

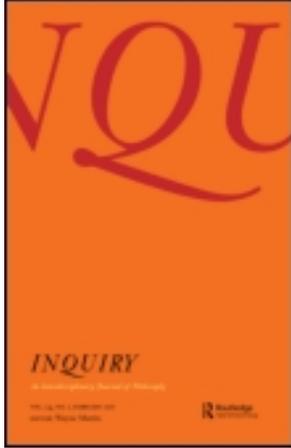
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Nietzsche's Fourfold Conception of the Self

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ABSTRACT *Struck by essentialist and anti-essentialist elements in his writings, Nietzsche's readers have wondered whether his conception of the self is incoherent or paradoxical. This paper demonstrates that his conception of the self, while complex, is not paradoxical or incoherent, but contains four distinct levels. Section I shows Schopenhauer as Educator to contain an early description of the four levels: (1) a person's deepest self, embracing all that cannot be educated or molded; (2) a person's ego; (3) a person's "ideal" or "higher self"; (4) a person's "true self" or "true nature". In the remaining three sections, I show that Nietzsche develops and enriches this conception, without ever abandoning it. Section II treats the fourfold conception as it appears in Human, All Too Human. Section III interrogates relevant passages in the Gay Science, showing that while Nietzsche speaks of artful self-fashioning (as Alexander Nehamas emphasizes), he also pays due regard to the sense in which we are not our own creations. Section IV turns to the "deepest" level of the self, consisting of motives and drives. Drawing primarily upon Daybreak and Beyond Good and Evil, I show that Nietzsche regards neither the drives nor their hierarchical ordering as things that we construct.*

In writings early and late, Nietzsche repeatedly quotes or alludes to Pindar's maxim "Become what you are." The degree of his investment in the maxim is suggested by his autobiography's subtitle, "How one becomes what one is." The maxim is apparently an exhortation to move from who you happen to be, at the present moment, toward a future, superior state of your being—what you really are, your "true nature" or "true self"—to quote two phrases used by Nietzsche himself in the third *Untimely Meditation, Schopenhauer as Educator*. Yet such an essentialist construal of the "true self" sits uneasily with other passages in which Nietzsche implies that "to become what one is . . . is not to reach a specific new state and to stop becoming—it is not to reach

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a state at all”, as Alexander Nehamas writes (1985, p. 191). Since both our conscious and unconscious selves “have a tendency toward continual change and development”, claims Nehamas, there is “no question of *discovering* what one’s true self is” (ibid. p. 251n6).

Perceptive readers of Nietzsche are struck by both essentialist and anti-essentialist elements in his texts. Making this point, Daniel Breazeale adds that in certain places—he gives the examples of Zarathustra’s speeches on “self-overcoming” and “remaining true to the earth”—readers will see that “essentialist and anti-essentialist speeches seem to jostle against each other on practically every page” (1998, p. 15). How should one account for this strange blend of essentialism and anti-essentialism in Nietzsche? Perhaps Nietzsche’s conception of the self is incoherent, or at least deeply paradoxical. Indeed, the Pindaric maxim that he loves presents itself as a paradox, at least superficially. But in view of Nietzsche’s express disdain for paradox (see both *SE* 2 and *WS* 92), we must try for another reading. I will show that Nietzsche does not give a single, univocal account of the self.¹ Instead, he operates with a conception of the self that contains four distinct levels. The inevitable consequence of confusing these levels is paradox. Failure to see the differences between them will create the impression that Nietzsche makes contradictory essentialist and anti-essentialist utterances about the same thing, with no possibility of reconciliation. This impression is mitigated, however, if we clearly discern the four levels and their relations to one another. Nietzsche’s conception of the self, while complex, is not evidently paradoxical or incoherent.

In what follows, I begin with an examination of the first section of *Schopenhauer as Educator*, which contains an early description of the four levels: (1) a person’s deepest self, embracing all that cannot be educated or molded; (2) a person’s conscious thoughts and desires, which Nietzsche associates with his “I” or ego;² (3) a person’s “ideal” or “higher self”; (4) a person’s “true self” or “true nature,” lying “immeasurably high” above her. In the rest of the paper, I show that Nietzsche develops and enriches this conception, without ever abandoning it. In Section II, I turn to the two volumes of *Human, All Too Human*, showing that in accordance with his desire to replace “metaphysics” with “historical philosophizing,” Nietzsche says relatively little about (1) or (4), but adds much to our grasp of (2) and (3). A third section asks to what extent Nietzsche privileges self-creation over self-discovery, interrogating relevant passages from *GS* in relation to *HH* and *SE*. Here I show that for Nietzsche, the transition from ego to higher self does involve artful self-fashioning, as Nehamas emphasizes, but *also* requires an openness to growth, a process which cannot be assimilated to the metaphor of self-fashioning. In Section IV, I turn to the “deepest” level of the self, which Nietzsche clearly does not take to be something that we construct. This is the aspect of the self that consists principally of motives and drives. Drawing primarily upon *D* and *BGE*, I demonstrate that Nietzsche regards neither the drives nor their hierarchical ordering as things that we construct. To say that we construct the

self “all the way down,” so that even the deep self is a construct, implies—or so I will conclude—precisely the conception of agency that Nietzsche is determined to deny.

I. The fourfold conception in *Schopenhauer as Educator*

Schopenhauer as Educator opens with a call to “Be yourself! You are none of those things you now do, think, desire!” (*SE* 1/p. 163). Your true self, what *you* are, is not identical or reducible to any of your present actions, desires, or thoughts. It is what you must *become*. The most common, least noble human being denies or represses what is unique about himself. By “thinking and acting as part of a herd”, he fails to realize what Nietzsche calls his “genius” or his “creative uniqueness” (*SE* 3/p. 180) and thereby avoids “joyously being himself” (*SE* 1/p. 163). *SE* turns on the tension between who you happen to be now (as distinct from your true self) and the self that cannot be reduced to your present condition, but that you strive to become and joyously be. This suggests a distinction between who you now take yourself to be, the *mélange* of actions, thoughts, and desires that you historically or presently identify with, clinging to them as to your “ego” (*das Ich*), and your “true self” (*eigentliches Selbst*) which you strive to realize, and toward which you desire to ascend. To characterize the transition from the ego to true self as an “ascent”, a metaphor that carries strong teleological implications, may seem un-Nietzschean. But Nietzsche himself uses just this trope. Critical interrogation of the ego, according to Nietzsche, promises to yield a “fundamental law” that points toward the true self.

