

Does Freedom Imply Morality?: The Understanding and Interrelation of Freedom,
Action, and Morality in Kant and Nietzsche's Normative Philosophy

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Introduction

One of the most pressing and widely asked questions in philosophical discourse is: “How should we act?” or “What moral principles should we live by?” Many philosophers, as well as those in other fields, have attempted to provide an answer for this worry. Attempts to answer these questions have resulted in a variety of theories that explain various moral laws and moral prescriptions. Oftentimes these moral prescriptions do not stand alone; they are not devoid of a philosophical context. A moral theory is rarely drawn out of the blue, but usually has its basis in a wider and more expansive philosophical system.

Along these lines, some questions that will often accompany the concerns of morality and a moral life are questions concerning the self and agency. Questions such as: “How is the self constituted?” “Through what processes are actions committed?” and “How can we understand agency?” Many thinkers understand these questions as being intimately tied up with concerns of morality. An agent can only be asked to act within the confines of how he is *able* to act. This may seem like a very obvious claim, but it portrays how these two sets of questions can be so intimately related. This idea can go even deeper. An agent is only able to act in a certain way due to how that agent is constituted. The way in which the self is constituted will restrict or allow for the manner in which the agent can and will act; it will restrict the way in which we can understand agency. Therefore, morality can be understood as being very intimately tied to an understanding of how an agent performs an action and how the self is constituted.

Two thinkers who are very committed to prescribing a system of morality, or at least a system of normativity, are Friedrich Nietzsche and Immanuel Kant. Both of these thinkers' normative prescriptions are intimately tied up with the ideas of the self and to a certain conception of actions, in the manner previously described. Kant directly draws on a specific conception of the self in order to ground his claim that humans should take interest in his idea of the moral law, or the Categorical Imperative. Without this specific conception of the self, and of how the self acts, Kant's argument for human's interest in the moral law does not hold. Both of these concepts are very important premises in his argument in *The Groundwork to the Metaphysics of Morals*.

Though he is not as systematic in the exposition of his thinking as Kant, Nietzsche's normative view has similar commitments to a certain conception of the self and the conception of action that arises from this. Nietzsche is attacking morality in the manner that Kant and many before him understood it, and in doing so, is asking us to act under very novel and radical ideas. Nietzsche's ground for asking us to act in this manner rests on ideas and conceptions concerning the self, action, and agency that can be fleshed out of many of his passages. Nietzsche does not explicitly state that his normative views rest on and are justified by these conceptions, but through an examination of his writing, it will become clear that this is very likely the case.

While Nietzsche's and Kant's thinking are similar in that their normative prescriptions rest on assumptions concerning their concepts of the self and action, similarity is not a consistent theme throughout their thinking. These two thinkers

differ in almost every way concerning these topics. They propose radically different understandings of the self and of action, which cause them to further propose almost diametrically opposed normative prescriptions.

In this paper, I will imagine what a debate between Nietzsche and Kant would look like on these topics. While I ultimately frame the debate in respect to the argument for morality, specifically Kant's argument for the moral law, it will also touch on the other concepts mentioned along the way. These are the concepts of freedom, autonomy, agency, and a conception of the use and function of reason in the human being. After fleshing out this argument and everything that follows from it, I propose an understanding concerning how many of the debate's vital terms can be reinterpreted in the wake of Nietzsche's critique of Kant's morality. More specifically, I argue that Nietzsche has radically reinterpreted many of these terms, and in doing so, is prescribing a normative view of his own. I also argue that his reinterpretation of these terms is an aspect of a larger philosophical project that involves his calling for a new understanding of how the field of philosophical investigation should be understood.

I will first lay out Kant's argument for morality. I show how Kant grounds moral values in the self through his understanding of freedom, agency, and autonomy. I will portray how Kant's understanding of all of these concepts ultimately rests on a commitment he has concerning human agency. Specifically, Kant makes a commitment to a certain understanding of the capacity of reason in the human and how it functions in the event of an action. This idea will be fully played out by investigating the specificities of Kant's philosophy of action. Here,

I will explore how Kant identifies different varieties of actions and their function, and what sorts of capacities the human uses to perform these different types of actions.

After portraying how Kant's understanding of action holds consistent with the assumptions made in his argument for the moral law, I turn to look at how Nietzsche will respond to these claims. Ultimately, Nietzsche's views will usurp Kant's conception of morality and his argument for the moral law, but as I already mentioned, will also contend many of his other claims along the way. These claims will include Kant's understanding of the self, action, agency, and free will; which will turn out all to be intimately interconnected with his understanding of morality. The contrast of these two views results in a rejection of Kant's argument for mortality due to Nietzsche's radically different view of how the self is constituted and how agency is understood.

From here, I will address a second question that develops from these issues: If Kant's conception of morality does not hold, if it no longer makes sense, then how does Nietzsche understand normative import in his own way? Here, I will claim that due to many conclusions concerning Nietzsche's views that have been drawn out during the elaboration of his debate with Kant, he has to understand many philosophical terms differently. This calls for Nietzsche to have a different idea of how philosophy can give normative import. Philosophy cannot ask us to decide how we perform an action, but only relate to an action after it is already performed. This example will also give rise to an understanding of one of Nietzsche's larger philosophical projects. More specifically, this includes the idea

that rather than making metaphysical explanations, philosophy should do mostly normative work. Under this view, terms such as “free-will” should not denote a metaphysical explanation of the concept, but instead denote a way in which one should act or should feel. Philosophy should be a practice of normativity, rather than a practice of metaphysical explanation.

Chapter 1: Kant's Moral Law

In his most important work on morality, *The Groundwork to the Metaphysics of Morals*, Immanuel Kant lays out his theory of the foundation of morality in three sections, which all have different functions. Through a series of analytic arguments in the first two sections, he demonstrates that the moral law is realized through the use of a Categorical Imperative. The claim that the Categorical Imperative and the moral law are one in the same is, in short, what Kant argues for in the first two sections of the *Groundwork*. Yet, what he concerns himself with in the third section is making an argument for why humans must be subject to the moral law or take any interest in it. In the third section, Kant takes a leap from his earlier analytic arguments and makes a synthetic argument in order to conclude that humans are bound to the moral law or the Categorical Imperative by duty. It is this third section that I will mainly be concerned with. Through an exposition of this third section, I will argue that Kant's argument is reliant and ultimately dependent on an assumption he makes concerning the faculty of reason and its function for an agent. Further, I want to show that the argument is dependent upon a certain conception of action in which reason has legislative authority. This will illuminate the idea that Kant's conception of morality and moral action is ultimately dependent upon a certain conception of agency that makes special use of reason.

1.1 Kant's Argument for the Moral Law

Before making any claims concerning pieces or aspects of Kant's argument for morality, it will help to have an expansive understanding of the argument he makes in section III of the *Groundwork*. A close understanding of this argument will be helpful to have throughout the remainder of the paper, it will be necessary to have an understanding of the full argument in order to later contrast it with Nietzsche's thought. Therefore, before delving into any critical work, I will begin with an explanation of Kant's argument in Section III.

Kant begins his argument by showing that there exists reciprocity between the concepts of the freedom of the will and of morality or the moral law. To do this, he first presents a definition of a free will. He defines it in a negative manner and then displays how this negative conception points to a more positive definition. The negative conception is that freedom is the manner in which something, the will in this case, acts without the influence of alien causes, or causes coming from outside itself. Kant also refers to the will as the "causality of living beings" (*Groundwork*, Kant, 121), and claims that a causality that does not have a law through which its effects are determined would "be an absurdity." (*Groundwork*, Kant, 121). Here, Kant is making an appeal to an intuition concerning the concept of causation. He is claiming that the concept of a cause without a law through which to regulate its effect is an impossibility. If this is the case, which he believes it is, he can conclude that the will must have a law under which it acts, because of its nature as a capacity of causality. In this way the will is must be conceived as free in a positive sense. Due to the restriction from the negative conception: the will's law cannot come from an external source, and the

need from the positive conception: the will needs a law through which it acts; Kant concludes that the will's law must be given to the will through its own volition. In this way the will must be autonomous in order to be free.

Next, Kant argues that the law that the autonomous will gives itself must necessarily be the Categorical Imperative. A hypothetical imperative is one in which the maxim is determined due to an inclination or desire of the agent, and these desires oftentimes arise due to external conditions. For example, the agent may want to eat because she is hungry. Yet, the fact that the agent is hungry is determined through her biology, which lies outside of her control. This means that a hypothetical imperative is determined through processes that involve external influences, and therefore it cannot be the imperative of a free will, whose imperative must be self-given. The "law" of a free will must instead be categorical because a Categorical Imperative is dependent only upon the form of a maxim, not on external conditions. Kant has previously displayed in the first two sections that the Categorical Imperative and the moral law are one in the same concept. He now claims that a free will acts under the law of the Categorical Imperative, and therefore under the moral law. Therefore, if a free will exists, it must act under the moral law. In this way Kant has established a reciprocity between freedom of the will and a will under the moral law. Now that this reciprocity is in place, Kant needs only to establish that humans have a free will and he will have, in turn, established that the moral law is valid for humans.

Kant ultimately makes two arguments for the existence of a free will in humans. Although an explanation of the first argument is not necessary to the

specific claim being made here in this section, we will later see that Nietzsche has a critique of this concept, and therefore it will be important to having an understanding of it. Kant stresses that he believes that his initial argument should suffice as an argument for the existence of free will. Yet, he fears that it may be problematic in some readers' eyes and therefore goes on to make another one. We can look at the first argument and then move to the second. The manner in which Kant makes his initial argument for freedom of the will is by claiming that freedom is necessarily presupposed in a functioning human life. He writes, "Every being that cannot act otherwise than *under the idea of freedom* is actually free" (*Groundwork*, Kant, 125). Here, Kant is simply claiming that because we act as though we are free we must assume that we are free. As we will see later, Kant is not trying to prove that we are free in a positive sense, he believes he can only lead us to believe that freedom is an assumption that must be made. Therefore, he believes by simply pointing out the fact that we live our lives and perform our actions as though we were free is enough to suppose that we are.

Due to this presupposition of freedom, Kant has portrayed how we can understand ourselves as free and also shown how this freedom necessitates an interest in the moral law. Kant claims that this argument for freedom, simply presupposing freedom due to our actions, should be enough to accomplish his goal and prove that humans must take an interest in the moral law. Yet, Kant thinks that some will see a problem with this argument. First, that they may not accept such a simple presupposition, and more importantly, that it is circular in nature. He writes "We take ourselves to be free in the order of efficient causes so

as to think ourselves under moral laws in the order of ends, and afterward we think ourselves as subject to these laws because we have ascribed ourselves freedom of the will” (*Groundwork*, Kant, 129). Kant, here, explains how he has drawn the concept of freedom from the idea of morality, and then in turn drawn the moral law from his presupposition of freedom, even though neither of these two concepts are individually grounded. Kant has only argued for freedom due to observations concerning our moral actions, and then also drawn morality from the presupposition of freedom. He therefore has the problem of creating a circular argument in which the argument for each part depends on the other. Kant believes that many will find this circle problematic and that he must find a way out of this circle in order to individually ground these reciprocal ideas of morality and freedom and prove that humans should take interest in the moral law.

It is through a digression into some of the metaphysical aspects of Kant’s philosophy that he draws himself out of this circle. More specifically, he incorporates the idea that every object can be conceptualized as having two different characters, one “phenomenal” and one “noumenal,” into his argument to remedy the issue. This distinction is a metaphysical doctrine that Kant argues for in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. In this work, Kant establishes that objects can be looked at from two standpoints: (1) how the object appears to us through our senses, and (2) how the object is in itself, which cannot be given to us by the senses. The first aspect he calls the object’s “phenomenal character,” and the second the object’s “noumenal character.” Though everything has these two aspects, we can only ever experience one of them--the phenomenal character. The

noumenal character is beyond our understanding, it cannot be given to us by the senses and therefore cannot be experienced.

This can be elaborated upon by looking into another metaphysical doctrine also explored in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Earlier in this work, Kant lays out the conditions for how we experience the world; he claims that all our experience is automatically filtered through *a priori* concepts of the understanding. These concepts are not part of how things are in themselves, but are faculties in our mind through which experienced is organized. These concepts of the understanding, which include things such as space and time, determine how we experience the world. Yet, these concepts only determine how objects are experienced by humans, and therefore there is still room for the question of how the objects are “in themselves,” or their noumenal character. Of this noumenal character of objects, nothing positive can actually be known. In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant writes, “The concept of noumenon is, therefore, only a limiting concept...and is therefore only of negative use;” and also, “A division of objects into phenomena and noumena and of the world of sense and a world of the understanding is therefore quite inadmissible in a positive sense” (*Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant, 261). The noumenal character is only a way to account for the object outside of the way we understand it with our senses. The concept of the noumenal character is only presupposed; it cannot have any concepts applied to it, and we can never know anything of it in a positive sense. It is not a possible object of knowledge.

In the *Groundwork*, in order to escape from the circle, Kant takes this distinction of phenomena and noumena explored in the *Critique of Pure Reason* and applies it to the self. He argues that not only can all objects of experience be looked at in this twofold manner, but the self can also be understood by way of these two standpoints. If this is the case, then there is no contradiction between the ideas of humans having a free will and humans as determined in the world of sense. In their phenomenal character they would be determined by natural laws, but in the sense that they can see themselves as noumena, they could also regard themselves as free.

Kant claims that we can understand ourselves as having a noumenal character or existing in the world of intelligence by proving that there is pure activity within us. Pure activity is activity that is not determined by outside causes or outside laws, but instead determined by its own volition, autonomously. To better understand this we can see that many actions that humans partake in are not pure activity. For example, when a human has the desire for food or experiences hunger, this is not a result of pure activity because it is only due to the natural law inherent in the biology of a human being that this person experiences hunger. Kant claims that self-activity in the human being is located in the capacity of reason. Reason is not reliant on any natural laws and is not dependent on anything outside of itself. Kant refers to reason as having a unique “spontaneity” that is absent from other capacities that exist in humans. All other capacities are determined by natural laws or forces outside themselves, but it is not so for reason.

