

## **CHANGELINGS:**

### **The Self in Nietzsche's Psychology**

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From Bazzano, M. & Webb, J. (Eds) (2016) *Therapy and the Counter-tradition: the Edge of Philosophy* Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, pp. 9-22

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Therapy-Counter-tradition-Philosophy-Manu-Bazzano/dp/1138905887>

### **Neither self nor 'no-self'**

That a psychologist without equal speaks from my writings is perhaps the first insight gained by a good reader – a reader such as I deserve him (Nietzsche, 2004, p. 45).

A key tenet in modern psychology is the belief in the existence of a separate self (or 'subject') – of a doer behind the deed. For Nietzsche, this belief represented the core of nineteenth century bourgeois morality and had its origins in the Christian notion of the individual soul. As an autonomous soul, I alone am responsible for my actions. The fact that I am answerable for what I do sounds obvious – so does the idea that I exist as a separate, self-governing individual. Autonomy, freedom and responsibility contribute to my sense of dignity; how can these notions be disputed? I will, however, neither dispute nor defend these ideas here: I will not assert the existence of an autonomous self, nor will I endorse a belief in 'no-self'. This is because I find both stances uninspiring, as well as one-sided. Moreover, they have been argued to death. Dualistic approaches try hard to substantiate the self (often through over-identification with Descartes' 'thinking thing' and its post-Cartesian variations, including the notion of an autonomous psyche). Other accounts choose to bypass the self, usually by emphasizing its interdependent or intersubjective nature, by describing it as 'being-in-the-world' and so forth.

Obviously one cannot draw on Nietzsche to bolster a Cartesian view of the self, though many still insist on a caricature of the *Übermensch* as superman or wonder-woman. Equally, and less evidently, one cannot draw on Nietzsche to prop up a simplistic bypass of the self, as it is sometimes the case in ‘transpersonal’ perspectives. It is for these reasons that (drawing from Nietzsche’s writings yet varying from familiar interpretations) I will attempt a different route.

### **Warning**

I should warn readers at this point, especially those expecting a confirmation of their views of Nietzsche as instigator of unbridled individualism, uninhibited narcissism or as harbinger of a now rather fashionable brand of existential ‘authenticity’: you will be disappointed. Equally frustrated will be those who prefer to read him as an existentialist *avant la lettre*, the purveyor of a relational, spiritually-tinged notion of ‘no-self’ or ‘relational self’.

What name should one then give to the reading of Nietzsche presented here? For reasons which I hope will become clear below, I suggest the term *negative psychology*.

### **Reading well, reading slowly**

Before becoming a philosopher, Nietzsche was a precociously gifted classical philologist. Despite his later disparaging of this branch of learning’s inherent sophistry, and despite the fact that the publication of his first book *The Birth of Tragedy* meant lifelong exclusion from the guild of philologists, he relied on philology’s methods throughout his creative life. Reading well, reading slowly and deeply, cultivating interpretative rigour: his grounding in philology provided him with the foundations for his genealogical approach to the notion of the self. In exploring the latter, Nietzsche revisits its historical formation – an almost *geological*, as much as a genealogical, approach, tracing the ‘story’ of the subject as-we-

know-it (i.e. the autonomous actor existing separately behind the action) as the ingenious creation of the prevailing Christian and bourgeois morality.

### **A thirst for enemies**

The soul is not eternal but *contingent*. For Nietzsche the very idea of a ‘soul’ (from which that of a self derives) is an indispensable *construct* in the development of our species, the result of a forcible sundering from our animal past. Our ‘inner life’ is a by-product of inhibition.

All instincts which are not discharged outwardly *turn inwards* – this is what I call the *internalization* of man: with it there now evolves in man what will later be called his ‘soul’. The whole inner world, originally stretched thinly as though between two layers of skin, was expanded and extended itself and gained depth, breadth and height in proportion to the degree that the external discharge of man’s instincts was *obstructed* (Nietzsche, 1996, p. 57).

