

DS 4/18: Nietzsche's Moral Skepticism and His Naturalism

A RECAP

- **GENEALOGY** AS THE HISTORICAL INVESTIGATION INTO A DYNAMIC AND DEVELOPMENTAL PROCESS BY WHICH WE COME TO BE EVALUATING ANIMALS
- **NATURALISM**: NOTHING OUTSIDE THE PLAY OF FORCES, NOTHING *SUPERNATURAL*
- THE (FALSE) SEPARATION OF DOER AND DEED AS LEADING TO THE STRONG BEING HELD **ACCOUNTABLE** FOR STRENGTH
- CULMINATING IN THE EMERGENCE **"RESPONSIBILITY"**
- THE FINAL FRUIT OF WHICH IS THE "SOVEREIGN INDIVIDUAL" AND SO THE MOST CHERISHED PIETIES OF **LIBERAL MODERNITY**: HAVING A CONSCIENCE, OWNING UP TO DUTIES AND OBLIGATIONS, HAVING FREEDOM AND AUTONOMY IN SUCH MATTERS

SOME QUESTIONS/CRITIQUE

- WHAT REALLY DOES IT MEAN TO SAY THAT THERE IS NO DOER BEHIND THE DEED?
- IF THE "SOVEREIGN INDIVIDUAL" IS AN ILLUSION, DOESN'T THAT MEAN THAT AT BOTTOM WE ARE NOT FREE?
- DOES THIS THEN INVOLVE SOME KIND OF DETERMINISM? IS N A DETERMINIST?
- AND FINALLY CAN THE GENEALOGIST REALLY SAY OUR NORMATIVE COMMITMENTS—WHAT WE ARE HELD ACCOUNTABLE FOR, WHAT WE ARE OBLIGED TO DO—ARE CASUAL ALL THE WAY DOWN? DOESN'T THIS INVOLVE THE GENEALOGIST IN AN UNTENABLE DUALISM OF NATURE V. NORMS?

N'S CALL FOR A NEW KIND OF FREEDOM IN ESSAY 3

- *III.10: On the Ascetic Priest: "...is there sufficient pride, daring, courage and self-confidence available today, sufficient will of the spirit, will to responsibility, freedom of the will, for the philosopher to be henceforth possible on earth?"* 116.4
- DOES THERE NOT SEEM TO BE A DOER BEHIND THE DEED HERE? NAMELY A PRIDEFUL, CARING, COURAGEOUS, SELF-CONFIDENT, FREE AGENT WHO WOULD, THROUGH A "FREEDOM OF THE WILL" (NOTE THE LACK OF SCARE QUOTES THIS TIME!) MAKE PHILOSOPHY POSSIBLE? DOES N NOT PERHAPS VIEW HIMSELF AS A SUCH A PHILOSOPHER? IS HE NOT MAKING CLAIMS IN THE HOPE THAT WE WILL ENDORSE THEM? OR AT LEAST TAKE THEM UP AS ARGUMENTS?
- WHERE DOES THAT LEAVE THE EXTREME FORM OF REDUCTIVE NATURALISM OF THE "DOER/DEED" PASSAGE AT I.13? 45.6

-The “Genetic Fallacy” [Fallacy Man at Existential Comics: <https://existentialcomics.com/comic/9> ; post at APA Blog: <https://blog.apaonline.org/2021/06/24/why-the-genetic-fallacy-is-not-a-fallacy/>]

-Issues for Nietzsche, and esp.: Is he self-undermining?

-Background: Arguments against our having free will

Standard Dilemma Argument

1. Either determinism or indeterminism is true
 2. If determinism is true, then our decisions to act, and then our actions, are all causally determined to happen by prior events over which we have no control, and so are not free
 3. If indeterminism is true, then our decisions to act, and then our actions, are just random, and so are not free
- So, C. We are not free

Deeper(?) Argument from “Scientiphicalism”

1. Our decisions to act, and then our actions, are all just the upshot of mindless tiny physical events, mostly occurring in our brains, over which we have no control
- So, C. We are not free

-“Agent causation”: We cause our decisions to act, and then our actions, in a way not reducible to event-or-state/event-or-state causal relations

-Scientiphicalism vs., I don’t know, “Statism” (& a perhaps deeper still argument against free will)

-Nietzsche and the problem with specifically moral evaluations (good vs. evil, not good vs. bad): the need for a Berkeleyan, not a Humean, self

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Free Will and Scientiphicalism

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It’s been agreed for decades that not only does Determinism pose a big problem for our choosing from available alternatives, but its denial seems to pose a bit of a problem, too. It’s argued here that only Determinism, and not its denial, means no real choice for us.

But, what explains the appeal of the thought that, where things aren’t fully determined, to that extent they’re just a matter of chance? It’s the dominance of metaphysical suppositions that, together, comprise **Scientiphicalism: Wholly composed of such mindless physical parts as electrons, you are a being whose powers are all physical powers, physically deriving from the powers of your parts and their physical arrangements. Scientiphicalism conflicts with your having real choice.**

Some fairly conservative alternatives to Scientiphicalism may allow for choice. Two are briefly discussed: On the further-fetched, you are a Cartesian mental being, a nonphysical being in powerful interaction with physical things. On the more conservative approach, you are wholly composed of physical parts, but some of your powers are radically emergent, including your power to choose.

Finally, it’s argued that, if you choose, you must be, to some extent, exempt from natural laws.

But employing an insight I believe I picked up many years ago from Unger,¹⁷¹ would it not be a surprise if determinism, and then also determinism’s bare denial, themselves both militated against our freedom? Would it not be more reasonable to suppose that, deeper down, some other thought is at work here, which thought challenges our freedom whether or not determinism is true, though it perhaps works out in somewhat different forms in the deterministic vs. indeterministic cases? I think when we look at what lies at the root of our supposed dilemma’s second half, we find just such a thought—indeed, that thought is the premise of the argument as I think it is best and simply construed: **that our decisions to act, and then our actions, are all just the upshot of mindless, tiny physical events.**