Due to the spontaneity and self-activity of reason, Kant argues that we must understand ourselves as members in the intelligible world as well as the sensible world. The activity of reason must come from a place in which freedom exists because it is acting of its own accord without being conditioned externally. Another way to look at this is to note that the existence of our capacity of reason cannot be sufficiently explained if we exist only in the natural world. There is no place for freedom in the world we experience, the world of sense, due to the fact that it is governed by natural laws. Therefore, this freedom that arises from the concept of reason must convince us to regard ourselves from another standpoint, that of the world of understanding.

In this way, Kant believes that we have rid ourselves of the problem of a circle. He writes:

When we think of ourselves as free, we understand ourselves as members into the world of understanding, and cognize autonomy of the will, along with its consequence, morality; but if we think of ourselves as bound by duty we consider ourselves as belonging to the world of sense and yet at the same time to the world of understanding (*Groundwork*, Kant, 135).

The problem of the circle was that the presupposition of the idea of freedom was sparked by an interest in the moral law. It is our natural phenomenological experience of morality, which is experienced as a set of “ought” statements that caused Kant to suppose this idea of freedom. Also, this presupposition of freedom was in turn being used to ground that very same moral law. Now that Kant has argued that we can intuit ourselves into a world of understanding and by doing so, see ourselves as free, this is no longer a problem. The presupposition of freedom does not arise solely from an interest in the moral law, but instead from an

understanding of ourselves as members of the noumenal realm. These two concepts can now be seen as grounded independently through considering ourselves from a standpoint involving freedom (the world of understanding) as well as one with no place for freedom (the world of sense).

Now that Kant has argued that we can understand ourselves as part of the world of understanding, a standpoint in which we can consider ourselves free, he can now argue why we must experience the moral law or the Categorical Imperative as something that we ought to adhere to. As we saw before during the discussion of the positive and negative sense of freedom: if we are considered as free, then we must be acting under the moral law when we act freely. This distinction also elaborates how exactly this interest plays out, if we were beings that existed only in the world of understanding, then we would never act on desires or inclinations: our will would be completely free and therefore we would only ever act autonomously or in line with the Categorical Imperative. Yet, it is not the case that we are pure intelligences, we understand ourselves as existing in the world of sense as well as in the world of understanding. Therefore, the Categorical Imperative is not understood as a law such as it would be for beings existing only in the world of understanding. Rather, we experience it as a duty, we experience statements of the Categorical Imperative as “ought” statements.

Now we have seen a full explanation for Kant’s argument for the moral law, and for human’s interest in the moral law. Kant has argued that there is a reciprocity between the concepts of freedom and morality. If we can understand ourselves as having free wills, then we are bound to the moral law. The

understanding of freedom originates in the claim that we have to see ourselves from the standpoint of the world of understanding, not only the world of sense, or the natural world. We must see ourselves in this way due to the fact that there is something which has pure self-activity within us, something that cannot be explained naturally. This capacity of pure self-activity is reason which acts freely, and not from outside causes or laws. Reason cannot be explained through the natural world and therefore we must posit the world of understanding in order to explain this concept and see ourselves as free. Therefore, due to the fact that we see ourselves as free by way of the fact that we are members in the world of understanding, we must see ourselves as bound to the moral law from this standpoint. This is why we experience morality or the demands of the categorical imperative as an “ought” in our experience in the world of sense.

Kant concludes this work with a section titled *On the extreme boundary of all practical philosophy*. The material Kant explains in this last section is very important to understand what Kant believes he is doing with his argument for morality. Here, Kant makes the important point that he is not giving a positive argument for freedom, or a positive argument for the positing of ourselves in the world of understanding. Kant realizes that we can only understand things in a positive manner within the world of sense and all else is just being assumed. Reason operating freely in the world of understanding is pure, and reason operating in the conditioned world we experience, the world of sense, is practical. Kant writes, “Reason would overstep all its bounds if it undertook to *explain* HOW pure reason can be practical, which would be one and the same task

entirely as to explain *how freedom is possible*” (*Groundwork*, Kant, 147). We can see that Kant does not think that we can explain anything about the world of understanding from our standpoint in the world of sensibility; in other words, we cannot explain anything of pure reason from our standpoint of practical reason. Therefore, we cannot establish a conception of freedom in a positive manner. He wants to make it clear that in this section, all that he has done is left room for freedom and morality by determining that it would be nonsensical to hold that it does not exist. He only argues for the noumenal realm and the idea of freedom because he feels that there are aspects of our experience--freedom and reason--that cannot be explained through only an understanding of ourselves as members of the natural world. This position is summarized in the concluding remarks when he writes:

And thus we do not indeed comprehend the practical unconditional necessity of the moral imperative, yet we do comprehend its *incomprehensibility*, and this is all that can reasonably be required of a philosophy that in its principles strives up to the boundary of human reason. (*Groundwork*, Kant, 155)

1.2 The Function of Reason In Kant’s Argument

Now that Kant’s argument has been laid out, I will try to focus on some particular aspects of it. Specifically, I will focus on the aspects of Kant’s argument that focus on reason and its place in the system he has proposed. From an examination of these aspects, I want to draw out certain assumptions that Kant implicitly makes concerning the place and function of reason in his argument. I will first look at an interpretation of the *Groundwork* that I believe falls short on some respects; by showing these problems, I hope to illuminate my point

concerning how necessary a discussion of reason is to Kant's argument. I will then examine two more interpretations that I believe will help to illuminate the more substantial point that I am trying to make that concerns an assumption that Kant is making in his argument.

The first work I will look at is Sally Sedgwick's *Kant's Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals: An Introduction*. Here, Sedgwick credits two arguments for freedom to Kant. The first makes use of Kant's concepts of the understanding that arise from his *Critique of Pure Reason*. These are the concepts used to organize the human's experience such as space and time. Sedgwick writes, "He has no grounds, in other words, for dogmatically ruling out the possibility that other beings sense objects or experience nature differently than we do. This recognition of the limits of what we can theoretically know is precisely what permits speculation about other forms of experience" (Sedgwick, 191). She claims that the argument here is that since our concepts are only one way to organize experience that they do not necessarily encapsulate everything that exists in the world. Therefore, freedom could exist out there even though we do not directly experience it in our categories.

The second argument Sedgwick credits to Kant is concerning the idea of scientific inquiry. Sedgwick sees Kant as identifying the problem that scientific enquiry holds two very contradictory views: (1) that everything that happens must be sufficiently determined by something else and (2) that freedom is not one of these causes, due to the claim that everything is conditioned. We cannot say that there is nothing at the end of a causal chain, this is an infinite regress, neither can

we claim that something that is conditioned lies at its end. Therefore, we must argue that something unconditioned, something free exists to end this causal chain. Thus, we end up claiming the need for the existence of freedom.

Both of these arguments that Sedgwick makes are consistent with Kant's thoughts concerning freedom and the possibility of its existence; neither are arguments that he would disagree with. Yet, there is still something problematic about her using them to characterize Kant's argument in the *Groundwork*. An examination of the nature of the problems that Sedgwick runs into will help to illuminate a very important aspect of Kant's argument. Although the two arguments that Sedgwick cites are sufficient to argue for the presupposition of freedom or of a world of understanding in general, she does not cite the vital argument that Kant makes for the posting of the *self* into the world of understanding. Namely, she has not referenced anything concerning Kant's observation and interpretation of the faculty of reason in the human being. The argument concerning the pure-activity of reason is one that is vital to what Kant is trying to do in the third section of the *Groundwork*. Kant writes, "The practical use of common human reason confirms the correctness of this deduction [of the moral law]" (*Groundwork*, Kant, 137). Kant has created a transcendental deduction of the moral law by determining that freedom must be presupposed for rational beings. He does this by calling our attention to the fact that we must understand ourselves as members of the world of understanding and it is through his emphasis on our faculty of reason that this is done. That reason is pure activity which acts only due to its own volition and not at the whim of external causal

connections is vital to this deduction. If reason is not addressed, then it still may be concluded that the world of understanding exists by way of these other types of arguments, but a reference to reason is needed to determine that humans take any part in this world of understanding. Therefore, by looking at this shortcoming, we can see the necessary function of reason, as a facet of humans that cannot be understood naturally, in order to posit the human into the world of understanding.

While Sedgwick makes the mistake of not addressing the argument concerning the human capacity of reason, there are other scholars who have addressed the third section of the *Groundwork* with this in mind. An examination of their views will help to shed light on certain aspects of the view that I want to focus on; specifically, concerning an assumption that Kant makes in his argument. Two scholars who approach the concept of reason in the *Groundwork* in different manners are Dieter Henrich in his essay, The “Deduction of the Moral Law”, and Frederick Rauscher in his essay, “Freedom and Reason in Groundwork III”.

The way in which Henrich understands what Kant is doing in *Groundwork III* is that he is distinguishing between two types of freedom and examining how they relate to the faculty of reason to make his point. One of these is theoretical freedom and other is practical freedom. Theoretical freedom holds that reason is the *a priori* source of its propositions. This completely, transcendently free reason is associated with and exists in the noumenal realm. Theoretical freedom, instead, exists in the phenomenal realm, which means that this is the kind of freedom that we experience. Theoretical freedom as it is related to reason does not have any causality in the world; this freedom only allows reason to make

judgments. Henrich characterizes the practical use of reason by writing, “I must be in a position to decide about the suitability of the use of predicates in relation to the fact of the matter, without my judgement being antecedently determined” (Henrich, 312). Here, there is still freedom, in that the judgment is not determined, but it is different than transcendental freedom in that the freedom has no causation in the world.

Henrich characterizes Kant’s argument as using practical freedom to point to and prove the existence of transcendental freedom. Our use of the practical freedom of reason calls us to see that a theoretical freedom of reason must be at its base, making it possible. We do not actually see or experience theoretical freedom, but like everything else that has its place in the world of understanding, it must be assumed. Henrich states this by writing, “Practical Reason must regard itself as free, even if in a different sense, and on account of this parallelism to the original legitimate hypothesis of reason its hypothesis can also be regarded as legitimated by reason.” (Henrich 316). Here, Henrich portrays that even though reason as we experience it is not being used directly in this transcendently free manner, the use of reason is still pointing to the existence of a transcendently free realm in which part of us resides.

The next scholar I will look at is Fredrick Rausher, who, In his essay, “Freedom and Reason in Groundwork III”, proposes a similar view to Henrich in that he believes that Kant’s main argument rests in the faculty of reason. Yet, there is in a difference in that he believes that Kant draws a very different conclusion from this faculty. A normal interpretation is one in which Kant is seen

as arguing that the faculty of reason is free in some manner, and, that due to this, the human being is seen as having a free will and therefore belonging partly to the world of understanding. This in turn allows for the existence of the moral law due to the fact that Kant has argued that the law that a free will adheres to must be the Categorical Imperative. Rauscher's argument differs in that he does not see Kant as arguing that the will of a rational being is free. Instead, he sees Kant as arguing that pure reason itself is free, and that this reason can determine the will. He writes, "Freedom of the will as autonomy is not a matter of the causal power of the will itself but the causal power of reason to determine that will" (Rauscher, 206).

In Rauscher's view, when Kant refers to the material from the *Critique of Pure Reason*, he is using it only as a methodological example, and is not trying to incorporate the metaphysics from this work. He is not proposing a similarity to the noumena/phenomena distinction ontologically, but is only referring to this argument because he is doing something similar in method to what he did in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. He claims that humans who see themselves as part of the intelligible world are only committing to a representation of the sensible world as it would be if it were completely determined by reason. Therefore, the human does not exist in the intelligible world, and the human does not have a free will. Reason is the only thing that is free, and reason is just a factor in the human will. Rauscher puts this as follows: "In *Groundwork III* Kant invokes the transcendental freedom not of the whole person but only of the faculty of reason as a way of explaining freedom of the will" (Rauscher 206). Kant has stated that

reason is the manner in which the will can be autonomous (and therefore ascribe to the moral law), so it is only reason that has to be free, not the will itself.

Therefore, what Kant is doing in *Groundwork* III is not showing that the will is free and therefore bound to the moral law. Instead, he is arguing that reason can provide the law (the moral law) to the human will from its standpoint of freedom outside of the world of sense. The human itself cannot exist outside this world, but only reason itself can.

In these last two interpretations, the scholars, though very differently, have identified the crux of Kant's argument as resting in the capacity of reason in the human being. Whether reason alone informs the human will or whether reason, as part of the human will, makes us regard the will as free, does not change that it is specifically Kant's view of reason that must hold in order for the moral law to hold as a binding force for humans. For reason to perform the function that Kant needs it to for his argument to hold, reason must have this kind of self-activity and must be the "authoress of her principles." (*Groundwork*, Kant, 125)

Yet, even more importantly, these views betray a facet of reason that must hold true in order for Kant's argument to hold. As we already have seen, reason must be able to have the capacities of being self-active and autonomous, but it must *also* have the ability to affect the human will and human action. Even though both of these views portray how this works slightly differently, they both agree on the important and relevant point. In Henrich's case, he assumes that transcendental freedom has causal efficacy in the phenomenal realm, the realm of our experience. This freedom must be able to effect change in this world through

the will of a human in order for the argument to hold. If the theoretical freedom of reason is somehow an illusion (we can see how this may play out later), and reason is not causing these judgments but something else, then there is no ground to claim that it points to the theoretical freedom of reason and therefore no ground to posit the existence of the noumenal self. The same is true in Henrich's case; even though reason exists in some manner outside of the position of the human, he still assumes that reason, which is free, actually affects the human's will and therefore has causal efficacy in the world. If reason isn't affecting the will, but something else is, then we can no longer claim that the will is affected by something that exists in a realm of freedom. We can see that these two authors agree on this point, and both use this as an assumption in their argument. This betrays the fact that this same assumption is made in Kant's argument. The assumption that reason does have an effect on the human will and therefore has causality in the world.