For Nietzsche (long before Freud), we were forced to partake “schizophrenically in the taboo pronounced by civil society” on ‘all those instincts of wild, free, prowling man’” (Conway, 1999, p. 55). This was as much a process of *repression* as of *ingenuity* on our part. The ingenuity came from our ability as a species to cover-up our motives with the noble and gracious gloss of moral righteousness. Here is an example: we habitually think we are free “to express or not to express strength” (Nietzsche, 1996, p. 29). Often the second option is not really a choice but a cunning move that masquerades as virtue my inability to exercise strength. Say for instance that during the course of a public discussion you voice a strong disagreement with what I am saying. I may defend my position and listen to what you have to say. I may notice, however, that I am now beginning to feel irritated, even angry; you clearly do not recognize the depth of my insight. My exasperation is now increased by the vague feeling that you may be right after all. I fear defeat, so I retreat, explaining my decision in terms of moral principles. ‘I abhor confrontation – I will say – I am a Buddhist. It’s no good wasting precious time arguing. I’ll send you thoughts of loving-kindness instead’. Thanks to

my ostensible moral superiority, I have missed the chance of being congruent, even perhaps of reaching that greater level of understanding that comes from *real* dialogue – i.e. from a conversation, according to Bakhtin, who first coined the term ‘dialogical’ (Bakhtin,1982), which does *not* end in mutual agreement, nor necessarily finds common ground. I have also conveniently avoided confronting my inability to deal with anger in a constructive way.

I may, on the other hand, choose to pay tribute to the shallow ‘pluralism’ now in vogue: I will nod politely and pretend to appreciate your perspective while remaining leisurely unaffected by your intervention. I will respond to your objections with a knowing smile and conclude that there are as many views as there are people on this wonderful planet of ours. My admirably democratic position will leave both of us happy and unscathed in our carefully cultivated cocoon of ‘individuality’ – all the while paying lip service to a goody-goody notion of dialogue.

Or – I may accept the openly declared *agon* and be involved in the challenge you posed. I will honour my “thirst for enemies” (Nietzsche, 1996, p. 26), engage with you fully in honourable conflict – I will fight and disagree with you because I respect you.

Bluntly put: a) for Nietzsche, civilised living imposes on us the *implosion* of natural elemental forces: thus the birth of our so-called ‘inner life’; b) the weak person’s inability to engage in honourable conflict brings him/her to cleverly think of ‘moral principles’ that his/her separate self decides to abide by. As we shall see, a naturalistic reading of the above dilemma will understand the situation more in term of *quantum of force* and will refrain to place the cause of action in a *separate* self. Here is Nietzsche:

A quantum of force is just such a quantum of drive, will, action, in fact it is nothing but this driving, willing and acting, and only the seduction of language (and the

fundamental errors of reason petrified within it), which construes and misconstrues all actions as conditional upon an agency, a ‘subject’, can make it appear otherwise. And just as the common people separates lightning from its flash and takes 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, its effect and what becomes of it; ‘the doer’ is invented as an afterthought, – the doing is everything (Ibid, pp 25-26).

### **In sickness and in health**

Weakness/strength, illness/health: these physiological as well as psychological binomials recur with regularity in Nietzsche’s writings. If feeling weak, fragile, uncertain, I may choose, rather than acknowledging my weakness, to paint it with the colours of compassion or virtue. After all, this choice is tried and tested, shored up the millenarian practices of institutionalized religion. If I happen to be allergic to long-established Judaeo-Christian pieties, I can always resort to ‘mindfulness’ or to equally effective secular forms of moralizing.

For Nietzsche, the notion of a self, separate from its actions, is a direct by-product of our weakness. He writes:

There is nothing strange about the fact that lambs bear a grudge towards large birds of prey: but that is no reason to blame the large birds of prey for carrying off the little lambs. And if the lambs say to each other, ‘These birds of prey are evil; and whoever is least like a bird of prey and most like its opposite, a lamb, – is good, isn’t he?’, then there is no reason to raise objections to this setting-up of an ideal beyond the fact that the birds of prey will view it somewhat derisively, and will perhaps say: ‘We don’t bear any grudge at all towards these good lambs, in fact we love them, nothing is tastier than a tender lamb.’ (Nietzsche, 1996, pp 25-26).

### **Weakness as freedom**

What kind of person must believe in an “unbiased subject [endowed] with freedom of choice”? (Nietzsche, 1996, p. 26). Answer: one whose main concern is *self-preservation*. And

what kind of organism is motivated by self-preservation? The question will be asked by neurologist and philosopher Kurt Goldstein some forty years later. And his reply is: a *sick* organism. Nietzsche and Goldstein, these two elective disciples of Goethe – the latter a precursor of *Gestalt* as well as non-reductive neuroscience– thoroughly agreed on this crucial point. Pathology is for Goldstein characterized by the *shrinking* of organismic experiencing (Goldstein, 1995). And what defines, conversely, *strength* in a healthy organism is the desire to give, even to squander one's resources: will to power is at heart generosity (Bazzano, 2006).

