling. It's not the arising of feeling in the world, but that of consciousness, that is difficult' (NL 1872–3, KSA 7, 19[159]).

For an argument that evolution by natural selection can give rise to will to power that is not in any sense mental (at least in the biological case), see Richardson (2004, 2008).

[4] See e.g. Pippin (2010: 5), citing Clark (1983). Leiter (2002: 142) points out that Nietzsche doesn't mention the will to power doctrine when he surveys his own work in *Ecce Homo*. There are also times when Nietzsche has reason to resist the idea inasmuch as it is Schopenhauerian.

[5] The claim [11] also entails [6], in effect, and this pulls in [4]; the interconnections are thick.

[6] It's a mistake to think that current physics supports indeterminism over determinism in any way (it's a further point that it's provable that neither determinism nor indeterminism can be proved true or false).

some cluster of drives,[7] not really about what he calls 'the *true being* of things . . . the in-themselves of things' (WLN: 42; NL 1885, KSA 11, 40[9]).

I'm happy to leave the detailed defence of this last claim to others.[8] I'm also going to put aside [1], [7], and [8] and focus on [2]–[6]. The claim that Nietzsche endorses [1], the view that there is no persisting unitary self, needs no further argument, and his endorsement of [1] is deeply bound up with his endorsement of [2]–[5]. Nor does the claim that he endorses [7], the denial of free will, need argument.

Claim [8] is also pretty tangled up with [3]–[6], and I'll make three points in passing. First, the reason why the name 'determinism' may be misleading in Nietzsche's case is that although he makes free use of the notions of power and force, he rightly purges the thesis that nothing can ever happen otherwise than it does of the notion of compulsion, and of the notion of necessity understood as some kind of compulsion, and of the idea of one particular thing bringing another particular thing about. He treats [8] rather—and deeply, in my view—as a kind of tautology, in a way that we can perhaps picture first by thinking of Leibniz's universe, in which every true statement about anything is an analytic truth, and then, perhaps, by thinking of the four-dimensionalist, 'block universe' of relativity theory.

The second point is that one doesn't, in attributing [8] to Nietzsche, have to suppose that he endorses the doctrine of eternal return (which incorporates the idea that nothing can happen otherwise than it does) as a statement of theoretical or metaphysical fact independently of endorsing its value or truth as a practical-ethical guide to conduct. The third point is that Nietzsche's endorsement of [7], i.e. the denial of free will, doesn't depend on his endorsement of [8]. As he famously makes clear, the denial of free will, in the sense in which he intends it, requires only the point that one can't be *causa sui*, the cause of oneself, a point which is provably true independently of any thesis of determinism.[9] It may be that the details of Nietzsche's commitment to [2], [3], and [6] amount to an endorsement of [8] independently of the doctrine of eternal return, but there is I think a coherent philosophical position that remains agnostic on [8] and still endorses all of [1]–[7].

What about [9], the view that (in some sense) all is one? I don't want to insist on this, although Nietzsche's constant criticisms of the tomistic or cutting tendencies—and matching atomistic tendencies—of human thought and language may be thought to tend strongly in this direction (the cutting or tomism delivers the a-toms—the supposed radical individuals—of the atomism). 'Thinking', he says, 'takes *apart* what is really one' (NL 1885, KSA 11, 40[38]). This is one of his most constant themes. It's less clear, however, that he is an all-out 'thing-monist' in line with Parmenides, Spinoza,

[7] They may certainly be true from the perspective of some drive, and indeed a drive to truth, for to say this is not to say that they are not true period.

[8] See in particular Richardson (1996). See also Section 2.

[9] See, classically, BGE 21. For more on the point that [7] is independent of [8], see e.g. Strawson (1994).

many Indian philosophers, and, now, many modern physicists and cosmologists, who hold that there is in the final analysis only one thing—spacetime (or whatever we actually manage to denote when we speak of 'spacetime') conceived of as itself an object, a concrete individual.[10]