Due to the understanding of this assumption that is inherent in Kant's argument, we can claim that Kant needs to be required to answer this question: the question of whether reason actually has any effect on the human will and how it determines its actions, or whether something else is going on here. If reason does not inform or determine the will in any sense, then the will cannot be registered as free. If the will is not actually in any way affected by reason, then reason may not be an inherent capacity in human beings. Therefore, there would be no need to understand ourselves as members of the world of understanding. If

this was the case, Kant would lose the ground on which he argues for a free will and therefore the ground on which he argues for the possibility of the moral law.

With this in mind, the vital question becomes whether reason is to be determined as having a direct effect on the will, or whether it is doing something different altogether. The human capacity to reason is the hinge on which Kant's argument turns, and it is in the determination of what reason is doing for a human being in regard to action that could change the outcome of Kant's argument. If reason is a determining factor in the will of the human being, and a determining factor in his actions, then the human being can be seen as having a free will and having a duty to the moral law. If human action is understood differently, then the argument for the moral law will become problematic. In his argument in the third section of the *Groundwork*, Kant assumes that reason has a direct impact on human's actions and decisions. Yet, this is not a proposition that can be simply assumed without further elaboration. An argument for this cannot be found in the third section of the *Groundwork*. Therefore, this question needs to be further addressed in order for Kant's argument for the moral law to be filled out.

Chapter 2: Kant's Philosophy of Action

We have seen through an exposition and examination of section III of Kant's *Groundwork* that he has made an assumption, namely, the assumption that reason has authority, or plays a legislative role in the process of action in the human being. We can see places in the *Groundwork* where Kant explicitly states this assumption, he writes, "Reason as a practical faculty, i.e. as one that is meant to influence the *will*, has yet been imparted to us" (*Groundwork*, Kant, 21). Although he states that reason does have an effect on the will, he never gives an argument for this claim; he simply utilizes it as an assumption throughout his argument for the moral law. Therefore, this is a link in Kant's argument for the moral law that must be validated and elaborated upon before the soundness of his argument for the human's duty to the moral law can be given. Although this concept is not elaborated upon sufficiently in section III of the *Groundwork*, it does not need to be concluded that that Kant's argument is now at a standstill. Section III of the *Groundwork* has a specific purpose in Kant's philosophy: to prove that humans must necessarily take interest in the moral law, not to explain reason's role in action. Through an examination of other parts of Kant's writings, a conception of reason's role in action can be found. If a picture of Kant's account of action and especially the role of reason in the action can be ascertained, then it will prove his system consistent. Therefore, to further an examination of the argument in the third section of the *Groundwork*, it will be necessary to look at Kant's philosophy of action, and see if he gives an account that is consistent with his assumptions in section III of the *Groundwork*. This examination will not only

serve the purpose of checking the consistency of Kant's philosophical system, but will also provide us with an understanding of Kant's philosophical system so that it can later be put in conversation with Nietzsche's.

Kant's philosophy of action can be organized in a specific manner, due to his hierarchical conception of action. For Kant, a moral action, an action whose maxim fits with the Categorical Imperative, is the most respected type of action. In this type of action, according to one of Kant's four interpretations of the Categorical Imperative, the agent's maxim can be willed as a universal law with no contradiction. The less respected type of action for Kant is an action whose maxim does not fit the Categorical Imperative, a non-moral action. This is an action in which the agent's maxim fails to pass the universal law test. Instead of acting due to the Categorical Imperative, the agent is acting on a hypothetical imperative. Lastly, although it is not highly focused upon in Kant's theoretical writings; intuitive action is an action which is not reliant on an imperative. This type of action differs largely from the first two. In this action, the agent does not act due to a maxim, but instead acts on some sort of instinct. This third, more obscure type of action will prove interesting later on, as it will bear many similarities to the conception of action proposed by Nietzsche. A more in-depth look at each of these three varieties of action will provide an expansive look at Kant's philosophy of action. It will also allow for a determination of reason's role in action, which will help to fill out the argument for the moral law that Kant proposed in section III of the *Groundwork*. Although it may at first look like the detail that is given in the explanation of these views is not necessary for our

purposes of questioning Kant's assumption, it will be very helpful to have the whole view when later contrasting it with Nietzsche's.

2.1 Moral Action

The first type of action I will examine is Kant's moral action, an act that has moral worth, or an act that conforms to the Categorical Imperative. In the *Groundwork*, it seems, initially, that the reason for acting morally is contained in the way that Kant grounds the Categorical Imperative in Section III. More specifically, it is that an agent realizes that to have her action conform to the Categorical Imperative is the most rational choice of a human being who wants to realize her humanity and her freedom through her capacity to act rationally. The agent would see that acting under the Categorical Imperative is the most reasonable action and also the only free, autonomous action due to the fact that she understands herself as a member of the noumenal realm. I will first look at the picture of moral action proposed in the *Groundwork*, to see exactly what acting under the Categorical Imperative looks like. Then I will move on to the more in-depth characterization of Kant's moral actions that is most commonly held by contemporary scholars.

The principle of willing that Kant refers to as commands or laws of morality is the specific principle of willing that is considered moral. These types of actions differ from immoral actions in that the imperative is not hypothetical, it is instead categorical. As we have seen, the Categorical Imperative, under one of its formulations, holds that the maxim one acts under must be able to be willed as

a universal law. To see an example of one who acts morally, we can look at a case. A man may ask whether it is consistent with the Categorical Imperative that he takes money from someone and promises to pay her back, even though he has no intention of actually doing so. To check whether this is consistent with the Categorical Imperative, he must ask himself if his maxim could hold as a universal law and use his reason to answer this question. If it were to become a law that anytime anybody promised someone she would pay them back, that in fact, she actually did not intend to, the action of promising someone one would pay them back would cease to make sense. If this was the case, everybody would know the actual intention of the speaker, and therefore promises would no longer be useful or sensible concepts. In this way, this maxim could not hold as a universal law, it would create a logical contradiction. Therefore, if one is acting under the Categorical Imperative, or abiding to the law of morality, one would not perform this action. Instead, they would either not take the money in the first place, or promise to pay the person back and actually intend to do it, because both of these maxims would hold as universal laws and pass the test of the Categorical Imperative. In this action, the agent is formulating a maxim and using practical reason by checking that maxim against the Categorical Imperative, and is performing his action only when she concludes that it fits the formal conditions of the Categorical Imperative.

What we have just seen is a very rough sketch of what it looks like to act morally under Kant's conception of the moral law, yet this picture does not answer every question one might have concerning what takes place when an agent

acts morally. There is still the question of what causes an agent to act morally, especially an agent who still sees herself as solely phenomena, and does not think of herself as a member of the world of understanding (which we would assume is a very large percentage of the population). Obviously, every person has not realized the distinction that Kant has proposed in the *Groundwork*, and obviously Kant cannot expect this of everyone. Yet, Kant believes that all humans, even those who have not thought through the existence of the moral law the way he has laid it out in the *Groundwork*, have reason to act morally. Therefore, there must be something other than the mere recognition of the nature of the Categorical Imperative and the nature of the noumenal self that causes one to act morally.

The way that scholars most often answer this question is through a reference to the presence of a moral feeling in Kant's work. We can see an example of a reference to this feeling in the *Groundwork* when Kant writes, "The subjective impossibility of *explaining* freedom of the will is the same as the impossibility of detecting and making comprehensible an *interest* that a human being could take in moral laws; and even so, he actually does take interest in them, the foundation of which in us we call moral feeling" (*Groundwork*, Kant, 147). In lines such as these, it is evident that in some way, Kant believes in a moral feeling. He also seems to believe, that this feeling somehow plays a role in our moral actions. It is this feeling that can be the impetus to cause any agent to act morally, even those who do not understand Kant's argument for the moral law.

We can take a brief look at some scholars' views on the subject of the moral feeling and how they play into Kant's conception of a moral action to achieve an understanding of how this idea may play out. Josefina Nauckhoff is one scholar who deals with this issue. She claims that although the will is still objectively determined by pure reason or by the moral law, that this is not how we experience our relationship with the moral law. She claims that the will is also subjectively determined through the moral feeling, and it is this subjective determination that we actually experience. Therefore, the will is determined in two ways: subjectively and objectively. Through this distinction, Nauckhoff accounts for both the fact that moral feeling must be determined by pure reason and that it is experienced by a person as a subjective feeling, as only an incentive.

Another scholar who holds a view which gives us an example of how these two aspects of a moral action can co-exist is Paul Guyer, he writes:

Because the noumenal act of free choice cannot be identified with any particular event in the phenomenal world, this act of choice can be considered to be the ground of the entire phenomenal world, and its effect can be just as plausibly be manifested in the phenomenal sphere of sentiment and inclination as in anything that might be considered the phenomenal manifestation of rationality. (Guyer, 363)

Here, Guyer portrays that the will is determined as subject to the moral law through a use of pure reason in the noumenal realm, as Kant explained in the *Groundwork*. Yet, he is also accounting for how we experience this choice in the phenomenal realm. We experience this event, or this "act of free choice," as an inclination or as a moral feeling due to our limited perspective of these matters as

members in the world of sense. The moral feeling we have is only a phenomenal manifestation of an act of pure reason in the noumenal realm.

These two interpretations gives us a glimpse of how the moral feeling may work for Kant. In both cases, there is something happening behind the scenes which we cannot fully or directly experience, there is some type of activity in the noumenal realm that binds us to the moral law through pure reason. Yet, because we cannot experience this event, the moral law is known to us through an inclination, the moral feeling. In this way, unlike other incentives, the moral feeling is “special” and there is moral worth assigned to the actions that are performed on its behalf.

2.2 Action From the Hypothetical Imperative

The next type of action that will serve to fill out Kant’s philosophy of action is an example of a non-moral action, or an action that does not have moral worth. For Kant, an action that is not moral is one in which the agent’s maxim is not being validated along the lines of the Categorical Imperative. An example of one of these actions is one that makes use of a hypothetical imperative. In the *Groundwork*, Kant distinguishes between three kinds of actions, or three principles that can necessitate the will. These principles are imperatives (or rules) of skill, imperatives (or counsels) of prudence and imperatives (or commands) of morality. The first two of these three principles are both examples of hypothetical imperatives, or imperatives that only hold in that they will achieve a certain end.

These imperatives are conditioned and cannot be universally applied, because their necessity only holds in the case that they will achieve the desired end.

The first type of imperative that Kant outlines is an imperative of skill, and this is a form of a hypothetical imperative. In imperatives of skill, morality or goodness is not involved, the only question is whether the action achieves a desired end. The imperatives of prudence look very much the same although the end is always happiness rather than the variety of ends that can exist in an imperative of skill. Kant writes, “The prescriptions for the physician to thoroughly cure his man, and for a poisoner reliably to kill him, are of equal worth in so far as each serves to effect its purpose perfectly” (*Groundwork*, Kant, 59) Here, we can use the example of the poisoner reliably killing his man to see how this would play out. In this action, a poisoner will have an end (to kill this man), and will create a maxim through which that end will be satisfied that uses this imperative of skill as rule. We can imagine that the maxim could be to avoid detection during his deed. The action that may go along with this maxim is to slip poison in his drink when he is not looking. This maxim, here, informs an action or an act of willing that achieves the desired end (killing the man), and therefore the imperative of skill is satisfied. Here, reason is being used in determining the maxim, because one is determining how he should act in order to attain a certain end. He is using a means-end form of reasoning.

2.3 Intuitive Action

Moral actions that make use of the Categorical Imperative and immoral actions that make use of hypothetical imperatives are both actions that are determined through the will. As we saw earlier, in Kant's system, the will is determined by practical reason. These two are the varieties of actions that Kant references heavily in his main works such as the *Groundwork*, yet there is some indication that there is another type of action that Kant leaves room for. This third variety of action does not make use of the will and therefore is not determined by practical reason. One of the works in which this type of action is presented is one of Kant's essays, *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*.

In the essay, Kant divides the predisposition in the human into three different parts. He writes, "We may conveniently divide this predisposition, with respect to function, into three divisions, to be considered as elements in the fixed character and destiny of man" (Kant) . These three elements are: "(1) The predisposition to animality in man, taken as a living being; (2) The predisposition to humanity in man, taken as a living and at the same time a rational being; (3) The predisposition to personality in man, taken as a rational and at the same time an accountable being."(Kant) The second two of these predispositions can be categorized into the first two types of action we saw that Kant elaborated upon in the *Groundwork*, the case of the moral and non-moral action.

It is the first predisposition, the predisposition to animality, which implies that there is another way that humans can act that is not mentioned in the *Groundwork*. Kant writes of the first predisposition that it "requires no reason" (Kant), and therefore in this case we can see that it may cause a person to act

without the use of his will. Kant also writes that this predisposition arises due to physical necessity and mechanical self-love. The reason this impulse exists is for three reasons or due to three drives: propagation of the species, self-preservation, and for a community with other men or a social impulse. We see here that Kant concedes that there is a capacity inherent in the human that may cause us to act without the use of reason. One can act completely on an instinct that arises due to this animal nature, and if that is to occur, then reason is not informing his action. Instead, he is acting upon a drive that exists in him due to an instinct such as self-preservation. An example of this kind of action may be when someone feels her life is threatened by another man, and she lashes out at that person violently to stop the threat to her own life. If this action were performed on instinct, a maxim was not used, and reason was not used to create a maxim. Instead, the person acted out of pure animalistic instinct, making this type of human action differ largely from the two previously explained. This last type of action will prove very interesting when we move on to look at Nietzsche's views on these topics.