Nietzsche's extraordinary suggestion is that our culture's fixation with the notion of an independent self is the product of the latter's endemic sickness, of our demand that others be in awe of our feebleness. The notion of an independent subject depends on our magnificent self-deception that sees weakness as freedom (Nietzsche, 1996).

### **And now for something truly objective**

There is a broader association with our habitual notion of a doer behind a deed, and it has to do with *cause* and *effect*. In *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche writes:

Cause and effect: such a duality probably never exists; in truth we are confronted by a continuum out of which we isolate a couple of pieces, just as we perceive motion only as isolated points and then infer it without ever actually seeing it. The suddenness with which many effects stand out misleads us; actually, it is sudden only for us. In this moment of suddenness there is an infinite number of processes that elude us. An intellect that could see cause and effect as a continuum and a flux and not, as we do, in terms of arbitrary division and dismemberment, would repudiate the concept of cause and effect and deny all conditionality (Nietzsche, 1991, p. 173).

Nietzsche's position is not, however, straightforward naturalism. In a later work, *Twilight of the Idols* (Nietzsche, 2003), he critiques psychology *and* science in the same breath – the *soul*

*atomism* of the former as much as the *atomism* of physicists (Acampora, 2004), both in turn dependent on the Kantian idealism of the ‘thing-in-itself’:

And even your atom, my dear mechanists and physicists – how much error, how much rudimentary psychology is still residual in your atom! Not to mention the ‘thing-in-itself’... of the metaphysicians! The error of the spirit as cause mistaken for reality! And made the very measure of reality! And called God! (Nietzsche, 2003, p 61).

Our objective sciences, in other words, are anthropocentric to the core, relying on human psychology which is in turn ensnared by the idea that spirit, self, consciousness are primary *causes*.

### **The trouble with phenomenologists**

Nietzsche did not end his analysis here. If he had, his would have been a deterministic reading that understands deeds as activated by forces and humans as little more than fortuitous conduits. His notion alters during the course of his rigorous and, to some, vertiginous perspectivism. Before considering in what ways his perception changes, it may be worthwhile to reflect on how the idea of ‘no doer behind the deed’, compellingly conveyed in the *Genealogy*, can serve our aim here. The first, immediate advantage of this notion is of necessary antidote to a contemporary orthodoxy almost irrevocably ensnared by unreconstructed notions of subjectivity. I am not referring exclusively to the obvious examples summarily listed here as follows:

- a) State-sponsored M.O.T.-style interventions aimed at making the wounded and the discouraged fit for productivity.
- b) Inspirational conversations focused on helping people achieve self-actualization, authenticity, their higher or true self or their inner child (delete as appropriate);
- c) Archaeological excavations of intricate mommy-daddy scenarios;
- d) DIY manuals for successfully applying the tags *transference* and *counter-transference*

over human interactions, particularly those happening in the ‘therapy world’.

I am explicitly referring to a ‘school’ of therapy that has claimed Nietzsche’s legacy as its own, perhaps without really earning it: existential/phenomenological psychotherapy. Despite (or perhaps because of) its emphasis on the ‘relational’ domain, and despite (or perhaps because of) its flight into *Dasein*, within this orientation the subject remains royally intact. The famed description of phenomena, trumpeted as radically and horizontally different from analysis, unfailingly goes back to the Ithaca of the subject who remains at the centre of phenomenological investigation. There may be acknowledgement of simultaneous ‘inner’ and ‘outer’ incidences but these are all referred back to ‘me’. Similarly, *epoché* or ‘bracketing’ may be seen as an essentially self-centred operation, especially when abstractly conceived and without an accompanying psychosomatic form of askesis such as meditation. Phenomena emerge incessantly and without a centre. Things happen: they arise, abide for a while and fade. They do not happen to *me*. In Nietzsche’s thought, as in all non-self-centred investigation, the question is not ‘Who am I?’ but rather (as in Zen practice) ‘What is this?’ (Sunim, 2009), a question that addresses the entire (and decentred) field of phenomena.