Let the young soul look back on its life and ask itself: what until now have you truly loved, what has raised up your soul, what ruled it and at the same time made it happy? Line up these objects of reverence before you, and perhaps by what they are and by their sequence, they will yield you a law, the fundamental law of your true self [*deines eigentlichen Selbst*]. Compare these objects, see how one completes, enlarges, exceeds, transforms the other, how they form a ladder on which you have so far climbed up toward yourself [*zu dir Selbst*]. (*SE* 1/p. 166)

If you try this experiment, Nietzsche suggests, you will see that you have already made some progress in “climbing up” toward what *SE* variously calls your “true nature”, your “true self”, your “productive uniqueness”, your “genius”, or—most simply—“you”. But does not the prospect of ascent to a goal require advance knowledge of the goal? If knowledge means “clear vision”, then the answer is “no”. But if you attend to the fundamental law that exhibits the relationship between the various things that you have truly loved and have mastered you, then you will be pointed in its direction, as by a ladder. Such knowledge of directionality, of an *orientation* toward the true

self, does not have to be propositional in character, as Breazeale notes (1998, pp. 14–15). Nonetheless, it is far from trivial, in at least two different ways. First, it suffices to give you a basis for rejecting certain modes of thinking, acting, and desiring—modes you may be momentarily tempted by and to which you may even succumb—as incompatible with what ascent toward your true nature demands. The capacity to answer certain proposals with a response of the form “That’s not me” or “That’s not who I am” does not require propositional knowledge of the true self. Discernment of what blocks or frustrates the ascent will do. Secondly, *SE* provides a positive criterion for counting certain things as progress in the ascent. If you genuinely succeed in overcoming mean or petty egotism, you may have some confidence that you are moving in the right direction. Who embodies such motion? The philosopher and the artist, to be sure, but also (Nietzsche says) the saint

in whom the individual ego [*das Ich*] has entirely melted away and whose life of suffering is no longer, or hardly any longer, felt individually, but rather as a profound sensation of likeness, compassion, and unity with every living thing; the saint in whom the miracle of transformation takes place, and on whom the play of Becoming leaves no trace—that last, supreme, humanization for which all Nature, in search of its redemption, strives . . . There are moments and sparkling, as it were, struck from that most brilliant and amorous fire, by whose light we no longer understand the word *I*. Beyond our being there lies something which in those moments occurs here and now, and this is why we desire from the bottom of our hearts to make bridges between here and that which lies beyond. (*SE* 5/p. 197)

The ascent that Nietzsche describes is a motion from yourself as ego, which includes everything to which you have become attached, in a vain attempt to arrest the flow of becoming, toward your true nature, your true self which “lies beyond” *das Ich* at an immeasurable height, in a genuine transcendence of becoming. Here we must notice that Nietzsche does *not* claim that your true self lies at some very lofty, but still very inspectable point above you. What he claims is far more radical: “Your true nature [*dein wahres Wesen*] does not lie hidden deep inside you, but immeasurably high [*unermesslich hoch*] above you, or at least above that which you customarily consider to be your ego [*dein Ich*]” (*SE* 1/p. 166).³

Though the ascent to one’s highest self is erotically desired, “from the bottom of our hearts”, it is never completed. Yet it can be begun, if we resolve “to live according to our own standards and law”, rejecting whatever does not point to our true nature—entirely our own, not attainable by anyone else, since every person is a “unique miracle”. If we take seriously Nietzsche’s claim that our true nature lies *immeasurably* high above our ego—and there is no reason not to take it seriously—then it seems that the true self is not finally

attainable. One might wonder about this. Could not my true self, though immeasurably higher than my current self, be nonetheless attainable? The text from *SE*, read in isolation, does not resolve the question. But when read in conjunction with later writings which suggest more clearly that self-overcoming is a never-ending task, one that does not terminate in any state that corresponds to one's true self, the "immeasurably high" character of the true self suggests that it cannot be definitively attained. Nehamas's claim that "to become what one is . . . is not to reach a specific new state and to stop becoming—it is not to reach a state at all" applies rigorously to the true self. Yet what is properly said of the true self—not our higher self, but our *highest* self—is not attributable to the two other levels of the self that also appear in *SE*. These are a person's "deep self", embracing all that cannot be educated or molded, and a person's "ideal" or "higher self".

SE contains no detailed discussion of the higher self. Its distinction between the higher self and "those things you now do, think, desire" (*SE* 1/p. 163) is not altogether clear, since at least some of a person's current desires might also turn out to belong to her higher self. In the next section, I will show that in the middle period texts, Nietzsche constructs a more adequate picture of the relation between a person's ego and her higher self. For now, it suffices to note that *SE*'s description of the saint, quoted above, obliquely indicates the presence of the higher self in Nietzsche's early thinking. The saint is no exception to the rule that the self which lies immeasurably high above a person is unattainable. He ardently desires but never finally completes the ascent to what lies beyond; he never attains the true or highest self. Yet he does transcend his ego, Nietzsche thinks, by attaining a higher self that differs significantly from the condition of a person who, owing to laziness and fear, spends his life "thinking and acting as part of a herd", never "joyously being himself". Along with the philosopher and the artist, the saint exemplifies the "no-longer animal" (*SE* 5/p. 195) condition of the person who manages to attain a higher self, or a series of higher selves, yet without attaining the true self. Because Nietzsche believes that true self is "immeasurably high" and thus in principle unattainable, and yet *also* thinks that a higher self can be attained, it is necessary to distinguish the higher self from the true self.

A fourth level of the self appears, at least dimly, in *SE*. This is a person's deepest self, embracing all that cannot be educated or molded. Here "deepest" does not necessarily mean "best" or "most true", as *SE*'s equation of one's "true nature" with the immeasurably high self suggests. The main point of the depth metaphor is to indicate that whatever access we have to the deep self, we have by virtue of making a descent. In *SE*, Nietzsche is skeptical that descending into the depths will enable us to acquire self-knowledge. "How can man know himself? He is a dark and veiled thing, and whereas the hare has seven skins, man could skin himself seventy-times-seven times and not say, 'This now is you yourself, this is no longer skin'" (*SE* 1/p. 165). Only when we switch the metaphor, thinking not of a descent into the depths, but

of an ascent to the heights, does the project of self-knowledge appear possible and desirable—even if one’s true self eludes final attainment. Yet *SE* does not altogether dispense with the deep self. Despite its pessimism about descending into the self, it does allow that “your true educators and molders reveal to you the true original meaning and basic stuff of your nature, something absolutely incapable of being educated and molded, but in any case something fettered and paralyzed and difficult of access” (*SE* 1/p. 166). This seems to anticipate *BGE* 231’s description of that which exists “at the bottom of us, really ‘deep down’” as “something unteachable, some granite of spiritual *fatum*”. In the final section of this paper, I will attend to the deep self more closely. For now, it suffices to note that *SE* includes the deep self in its conception, but says little about it. It prefers to place the emphasis on the ascent from ego to higher self, with the true self as its unattainable horizon.

Taken together, these four levels of a person’s self—her deep self, embracing all that cannot be educated or molded; her ego; her “ideal” or “higher self”; her “true self” or “true nature” that lies “immeasurably high” above her—comprise Nietzsche’s fourfold conception of selfhood. Nietzsche’s mature texts develop and enrich this multi-level scheme, but they never abandon it. Or so I will argue.

II. The “higher self” in *Human, All Too Human*, vols. 1–2

In 1878, Nietzsche sharply breaks from his early writings in taking a strongly critical stance against metaphysics. The contrast is striking. Whereas *SE* laments the state in which it seems “almost as though man had deliberately been created to regress and cheated of his metaphysical disposition” (*SE* 5/p. 194), *Human, All Too Human* opens with an attack—a brutal assault—on that very disposition. Lacking the historical sense, metaphysical philosophers fail to see that “everything has evolved; there are *no eternal facts*, nor are there any absolute truths” (*HH* 2). Nietzsche’s new hostility toward metaphysics arouses a suspicion that he means to reject his earlier proposal that humans can and should attempt an ascent from the ego to the true self. What is true in the suspicion is that *HH* tends to say little directly about the true self, which may indeed strike the reader as just the type of metaphysical entity that *SE* endorses and *HH* is determined to reject. I will show, however, that the true self continues to serve an important function in *HH*, even if Nietzsche does not speak of it explicitly.