2.4 The Consistency of Kant's System

Now that Kant's conception of action has been examined, it can be applied to the larger question concerning Kant's argument for the moral law. More specifically, we can examine how reason functions in each of these types of actions in order to see whether his conception of action in general holds up with the assumption he has made in the argument for the moral law.

Whether it was in the case of the moral action drawn straight from the *Groundwork*, the moral action that made use of the concept of moral feeling, or an action that makes use of a hypothetical imperative, most of the types of action that Kant laid out employed reason in a legislative role. In the first moral action, the agent has to employ reason to check her maxim against the Categorical Imperative in order to determine its moral worth. It was only after this determination that the action is performed. Therefore, without the use of reason, this action could not be performed in the same way. In both the case of the action that arose from the incentive of moral feeling or a non-moral action committed due to any other incentive, we see a similar case. Since these are both cases of hypothetical imperatives, one example can be extrapolated to make conclusions for both of these types of action. In the case of the moral action, the agent experienced the negative moral feeling when she lied. She then employed her reason to determine how she could achieve the end that this incentive laid out for her, to no longer experience this feeling. It is only through this reasoning process that the maxim (not to lie) was decided upon and therefore only through this reasoning process that the action was performed. It was only the last type of action we saw in which reason was not employed for the event of an action. In this case, it was instinct that caused action, not a process of reasoning as in the previous ones.

Although there is one type of action where reason does not have any authoritative or legislative power, Kant's assumption that lies in his argument for morality is consistent with his philosophy of action. All that that is required for

Kant's argument for the assumption to be validated is that there is a possibility of reason as a legislative force in action. Reason does not need to take part in this way in every action. Instead, there only needs to exist the possibility of acting rationally for all humans. As long as reason has the capacity to act with a legislating role in humans, then Kant's system can be considered consistent. Kant needs to show not only that humans have the capacity to reason, but also, that reason is a capacity that can determine the will, in order to prove that humans have a free will. We have seen earlier that reason is free and has self-activity. Also, we have seen that if the will is determined by something that acts from its own legislation, and not from outside forces, it is determined as free. Therefore, the existence of reason can determine the will as free. Further, free will proves humans' interest in the moral law, due to the arguments presented in the third section of the *Groundwork*.

Kant's philosophy of action shows that he believes that many types of actions are determined in this manner, and that reason can and many times does have this legislative role. In almost every type of Kantian action, an agent either has an end that is determined through an incentive or is attempting to obey the moral law. The agent either uses reason to determine a maxim that will produce that end or to test her maxim against the categorical imperative. Therefore, in many actions, reason has a decisive role, the role that Kant needs for his argument to hold. The next question to turn to is whether this conception of action holds up against rival views. The rival view I will examine is that of Friedrich Nietzsche, who presents a radically oppositional idea concerning action due mainly to a

radical departure from Kant's conception of the self. The understanding we have of Kant's philosophical system will allow us to put these two views into conversation. An examination of the differences in these two philosophers' views will not only aid in critiquing Kant's argument for the moral law, but will also bring some key issues into focus that will shed light on Nietzsche's very radical conception of the relevant philosophical concepts such as freedom, autonomy, and agency.

Chapter 3: Nietzsche's Response

We have seen in earlier sections that the validity of Kant's argument for morality ultimately finds itself resting on a certain conception of action. The relevance of the moral law to human beings is grounded through the claim that their will is free. In turn, the idea of a free will is grounded in Kant's conception of the use of reason in human action. Kant believes that the majority of human action takes place through the "will," and that actions are determined through practical reason, or even, in a more indirect sense, pure reason. When an agent is acting under a hypothetical or categorical imperative, she utilizes reason in order to determine their action. Whether this reasoning comes in the form of means-end reasoning, as in the case of the hypothetical imperative, or by checking the form of the maxim, as in the case of the Categorical Imperative, it is still being utilized in both these cases. We have seen that Kant's argument for the freedom of the will relies on this understanding of the relationship of reason to action. One philosopher who proposes an oppositional type of willing, or a philosophy of action that looks radically different than what has been proposed by Kant, is Friedrich Nietzsche. I will endorse an interpretation of Nietzsche that rejects the idea that human action makes use of reason as a legislator. An examination of this view will lead to a critique of Kant's argument for morality, but will also to bring Nietzsche's positive view on these subjects to light. I will also argue that Nietzsche wants to move away from Kant's understanding of the concepts of free

will and autonomy and propose a new understanding of these terms that calls us to engage with them in a radically different manner.

Nietzsche critiques Kant and others who share his views on action in that he argues that both the concepts of freedom and reason are falsely posited as explanatory devices in the event of human action. In reality, neither has exclusive causal power in an action. Nietzsche writes in *The Twilight of the Idols*, “The will no longer moves anything, hence it does not explain anything - it merely accompanies events, it can also be completely absent.” (*Twilight*, Nietzsche, 14) Here, Nietzsche is proposing that Kant and others have made a grave error in claiming that the will can be employed as a sufficient explanatory device for action. He proposes instead that the will is in no way determining action; it is only a concept that accompanies actions, it does no work in motivating or determining them. If Nietzsche is correct in this claim and can provide a new conception of a will, it will prove problematic for Kant’s argument. A denial of the will would be, for Kant, a denial that reason determines actions. If reason does not determine actions, this would be an ultimate denial of human freedom, which would undermine a premise in Kant’s argument for the moral law.

3.1 Nietzsche’s Conception of the Self

Before turning specifically to contrasting Nietzsche’s and Kant’s philosophies of action, it will be helpful to fill out the philosophical background of Nietzsche’s view in order to have a full understanding of it. As with Kant’s, Nietzsche’s philosophy of action is intimately tied up with his understanding of

the self. Therefore, an understanding of this aspect of his thinking will be very useful in order to gain an overall understanding of his philosophy of action. While Kant conceives of the self as autonomous and as having membership in the world of understanding, making it a primary cause of the world of sense, Nietzsche sees the self only as a useful explanatory or practical tool. He does not believe that the self has the same type of ontological status that Kant assigns to it. Nietzsche writes, "As for the ego...that has become a fable, a fiction, a play on words! It has altogether ceased to think, feel or will!" (*Twilight*, Nietzsche, 14). This quote illuminates Nietzsche's idea that the ego or the self is not something primary, or something that has any sort of causation in the world. Instead, he believes that events occur in the world due to other factors, and the self is afterwards posited as an explanatory concept for these events. The concept of the self is only a tool used to organize and understand events. It is simply a way to neatly make sense of experience; it does not have any ontological status. We can see this in the quote stated above, Nietzsche claims that the self no longer thinks, feels or wills. All of these events still seem to take place, he is not claiming that thinking feeling and willing do not happen. Instead, he is denying the traditional position by claiming that none of these events originate with the self. Events do happen, but are only organized in this manner due to the false understanding we have of ourselves as subjects who experience them.

We can see a specific example of Nietzsche's attack on the self in *Beyond Good and Evil*, when he writes, "A thought comes when 'it' wants, not when 'I' want, so that it is a *falsification* of the facts to say: the subject 'I' is the condition

of the predicate think... 'I' is, to put it mildly, only an assumption, an assertion, above all not an 'immediate certainty' (*Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche, 17). We see here, that again, Nietzsche is claiming that the proposal of the self is a falsity. Here, he is identifying a specific, localized, example of this error. He is giving one instance in which the self is employed to explain and organize an experience, in this case, the instance of the oncoming of a thought. The traditional conception that he is attacking would propose that the thought originates with and through the self; it would claim that the self is primary to the thought, that there can be no thought without the self. Yet, Nietzsche gives an alternate view and proposes that the self or the "I" is not needed to explain the thought, the thought arises of its own accord, it is not somehow brought about by a subject.

If Nietzsche claims that the self is an illusion, or an explanatory device, then there is still the question of what is doing the willing, or the acting. Nietzsche has not claimed that action, thought, and willing are not happening, only that they are not occurring in the way we traditionally believe them to be. Therefore, there is still the question of how these actions are being performed. This is the question of what lies behind our false conception of the self. A passage from the

Genealogy of Morality will help to answer this question, Nietzsche writes,

Just as the common people separate lighting from its flash and take the latter to be a *deed*, something performed by a subject, which is called lightning, popular morality separates strength from the manifestations of strength, as though there were an indifferent substratum behind the strong person which had the freedom to manifest strength or not. But there is no such substratum; there is no 'being' behind the deed... 'the doer' is an afterthought, the doing is everything. (*Genealogy*, Nietzsche, 26)

In this passage, such as the other passages we have seen, Nietzsche exposes the self or the subject as only an explanatory device, as an “afterthought.” Yet, here, he provides a hint as to what it is that is behind this conception of the self, where these events actually originate. He writes “the doing is everything,” “there is no substratum”. This gives us the simple answer that the deed or the action is not being brought about by anything. There is no subject, no substratum. Instead, the deed begins and ends with itself. The “deed” occurs of its own accord, without the need for a doer or a subject through which it is manifested. The “deed” is where there is substantive value lies for Nietzsche, not in the self, or in the “doer.” We can understand, “deed” in this passage as a manifestation of what Nietzsche most commonly refers to as a “drive” or “will.” It is these drives that make up the illusion of the self for Nietzsche; the self is really only an arena of different drives. Whatever drives are present or not present, stronger or weaker, are what determine the “self”. The self is just a function of the manner in which these drives are structured. The drives determine the output of the “self”, its actions. The self can be deconstructed only into a structure and set of these drives at a given time or in a given instance.

In *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche explains how these drives function,

I do not believe that “drive for knowledge” is the father of philosophy, but rather that another drive, here as elsewhere, uses knowledge (and mis-knowledge!) merely as a tool. But anyone who looks at people's basic drives...will find that they all practiced philosophy at some point, - and that every single one of them would be only too pleased to present *itself* as the ultimate purpose of existence and as rightful *master* of all drives, because every drive craves mastery” (*Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche, 8-9)

Here, Nietzsche is describing how drives function in a person's psychology. In the case he has presented here, he claims we traditionally assume that philosophy comes out of a pure drive for knowledge, that we somehow want philosophical knowledge "for its own sake". Nietzsche is arguing against this conception by way of his own understanding of an agent's psychology. He explains that drives are only ever trying to achieve their own end and that this end is always power, or a mastery over all other drives. In this case, the idea of knowledge for its own sake is only a mask for certain drives to attain power over others.

In this passage, Nietzsche notes that this process happens "here as elsewhere." He is claiming that this is only one instance of a drive attempting to gain power. This process occurs constantly. Every action of the human can in principle be reduced and explained as one drive or a number of drives attempting to gain power. Even if this does not at first seem like it is the case, the drive may be masked as it was in the example we already saw. We can see the central importance of this notion of drive psychology to Nietzsche's thought when he writes, "Psychology again be recognized as the queen of the sciences, and that the rest of the sciences exist to serve and prepare for it. Because, from now on, psychology is again the path to fundamental problems." (*Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche, 24). This passage illuminates Nietzsche's belief that for any question we may have, we can make recourse to psychology for an answer. He believes that everything we experience can be explained through the presence of a drive or set of drives and the attempt of that drive or set of drives to actualize its power. In his paper, "Nietzsche on Agency and Self-Ignorance", Paul Katsafanas gives a list

of some of these drives. Katsfanas points out that throughout his corpus, Nietzsche identifies over one hundred drives. Some of these include: the drive to imagine metaphors, to nature, to logic, to rest, to fight, to distinguish oneself, to religion, to truth, to sociality, and to lie. (Katsfanas, 7) He also explains that these drives are interconnected; they constantly work with and against each other. This gives us some understanding of how these drives could have so much explanatory power. If so many are identified, and they are so interconnected, they could conceivably sufficiently explain any action.

3.2 Nietzsche's Philosophy of Action

Now that we have a picture of Nietzsche's conception of the self, we can look at how his philosophy of action comes out of this conception. We have seen that Nietzsche believes that the self as we traditionally understand it does not exist. Namely, that there is no unified or autonomous self that is performing actions and interacting with the world through its own will. Instead, the self is only the product of a collection of drives, each of which wants to actualize its power or prove its dominance over other drives. The arrangement of these drives is what determined the makeup of what we call the self or the subject. In this new framework, the subject or the self is no longer needed to explain actions; the actions can all be explained through the presence and activity of drives. This drive psychology will prove vital to understanding Nietzsche view of action. This being said, there are many different readings on how Nietzsche understands action, due to the diversity in the way in which he writes concerning action and due to the

diversity of manners in which each one of his passages can be interpreted. I will look at three different readings of Nietzsche's account of action; this will allow a fuller conception of his view on this subject. By examining the similarities of the three readings, it will be possible to pull out what is important to the overall picture that is being discussed. Specifically, Nietzsche responds to Kant's claim that reason has an exclusive causal role in action.

3.3 A Naturalist Account

The first of these three accounts is what is referred to as the "naturalist account." A proponent of this naturalist account is Brian Leiter. He proposes this view in his book, *Nietzsche on Morality*. A vital idea to Leiter's naturalist conception of Nietzsche's philosophy is his view of how the self is constituted, or how the drives are explained. He believes that Nietzsche's drives can be explained through recourse to both a person's "psycho-physical type facts" and the person's social context, especially in respect to morality. The "type facts" are psychological or physical facts about a person that are determined from birth. Examples of these would be physical predispositions such as height or weight, also mental predispositions that we usually refer to as attitudes or characteristics of a person.