I write these words with a deep sense of ambivalence, having practiced from within a humanistic and existential frame for several years (even though I came to psychotherapy long after studying Nietzsche). The paradox is that in Nietzsche we find not only the *basis* of existential phenomenology – in his persuasive ousting of metaphysics and epistemology – but also its anticipatory overcoming. While Husserl and Heidegger cling to the notions of *truth* and of a *real world*, Nietzsche’s inquiry does not end there. If it did, his philosophy would be merely a reversal of Plato’s ‘two world’ metaphysics (Poellner, 1995) with pride of place granted this time to the phenomenal world (whose hidden ‘truth’ would in turn be ‘unveiled’

to/by a subject). But the real world is for Nietzsche a myth –useful at times, but a myth nevertheless:

The ‘real world’ – an idea no longer of any use, not even a duty any longer – an idea grown useless, superfluous, consequently a refuted idea: let us abolish it! [...]  
We have abolished the real world: what world is left? The apparent world perhaps? [...]  
But no! *With the real world we have also abolished the apparent world!* (Nietzsche, 2003, p. 50)

Belief in the existence of an autonomous self is closely associated to the metaphysical notion of *being* behind *becoming*. One of the tasks for a philosophy of becoming, as articulated by the counter-tradition, is to dispose of the idea of being altogether. In this, Nietzsche remains the most direct inheritor in modern times of the first thinker of the counter-tradition, Heraclitus.

### **We are not artists enough**

As far as *truth* goes, the will to truth epitomized by science (championed by Husserl) and a philosophy of being (advocated by Heidegger) is for Nietzsche a manifestation of our *inability to create*. We placidly assume the existence of a readymade truth somewhere, behind the bewildering precariousness of the world – a static truth waiting to be discovered. This view is not only complacent; it is a symptom of weakness. We nurture it because we are not daring and inventive enough – we are not *artists* enough – to *create* truth. Will to knowledge (*episteme*) and will to truth (*aletheia*) both are born of our *fear* of becoming, “a movement proper to mediocre people who are unable to direct and dominate things and who conceive of happiness as immobility” (Vattimo, 2005, p. 18).

Incidentally, Nietzsche being Nietzsche, in his writings there is no straightforward ‘relativist’ rejection of truth in favour of *semblance*. Reason and will to truth play an important role in the plurality of the psyche but certainly not the dominant role assigned to them by centuries of

rationalism and metaphysics. Paradoxically, even the will to deceit (and self-deception) plays its part in our psychological landscape.

Does the therapist help her client unveil a pre-existing truth known to the therapist? My sense is that client and therapist together *create* truth by “taking the risk of communicating” (Madison, 1981). This is a risk worth taking because

Client and therapist may come to bear witness to the evanescent coming-into-being, through dialogue, of a truth forged in encounter rather than the unveiling of a pre-existing, a-historical truth behind the course of events (Bazzano, 2013).

### **Lebensphilosophie or Existenzphilosophie?**

Following on the footsteps of Jaspers and Heidegger, existential psychotherapy embraced Nietzsche – with mixed results. Other applications of Nietzsche’s thought that could have potentially proved more fruitful were sadly neglected. I am thinking of the *philosophical anthropology* of Scheler (1961) and Plessner (1970), a school of thought often associated with phenomenology despite the fact that it had emerged from a distinct cultural movement of the 1920s originally associated with Nietzsche: *Lebensphilosophie*, the philosophy of biological and human life championed by thinkers such as Dilthey, Bergson, Klages and others. *Lebensphilosophie* presents us with refreshing alternatives to the interpretations of Nietzsche hypothesized by *Existenzphilosophie*. For example, for Dilthey (2010) our task is to understand the world on its own terms by developing the empathic relation one would apply to a work of art – a view close to Nietzsche’s. Klages was one of the first who appreciated Nietzsche’s psychological accomplishments, while Simmel, Bäumlner and Joël each valued Nietzsche’s relevance in various areas of knowledge and human enquiry (Behler, 1991). Bergson’s own brand of vitalism was in turn to inspire the work of one of Nietzsche’s greatest interpreters in the twentieth century, Gilles Deleuze (1983).