Nietzsche's views have a fine ancestry—they are in a sense traditional—and they are, again, strongly in accord with much in present-day physics and cosmology. Their main elements are found in Heracleitus, in the Buddha, and in some of the work of the Buddha's near contemporary Plato (e.g. *Timaeus*, *Theaetetus*, and the *Sophist*).[11] In early modern times they connect strongly with elements of Spinoza's and Leibniz's philosophies, and, more recently, with Whitehead and the later Russell among others. Many more connections can be made, above all to Büchner and Lange, but I'm not concerned with questions of influence. There are fundamental points on which Nietzsche also agrees with that great and much misunderstood genius Descartes, and with Locke, Hume, Kant, and Schopenhauer. None of this is surprising. 'Metaphysics means nothing but an unusually obstinate effort to think clearly', as William James remarked (1890:1.145). There are always a few obstinate thinkers around—none more obstinate than Nietzsche—and they may be expected to show convergence in their views. My present aim is to give a brief exposition of part of what I take to be the right view—the best description—of the fundamental nature of reality, with special reference to Nietzsche. I'd be amazed—worried—if there were anything new in what I have to say about Nietzsche. My aim is simply to provide a certain view of reality with one distinguished reference point among others.[12] I'll use the late (1885–9) notebooks freely, even when there are equally good quotations from the work Nietzsche published himself. All one needs, in order to know that the notebooks are a legitimate or prime source of evidence for Nietzsche's views—especially when it comes to his theoretical or speculative-metaphysical views, as opposed to his 'practical' or ethical views—is a basic sense of smell. But one may also note his letter to Franz Overbeck in 1885: 'my philosophy' he says, 'is no longer communicable, at least not in print. . . . I often feel ashamed that I have said so much in public already, that should have never been put in front of an "audience", even in more worthy and deeper times'.[13]

[10] Nietzsche holds that 'all things are enchained, entwined, enamored' (Z IV 'The Sleepwaker Song' 10), even as he favours a view according to which reality—including space and time—is discrete, 'quantal', at the fundamental level (see Ulfers and Cohen (forthcoming)). Modern cosmology and physics suggest that a quantal view is compatible with a version of thing monism, and the 'relationalist' quotations from Nietzsche in Section 2 tend in the same direction.

[11] Heracleitus lived from about 535 to 475 BCE. Plato lived from about 428 to 348 BCE. The Buddha's dates are disputed, and some now think that he lived more recently than has previously been supposed—perhaps as late as 450 to 380 BCE.

[12] I think that Nietzsche lies equal first—alongside some very different peers—in any accurate ranking of German philosophers by merit.

[13] 2 July 1885. See Bittner (2003: x).

2 Reality As it Is in Itself

Perhaps the first thing to do, when it comes to the discussion of Nietzsche's metaphysics, is to note that Nietzsche isn't sceptical about the notion of reality as it is in itself. This is hardly surprising, because such scepticism is incoherent. It's incoherent because:

(1) to be is necessarily to be a certain way, at any given time, to be somehow-or-other;

and

(2) the way that a being is, at any given time, just is the way it is in itself.[14]

—'The point fails in Nietzsche's case, because he holds that being is becoming.'

No. Reality is a certain way, as it is in itself, *whatever* the nature of reality. If reality is becoming—I'm going to avoid this useful way of putting things for the most part, because its ancient roots are so tangled—then that is the way reality is in itself, and there is of course a certain way becoming (i.e. reality) is as it is in itself.

—'Nietzsche aside, our best models of the behaviour of things like photons credit them with incompatible properties, e.g. wave-like properties and particle-like properties; so there can't be a way reality is as it is in itself.'

What we learn from this is simply that this is how photons affect us, given how they are in themselves, and how we are in ourselves. We acquire no reason to think—incoherently—that photons are not somehow-or-other, at any given time. Whatever claim anyone makes about the nature of reality, including the claim that it has, to us, apparently incompatible properties, just is a claim about the way it is. This applies as much to the Everett 'many-worlds' theory of reality as to any other.[15]

—'Quantum theory shows directly that there is, objectively, no particular way that an electron or a photon is, at a given time.'

This objection confuses an epistemological point about undecidability with a metaphysical claim about the nature of things. It's not just that such a claim is unverifiable.

[14] Those who are sceptical about time can drop the words 'at any given time'.

[15] Even the claim that there is no way it is as it is in itself is a claim about the way it is as it is in itself, albeit a self-refuting one. Lange's (1865) extreme anti-realism led him astray somewhere in this area.

It's incoherent. Whatever the electron's or photon's weirdness (its weirdness-to-us: nothing is intrinsically weird), its being thus weird just is the way it is (in itself).

—'Nietzsche plainly says that "the properties of a thing are effects upon other 'things': if one eliminates other things, the thing has no properties, i.e. there is no thing without other things, i.e. there is no 'thing in itself' " (WP 557; NL 1885–6, KSA 12, 2[85]). He says that "the 'thing in itself' [is] absurd. If I remove all relations, all 'properties', all 'activities' of a thing, then the thing does not remain left" (WP 558; NL 1887, KSA 12, 10[202]).'