The moral context, which is the other apparatus that can determine the self, is the context in which the person is brought up or the context in which she is currently contextually situated. Leiter argues that the context that shapes the person's understanding of morality partially determines actions and thoughts. For

example, someone brought up by devout Christians would most likely exist in a Christian moral context and would have tendencies towards acting in accordance with Christian morality. He explains that psycho-physical “type facts” initially fix the trajectory of a person’s life, they are causally primary, and one cannot stray from a path that her type facts prescribe. Yet, the person’s environment, especially her moral environment, can warp the trajectory within the bounds that the “type facts” allow for. A person is primarily made up of type facts and these cannot be changed; however, her trajectory within the confines of her type facts can be modified through an alteration in her moral context. We see that in this view that there are only two factors that cause an action or thought in an agent: the agent’s type-facts, and the agent’s social context. These two factors “work together” to determine the agent’s actions.

This naturalistic explanation of action leaves us with a specific account of the will. The will is not autonomous; it does not determine actions of its own accord. Actions are instead determined by other forces. The will, as an enterprise having a causal role in a specific action, is only a falsity that is posited in order to attempt to explain an action. In actuality, the action is being determined by these other two factors: environment and type-facts, both of which are outside of the agent’s control. Leiter writes, “Assuming that conscious states would have to figure in the causation of *autonomous* actions, it follows that there are no such actions, such actions are simply determined by the natural facts that determine consciousness.” (Leiter, 87) From the position of the naturalist argument, the drives inherent in an agent’s psychology are explained primarily through the

person's "type facts" and secondarily through their moral context. It is these two factors that cause action, desire, or belief. Therefore, under this view, the agent cannot be determined as taking any causal role in action, action is just a product of forces that are outside of the agent's control.

3.4 Two Further Accounts

Now that we have examined Leiter's naturalist account of Nietzsche's conception of willing, I want to turn to two other accounts. Although these accounts differ on some respects, I think they will show that one thing is central to Nietzsche's view of action, something that is very important in contrasting this view with Kant's. Specifically, we will see that in all of the views that the self is not autonomous in determining action; action is always dependent on conditions outside of the agent's control.

One of these two accounts is proposed by Maudemarie Clark and David Dudrick, who, in their essay: "Nietzsche on the Will: and Analysis of BGE 19", analyze one passage of Nietzsche's to propose a reading of willing in Nietzsche's thought. There, Nietzsche writes:

Willing strikes me as, above all, something *complicated*, something unified only in a word - and this single word contains the popular prejudice that has overruled whatever minimal precautions philosophers might take. So let us be more cautious...Let us say: in every act of willing there is, to begin with a plurality of feelings...All willing is simply a matter of commanding and obeying, on the groundwork, as I have said, of a society constructed out of many "souls": from which a philosopher should claim the right to understand willing itself within the framework of morality: morality understood as the doctoring of power relations under which the phenomenon of "life" arises. (*Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche, 19)

Nietzsche explains here that willing is more complicated than the way it is traditionally conceived, that an action is explained due to the conscious activity of an agent. Instead, he argues that there is a “plurality of feelings” in the event of an action, and every action takes place within a framework, what he calls a many “souled” self. Nietzsche is proposing that an action is a result of the conflict of many drives, what are referred to as both “feelings” and “souls” in the passage.

Therefore, an action of willing is not as simple as we might first assume. The self does not simply determine the action in whatever way he or she wants; it is instead a product of all of these interacting drives. Clark and Dudrick pick up on this reading of the passage and propose that the agent’s drives must line up in a certain way to make an action possible. An action is not simply a matter of willing (the traditional conception), but it also depends on the nature of the drives that make up the agent and the manner in which they are arranged. Only when the drives are lined up in the right way will the agent be able to produce a certain action. Clark and Dudrick write, “The further conditions to be met if willing is to bring about action are therefore whatever conditions must be in play for the commands of the superior drives to bring about the obedience of the commanded drives.” (Clark and Dudrick, 197) The example that the authors use to explain this notion is the example of a car with faulty brakes. The faulty brakes are used to represent the will and the car crashing is the representation of the action in question. The faulty brakes themselves are not sufficient to cause the car to crash. If the car is simply sitting in the driveway with faulty brakes it will not crash. Yet,

if the situation is right--for example, if the car is moving at a fast enough speed--then the faulty brakes will cause the car to crash. It is the same with the will: if the agent's drives are not set up in the right way, then the agent cannot will a certain event to happen. The drives must be set up in the right way for the agent to be able will a certain action. As in Leiter's account, the agent is not acting autonomously, but is being determined by something outside of her control, her drive psychology.

One last conception that will help to illuminate Nietzsche's view on the will and action in general is proposed by Aaron Ridley in his paper, *Nietzsche on Art and Freedom*. I will also use Ridley's ideas in a later chapter when proposing the positive view of Nietzsche's that I want to endorse. Therefore, I will go into it in some detail in this view, more detail than what is needed specifically for the purposes of what I am doing in this chapter. Some points that may seem superfluous at this point will come into use later while explaining Nietzsche's positive view. In this essay Ridley first contrasts Nietzsche's view of the will with the traditional free will debate. This debate Ridley characterizes as the argument between three different camps: (1) those who believe in free will in the traditional sense, (2) those who do not believe in free will in the traditional sense, (3) and those who consider themselves compatibilists. The question at stake is whether one believes that the agent has free choice over what action to perform at any given instant or whether the agent is limited to only one action at any moment in time. One who is a proponent of free will believes that there is freedom in the choice of what action to perform, while one who is not believes that this freedom

does not exist. The comptabilist combines these two views in a sense by arguing that agents are limited to only one action at a given time, but also claims that this does not necessitate a lack of freedom. Ridley locates Nietzsche's comments concerning the will outside this debate, claiming that he is doing something different altogether, that by the term "free will" he is addressing a completely different notion. Ridley explains Nietzsche's relation to the traditional debate concerning free will in order to make sure we do not look to the wrong debate to understand some of his passages, and therefore mis-interpret them. We must look at his views on the will as having a normative status, not an explanatory one.

Ridley analyzes *Beyond Good and Evil* 21, where Nietzsche explains that the conception of the will as the first cause of an action is an absurdity, and he writes:

The *causa sui* is the best self-contradiction that has ever been conceived, a type of logical rape and abomination...The longing for "freedom of the will" in the superlative metaphysical sense (which, unfortunately, still rules in the heads of the half-educated), the longing to bear the entire and ultimate responsibility for your actions yourself and to relive God, world, ancestors, change, and society of the burden. (*Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche, 21)

This passage portrays Nietzsche's discontent with the idea that the will has exclusive causal power in an action, something we have already seen. Instead, he argues that there are many other factors that play into action, which this idea denies. Ridley picks up on this reading and proposes that Nietzsche is more concerned with the other factors that play into one's willing such as "God, the world, ancestors, chance, and society", than he is with the physical causation of the will.

Ridley further elaborates on his view by examining a passage from the *Gay Science*, titled *One thing is needful*. The passage goes:

To 'give style to one's character - a great and rare art! It is practiced by those who survey all the strengths and weaknesses that their nature has to offer and then fit them into an artistic plan until each appears as art and reason and even weaknesses delight the eye...It will be the strong and domineering natures who experience their most exquisite pleasure under such coercion, in being bound by but also perfected under their own law...Conversely, it is the weak characters with no power over themselves who *hate* the constraint of style...they become slaves as soon as they serve; they hate to serve...For one thing is needful: that a human being should *attain* satisfaction with himself. (*Gay Science*, Nietzsche, 232)

Ridley explains his conception of Nietzsche's normative views on the will by fitting a reading of this passage with his reading of *Beyond Good and Evil* 21. He claims that Nietzsche is proposing that the ideal agent is one who relates to his will artistically. Ridley uses the example of Beethoven trying to compose a symphony. Beethoven doesn't know what his symphony will look like until after he writes it. Ridley writes, "He therefore discovered the determinate character of his intention only in (finally) realizing it. And in doing so he exercised - by Nietzsche's lights--free agency at its exemplary best." (Ridley) Here, Ridley explains that Nietzsche's passages concerning the will are only meant to explain a manner in which one should relate to the will. He is warning against looking at the question of free will in the metaphysical sense. He is attempting to turn the debate concerning free will away from this, away from the traditional sense mentioned earlier. Nietzsche does not believe freedom of the will should denote a metaphysical claim about the structure and reality of the will, but instead denote a claim about how one should act. Ridley writes, "For a certain sort of

metaphysician, the central question about the freedom of the will is ‘Could I have done otherwise?’ For Nietzsche, by contrast, the central question is ‘*Would* I have done otherwise?’ - or: ‘Would I *will* it otherwise?’ I am free, on this conception, if my answer is ‘No’” (Ridley). This passage shows, again, that in Ridley’s view, Nietzsche is not even addressing the question of the freedom of the will in the traditional metaphysical sense. He is changing the definition of free will and determining that an agent with a free will is an agent who accepts her actions with artistic style. He still claims that the agent is being “bound” by the law, but also being perfected through this same law. An exemplary agent who understands freedom of the will in this sense is one who accepts her path, and takes the binding nature of her character and her actions in stride.

The first portion of Ridley’s article that reads the passage from *Beyond Good and Evil* can be used for the purposes of this chapter, but I will later come back to the second part of it in order to understand my interpretation of Nietzsche’s positive view. In the first portions Ridley shows how, again, Nietzsche understands that the will cannot act autonomously. The will as a “*cuasa sui*” or as something that can have causal efficacy is an absurdity due to the fact that other factors influence the actions of a human.

3.5 Nietzsche’s Determined Will

Now that these three conceptions concerning how Nietzsche’s addresses the question of willing and action have been laid out, it is possible to look to how this bears on the larger issue at hand, more specifically, the question of how

Nietzsche's conception of action and willing compares to Kant's. Looking at all these three views together helps to shed light on how to interpret Nietzsche's oftentimes confusing passages concerning the will and action. Even though the three views differ in their focal points, there is one aspect to which all three views seem committed to one degree or another: the idea that an agent's action is determined by factors outside of her control.

Leiter cites psycho-physical facts and surrounding contextual ideas as having complete causal effect on an agent's actions. Both of these two factors are outside the agent's control; the agent is not determining an action, these outside factors are what are doing the work. Yet, we can see that this point holds even in the normative conceptions. Although Ridley argues that Nietzsche's main point is normative, he makes recourse to some explanatory arguments to set the stage for his final point. Ridley cites *BGE* 21, specifically the line where Nietzsche references "God, the world, ancestors, chance, and society" (Ridley). He explains that all these outside factors affect and determine the agent's will, and that the agent must realize this to be able to do the normative work that Nietzsche calls for. Clark and Dudrick's conception also hold that the will is in some way determined. Under this view, the makeup of one's drives leaves a space open for how one can act, but one cannot use the will to act however she chooses in any situation. The will is still determined by the current state of the agent's drives. Therefore, the agent still does not have full autonomy in her action; an explanation of the action needs to make recourse to the drives, or to conditions that lie outside of the agent's control, the same as in the other cases.

We have seen that although these interpretations of Nietzsche's conception of the will differ, that one important aspect remains constant. Even though some of these authors put focus on other, more normative points of Nietzsche's, each view holds that an action is never determined by the agent. The fact that three different interpretations, some even specifically arguing against each other, (Clark and Dudrick's view is specifically speaking to Leiter's) all hold one thing in common is a good indicator that this may be something that can be confidently stated about Nietzsche's view of the will and of action. Despite the difficulty of drawing out consistent philosophical themes from Nietzsche's writings, each of these authors pulls out one consistent aspect that seems central to Nietzsche's view on willing; namely, the idea that the agent does not in any sense "commit" the action completely of their own accord, or autonomously. In each of the three accounts, the agent is at the mercy of some force outside of herself when it comes to acting. When accounting for action it is these outside forces that must be cited, not any force of the agent herself.

This conception also holds with other passages concerning action not referenced by these scholars that prove that Nietzsche held this view throughout a wide variety of his writings. In a much earlier work than those referenced in the articles, *Daybreak*, Nietzsche writes, "We laugh at him who steps out of his room at the moment when the sun steps out of its room, and then says 'I will that the sun shall rise'...all laughter aside, Are we ourselves ever acting any differently whenever we employ the expression, 'I will'" (*Daybreak*, Nietzsche, 77). A passage such as this is consistent with this conception of the will. The action is

not being determined by the agent herself; it is being determined by something else, and it is only afterwards assigned to the agent. The action is being determined by the agent as much as the sun is being risen by the agent. It is only an illusion that the agent is determining the action.

The rationale for drawing out this one specific aspect out of these three readings--that the conditions for an action lie outside of the agent's control--is that this aspect is central to contrasting Nietzsche's account of action with Kant's. In the *Groundwork*, Kant writes, "What else, then, could the freedom of the will be, except autonomy, i.e., the quality of the will of being a law to itself?" (*Groundwork*, Kant, 122-23) Here, Kant is claiming that a free will is autonomous, one that gives the law to itself. He goes on to claim that this law it gives itself is the law of pure reason, or the Categorical Imperative. Yet, if Nietzsche's conception of action holds true, then one is not giving herself a law under which to act, she is not acting autonomously. Instead, the agent is acting completely under influence of, or at least partly under the influence of outside factors. The idea of an action determined by reason would be a falsity. Due to these important differences, if we can determine that Nietzsche's account is more prudent than that of Kant's, then we can determine the final outcome for Kant's moral law or Categorical Imperative, and how it applies to human beings. If Nietzsche's account of action holds true, then the will is not autonomous and therefore not free and not subject to the moral law.

Chapter 4: Contrasting the Two Views

I will next contrast Nietzsche's conception of action with the three conceptions of action that Kant earlier identified. I will examine how Nietzsche would understand these conceptions of actions, and also how he would understand some other situations that are vital to Kant's system. I will then argue that Nietzsche's view gives the better explanation of these phenomena due to the fact that he can account for all of these phenomena through naturalistic principles. We will see that he does need to ascribe to the non-natural principles that Kant identified such as the use of reason and the noumenal self.