Despite the break with *SE*’s metaphysics, Nietzsche continues in *HH* to maintain a distinction between the human, all too human ego and a “higher self” above the ego. This “higher self” must be distinguished from the notion of a “highest self”, precisely because Nietzsche seems to think that the former *can* be discovered and attained. It exists at a considerable height above the ego, but not an immeasurable one. An aphorism from *Human, All Too Human* makes this clear.

Traffic with one's higher self. — Everyone has his good days when he discovers his higher self; and true humanity demands that everyone be evaluated only in the light of this condition and not in that of his working-day unfreedom and servitude. (*HH* 624)

Here Nietzsche explicitly speaks of “discovering” one’s “higher self”. What lay immeasurably high above the ego in *SE* is now brought close to us, so close that we are able to discover it, at least on our good days. Has Nietzsche gone too far in minimizing the genuine difficulties of attaining one’s true self? Has he made the higher self *too* accessible? A more careful reading of the aphorism should help. Nietzsche’s choice of the metaphor of “traffic” for indicating the mode of access to the higher self is suggestive. It indicates that the mode of access, whatever it may be, is not introspection or direct observation. Moreover, it provokes a suspicion that undercuts the superficial optimism of the notion that everyone finds a true self. Though everyone does manage to have some contact with a higher self, the manner of contact implied by the traffic metaphor is intensely problematic. The aphorism continues:

But men themselves traffic in very various ways with this higher self of theirs and are often actors of themselves, inasmuch as they afterwards continually imitate that which they are in those moments. Many live in awe of and abasement before their ideal and would like to deny it: they are afraid of their higher self because, when it speaks, it speaks imperiously. (*HH* 624)

That humans do have a higher self, and indeed some access to it, is not at issue for Nietzsche. (Notice that Nietzsche here identifies a person’s higher self with her “ideal”; I will speak of the two interchangeably.) At stake is a different and more interesting question. Does “traffic with one’s higher self” produce in most people any kind of authentic relation to that self, leading them down a path whereby they might become what they are? It would seem not. Far from producing a genuine attainment of one’s higher self, it leads to a strange combination of questionable imitation and servile fear. Someone can discern his ideal, but he will likely become an “actor of himself”—and, eventually, a parody of himself. Rather than take the direction given by their ideal, embracing the necessity of the task that it enjoins and any suffering that its performance may require, they fear its commandments. This they hide from themselves, going so far as to bestow compliments on their ideal, calling it “a gift of the gods”. The hidden motive of praising the ideal is to evade its demands by dismissing it as something alien to the self. Instead, they attach themselves (their ego) to everything that is *not* their higher self. “In reality”, it is precisely this “everything else” that is a “gift of the gods (or chance).” What is actually “man himself”, Nietzsche concludes *HH* 624, is the higher self.

In different texts, Nietzsche identifies both the “higher self” and the “highest self” with the “true self” or the “actual self”. This point is important, not least because it clarifies the terms in which the question “Does Nietzsche think that a person can attain her true self?” should be asked and answered. If by “true self” one means the highest self, then a person cannot definitively attain it, though she should strive to do so. But if “true self” denotes a person’s higher self or her ideal, then a different answer is warranted. In principle, a person who aspires to enter what Nietzsche describes as the “circle of culture” (*SE* 6/p. 198) can attain a superior ideal, even though most tend to fear and avoid the higher self, remaining stuck in the ego and never attempting the ascent toward the true self.

That *HH* speaks of a transition from the lower self to the higher self suggests an important continuity with *SE*. Whatever the critique of metaphysics means, it does not entail the abandonment of the project of “becoming what one is”. Yet it would be mistaken to infer that the desire to break with metaphysics yields no innovations in Nietzsche’s conception of the self. The middle works are marked by the claim that the ego and the higher self must now be reconceived in accordance with the demands of “historical philosophizing”. This appears nowhere more clearly than in the first volume of *HH*’s second part, the *Assorted Opinions and Maxims*.

Whither we have to travel. — Direct self-observation is not nearly sufficient for us to know ourselves: we require history, for the past continues to flow within us in a hundred waves; we ourselves, are indeed, nothing but that which at every moment we experience of this continued flowing. It may even be said that here too, when we desire to descend into the river of what seems to be our own most intimate and personal being, there applies the dictum of Heraclitus: we cannot step into the same river twice. (*AOM* 223)

This would seem to vindicate the suspicion that in breaking with the metaphysics of *SE*, Nietzsche departs from his earlier conception of the self. But if we continue to read *AOM* 223, we find that “our own most intimate and personal being” does not resist all attempts at discovery. If we adopt a “*subtler* art and object of travel” than that practiced by Herodotus, who thought “that understanding history required us to travel to other nations”, we will discover that the self is a locus in which layers of cultural development “still lie neatly and clearly one on top of the other”. The person who disciplines himself “for long practice in this art of travel” will become “a hundred-eyed Argos” who “will in the end be attended everywhere by his *Io*—I mean his *ego*—and will rediscover the travels of this *ego* in process of becoming and transformation in Egypt and Greece, Byzantium and Rome, France and Germany, in the age of the nomadic or of the settled nations, in the Renaissance and the Reformation, at home and abroad, indeed in the sea, the forests, in the plants

and in the mountains" (*AOM* 223). Once again, a clear distinction appears between the self as ego and the higher self.⁴ Nietzsche now imagines the higher self as a superior "hundred-eyed Argos", seeing many things from a more expansive, comprehensive perspective.⁵ The ego, by contrast, becomes a subservient cow that will attend, wait upon, and minister to the higher self. The replacement of metaphysics with "historical philosophizing", announced so dramatically in the first part of *HH*, turns out not to dissolve the distinction between the ego and the higher self.

What has happened to the true self in the middle works? Though Nietzsche devotes most of his direct speech to the higher self, it seems that the true self continues to play a crucial role. The middle works reject any attempt to equate a higher self with a unique highest self, an equation which presumes that realizing an ideal amounts to attaining one's highest self, effectively terminating the process of becoming what one is. Consider a person who, pondering his relation to his higher self, concludes not only that he has attained his ideal (a possibility, as *HH* 624 and *WS* 267 grant), but also that he *therefore* has no more work to do. How would Nietzsche respond to such a claim? Not by denying that he has necessarily failed to attain some version of his ideal. Rather, he thinks, such a person errs more fundamentally by taking himself to have reached the *telos* of the ascent—that is, mistaking the achievement of a higher self for the attainment of his highest self. In the very act of making this assumption, he ensures that what once had been a higher self degenerates into ego, a collection of thoughts, desires, and actions to which he clings (see *GS* 347).

