

DS 4/20: Nietzsche's Moral Skepticism and His Naturalism-b (2 text images at the end are different from 4/18 handout)

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 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 “Scientificalism”

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

-Scientificalism 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 Berkeleian, not a Humean, self

Paul: I’ve been thinking that maybe what Nietzsche has in mind here could be tied up with what I think of as the intuitive roots of the best arguments against our having free will. Maybe N was anticipating these arguments and responses? I think, and I think other incompatibilists think, that the way to escape those arguments – what the world has to be like for us to be free in the face of those arguments – is some form of *agent-causation*: We have to cause things (our decisions to act, and then the subsequent actions) in a way that is not reducible to event/state – event/state causal relations. If that is what Nietzsche is sensing, he could then be sensibly thinking that this requires us to be super-natural in a way that his naturalism does not countenance. Does that strike you as a plausible stab at what N might be getting at? --Keith

Here is a nice and insightful description of the phenomenology of intentional action, by Timothy O’Connor, one of today’s leading Libertarians. O’Connor is here at the point of questioning at which his reasons are being fingered as the potential causes of his decision to act and then of his action: “Well, why did you do it, then?”; “Well, I acted for these reasons....”; “Ah, so *they* are the cause of your action?” O’Connor’s answer is that that at least is not how things seem to go:

It does not seem to me (at least ordinarily) that I am caused to act by the reasons which favor doing so; it seems to be the case, rather, that I produce my decision *in view of* those reasons, and could have, in an unconditional sense, decided differently.¹²⁸

We will later consider more carefully how this process positively seems to go—and how, according to the Libertarians, it actually does go—including the fascinating suggestion that one’s decision and then action are caused, but not by some event or state, but by the actor themselves (Sect. 50). For now, as we stay fixed on how things seem *not* to go, note how in these cases of deliberate actions, one does not seem to be caused to decide, and then to act, as one does—by one’s reasons, or by anything else. As O’Connor immediately notes, though they think it is deceptive, even determinists agree that there is this appearance of indeterminism (we elide over his lists of examples of those who agree): “This depiction of the phenomenology of action finds endorsement not only, as might be expected, in agency theorists. . .but also in determinists. . .” And, going beyond what O’Connor explicitly notes right here, there is also an