4.1 Action From the Hypothetical Imperative

First, I will look at the case of an action that Kant would identify as occurring under a hypothetical imperative. In this type of action, the agent acts either upon an imperative of skill or an imperative of prudence, where she has some end that she wants to achieve. The end of an imperative of skill can be any number of things that the agent might desire to achieve, while the end of an imperative of prudence is always happiness. As we have already seen, in Kant's conception, a maxim is determined under the hypothetical imperative. In this action, practical reason is employed in order to achieve this end, it is used in a means-end manner. Therefore, the agent is determining her action through the use of her reason. The example used earlier was that the agent had the end of doing well in school. She therefore determined that studying everyday would help her to achieve this end, and acted under the maxim that she would study every day.

Through what we have learned concerning Nietzsche's view of the self and action, we can easily understand how Nietzsche's conception of action would provide a much different view of one of these cases. Under Kant's conception, an end is realized and a maxim is determined because the agent has reasoned out that it will be a means to their end. Yet, Nietzsche's conception does not credit the agent this much understanding of her action. Nietzsche writes, "That which, from the earliest times to the present moment, men have found so hard to understand is their ignorance of themselves! The primeval delusion still lives on that one knows, and one knows quite precisely in every case, *how human action is brought about....all actions are essentially unknown*" (*Daybreak*, Nietzsche, 72). Under Nietzsche's view then, he could not say that the agent understood her action, and understood that she decided to study for a particular reason, to bring about a certain end. She only characterizes the action in this manner after the fact, so it will make more sense to her. Instead, Nietzsche would explain the action by saying something such as: the drive to study has become strong due to her moral context (her parents and teachers constantly stressing that it is important to study). Therefore, her drives have been attuned in a manner so that the drive to study (or whatever other drives are hiding behind this notion, such as maybe the desire to look good in front of her elders) won out at the moment of the action. Different actions could be explained by a number of different reasons, a number of different drives, but all will be explained by a similar picture. Therefore, the agent does not act autonomously, with an understanding of her action; and surely does not act

with the use of a free will under which she determines her actions and the reasons for her actions.

4.2 Moral Action

In the earlier chapter concerning Kant's conception of action we also saw an outline of how Kant understands the event of a moral action, or an action that conforms to the Categorical Imperative. We saw that in many cases, agents most likely committed a moral action not due to an intimate understanding of the nature of the moral law, but due what Kant sometimes called the "moral feeling". The moral feeling acts as the incentive on which the agent acts. The agent determines her maxim in a way that it will satisfy the feeling. Although the agent does commit the action due to the presence of the moral feeling (an incentive), and therefore acts under a hypothetical imperative, the action is still determined in a sense by pure reason or by the Categorical Imperative. We saw this through some scholars' views on moral feeling and how it functions in Kant's philosophy. They believed that there was a way in which pure reason still determined the action, even though on the face of it, the agent was only acting due to a feeling or an incentive. They all portrayed how there was something "special" about this particular feeling that set it apart from other incentives. Nietzsche's view has something to say to this special, moral feeling. Why would this feeling be a part of human experience if not for the actual existence of a morality or the moral law? Nietzsche's response to the existence of this feeling will not make recourse specifically to his philosophy of action the way we saw in the last example.

Instead, it can be spoken to through Nietzsche's genealogical method. In this method, Nietzsche traces the origin of a certain aspect of human experience to display that it is not actually inherent in human nature, but instead only really another manifestation of a drive trying to achieve power, or of will to power.

In *The Genealogy of Morality*, Nietzsche addresses exactly this issue. The second of three essays in this work is titled: "'Guilt,' 'bad conscience' and related matters." This essay gives an account, a genealogy, of how these concepts arose in human interaction and understanding. As with the concept of a free will, Nietzsche does not believe that the moral feeling, or what he refers to as a "bad conscience," is a natural or inherent human characteristic. Instead, he believes that it arrived in the scene relatively late in human history, and was something that was constructed. Nietzsche claims that the idea that man is free is only a fabrication, a way for the weak to achieve power. The weak beings could not overcome the strong with physical force, and instead created the idea of a free will. This way, they could overcome the strong by making them accountable and therefore blameworthy. From this description we can already see how the concept of bad conscience is tied up with the concept of freedom. Nietzsche writes of the man who understands himself as free: "The consciousness of this rare freedom and power over himself and his destiny, has penetrated him to his lowest depths and become an instinct, his dominant instinct:- what will he call his dominant instinct?...this sovereign human being calls it his *conscience*..." (*Genealogy*, Nietzsche, 37). In early history, the concept of a "conscience" did not exist for men. Instead, when a harmful act was performed, it was just considered fate. The

aggressor did not feel remorse for what she had done, it was something that had to happen. Nietzsche writes of one of these “pre-freedom era” actions:

Instead it was a question of someone who had caused harm, an irresponsible piece of fate. He himself the recipient of punishment, which again descended like a piece of fate, felt no ‘inner pain’ beyond what he would feel if something unforeseen suddenly happened, a terrible natural disaster, a boulder falling on him and crushing him, where resistance is futile. (*Genealogy*, Nietzsche, 55)

This is in line with the reading we have seen of Nietzsche’s view on action. In the picture suggested in this quote, both parties --the victim and the aggressor-- understand action through this lens. There is no reason to feel bad or have any “inner pain”. The action happened due to reasons outside the agent’s control, so therefore it is something that needs to be accepted as a “piece of fate”.

It is only with the development of bad conscience that agents start to feel remorse for their actions. Nietzsche believes that the concept of bad conscience first originated with the relationship of the buyer and the seller or the creditor and the debtor. He argues that the dynamics of buying and selling are what set man apart from other animals and caused them to posit values by which to live, rather than by living on instinct. The idea that everything good has a price, that everything that an agent can desire must be paid for, is where values, morality, and justice originate. He writes “Man soon arrived at the great generalization: ‘Everything has its price: *everything* can be compensated for’- the oldest, most naive canon of morals relating to *justice*, the beginning of all ‘good naturedness’, ‘equity’, all ‘good will’, all ‘objectivity’ on earth.” (*Genealogy*, Nietzsche, 45)

Once these ideas were established, conscience and more specifically, bad

conscience could then arrive on the scene. The debtor felt bad when she did not pay a price for the good she had received, whether this was a material good, an emotional good, or any other type of good. Nietzsche believes that this creditor/debtor system was amplified through the idea of the community, where the community acted as the creditor and citizen as the debtor. The community gives the citizens peace and safety and the citizens feel indebted to the community for this. Therefore, a citizen will feel guilty when she transgresses on community values. The last move Nietzsche identifies is the move of community as creditor to God as creditor. God creates and preserves life and therefore humans are indebted to him as their creditor. They therefore feel bad when they transgress on God's values, which are the moral values of the time. In essence, this is a final step towards the development of bad conscience. With this God model, anyone who transgresses on God's values (moral values) will feel a pang of conscience or a moral feeling.

The last idea Nietzsche illuminates concerning the origin of the bad conscience is to explain where the drive for this specific feeling initially arises. The creditor is obviously acquiring power through propagating this idea of bad conscience, but where does the feeling in the debtor come from? As we have seen so far in the examination of Nietzsche's philosophy, everything must be able to explained through drives or through will to power. Therefore, this feeling cannot arise out of nowhere, it must be explained somewhere in the person's drive psychology. Nietzsche writes:

You will have already guessed *what* has really gone on with all this and *behind* all this: that will to torment oneself, that suppressed cruelty of

animal man who has been frightened back into himself and given an inner life, incarcerated in the 'state' to be tamed and has discovered bad conscience so that he can hurt himself, after the *more natural* outlet of this wish to hurt had been blocked. (*Genealogy*, Nietzsche, 63)

Here, we see that Nietzsche can explain where this feeling originated in the "cruelty of animal man", what he proposes to be an inherent quality. He can still make recourse to his drive psychology to understand the moral feeling or bad conscience. This feeling does not arise due to the activity of pure reason, or due to a notion of respect for the moral law, as Kant described, but instead is only a basic human drive to violence or cruelty that is re-directed. The feeling is re-directed at oneself because society does not allow for it to be directed outwards, the way it is naturally inclined.

In the *Genealogy of Morality*, we have seen that Nietzsche can explain that the moral feeling or bad conscience is a fabrication or a tool, not an inherent quality in humans due to the activity of pure reason. At first, the concept did not exist; but through a series of interactions between individuals with each other, with their community, and eventually with "God", the initial drive to cruelty in man was re-directed into this moral feeling. This naturalistic argument for the existence of the moral feeling gives a fuller view than Kant's explanation of the concept. In Kant's view, one needs to posit the existence of the noumenal realm and the noumenal self in order to understand how pure reason creates the moral law, which in turn, justifies the moral feeling. Instead, here, freedom can be explained without these factors, but through a naturalistic, historical reading.

4.3 Intuitive Action

The last of the kind of actions that Kant allowed for was outlined in his *Religion* essay. Here, he specified three predispositions in the human. The predisposition that brings about the action that we are looking at Kant titled: “The predisposition to animality in man, taken as a living being” (*Religion*, Kant). This predisposition, according to Kant, will bring about an action in us that does not make the use of reason. Instead, this action is performed on the basis of one of three instincts: (1) Self-Preservation, (2) Propagation of the Species or the sex-impulse, or (3) community with other humans or the social impulse. Kant believes that this predisposition causes vices, and no other type of action. This conception of action is the only manner of action that Kant allows for that aligns closely with the conception of action that arises from Nietzsche’s writing. There are a couple differences though. As has already been noted earlier, Nietzsche explains that there are over a hundred drives that cause humans to act, while Kant identifies only three. Also, as we have seen Kant believes that the activity of these drives can only result in vices, while Nietzsche believes that naturalistic drives can explain every action of which we are capable. Although the fact that Kant allowed for instinctual actions proves that he does believe that man had the capacities that Nietzsche gives central importance to, it displays that Kant believes that this was only one aspect of man and not the part that we should find any value in.

4.4 Nietzsche on Freedom

We have seen that Nietzsche's view can reassess Kant's understanding of reason's role in action. Yet, before turning to a more in depth analysis of the strengths or weakness of each side, there is one more argument of Kant's that must be addressed. Kant believed that his understanding of humans' capacity of reason can transfer them into the world of understanding and therefore register them as free and subject to the moral law. The work that has been done concerning Nietzsche's view of action has been to attack this argument of Kant's. Yet, as we saw in the earlier chapter that laid out Kant's argument in the *Groundwork to the Metaphysics of Morals*, this was not Kant's only argument for the moral law, it was the second of two arguments. Kant at first argued that an assumption of human's freedom can be made, and that this should be sufficient to ground the moral law. He writes, "Now I say: every being cannot act otherwise than *under the idea of freedom* is actually free...Now I assert: that we must necessarily lend to every rational being that has a will also the idea of freedom" (*Groundwork*, Kant, 125). Kant later gives the second argument claiming that the understanding of the activity of reason can allow us to posit the self into the world of understanding. Yet, he primarily explains that this initial presupposition of freedom should be enough to ground the moral law, and this second argument should not be necessary. He believes that due to the fact that humans act under the idea of freedom, we can regard ourselves as free and as bound to the duty of the Categorical Imperative. Freedom is an inherent characteristic of humans. Kant argues for this by simply claiming that we act, in our everyday lives, such that we are free. As well providing an oppositional view to what we have mainly been

dealing with--Kant's second argument concerning freedom and morality-- Nietzsche can also be employed to give an opposing view of this first, simpler argument. As we saw with the concept of the moral feeling, Nietzsche's genealogical method can shed light on the concept of freedom.

In the *Twilight of the Idols*, Nietzsche writes:

Men were considered "free" only so that they might be considered guilty – could be judged and punished: consequently, every act had to be considered as willed, and the origin of every act had to be considered as lying within the consciousness (and thus the most fundamental psychological deception was made the principle of psychology itself).
(*Twilight*, Nietzsche, 16)

Here, Nietzsche portrays that he believes he can explain the origin of what Kant calls “the presupposition for freedom” that humans act under. He means to show that freedom is employed for instrumental or moral reasons and therefore is in no way a necessary aspect of human experience. We saw a little bit of this explanation in the earlier section concerning the moral feeling or bad conscience when looking at *The Genealogy of Morality*. We saw that Nietzsche credits the creation of the concept of freedom to the weak in prehistoric society. They created this concept to give themselves an upper hand against those stronger than them. If one believed in freedom, then one could be taken as responsible for her actions. Therefore, those in unfortunate circumstances due to their weakness or the inadequacy of their drives to achieve strength would be able to change their circumstances by blaming those who oppress them or are stronger than them physically. To create a situation in which their oppressors understand the idea of blame, the weaker people created the illusion of freedom in order to hold others

responsible for their actions. Therefore, everything can be explained in terms of Nietzsche's drive psychology, rather than in the elusive idea of "freedom". The drives in the weaker beings want to be actualized and need to fabricate this idea of freedom in order to do so, because they are not able to in the traditional manner, through strength.

Bernard Williams expresses this in his paper, *Nietzsche's Minimalist Psychology*. He writes from the point of view of a weaker person, a victim:

I want to think that that he might have acknowledged me, that he might have been prevented from harming me. But the idea cannot be that I might in some empirical way have prevented him: that idea presents only a regret that I was not actually so, and, in these circumstances, a render of humiliation. The idea has to be, rather, that I, now might change the agent from one who did not acknowledge me to one who did....It requires simply the idea of the agent at the moment of the action, of the action that harmed me, and of the refusal of that action, all isolated from the network of circumstances in which his action was actually embedded. (Williams, 11)

In this passage we see Williams' characterization of the situation. The victim is powerless to change her situation empirically, through force or will power.