Is there any hope for the person whose higher self or ideal degenerates into ego? "People wish to be settled: only insofar as they are unsettled is there any hope for them" (Emerson, 1965, p. 320). This maxim of Emerson suggests Nietzsche's own answer to the question. To speak in *HH*'s terms, a "settled" person has a strong *conviction* about himself—perhaps a conviction that his true self is bound up with a particular set of convictions. In *HH* 629, Nietzsche cites the case of someone who has sworn to be faithful to something outside himself—a god, a prince, a party, a woman, a priestly order, an artist, a thinker. Should we recognize ourselves in this description, Nietzsche asks us to consider whether we made such pledges "in a state of deluded infatuation that made that being seem worthy of every kind of sacrifice and reverence", and whether we are now "ineluctably committed". He then reduces these considerations to a single question: "Are we obliged to be faithful to our errors, even when we realize that through this faithfulness we are injuring our higher self?" He answers: "—No, there exists no law, no obligation, of this kind; we *must* become traitors, be unfaithful, abandon our ideals again and again. We cannot advance from one period of our life into the next without passing through these pains of betrayal and then continuing to suffer them" (*HH* 629).

Precisely to prevent ourselves from injuring our higher self, we cannot cling to our attained ideals. To do so is to act as if the ascent has a determinate stopping point, that it is something other than an infinite task. We must, Nietzsche thinks, let go of anything that is *only* a conviction, since “convictions are worse enemies of truth than lies” (*HH* 483). A person who clings to his cherished convictions will have only temporary success in attaining a higher self, failing to realize that “whoever reaches his ideal transcends it *eo ipso*” (*BGE* 73). But what is the alternative to conviction-holding? After all, convictions begin as opinions that grow out of passions, and proceed through “mental sloth” to harden into convictions (see *HH* 637). Does Nietzsche recommend a Stoic extirpation of passion, accompanied by the ideal of the wise man who “holds no opinions”? Occasionally he is tempted by this route, as when he presents the possibility of becoming a “veritable thinking snowball” who “will have no opinions at all in his head”, but rather join the ranks “of noble *traitors* to all things that can ever be betrayed—and yet with no feeling of guilt” (*HH* 637). But more characteristic, I think, is the train of thought suggested by *WS*.

Opinions and fish. — One possesses one’s opinions in the way one possesses fish—insofar, that is, as one possesses a fishpond. One has to go fishing and be lucky—then one has *one’s own* fish, *one’s own* opinions. I am speaking here of living opinions, of living fish. Others are content to possess a cabinet of fossils—and, in their heads, ‘convictions’. (*WS* 317; see also *AOM* 325)

The true philosopher, in quest of her highest self, and thereby attaining her higher self (or selves), will *not* be the opinionless Stoic sage. Rather, she will actively draw opinions from her “fishpond” and be willing to test them in whatever way she can. She will applaud the fact that “the fervor about having the truth counts very little today in relation to that other fervor, more gentle and silent, to be sure, for seeking the truth, a search that does not tire of learning afresh and testing anew” (*HH* 634). But of what is the “fishpond” a metaphor? Is it a figure of the higher self? This would imply, among other things, that the philosopher possesses a type of genuine access to her higher self, an access manifested in the way that she obtains and tests her opinions. This interpretation seems to harmonize with *SE*’s portrait of the philosopher, who differs from the scholar in *not* seeing everything through the prism of concepts, past events and books. Instead, “most of what he teaches he has to draw from himself . . . he himself is his own image and compendium of the whole world” (*SE* 7/p. 214). Without necessarily abandoning this notion, Nietzsche appears in *WS* to move beyond it.

Losing oneself. — Once one has found oneself, one must understand how from time to time to *lose* oneself—and then how to find oneself

again: supposing, that is, that one is a thinker. For to the thinker it is disadvantageous to be tied to one person all the time. (*WS* 306)

If the thinker's mind is to turn as freely as it needs to turn, she cannot be limited to herself: "one must be able to lose oneself occasionally if one wants to learn something from things different from oneself" (*GS* 305; see also *HH* 616). Indeed, the middle period works emphasize, with increasing force, the need to struggle against oneself, "heroically against wind and tide, at bottom against ourselves" (*WS* 329). Does this imply a renunciation of the quest for one's true self? It does not. If we persevere in what seems to be joyless and weary effort that leads to despair, Nietzsche adds, we will find that "at long last we *turn round*—and now the wind is blowing *into* our sails and driving us into *our own* channel . . . Only now do we know what we are and what we want, now we vow to be loyal to ourselves and *have a right* to do so—because we know what it means" (*WS* 329). What it means, in terms of the fourfold conception, is to take the true self as the immeasurably high horizon for endlessly attempting the ascent that takes the form of a transition from ego to higher self, and which never altogether escapes or leaves behind the deep self.

III. Self-construction and self-discovery in terms of the fourfold conception

Does Nietzsche think the true self is discovered? Or is it something that we construct? Nehamas gives a characteristically elegant and clear answer to this question: "The self, according to Nietzsche, is not a constant, stable entity. On the contrary, it is something one becomes, something, he would even say, one constructs" (1985, p. 7). In what sense does a person become or construct a self? "A person consists of absolutely everything one thinks, wants, and does," Nehamas says, recalling *SE*'s formula. "But a person worthy of admiration, a person who has (or is) a self"—a person who attains a higher self—"is one whose thoughts, desires, and actions are not haphazard but are instead connected to one another in the intimate way that indicates in all cases the presence of style" (*ibid.*). To "construct" a self means to take antecedently given materials, belonging to the ego and perhaps the deep self, and compose them into a harmony. "An admirable self, as Nietzsche insists again and again, consists of a large number of powerful and conflicting tendencies that are controlled and harmonized" (*ibid.*).

This notion of self-fashioning is clearly attested by Nietzsche's early and middle works. Its first expression may be found in *SE*. While the philosopher and the saint can be distinguished from the artist, they cannot be separated, as Schacht's image of *SE*'s "trinity of higher types" aptly suggests (Schacht, 1990, p. 157). Any true philosopher or saint will *ipso facto* be something of an artist. Moreover, *SE* understands the imperative "to live according to our own standards and law" (*SE* 1/p. 165) as the indispensable condition for realizing our "creative uniqueness" (*SE* 3/p. 180). This anticipates his later claim that

genuine artists of the self, who are “strong and domineering natures”, work according to a “law of their own” (*GS* 290). The first part of this aphorism reads:

To “give style” to one’s character—a great and rare art! It is practiced by those who survey all the strengths and weaknesses of their nature and then fit them into an artistic plan until every one of them appears as art and reason and even weaknesses delight the eye. Here a large mass of second nature has been added; there a piece of original nature has been removed—both times through long practice and daily work at it. Here the ugly that could not be removed is concealed; there it has been reinterpreted and made sublime. Much that is vague and resisted shaping has been saved and exploited for distant views; it is meant to beckon toward the far and immeasurable. (*GS* 290)

In no small part, the attainment of one’s higher self is a matter of artful construction, of self-sculpting, even as what we make “beckons toward” the highest self, the “far and immeasurable.” Successful natures, Nietzsche claims, act “not according to the dictum ‘know thyself,’ but as if there hovered before them the commandment: *will* a self and thou shalt *become* a self” (*AOM* 366). It is difficult to deny that Nietzsche understands the transition from ego to a higher self not as a task for detached contemplation, but as an accomplishment of willed artistry. If such natures happen to be ours, we will see that “we want to be the poets of our life” (*GS* 299). Yet our desire to poetize our experience may fall short of what we can actually do, since true modesty reminds us of “the knowledge that we are not our own creations” (*HH* 588).