Neither of these remarks challenges the propriety of the notion of reality (reality as a whole) as it is in itself; both are directed against a certain conception of particulars. Their target is, first, the incoherent notion of the bare particular, second, the notion that any part of reality as a whole can be supposed to be a radically self-subsistent entity, something that satisfies the traditional notion of a substance (an individual substance) as something that can exist by itself without any dependence on other beings.

—'But Nietzsche writes that "there is no 'truth' ", and that "what can be thought of must surely be a fiction" (WP 616; NL 1886, KSA 12, 2[108]; WP 539; NL 1888, KSA 13, 14[148]).'

There's no tension between the view that there's a determinate matter of fact about how things are in themselves and scepticism about our ability to know what it is and our ability to convey it with full accuracy in a representational system (thought or language) whose representations may be said to be true or false. Nietzsche constantly stresses the point that ordinary human thought or language is profoundly inadequate, when it comes to the attempt to try to express the nature of reality. He holds that human thought and language are in part essentially constituted by falsifying structures, fictionalizations of—errors about—that reality. At the same time, he never thinks that there's any insuperable difficulty in using language that builds in such errors to express truths about those very errors—or indeed truths of other kinds. We have to weigh remarks which seem to express global scepticism about the possibility of expressing the truth about anything against the vast mass of the rest of his work, which is everywhere premised on the assumption that it is possible to express the truth about how things actually are or aren't (it consists almost entirely of truth claims of this sort). It's not as if it's hard to fit dubitative remarks like these into Nietzsche's work considered as a whole. It's easy. It's easy to understand their point in the context of his other views. It's no harder than understanding the intuitively natural Buddhist distinction between conventional truth and ultimate truth.

Once again, it seems to me that this interpretative matter has been sufficiently dealt with,[16] and that a great deal of time has been wasted. As Kant says:

> many historians of philosophy, with all their intended praise, . . . attribute mere nonsense . . . to past philosophers. They are incapable of recognizing, beyond what the philosophers actually said, what they really meant to say. (1790: 160)

> If we take single passages, torn from their context, and compare them with one another, contradictions are not likely to be lacking, especially in a work that is written with any freedom of expression . . . ; but they are easily resolved by those who have mastered the idea of the whole. (1781–7: B xliv)

Nietzsche believes, of course, that there is such a thing as reality, concrete reality, which just is the way it is (the way it is being something about which he has much to say). He believes this even as he insists on the superficiality—the ultimate falsity—of thinking in terms of things, objects, and substances, as ordinarily understood. He believes this even as he moves smoothly between stressing the respect in which the idea 'that things possess a *nature in themselves* quite apart from interpretation and subjectivity' is a '*perfectly idle hypothesis*' (WLN: 148; NL 1887, KSA 12, 9[40]),[17] and verbal licks which suggest that he thinks that the idea is definitely and categorically—although incoherently—false.

3 Object/Process/Property/State/Event

Turning now to detail, consider first thesis [4], according to which there's no fundamental (real) distinction between objects or substances on the one hand and processes and events on the other. Physics, it may be said, is silent on traditional metaphysical issues of this sort. There is however an intuitive metaphysics that evolves along with physics as it develops over time, and it has in the last century become increasingly hospitable to the idea that objects are equally well thought of as processes. Certainly we didn't need modern physics in order to grow into this idea, any more than the ancient Indian and Greek philosophers did, but we have learnt that matter is astonishingly ethereal—that substance is almost inconceivably insubstantial—relative to our everyday conception of it. Grainy individual particles were already being treated as 'insubstantial'—as mathematical points, hence theoretical posits—in the eighteenth century,[18] and they lost all real particulate punctuality long ago, inasmuch as they gave way to fields in post-1925 quantum physics (the phenomena of particles' entanglement and their 'infinite' 'tails' reinforce the point).

[16] See especially Richardson (1996: chapter 4).

[17] It's idle in the sense that you can't do anything at all with the fact that things are a certain way in themselves independently of any interpretation. Hume makes the point (*Treatise* 1.3.14.27; SBN 168).

[18] 'The mathematical physicists have no use for lump atoms in their science; consequently they construct for themselves a world of force-points that one can calculate with' (WLN: 45; NL 1885, KSA 11, 40[36]).