Therefore, she must find another, more abstract method through which she can achieve her goal. The way to get what she wants is to create a conception of action that, if adopted by the aggressor, will force in him a sense of acknowledgment of his victim. This conception of action is understood by Williams as an interpretation in which the agent, at the moment of action, understands herself as isolated from the circumstances in which the action is actually embedded. As we have seen, Nietzsche believes that an action is not performed through the will, but rather it is either mainly or completely determined due to outside influences: personal make-up, the contextual situation, etc. Yet, if

the agent understands her action under this new conception, that she is autonomously performing the action in the moment regardless of factors outside of her control, the notion of blame can come into play.

This notion of freedom contrasts Kant's notion of freedom. Kant believed that the fact that human beings act such that they are free or "under the idea of freedom" meant that it was an inherent quality of human nature. This account of Nietzsche's portrays that humans only act under this idea of freedom as a consequence of this social process. Freedom, under this conception, is only a construction, and therefore the fact that we act under the idea of freedom does not show that we must be free. It only shows the extent to which we have incorporated the construction of freedom into how we understand ourselves and our actions.

4.5 The Superfluous Nature of the Noumenal Realm

Now that we have successfully addressed Kant's first argument for the moral law, we can turn back to the more central point concerning Kant's second argument that makes use of reason and its place in action. We have seen how both Kant and Nietzsche would explain Kant's conceptions of normal action, moral action, and instinctual action. In most cases the two views are very oppositional and produce two very different pictures of how these events play out. Now that all this material is in place, I will look to determine which view should be taken up and why. I will argue that Nietzsche's view is more defensible for a couple of reasons. A good place to start this analysis is with the one place that the thinkers

have most in common, in Kant's notion of the "Predisposition to animality in man".

The predisposition to animality that Kant identifies in his *Religion* essay proves that Kant does believe that a human has the natural characteristics and drives that Nietzsche identifies. Although the two thinkers disagree on the specific nature of the drives, they still hold roughly similar positions. Where Kant moves after this naturalistic conception concerning the nature of the human is where these two thinkers drastically part ways. While Nietzsche stops at this conception that defines man as animalistic and subject to drives, Kant transfers man into the noumenal realm or the world of understanding, claiming that man needs to be understood in this second manner. It is only as a member of the noumenal realm that man can be understood as having any causal force in the world. If man is not considered in this way, all of his actions are determined through natural processes. He cannot use reasons to determine his actions under a categorical or hypothetical imperative. As we have seen, Kant argues for man's membership in the noumenal realm through the identification of the concepts reason and freedom and their interrelation. The concept of reason, and especially as reason taking a role in the process of action, identifies the human being as free, because it is an activity that does not act within and through natural laws. He claims that these two attributes seem to be inherent to human nature, and therefore claims that we have to make a presupposition of humans' place in the world of understanding. The world of understanding is not argued for in a positive sense, but is only seen as an inescapable conclusion due the notion of freedom as derived from reason. Kant

argues that these aspects of one's nature do not fit in a deterministic, naturalistic world. Therefore, we must assume that humans exist in some other unknowable realm, because the notions of freedom and reason need to come from somewhere outside of the naturalistic universe, and so posits the world of understanding.

We have seen that Nietzsche can identify a naturalistic cause for these two aspects of human experience, and therefore deny the need for a world outside of the naturalistic one. Under Nietzsche's conception, we can imagine that Kant could have accounted for "existence" of both of these aspects of human experience through only his first disposition, the disposition to animality. There is no need for the creation of the other two dispositions and their implications in order to understand these notions. Nietzsche's ideas have been employed to show that all of the ideas that Kant uses to take man away from the natural world and into the world of understanding can all, at the end of the day, be explained by the subject's drive psychology, their naturalistic drives. These drives may be in some way affected by the external environment of the subject, but they are still what directly and primarily causes every action. It is even the activity of the drives that create the ideas such as freedom and free will in the first place. For example, we saw that the concept of freedom arose only due to the drive of a weaker group to be able to blame a stronger one and achieve power for their drives this way. We also saw that drives can explain action just as well as reason can. A story of an action in which the agent determines her maxim through the use of her reason can just as well be explained by the activity of a drive within the agent's psychology. The fact that we even understand acts through the concept of reason can be

explained through activity of a drive or set of drives that want to be able to organize experience more clearly.

The fact that these “special” aspects of human nature (freedom, capacity for reason) for Kant can be explained by natural drives calls us to question many of the implications he draws from them. The most important question that arises from these conclusions is whether the assumption of the existence of an unknowable “noumenal realm” is necessary. If every aspect of human action and experience can be explained through the knowable, natural environment, then the assumption of another realm is no longer necessary. Kant, himself, claims that these concepts are posited only due to the impossibility of explaining the ideas of freedom and reason through naturalistic processes. The world of understanding does not exist in a positive sense, it is only assumed due to this predicament. If this naturalistic explanation was deemed sufficient, we must imagine that even Kant would have to concede that there is no need for the ideas of the noumenal realm and humans’ place in it. The method of explaining action through the agent’s psychology and their drives proves that these concepts that eluded natural explanation for Kant can in fact be explained as part of the natural world, or in Kant’s language, the world of sense.

By looking back the earlier chapter that contains Kant’s argument for the moral law, we can see that this conclusion has disastrous consequences for this argument. The moral law is grounded in the idea of human freedom, the capacity to reason, and the idea of the self as a member of the noumenal realm. These ideas allowed Kant to claim that self is autonomous and gives itself laws under which to

act. By way of this claim of autonomy, he argued that the law that the human must give herself is the Categorical Imperative or the moral law. Without the existence of freedom, which is grounded through the self's membership in the noumenal realm, there can be no claim of a necessity for a moral law. It is simply no longer necessary. It does not make sense to prescribe action for an agent that does not have a free will. If a human's action is determined through her drive psychology and her contextual situation, not her reason, there is no need for her to give herself a law under which to act, as it will not change anything.

Chapter 5: The Uptake

If there is no longer a need for the Categorical Imperative or for a moral law due to this understanding of the self and of human action, then can there be any normative import in philosophy? It would seem that there is no reason at all for anyone to ask us to act in a certain way due to the fact that our actions are unknown to us, that we do not have the capacity to change them. Yet, in Nietzsche's view, this is not the case. There is still normative work to be done; he only wants to modify the manner in which it is. He wants to change certain aspects of normative philosophy from the way that Kant and others before him perceived it. This is where Nietzsche's positive view has a role. I will argue that Nietzsche not only undermines the concepts of free will, agency, and autonomy as proposed by Kant, but also provides radical new definitions for these terms. Through these new definitions, Nietzsche calls for his readers to act in a certain way despite the restrictions that his philosophical system seems to endorse.

5.1 Nietzsche as a Kantian?

I will first consider some literature that opposes my viewpoint, and from arguing against these views, show how my understanding of Nietzsche's positive view can come into light. This literature argues that although Nietzsche sees himself as making a critique of Kant's transcendental moral philosophy, he actually has many Kantian commitments in his views. A discussion concerning these ideas will help to shed more light on some of the issues that have already been discussed. It will also put the ideas in a broader context and attempt to give a

fuller understanding on the radical nature of what Nietzsche is doing with his concept of the will and action. Although the scholars give a very full explanation of Nietzsche's Kantian tendencies, I will look at only the ideas that relate to the concepts being discussed in the paper. Specifically, I will examine the idea of free will, action, and morality. One of these works is a paper titled "Nietzsche the Kantian?" by Tom Bailey.

In his paper, Bailey argues that Nietzsche does not completely deny Kantian ethics, like many, even Nietzsche himself, seem to think. Instead, he argues that Nietzsche, very likely without realizing it, only amends an idea that was vital to Kant's conception of morality. More specifically, this is the idea that the ideal agent is one who acts autonomously. Bailey argues that Nietzsche's praiseworthy "sovereign individual," which he presents in *On the Genealogy of Morality* exemplifies these commitments. He writes, "For Nietzsche's 'sovereign individual' affirms agency [autonomy] as such and in general as the highest and unconditional value, and thus a sense of the equal or universal moral significance of agency that denies any fundamental moral significance to agents' contingencies or, indeed to anything other than agency" (Bailey 151).

Bailey claims that Nietzsche understands the sovereign individual as one who does not act on the basis of morality. The individual does not determine actions in light of a concern of whether they are "good" or "bad." The actions are, instead, determined only through whether it is something that the agent himself desires to will. Therefore, the ideal agent is being autonomous in that that she gives herself actions, and acts on her own impulses rather than on moral or other

impulses that have been given to her from the external world. Bailey points out that Kant's morality holds a very similar picture. In Kant's philosophy, the ideal agent is one who gives herself a law under which to act, rather than acting due to external influences. The only difference is the belief in the outcome of autonomous action. Kant believes that acting autonomously necessarily implies acting under a moral law, while Nietzsche claims that 'autonomous' and 'ethical' are mutually exclusive" (*Genealogy*, Nietzsche, 37). The way that Bailey terms this distinction between the two thinkers is by claiming that there is an allowance by Nietzsche or lack of allowance by Kant in degrees of distinction in morality. Nietzsche amends Kant's conception of autonomy by admitting different degrees of agency or autonomy. This way, there is not only one degree of agency and therefore one way to be autonomous that results in the Categorical Imperative. Instead, different degrees of agency make it so different agents can have different actions while still being considered autonomous.

With this argument, Bailey believes that he has shown that "Rather than rejecting Kantian ethics outright, Nietzsche shares its affirmation of the value of agency as such--its basic sense of autonomy" (Bailey 153). We can see that this is not only a radical belief held by one thinker, but that it is more widespread than that. R. Kevin Hill's *Nietzsche's Critiques: The Kantian Foundations of his Thought* also argues the idea that Nietzsche draws much of his thinking from Kant's philosophy. In his chapter on Nietzsche's morality, titled *The Critique of Morality*, he makes points that echo those of Bailey's very closely. Like Bailey, he claims that Nietzsche takes up the idea of freedom through autonomy from

Kant and only slightly amends it. Therefore, claiming that Nietzsche is not departing from Kant's ideas drastically but, again, only borrowing and amending them. Hill writes, "He agrees with Kant's characterization and high evaluation of the autonomous agent as self-legislating, unbound by laws of custom or normative laws of nature" (Hill 222). Hill terms the distinction that Nietzsche and Kant have concerning their belief in the outcome of autonomous action slightly differently than Bailey, but is, in essence, arguing the same point. Hill gives a similar argument to the one that I have argued in this paper, an argument that contrasts the two thinker's views of the self. He claims that Nietzsche does not follow Kant in his understanding of the self as part of the noumenal realm as well as the phenomenal. This is due to the fact that the agent's actions can be explained in naturalistic terms, and therefore the noumenal is not necessary. This argument leads to the same conclusion that Bailey's idea of degrees of autonomy did. Nietzsche's ideal agent or "sovereign individual" is still free or autonomous, but will not adhere to a universal law, or the Categorical Imperative, because she has no reason to regard herself as a member of the noumenal realm.

This Kantian spin on Nietzsche's understanding of agency and morality does not hold up to the view I have been promoting in this paper. On Bailey's understanding, Nietzsche's ideal agent is one who autonomously determines her actions rather than letting herself be affected by morality or other leveling influences. This does not fit with the understanding that I have endorsed in which action lies outside of the agent's control, and that the agent is a passive participant in action that is actually determined by impersonal drives. We see this problem

again in Hill's characterization of the argument. He gives an explanation of how Nietzsche's ideal, free agent acts, he writes, "The will posits some end or another and organizes its behavior in pursuit of that end" (Hill 219). Again, this claim seems problematic given the understanding of Nietzsche's conception of action we have used in this paper. An agent that is determining an end and organizing her action in accordance with that end looks very similar to Kant's conception of action that I have proposed, not Nietzsche's. Nietzsche's conception of action looked radically different from this, in which the agent did not have this much control or understanding of her action. If the understanding presented by these scholars concerning Nietzsche's relationship to Kant and Nietzsche's normative prescriptions for action do not hold consistent with other aspects of Nietzsche's philosophy, then there must be something off here. Nietzsche must mean something else when he uses the terms free, autonomous, or sovereign. He must be using these terms in a way as to mean something radically different from what Kant meant.

5.2 Nietzsche's Positive View

We can begin to see another explanation for Nietzsche's understanding of these concepts by looking towards the work of Aaron Ridley, which we already saw earlier. In Ridley's paper, "Nietzsche on Art and Freedom," he suggested that Kant was not addressing the traditional, metaphysical debate on free will. He was instead re-interpreting the term "free-will" to produce a normative conception. This same phenomenon could be what is happening with the idea of an

autonomous agent. Again, Nietzsche could be re-interpreting a term that has been used historically to make metaphysical claims in philosophy. This would be a reason for mistakenly understanding Nietzsche's conception of the ideal agent as being borrowed from the Kantian idea of agency. He is not borrowing Kant's conception of autonomy, but only borrowing Kant's term "autonomy." The term is the only thing that is staying constant; Nietzsche is actually radically changing the conceptual content that lies behind the term. Therefore, he is not borrowing any substance of Kant's system, but only some of the terms. Although more explicitly stated in Kant's work, this is similar to what Kant himself did in the *Critique of Pure Reason* with many philosophical terms. For example, Kant took the term "objective" and re-defined it to mean "objective" in reference to a subject rather than "objective" in a universal sense. This is exactly what Nietzsche could be doing with many of the terms concerning the will such as "freedom," "agency," and "autonomy. He may be using these terms in a new way in order to make a point to his readers that they should no longer try to understand things in a metaphysical sense, but rather try to understand things in a normative way. We should no longer look to philosophy to explain things metaphysically, but instead only to suggest ways to be in the world. He may be trying to make another revolution in philosophical terms this way, such as Kant did by making philosophy revolve around the subject rather than around the external world.