The role of artful construction in the attainment of a higher self is amply attested by Nietzsche’s texts, early and late. We “*want to become those we are*—human beings who are new, unique, incomparable, who give themselves laws, who create themselves” (*GS* 335).⁶ Nehamas is right to attend to this dimension of Nietzsche’s thought. His exposition is misleading, however, when it suggests that self-construction excludes self-discovery. How can any stark antithesis of construction and discovery be reconciled with texts such as the following?

One day, when one has long since been educated as the world understands it, one *discovers himself*: here begins the task of the thinker; now the time has come to call on him for assistance—not as an educator but as one who has educated himself and who thus knows how it is done. (*WS* 267)

For Nehamas, the “tendency toward continual change and development” that we find in the self ensures that there is “no question of *discovering* what one’s true self is” (1985, p. 251n6). According to Nehamas, “Nietzsche’s view” is

that “the self is a fiction” (ibid., p. 173).⁷ For Nietzsche, the matter is not so simple. In the very process of giving style to our character, engaging in self-fashioning and self-constructing, we discover something about ourselves. *WS* 267 implies that attainment of a higher self is a matter of *both* construction and discovery. That *WS* 267 does not intend the “discovery” of a higher self as a final accomplishment, one that halts the ever-continuing development of self, should be clear. A person who “discovers himself” has not completed the task of becoming what he is. On the contrary, Nietzsche says, it marks the point at which the task begins.

To say “there is no question of *discovering* what one’s true self is” is not warranted with respect to the higher self. It is justified, however, as a claim about the true or highest self, since it is difficult to see how the self that lies *immeasurably* high above us can be discovered, unless we have grounds for supposing that our capacity for discovery extends beyond the set of objects that lie at some in-principle measurable distance from ourselves. That Nietzsche would grant the existence of such grounds seems unlikely. (From a different perspective, Christian mysticism holds that the infinite, immeasurable distance between human beings and God makes God radically other than an object whose essence we can discover, despite the idolatrous tendency of many particular Christians to make God into just such an object.) The highest self is equally not an object of construction, since we are able in principle to measure whatever we construct, whereas the true self existing at an “immeasurable height above you” is *ex hypothesi* immeasurable.

There is another problem with attributing to Nietzsche any simple version of the claim that the self is a construct. While Nietzsche does employ the metaphor of artful construction, it is not the only metaphor that he uses. Aiming toward the true self, attaining successive versions of one’s higher self, is not exclusively a matter of aesthetic self-fashioning. It also involves “growing”, in a sense quite distinct from “self-making”. “What is life?” *GS* 26 asks. “Continually shedding something that wants to die.” What in us is low and petty, what belongs merely to ego, “wants to die”. Particular awareness of this can emerge, Nietzsche says, in the activity of criticism. Very often, criticism is “no arbitrary and impersonal event”, but “evidence of vital energies in us that are growing and shedding a skin. We negate and must negate because something in us wants to live and affirm—something that we perhaps do not know or see as yet” (*GS* 307). Not to get in the way, but simply to let some things die so that others may grow, is also an important part of “becoming what one is”. Though not incompatible with artful self-fashioning, it is not identical with it. It means to live in such a way that “one thing after another that simply does not belong to such a life drops off” (*GS* 304). Here the virtue that Nietzsche “requires and admires” is not self-fashioning but courage—specifically, the courage to resist those who lodge a protest of the form “If you let this allegiance, or allow that conviction, to ‘drop off’, you are

betraying who you are.” (For excellent advice on dealing with these types, see *D* 484.)

That Nietzsche regards courage as an essential requirement for self-fashioning may be seen in *SE*. “Fundamentally the decisive factor is not the rarity or vigor of talent but the influence of a certain basic heroic attitude and the degree of real organic affinity with genius” (*SE* 6/p. 210). Similarly, *HH* 263 remarks that “everyone has *inborn talent*, but only a few have inherited and cultivated such a degree of toughness, endurance, and energy that they really become a talent, *become* what they *are*—that is, release it in works and actions”. Of the many later texts that make similar affirmations, *BGE* 41’s sixfold exhortation “not to remain stuck” is among the most powerful. If one attends only or primarily to the metaphor of self-fashioning, one may have a tendency to claim that one’s artistic work is “finished”, and that further growth is not desirable or possible. Nehamas points to “a realization many of us make at some point in our life, when we see or decide that our character has developed enough and that we neither need nor want to change any more” (1985, p. 189). But for Nietzsche, any such “realization” is a seduction, a temptation to arrest the never-completable ascent toward the highest self.

Is one’s higher self discovered or created? Self-fashioning suggests that our higher self is something yet-to-be-present, something that lacks being until and unless it is constructed. To speak in terms of growing and shedding a skin, by contrast, indicates an identity that is already present, waiting to be discovered. The metaphors used by Nietzsche, or at least the two on which I have focused, seem to point in opposite directions. The suspicion arises that Nietzsche has not, after all, resolved the tension between self-discovery and self-creation. This suspicion is correct, as far as it goes. It is valuable, moreover, in leading us to see that Nietzsche does not wish to resolve the tension (as suggested by his decision to use both metaphors, without subordinating either to the other). But if the suspicion becomes an accusation that Nietzsche has lapsed into self-contradiction, it misfires. Without inconsistency, Nietzsche is able to say both “constructivist” and “realist” things about the higher self. He can say *both* that engaging in the process of self-fashioning generates self-discovery (beyond what we have made) *and* that genuine self-discovery inspires new acts of self-creation (beyond what we have discovered). Nietzsche’s concept of the transition from ego to higher self contains, one might say, a dialectical tension between self-discovery and self-creation. Such a conception will invariably frustrate the reader who demands that he resolve the tension in favor of either self-discovery or self-making. But Nietzsche would reject the demand to resolve the tension, while defending himself against the charge that he has abandoned himself to paradox.

IV. Descending into the depths: a preliminary drive

The lowest and highest levels of the self—what I have designated as the “deep self” and the “true self”—are distinct from one another. But they share at least one common property. Neither seems to be constructed, at least by us. Consider the following passage, ignored by Nehamas:

Learning changes us; it does what all nourishment does which also does not merely “preserve”—as physiologists know. But at the bottom of us, really “deep down,” there is, of course, something unteachable, some granite of spiritual *fatum*, or predetermined decision and answer to predetermined selected questions. (*BGE* 231)

What is “at the bottom of us” points to the deepest level of the self. Is the deep self constructed? Perhaps in some sense it is. It may be a “cultural product”, as Sheridan Hough claims, though Nietzsche does not seem to reject the possibility that it is also determined by biology (1997, p. xiv).⁸ We need not adjudicate the “biology or culture?” question in order to see that both the deep self and the highest self denote levels that we do not construct ourselves. True modesty, Nietzsche says, reminds us of “the knowledge that we are not our own creations” (*HH* 588). What Nehamas calls “Nietzsche’s emphasis on the creation of the self” (1985, p. 175) is not Nietzsche’s only emphasis. Attending to the non-constructed character of both the deep self and the highest self suffices to show the distance between blanket assertions that the self is “nothing but” a construct and adequate readings of Nietzsche.