The *Existenzphilosophie* of Jaspers and Heidegger ended up overshadowing *Lebensphilosophie* as well as Scheler's and Plessner's anthropological philosophy. Heidegger never mentions Scheler, whose far-reaching analyses of Nietzsche's thought are also virtually unknown to the English-speaking world. What is still refreshing about their approach is the absence of a reference "on first-person-singular human existing" (Schacht, 2006, p. 131).

Richard Schacht writes:

[Existential philosophers] often embraced Nietzsche avidly; but they also embraced him selectively, to suit their own philosophical purposes, which were generally hostile to any and all forms of naturalistic interpretation of human reality (Schacht, 2006, p. 131).

A return to a (neglected) *naturalistic* reading of Nietzsche (in contrast with predominant *onto-theological* perspectives) may well be an antidote to the privileged role most psychotherapy orientations grant to the notion of a self whose origins are steeped, lest we forget it, in bourgeois morality. It could also form the basis, in an era of identity politics and intolerance of otherness, of a psychotherapy steeped in the more inclusive ethics of the *citizen* (Bazzano, 2015a).

In all fairness, there *have* been within phenomenology significant if unassuming signs of a move away from Husserlian subjectivism and Heideggerian mysticism: Merleau-Ponty's fertile notion of the *body-subject* (Merleau-Ponty, 1989) shed light on our situation as incarnate/embodied beings: we are organically bound to the natural world; a sophisticated, pre-cognitive language straddling the artificial divide between world and self *precedes* the allegedly 'free' and 'pure' consciousness which is presumed to gaze at matter and becoming like a spectator. But Merleau-Ponty's thought remains marginal in conventional existential psychotherapy, partly because it resists systematization and is thus ousted by other thinkers'

lofty if unfulfilled promises of bestowing on us their grand ‘theory of being’. In this sense, Merleau-Ponty is a natural heir of Nietzsche: both thinkers’ inherent naturalism reclaims the centrality of the body.

### **How to sanitize Nietzsche**

A growing trend in scholarship (Abbey, 2000; Safranski, 2003; Ure, 2008) sees Nietzsche’s middle works (*Human all too Human*, *Daybreak* and *Gay Science* in particular) at variance with both his Wagnerian/Schopenhauerian debut and with the quasi-metaphysical pronouncements of his posthumous notes. In contrast with the Dionysian intoxications of *The Birth of Tragedy* and the ethical and political ambivalence of some of the *Nachlass*, the middle works would be animated instead by a pervasive disposition of tranquil examination and self-effacing psychological inquiry. A central theme would be cultivation and care of the self – attitudes echoing the Stoics, the Epicureans and even Socrates – all compatible with the kind of explorations taken on a century later by Foucault (1997), Hadot (1995) and others. These later writers reconfigured subjectivity in term of *askesis* (self-discipline) and in an altogether more positive light than it had been portrayed during the ‘death of the subject’ heyday of post-structuralism.

It is true that the middle works register a significant, almost ‘positivist’ shift compared to the giddiness of *The Birth of Tragedy*. Certainly the dedication of the first 1878 edition of *Human all too Human* to Voltaire was more than an effective way to infuriate Wagner. Yet to read the middle works as painlessly compatible with ancient Greek rationalism seriously underplays Nietzsche’s lifelong antagonism to Socratism and Platonism and it glosses over the deep ambiguity displayed in his writings towards Greek thought (with the exception of the pre-Socratics and the tragedians). Although he admired the serene materialism of a

thinker like Epicurus, he was at pains to distance himself from Socratic dialectics and Plato's metaphysics. Although Nietzsche's Dionysus undergoes a profound transformation during the course of his sixteen years' prodigious creative output (Bazzano, 2006), he remains the northern star in Nietzsche's firmament. Dionysus is a vexing presence in a present cultural landscape bent towards gaining mastery over the unruly nature of the affects that threatens the alleged solidity of the self. I wonder to what extent the attempt to turn Nietzsche into a modern Stoic philosopher unwittingly fits a contemporary ethos of control and sanitization of those aspects of human experience that are deemed problematic (Bazzano, 2012).