If this idea that is drawn from Ridley's article is carried out it would produce some drastically different conclusions about Nietzsche's understanding of the will and autonomy than those we have seen from Bailey or Hill. If

Nietzsche is borrowing the idea of autonomy from Kant and only amending it, as these two scholars suggested, then the ideal agent would be one who gives herself laws under which to act. If Nietzsche is only borrowing the terms, not the content from Kant, and from the general philosophical milieu at the time--as I believe he is--the understanding of the ideal agent would differ. We have already seen a bit of a picture of this agent in the reading of *Gay Science* 290. A quick understanding of how she is understood in this passage is that she would understand her limitations and accept her constraints with style. She would know that her actions are determined through impersonal processes, and that she herself does not determine her actions. Yet, she would affirm all actions that she undertakes nonetheless. As Ridley wrote, the question, "Would I have done otherwise?" is not a relevant question for Nietzsche's ideal agent. The relevant question is "Would I will it otherwise?" (Ridley), and the answer must always be no.

The claim that Nietzsche is not taking a modified Kantian stance on free will or autonomy, but instead is re-interpreting Kantian terms, can be backed up by a close reading of some of the relevant passages in his writings. The passage that Bailey points out in the *Genealogy of Morality* equates the sovereign individual with one who has a free will. He writes, "This master of the *free* will, this sovereign." Due to this definition Nietzsche gives we can assume that the sovereignty, autonomy, and freedom are all very closely similar concepts for Nietzsche, as they were for Kant. Therefore, we can look to the many passages where Nietzsche concerns himself with freedom or a free will to determine what

he actually means when he references the autonomous agent or sovereign individual.

There are two different understandings of freedom that Nietzsche concerns himself with in his writings. One is the traditional conception of freedom, what we have been calling the Kantian conception. Nietzsche very often refers to this conception as a “prejudice” or some sort of mistakenly held belief. When Nietzsche is concerning himself with this conception of free will, the “prejudice of free will”, he is always critiquing it. The second kind of freedom that Nietzsche references in his writings is his new, normative conception of freedom that departs radically from the traditional or Kantian conception. When he writes of this conception, he is prescribing it. First, we can look at how Nietzsche addresses the first conception, how he critiques the traditional conception of freedom. The first section of *Beyond Good and Evil* is titled “On the Prejudices of Philosophers”, of which he believes one to be the concept of freedom of the will. He explains that up until now philosophers have only understood the will by adopting a “Popular Prejudice”. Nietzsche proposes that:

It [the will] is fundamentally an affect: and specifically the affect of the command. What is called “freedom of the will” is essentially the affect of superiority with respect to something that must obey: “I am free, ‘it’ must obey”...A person who wills –, commands something inside himself that obeys, or that he believes to obey (*Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche, 19).

Here, Nietzsche is critiquing the freedom of the will in the sense it has been understood in the past. More specifically, the sense in which the agent causes the action herself, by thinking she is commanding something in herself to obey, and thus performing an action. Nietzsche claims that the agent only believes this to be

the case, portraying his belief that this is not so. Therefore, when Nietzsche is describing his ideal agent as one who is sovereign, autonomous, and free, it would be inconsistent for him to hold that this agent is herself determining action. Here, as in many other places we have seen, he has revealed his understanding that this conception of the freedom of the will is problematic; it is only a “prejudice”. Therefore, he must mean something else when he uses freedom and its related terms in a prescriptive sense.

Nietzsche continues this critique two passages later in *Beyond Good and Evil* 21, he writes:

Suppose someone sees through the boorish naivete of this famous concept of “free will” and manages to get it out of his mind; I would then ask him to carry his “enlightenment” a step further and to rid his mind of the reversal of this misconceived concept of “free will”: I mean the “un-free will,” which is basically an abuse of cause and effect...; in real life it is only a matter of *strong* and *weak* wills. (*Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche, 21)

Here, Nietzsche is arguing against an attempt to understand the will in any “metaphysical sense” (*Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche, 21). He does not want to call the will free but neither does he want to call it “un-free,” he does not want to look at the will through this lens. This passage departs from what we saw in the last one in that Nietzsche does not limit himself to only a critique of the old “prejudice” of the concept of free will. He also gives some insight into how he will move beyond his critique and propose a new definition of freedom, how he will fill out this concept with his own understanding. He claims that rather than looking at the will metaphysically, we should look at only the strength or weakness of an individual will, as this is what matters. More elaboration on this

idea of strong and weak wills will come into light when some other passages from Nietzsche's other works are examined, passages where he fills out his new, normative concept of freedom of the will in more detail.

One of these passages comes from the *Gay Science*. We can first see some hints of Nietzsche's normative understanding of freedom in passage 335 titled "Long live physics!" In this passage Nietzsche is attacking the traditional moralist conception of measuring one's actions against rules of morality. He is encouraging people to instead become free, rather than be bounded by morality. He writes of these men who have not realized true freedom that they have not "Discovered themselves", that they "Not yet taken five steps towards self-knowledge", and eventually gives a normative prescription when he writes, "We, however, *want to become those we are.*" (*Gay Science*, Nietzsche, 263). Here, Nietzsche characterizes the ideal, free individual, as one who finds herself, attains self-knowledge, and becomes who she is. These lines suggest that there is something already there for the individual to embrace. There is something that she has to find out or discover. It does not seem that the individual is free in an existential sense, in a sense that she can choose to be however and whoever she wants. It instead looks more like Nietzsche is claiming that she must realize something within herself. This suggests that Nietzsche might, again, not be using his perspective freedom in a modified Kantian sense, but instead within a different context. He is prescribing that there is something that the agent needs to find within herself to become free, something she needs to realize about herself,

rather than that the agent has some sort of transcendental freedom, in a Kantian sense.

Another passage in the *Gay Science* that can be employed here is one that has already been mentioned, *One thing is Needful*. We can follow Ridley's reading of this passage for our needs. Though this passage has already been analyzed, it will be helpful to go over it again in this context. In this passage, Nietzsche praises those with a strong nature who, "Enjoy their finest gaiety in such constraint and perfection under a law of their own; the passion of their tremendous will relents in the face of an stylized nature, of all conquered and serving nature" (*Gay Science*, Nietzsche, 232). He also critiques those of weak wills and claims that they "Hate the constraint of style. They feel that if this bitter and evil constraint were imposed upon them they would be demeaned; they become slaves as soon as they serve; they hate to serve." (*Gay Science*, Nietzsche, 232). Here, we see again, this new sense of freedom and of the ideal agent for Nietzsche. He is not using a Kantian notion of freedom, a notion of one who is free to give herself any law she desires or perform any action she wants. This Kantian sense of freedom is the very concept that Nietzsche is critiquing, as we saw in the two passages from *Beyond Good and Evil*. Instead, he speaks of the ideal agent as enjoying her "constraints" and the lesser agent hating her "constraints". The agent is being constrained due the lack of authority or casual efficacy inherent in Nietzsche's conception of action, as we have seen in earlier sections. Therefore, the new sense of freedom concerns an agent realizing her

constraint (attaining self-knowledge, as we saw in the last passage), and accepting it with style.

This passage also gives understanding to Nietzsche's claim that it is only a question of strong and weak wills rather than free or un-free wills stated in *BGE* 21. He is claiming that it is only a matter of how one accepts her constraints, accepts that her actions that lie outside of her control. Rather than employing freedom as a term that requires metaphysical explanation, Nietzsche is determining freedom on the basis of if the subject in question acts in the right way, or if she can accept who she is by realizing that she does not have control over herself, and she is really just subject to the drives which constitute her being. In this way a will can be determined as "strong" or "weak", and this is all that matters.

Finally, we can see an understanding of Nietzsche's new conception of freedom summed up in *Twilight of the Idols*. He writes:

Such a spirit who has become free stands amid the cosmos with a joyous and trusting fatalism, in the faith that only the particular is loathsome, and that all is redeemed and affirmed in the whole — he does not negate anymore. Such a faith, however, is the highest of all possible faiths: I have baptized it with the name of Dionysus. (*Twilight*, Nietzsche, 42)

Here, Nietzsche gives an understanding of what he means by a "spirit who has become free". As we have already seen, for Nietzsche the ideal agent is a free, autonomous, and sovereign one; these are all interrelated concepts. Here, Nietzsche claims that the free agent is one who "stands amid a trusting fatalism". He explicitly states that the agent does not have a say in his actions, there is a fatalism at work. Nietzsche continues and proves that by the term "freedom", he

is proposing a normative view on how one should relate to her actions, or to herself. He claims these free spirits, or ideal agents, do not find anything loathsome, and they do not negate. He describes the stance of freedom as a stance of faith, the agent cannot herself effectively will anything, but can only have a faith, and should have faith that everything will turn out for the best in the end. This sounds very much like those who own a “strong” will that we saw praised in *Gay Science* 290 and *Beyond Good and Evil* 21. This is what he is referring to with this notion of freedom, that people should be joyous and find pleasure in their actions and themselves despite the fact that these actions cannot be determined autonomously in the traditional sense. They must realize that they are only an arena of drives, of will to power, and that these factors are what determine their actions, not any sense of “I” or the subject. Yet, they must accept this and be happy about how they act nonetheless.

We have seen through a close reading of many of Nietzsche’s passages that when Nietzsche references freedom and autonomy in the sovereign individual, he is not proposing it in a traditional, Kantian sense. There is a general understanding among some philosophers, as we saw in the work of Bailey and Hill, that Nietzsche is only modifying the Kantian conception of freedom. They propose that Nietzsche’s ideal agent determines her own actions and gives herself her own laws. Yet, the understanding of Nietzsche’s conception of action and conception of the self that has been employed throughout this paper is not consistent with this conception of the ideal agent. If actions are not determined by the agent herself, but by impersonal forces, by drives, then this cannot be what

Nietzsche understands as the ideal agent, the sovereign individual. Instead, we have seen that Nietzsche is more likely proposing something else when he uses terms such as “free”.

I have taken up the view proposed by Ridley in which the ideal agent is consistent with Nietzsche’s understanding of the self and of actions as a product only of drives attempting to achieve power. In this view, Nietzsche is making a radical reversal of the term “freedom”, and giving it only a normative dimension rather than an explanatory one. By changing this term in this way, he is making an attempt to change how people look at philosophy and its terminology. Philosophy should only deal with normative issues, and not with explanatory ones, such as metaphysics. He is calling for people to understand their “constraints” and the fatalism of their actions. They must understand the nature of themselves, and have self-knowledge. The ideal agent has faith that that everything will turn out fortunately despite her lack of control and therefore negates no actions and relates to every action with “style”. It is not a formula such as the Categorical Imperative suggests that agents need to apply to their actions. Instead, Nietzsche only asks that we relate to our actions, and to ourselves with good faith and good will, and that this is all that he can ask us to do.

Conclusion

In *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche writes:

I have gradually come to realize what every great philosophy so far has been: a confession of faith on the part of its author, and a type of involuntary and unselfconscious memoir; in short, that the moral (or immoral) intentions in every philosophy constitute the true living seed from which the whole plant has always grown. Actually, to explain how the strangest metaphysical claims of a philosopher really come about, it is always good (and wise) to begin by asking: what morality is it (is he-- getting at? (Nietzsche, 8)

Nietzsche points out that all philosophical claims are ultimately tied to a thinker's latent moral convictions. From this Nietzschean perspective, no philosophers create a philosophical system from a blank slate, because of a discovery of the "truth" of reality. Through what we have seen in this essay, Kant, as well as Nietzsche himself, are both philosophers that can be accused (or credited) of performing philosophy in this way.

Kant sets up a certain philosophical conception of the self and of action. Both of these rely heavily on his philosophical understanding of reality in general. Kant uses the understanding he has posited of these concepts in order to ground his argument for the moral law. When Kant's conception of the self, agency and action fell apart, so did his argument for the moral law, thus, portraying how intimately tied his normative views were to his metaphysical assumptions. This may lead us to ask the question Nietzsche is asking: whether Kant believed he had "discovered" metaphysical truth concerning the constitution of the self and these other concepts, or whether this was just the most convenient way to justify his normative views.

Nietzsche's understandings concerning morality and normative prescriptions are also, as we have seen, intimately tied up with metaphysical points he makes or at least alludes to. It is only through what we have seen of Nietzsche's conception of the self and Nietzsche's conception of action that we have been able to deny Kant's argument for the moral law. The philosophical and metaphysical idea of claiming that the world as we know it is reducible to drive psychology or will to power, allowed for Nietzsche to justify his attack on ethics and therefore his normative prescriptions.

The earlier passage from Nietzsche's *Beyond Good and Evil* brings to light something that has been revealed and practiced throughout this paper. Philosophers that are as systematic as Kant and Nietzsche cannot have parts of their philosophy picked apart. One cannot elect to take Kant's ethics and leave his metaphysics or vice versa; they are dependent and tied up with each other, all parts of the philosophy are interconnected. If one believes that she is a member of the noumenal realm as well as the phenomenal realm, then she must also believe that to act freely is to act under the Categorical Imperative or the moral law. It is the same situation with Nietzsche's philosophy. If one takes up Nietzsche's view of action that I have endorsed and believes that that her actions are determined through external processes, and not of her own accord, then it does not make sense for her to believe that she has the freedom to make her actions adhere to a moral law such as the Categorical Imperative.

It is with this view in mind that the ideas in this paper have been put forth. Aspects of Nietzsche's normative views were not measured directly against the

aspects of Kant's Categorical Imperative. Instead, aspects of their larger philosophical systems have been compared, and we have seen the results this has on morality or normativity. I have argued that Nietzsche's system as a whole--his views concerning the self, agency, and action--is the more reasonable view to hold. It is due to the superiority of his whole system that Nietzsche's positive view should be taken up. It is through the acceptance of his whole philosophical system, that I have endorsed his normative view: that we should not look to change our actions on the basis of a moral law, but instead accept our actions with good faith and with style.

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