If we seek the various components that comprise the deep self, “descending into the depths” as Nietzsche counsels (see *BGE* 23 and the 1886 Preface to *D*), what do we find? First, it appears that behind our actions there are “motives”. Nietzsche’s view is not that all motives belong to the difficult-to-know deeper self. Suppose we contemplate bringing about the demise of someone who has wronged us. We can know, without too much difficulty, that our motive is revenge; the motive lies close to the surface. Moreover, we often know the motives of others—so well, in fact, that we have to engage in a “benevolent dissembling, as if we did not see through the motives for their behavior” (*HH* 293). Not all motives for Nietzsche are mysterious or unconscious. Many can be assigned straightforwardly to the conscious ego.⁹ Leaving these aside, it remains true that we often possess only rationalizations or spurious explanations, rather than genuine knowledge of motives. The consciously formulated maxim of an action (as Kant would have it) often fails, sometimes spectacularly, to express its true motive. It is but a story told by the ego, shedding no light on the unconscious but decisive motives that are present in the deep self. This is especially likely to be true of “publicly announced” motives: “The prince who discovers a *casus belli* for an earlier decision to wage war against his neighbor is like a father who imposes

a mother upon his child, to be henceforth accepted as such. And are not almost all publicly announced motives for our actions such imposed mothers?" (*HH* 596). Such imposed mothers deceive others about the true motives of action—and not only others. Often when we “let our annoyance out on others, while we are actually feeling it about ourselves, we are basically trying to cloud and delude our judgment; we want to motivate our annoyance *a posteriori* by the oversights and inadequacies of others, so we can lose sight of ourselves” (*HH* 607; see also *D* 385).

Motives, then, can belong to the ego, but often exist in the deeper recesses of the self, opaque to those who have not acquired the capacity and taste for “psychological observation” (*HH* 35). As Nietzsche says, “motives and intentions are seldom sufficiently clear and simple, and sometimes even memory seems to be dimmed by the success of a deed, so that one attributes false motives to his deed, or treats inessential motives as essential” (*HH* 68). Nietzsche loves to deflate the claim that the ego has any control over the deep self. He considers “those inner struggles and crises in which a man is torn back and forth by various motives until he finally decides for the most powerful—as is said (in truth until the most powerful motive decides about us)” (*HH* 107). Beyond our lack of power over motives, the very multiplicity of motives makes it difficult to know which are genuinely present in any given action. *HH* 107 mentions a wide range of motives: vanity, revenge, pleasure, usefulness, malice, cunning, sacrifice, pity, knowledge. The list is not exhaustive; it could easily be extended.

In light of the sheer variety that “contemplating the motives for human behavior” turns up—a task assigned by *HH* 163 to the person who would become a good short story writer—one wonders whether this multiplicity can be reduced to something still more basic. Nietzsche suggests that it can. As actions are expressions of motives, so motives themselves seem to derive from the “whole nature [*Wesen*] of a man”, as a plant grows out of the earth (*HH* 39). To indicate the deeper layer of soil out of which motives grow, Nietzsche speaks of the “drives” (*Triebe*).¹⁰ Nietzsche’s best-known discussions of the drives occur in the later writings, particularly *BGE*, the work in which “the discourse of drives reaches its highest pitch and unfolds its profoundest implications”, as Graham Parkes writes (1994, p. 308). But the notion that clarity about the drives is vital for understanding a person’s deep psychology is present virtually from the beginning. *SE* begins its long discussion of the scholar with this premise: “The scholar is a complex tangle of very different drives [*Antriebe*] and stimuli [*Reize*]; he is an alloy in every sense of the word” (*SE* 6/p. 204). In accordance with its program of “psychological observation,” we would expect the middle works to say much about the drives. This expectation is amply met by *HH*, which remarks on at least the following drives:

- The “unegoistical drive” (*unegoistischer Trieb*), whose tributaries are good nature, friendliness, and courtesy of the heart (*HH* 49).
- A powerful “drive of Nature” (*Antrieb der Natur*) that has informed certain protests against the claim that asceticism is miraculous (*HH* 136).
- The “artistic drive” (*Kunsttrieb*) (*HH* 147).
- The “aphrodisiacal drive” (*aphrodisischer Trieb*), once thought to be divine (*HH* 214).
- The “good useful drives, the habits of nobler hearts” that promise to replace “harsh and violent acts as the most powerful bond between man and man, people and people” (*HH* 245).
- The “drive for knowledge” (*erkennender Trieb*) that leads a certain type to walk among men like a natural scientist among plants (*HH* 254).
- The “drive of rivalry, of competition” (*der Antrieb der Konkurrenz, des Wettbewerbs*) (*HH* 367).
- The “acquisitive drive” (*Erwerbstrieb*) that is more characteristic of northern than southern Europe (*HH* 478).

This is hardly a full catalog of drives discussed by Nietzsche. But it is sufficiently representative to suggest that the deep self is constituted by a multiplicity of drives, of which Nietzsche thinks we have only the dimmest knowledge.¹¹ “However far a man may go in self-knowledge, still nothing can be more incomplete than his image of the totality of *drives* which constitute his being. He can scarcely name even the cruder ones: their number and strength, their ebb and flood, their play and counterplay among one another, and above all the laws of their *nutriment*, remain wholly unknown to him” (*D* 119). If we can scarcely name or know the drives that constitute the deep self, it seems that we do not in any sense construct the deep self. Against this claim, one might concede that while we do not construct the drives themselves, we are capable of constructing the order of rank that obtains among the drives—at least if we are higher types capable of organizing the “chaos within”.¹² But this seems to capture only part of Nietzsche’s view. It is true, according to Nietzsche, that whereas many will exhibit only “a feeble vacillation between different drives” (*HH* 278), the higher types will display an order of rank among the drives. In the philosopher, “every one of his drives would like only too well to represent just *itself* as the ultimate purpose of existence and the legitimate *master* of all the other drives. For every drive wants to be master—and it attempts to philosophize in *that spirit*” (*BGE* 6; see also *WP* 481). With respect to any philosopher, knowing “who he is” requires not only the examination of his teachings and texts, but also (and more profoundly) a determination of “what order of rank the innermost drives of his nature stand in relation to each other” (*BGE* 6).

Any representative of a higher type will exhibit an order of rank among his innermost drives. But does Nietzsche give any reason to suppose that he is capable of *constructing* this order of rank? At times he appears to say that

we have some measure of control over which drives are strengthened or weakened. “In the long run, a drive is actually *strengthened* by gratifying it, despite periodic alleviations” (*HH* 212). That one may weaken a drive by refusing to gratify it seems to follow. A few years later, at *D* 109, he proposes just this strategy as the first of six different means of combating the violence of a drive. Were he to have stopped the aphorism at this point, he would indeed appear to hold that by starving some drives and nourishing others, humans have the power to construct the order of rank among their drives, at least if they are higher types. But the aphorism continues:

That one desires to combat the violence of a drive at all, however, does not stand within our own power; not 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 violence is tormenting us: whether it be the drive to restfulness, or the fear of disgrace and other evil consequences, or love. While ‘we’ believe we are complaining about the violence of a drive, at bottom it is one drive which is complaining about another. (*D* 109)

Nothing in us “behind” the drives is capable of artfully arranging the drives in a harmonious relation with one another. Intellect cannot do this, since it is only “the blind instrument” of another drive. The activity of intellect does not oversee the drives that constitute the deep self: “thinking is merely a relation of these drives to each other” (*BGE* 36). If anything is prior to the drives, it cannot for Nietzsche be intellect. One might well infer that no attempt to “get behind” the drives will succeed, since there is apparently nothing in the self more fundamental than the drives. But Nietzsche seems reluctant to make this inference. He proposes an “experiment” which, if successful, will “explain our entire drive life [*Triebleben*] as the development and ramification of *one* basic form of the will—namely, of will to power” (*BGE* 36). Just as drives are more fundamental than motives as constituents of the deep self, so perhaps the one “will to power” is more fundamental than many drives. But does a univocal “will to power” have any intelligibility apart from the multiple drives that express it? Answering this question lies well beyond the scope of the present essay.¹³ What may be said is that for higher types, there will be an order of rank among the drives—and that Nietzsche denies the intellect (or will operating in accordance with intellect) any power to construct this ordering in ourselves.