Appeals to Greek *ataraxia* (serenity or imperturbability) are now popular in current Buddhist-tinged literature as well as in philosophical and psychotherapeutic practices. Without wishing in any way to disparage *ataraxia* as a desirable goal (who would not wish serenity to those among us afflicted by mental anguish?), it is equally important to point out that this notion of serenity has to be uncoupled from notions of control and mastery over the passions if it is to play a role beyond the demands of the ego. The passions, these "magnificent monsters" (Nietzsche, 1967, p. 521) are endowed with an almost numinous quality. We can learn from their intensity and irreducible autonomy in the same way, say, in which we humbly *learn* from a dream rather than bending the oneiric domain to the goals and agendas of our waking life. Gaining full control over the passions (or rather mistakenly believing we have done so) is a form of *hubris*, whose other name is Titanism. In Greek mythology, the Titans were giants who defied the gods out of arrogance, mistakenly believing themselves to be more powerful than the gods themselves. Prometheus is one such Titan. There is no greater ego than the ego of the scientist who believes his research to be one hundred per cent objective or the pious person who truly believes he has eradicated 'negative' emotions from

his psyche. There is no greater ego than that of the person who believes him/herself to be ‘spiritual’ and/or fully integrated.

### **From individual to dividual**

Yet the validity and richness of his self-exploratory, pointedly ‘psychological’ turn in Nietzsche’s middle works is irrefutable. It yielded real gems, one of which is the notion of the *dividual*. Nietzsche (1994) resorts to the Scholastic words “*individuum*” and “*dividuum*” (p. 54) to illustrate his point. Individuum, from which ‘individual’ derives, is that which cannot be divided without obliterating its essence; dividuum, from which the new term *dividual* derives (useful in describing the self in Nietzschean terms) is an *aggregate* devoid of individual essence. This is firstly an ontological statement on the nature of the self, remarkably similar to the Buddhist notion of *skandhas* (heaps, or aggregates), one that rather than granting primacy to the ‘mind’ sees the self as a combination of physicality, feeling-tone, perception, impulse, and consciousness (Bazzano, 2015b). It also has a more ordinary dimension of flexibility, as a passage in *Human all too Human* neatly illustrates:

*A philosophical frame of mind.* Generally we strive to acquire one emotional stance, one viewpoint for all life situations and events: we usually call that being of a philosophical frame of mind. But rather than making oneself uniform, we may find greater value for the enrichment of knowledge by listening to the soft voice of different life situations; each brings its own views with it. Thus we acknowledge and share the life and nature of many by not treating ourselves like rigid, invariable, single individuals (Nietzsche, 1994, p. 256).

### **I am a changeling**

Nietzsche’s thought constitutes the beating heart of the *counter-tradition* and is profoundly *counter-cultural*: it invites limitless interpretation rather than advocating the mere renovations of cultural models. In his writings we find the seeds of important future deconstructions and negations. The death of God also signals “the definitive banishment of

metaphysical forms concealed in the dialectics of self-awareness and of the subject” (Masini, 1978, pp. 21-22, my translation).

In the *Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche (1996) describes the self as a *changeling* (p. 26). The term has several meanings. Its archaic meaning describes one given to change; a fickle or inconsistent person; a turncoat, a renegade. It also describes a person or thing surreptitiously put in exchange for another; a child substituted for another in infancy; a half-witted person. We find an equivalent in Lacan, for whom the subject is a failure at subjectification (Clemens, 2013).

### **No happy endings**

So far, the suggestion presented, in various guises, throughout this essay can be summed up as follows: ‘there is no doer behind the deed’ and ‘the deed is everything’. It is, Nietzsche tells us, a question of strength expressing itself. Is the doer then (the self, subject) a fiction, a function of Grammar, expression of the commonsense, everyday necessity of using the word ‘I’ when speaking? To understand the above position as Nietzsche’s unambiguous viewpoint on the matter would effectively mean overlooking the multi-perspectival nature of his thought. Although it is true that for Nietzsche the deed is everything, at the same time the doer (the embodied human subject for whom the body itself, rather than the soul constitutes the ‘great reason’) does not simply evaporate as a provisional choreographic prop on the stage of ‘Being’. If such a metaphysical bypass of the self has been ascribed to Nietzsche, this is partly due to Heidegger’s influential 1936-1946 lectures (Heidegger, 1979-87) in which, rather arbitrarily, Nietzsche is presented as a metaphysical thinker, when in fact not only he convincingly negated metaphysics but presented us with highly nuanced perspectives on subjectivity.