There must be, nonetheless, something in us that imposes an order on the unruly chaos of the drives—supposing, that is, our capacity for avoiding the paralyzing “faction of the soul” (*stasis*) of which Socrates speaks in the *Republic*. For Nietzsche, this “something in us” can only be the highest drive, which assumes a relation to the other drives comparable to that of a tyrant to those whom he rules. Whereas Plato presents the alternative as order

and tyranny, Nietzsche denies that these are alternatives. He proposes something like “order through tyranny”. The highest types do not resist tyranny, but prove to be its ablest practitioners. “Philosophy is this tyrannical drive itself, the most spiritual will to power, to the ‘creation of the world’, to the *causa prima*” (BGE 9).¹⁴ Beyond philosophy, all “freedom, subtlety, boldness, dance, and masterly sureness, whether in thought itself or in government, or in rhetoric and persuasion, in the arts just as in ethics” owes its existence not to some ideal of “letting go” (*laissez aller*), but to a strict “tyranny” over both “nature” and “reason” (BGE 188). Given the number and unruliness of the drives, this order is difficult to impose. Any higher type is for Nietzsche naturally polyphonic—“the more polyphonic the subject, the more it pleases him”, as Lou Salomé observes (2004, p. 20). But keeping the many voices in productive harmony proves not to be an easy task. Hence “the higher a type that a man represents, the greater the improbability that he will turn out *well*” (BGE 62; see also *TI* “Skirmishes” 45). The likelihood increases that not one but several powerful drives will endlessly compete for dominance, none of them gaining anything but the most temporary victory.

It is easy to slide from the claim that some order among the drives must be “imposed” or “achieved” to the very different claim that “we construct this order.” For Nietzsche, there is no autonomous “I” standing behind the drives, capable of constructing their order. There is only the play of drives. To deny this is to revert to belief in the soul as an *atomon*, a belief that Nietzsche wishes to replace with “new versions and refinements of the soul-hypothesis”, e.g., “soul as subjective multiplicity” and “soul as social structure of the drives and affects” (BGE 12). Not all of Nietzsche’s readers have fully grasped the implications of his view. Kaufmann suggests that “the truly rational man need not go to war against his impulses. If his reason is strong enough, he will naturally control his passions . . . instead of extirpating [his impulses] he masters and employs them” (1950, p. 234). As Parkes notes, Kaufmann “fails to question the identity of the agent of control by asking *who* exactly it is that ‘masters and employs’ the impulses, or—which amounts to the same thing—by inquiring into the nature of the reason that is strong enough to do this mastering” (Parkes, 1994, p. 451n1). Kaufmann is not the only reader who falls short on this count. Nehamas asserts that for Nietzsche, there can be nothing in the self “over and above its thoughts, desires, and actions”—simultaneously evoking and inverting *SE*’s “Be yourself! You are none of those things you now do, think, desire!” (1985, p. 171). Instead, “a self is just a set of coherently connected episodes, and an admirable self . . . consists of a large number of powerful and conflicting tendencies that are controlled and harmonized” (*ibid.*, p. 7). The questions that Parkes raises against Kaufmann apply no less to Nehamas. *Who* exactly is it that “controls and harmonizes” these powerful and conflicting tendencies? *What* is it that is strong enough to master and order them? At times Nehamas avoids these questions by relying upon the grammatical passive. Episodes “connected”—by whom or what? Tendencies

“that are controlled and harmonized”—by whom or what? When he does use the active voice, his account becomes a curious echo of Kaufmann. “The affects must be overcome; but instead of weakening or extirpating them we must master and direct them” (Nehamas, 1985, p. 220).¹⁵ Again, exactly *who* is it that “masters and directs” the affects? What is the “we” that is strong enough to do this mastering?

Nietzsche gives his own distinctive answer to such questions. The most powerful motive decides about us. The most powerful drive—or complex of drives, as suggested by the metaphor of our “subject-unity” as “regents at the head of a community” (*WP* 492)—presses the others into its service. “While ‘we’ believe we are complaining about the violence of a drive, at bottom it is one drive *which is complaining about another*” (*D* 109). The ironic quotation marks reinforce Nietzsche’s denial of any “we” that has any power over the motives and drives that constitute the deep self. Nonetheless, Nietzsche does not eliminate the possibility that our intellect, despite its lowly status as the instrument of one drive or another, can succeed in discovering what Montaigne calls the “ruling pattern” of our drives (1958, p. 615). This ruling pattern, as Parkes observes, is “something *discovered*—something naturally ‘given’, and like Nietzsche’s ‘granite of fate’ in being resistant to education—even though the inclination to listen for it or the will to follow it may not be” (1994, p. 322). How do we discover this pattern? Certainly not through introspection; our “drive life” does not lend itself to direct observation. But if we become adept in the art of psychological observation, we may discover that our actions fall into patterns. From these patterns, we may infer that our actions habitually serve to gratify some drives at the expense of others, and thereby learn something about the order of rank among our drives. “If one has character one also has one’s typical experience, which recurs repeatedly” (*BGE* 70). One’s typical experience, suitably interpreted, can provide a clue to discovering the ordering among one’s drives. But only a clue, since Nietzsche denies that we can attain definitive self-knowledge. Even if we gain proficiency in the “great and rare art” of giving style to our character, considered as the essentially *public* manifestation of our unobservable drive life, our innermost drives and their order of rank will remain mysterious.

Nietzsche’s assertion of the supremacy of our “drive life” is a denial of traditional conceptions of agency and responsibility. No less strongly than Spinoza, Nietzsche denies the “freedom of the will”. But denying free will does not preclude what Spinoza calls “power of acting”. In certain moments, when a person senses that she is moving toward the self that lies immeasurably high above her, and attains some version of her ideal or higher self, she feels free of the bondage in which her ego trapped her. For both Nietzsche and Spinoza, to feel free in this sense provides no ground for any metaphysical freedom of the will. It does, however, point back to the deep self; it is the sign of a potent change in her drive life. The change is from “a feeble vacillation between different drives” (*HH* 278) to an increase in her power of acting,

expressed in the transition from ego to higher self. What causes this change? It is the triumph of the most powerful drive over the “vacillation between different drives”, or what Spinoza calls the *fluctuatio animi*—translated appropriately enough by Curley as “vacillation of mind”. In these terms we can understand not only Nietzsche's fourfold conception of the self, but also one of his most deeply felt desires. “One seeks a picture of the world in that philosophy in which we feel freest; i.e., in which our most powerful drive feels free to function. This will also be the case with me!” (*WP* 418).¹⁶