In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Nietzsche suggests a more subtle relation between doer and deed:

Oh, my friend, that your self be in your deed as the mother is in the child – let that be your word concerning virtue (Nietzsche, 1978, p. 94).

There is a very intimate link between doer and deed, Nietzsche seems to suggest.

Taking my cue from Taylor (1977) and Pippin (2006), I propose a way of reframing the relation between doer and deed, one that goes back to the Hegel of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*:

Whatever it is that the individual does, and whatever happens to him, that he has done himself, and he is that himself. He can have only the consciousness of the simple transference of himself from the night of possibility into the daylight of the present, from the abstract in-itself into the significance of actual being, and can have only the certainty that what happens to him in the latter is nothing else but what lay dormant in the former [...] The individual, therefore, knowing that in his actual world he can find nothing else but is unity with himself, or only the certainty of himself in the truth of that world, can experience only joy in himself (Hegel, 1977, p. 242).

The view of action presented here at the very birth of (pre-Husserlian) phenomenology is not based on *intentionality* but on *expression* – a crucial difference, as Pippin (2006) explains:

I may start out engaged in a project, understanding my intention as *X*, and, over time, come to understand that this was not really what I intended; it must have been *Y* or later perhaps *Z*. And there is no way to confirm the certainty of one's real purpose except *in* the deed actually performed. My subjective construal at any time before or during the deed has no privileged authority. The deed *alone* can show one who one is (p. 381).

The deed is inherently social and historical; an interpretation of Nietzsche's writing which were to emphasize expression over intentionality in the relation between doer and deed turns Nietzsche's psychology into a social as well as historical psychology. I see myself in the deed – socially, historically. The deed is an expression of me. My 'original' and 'authentic' intentions are simply "provisional starting points, formulated with incomplete knowledge of circumstances and consequences" (Pippin, 2006, p. 382). What I end up doing is the

expression of my intention. In Hegel's words: "Ethical self-consciousness now learns from its deed the developed nature of what it actually did" (Hegel, 1977, p. 283).

I am aware that choosing Hegel as provisional accomplice in my interpretation of Nietzsche's psychology may be deemed objectionable by some. It is nevertheless consistent with recent scholarship and with my own championing of Hegel's early works (Bazzano, 2013). His depiction, in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, of *Anerkennung* (recognition/acknowledgement) and of the lordship and bondage dialectic throughout history provides the missing link in contemporary psychotherapy's understanding of 'intersubjectivity'. By emphasizing the real presence of conflict in human encounter, Hegel avoided romanticizing the latter and although allowing for the possibility of commonality, he crucially identified the suffering and injustice present in human affairs. In fact, it could be said that Nietzsche exacerbates the conflict inherent in encounter and instrumental to the formation of self-consciousness by *not* resolving it teleologically as Hegel does, let alone allow for pious fantasy of happy endings often envisaged in the 'Philosophy of the Meeting' championed by Buber and romanticized in turn by swarms of imitators.

Closely linked to the above is the virtual impossibility of *building* on Nietzsche's psychology as many would like to do imagining an uninterrupted lineage of philosophical and therapeutic practices beginning with him and Kierkegaard. In this sense Nietzsche's psychology is a *negative psychology*. This is because Nietzsche's analysis of the self highlights a point of rupture, even of dissolution. Far from being a prototype of a new human being, the *Übermensch* signals a crisis – a *creative* crisis certainly, yet a crisis all the same – the agonizing demise of the self-as-we-know it. A more detailed discussion of how this crisis, signalled by a 'limit experience', comes about, belongs however to a different essay.

Nietzsche's thought being irreducible, it is hard to build from it a philosophical school, let alone a neatly defined psychology. This in spite of the fact that many of Nietzsche's ideas can be found, among others, in Freud's psychoanalysis, Jung's analytical psychology, Adler's individual psychology, Otto Rank's notion of 'creative will', Rollo May's existential psychoanalysis – the list can go on. Nietzsche's influence is often unacknowledged, perhaps because his presence is too mercurial, his perspectivism too unsettling. Above all, he mocked the bulwarks of western civilization – chief among them the notion of truth – unmasking the pretense hiding behind many of our cherished notions. For these reasons Nietzsche makes for a strange bedfellow – an outsider, whose brilliance inculcates the twin feelings of fear and respect or, among 'virtuous people', the feeling of disdain.

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