Notes

1. I cite Nietzsche's texts using the following abbreviations. *SE*=*Schopenhauer as Educator*; *HL*=*History in the Service and Disservice of Life*, both in *Unmodern Observations*. Citations to *SE* contain two numbers. The first refers to section number; the second cites a page number in Arrowsmith's edition. *HH*=*Human, All Too Human*; *AOM*=*Assorted Opinions and Maxims*; *WS*=*The Wanderer and His Shadow*, in *Human, All Too Human*. *D*=*Daybreak*. *GS*=*The Gay Science*. *BGE*=*Beyond Good and Evil*. *GM*=*On the Genealogy of Morals*; *EH*=*Ecce Homo*. *TI*=*Twilight of the Idols*. *WP*=*The Will to Power*. *KSA*=*Werke. Kritische Studienausgabe*.
2. In what follows, I use “ego” as shorthand for what Nietzsche calls “the things you now do, think, and desire,” or at least that subset of present acts, thoughts and desires that are distinct from a higher self yet to be attained. The justification for the shorthand is that Nietzsche himself often uses the term “ego” in just this manner, as will become apparent. The shorthand ought not, however, suggest a reification of ego. As Paul Katsafanas observes, Nietzsche does not grant the existence of a “substantive faculty, an Ego, standing behind conscious thoughts and generating them *ex nihilo*” (2005, pp. 11–12). If “ego” seems misleading as a shorthand designation for this level of self, the reader is free to substitute “conscious thoughts, actions, desires” or “lower self as distinct from higher self”.
3. One may object that from *HH* forward Nietzsche abandons this conception, and that I am placing too much weight on an early text. But even if the mature writings display more sympathy with a certain form of “egoism,” they do not (as I show) abandon the core idea of transcending ego in favor of the higher self. Against simple ascriptions of egoism to Nietzsche, here is an unpublished note from 1881: “We are buds on a single tree—what do we know about what can become of us from the interests of the tree! . . . *Stop feeling oneself as this phantastic ego! Learn gradually to jettison the supposed individual! Discover the errors of the ego! Realize that egoism is an error! But not to be understood as the opposite of altruism! That would be love of other supposed individuals! No! Get beyond ‘me’ and ‘you’! Experience cosmically!*” (*KSA* 9:11[7], quoted in Parkes, 1994, p. 300).
4. For a helpful analysis of the relation between ego and higher self as they appear in *Zarathustra*, attending appropriately to the body, see Gerhardt (2009, pp. 273–96).
5. Much about Nietzsche's initially somewhat perplexing notion of the higher self is clarified when we see that it is nothing more (and nothing less) than the self which achieves the power of seeing things with many eyes. *GS* 249 speaks of the “all-coveting self that would like to appropriate many individuals as so many additional pairs of eyes and hands”. *GM* 3.12 famously suggests that the “*more eyes, different eyes, we can use to observe one thing, the more complete will our ‘concept’ of this thing, our ‘objectivity,’ be*”.
6. This part of *GS* 335 appears to have its ancestor in an unpublished note from 1880: “*To make ourselves, to shape a form from various elements—that is the task! The task of a sculptor! of a productive human being!*” (*KSA* 9:7[213], quoted in Graham, 1994, p. 159).

7. The evidence for Nehamas's view is *WP* 477: "both the deed and the doer are fictions". But to move from the context-specific critique of the "doer" and the "deed" to the general characterization of "the self" as a fiction is questionable. What Nietzsche says about "doers" and "deeds" does not apply to every level of the "self" as he understands it, though it is critical for understanding the difference between his fourfold conception of the self and (e.g.,) the Cartesian *ego cogitans*. At the very least, the claim "the self is a fiction" needs to be qualified by attention to *BGE* 231, as well as *SE* 1's claim that there is an "original meaning and basic stuff of your nature, something absolutely incapable of being educated and molded, but in any case something fettered and paralyzed and difficult of access".
8. Though Hough's analysis is often suggestive, she places more weight on the "granite" metaphor than it can ultimately bear. (Is it really "his favorite metaphor of the self", as she suggests? (p. 3)) Her treatment of the "granite stratum" strangely neglects the drives, focusing on the more superficial category of "values" (p. 31). For an insightful treatment of the relation between drives and values, see Richardson (2004, p. 69).
9. Maudemarie Clark and Brian Leiter's introduction to *D* often treats motives in this way, contrasting the "conscious motives of which we are aware" with "*non-conscious factors* (psychological and physiological)" (Nietzsche, 1997, p. xxvi). Yet two pages later they proceed—rightly, I think—to speak of motives as unconscious: "we do not know the 'motives' for which we act (what determines our actions are the underlying drives and the outcome of their 'struggle')" (p. xxviii). This is consistent with my view that for Nietzsche there are *both* conscious and unconscious motives, the former constituting (at least partially) the ego, the latter the deep self. For an attempt to exhibit the conscious–unconscious relation in Nietzsche as a relation between conceptually articulated content and nonconceptually articulated content, see Katsafanas (2005).
10. That Nietzsche takes the deepest layer of the self to be constituted in large part by the drives seems impossible to deny. Yet as recently as 1994, it was true that there has been a "general neglect of the topic of the drives in the secondary literature" (Parkes, 1994, p. 388n4). Since the publication of Parkes' valuable work, commentators have worked to fill this gap. See Richardson (2002; 2004); Conway (2002, Ch. 2); Gemes (2009); Katsafanas (forthcoming).
11. That the drives are unknowable in themselves is an idea that occurs very early to Nietzsche. In an unpublished note from 1871, he writes: "Our entire drive-life [*Triebleben*], the play of feeling, sensations, affects, acts of will, is known to us—and here I must go against Schopenhauer—even under the most intense self-scrutiny only as representation, and not in its being" (*KSA* 7:12[1]; 1871, quoted in Parkes, 1994, p. 294).
12. For Nietzsche's attribution of this power to the Greeks, see *HL* 10 and the discussion of Kaufmann's use of this passage in Parkes (1994, p. 450–1). At *WP* 848, Nietzsche says that "to be classical" one must possess all the drives, "but in such a way that they go together beneath one yoke".
13. Remarking that "the will to power" is "an obscure and often misleading term", Nehamas says that the will to power "is the manifestation of what Nietzsche often calls a 'drive' [*Trieb*] which is common to animate and inanimate objects" (1985, p. 79). This gets things backwards. According to *BGE* 36, the drives are manifestations of the will to power, not the other way around. It may be, however, that Nietzsche has not one but two views of the relation between will to power and the drives. According to the "dominant" view in his texts, will to power shapes the drives; according to a "recessive" view, the will to power is explained by (rather than explaining) drives and natural selection. See Richardson (2004, pp. 45–63).
14. On Nietzsche's conception of philosophy not as an alternative to tyranny, but as a spiritual form thereof, Emerson is likely an inspiration. The essay on "Wealth" in *The Conduct*

- of *Life*, a text that Nietzsche read early and often, mentions the “speculative genius” and says this of its possessors: “Each of these idealists, working after his thought, would make it tyrannical, if he could” (1860, p. 94).
15. To be fair, Nehamas does not consistently speak in this manner. He correctly notes that for Nietzsche a drive has no moral character (p. 208). He includes the drives—but only after multiple descriptions of the self that make no reference to them—in a list of what is “essential to who one is” (p. 217).
 16. For analyses of freedom in Nietzsche, see Richardson (2009) and Poellner (2009).

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