

Body-poet: normativity in Nietzsche thought

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RESUMEN: El objetivo de este texto es participar en la controversia sobre normatividad, proponiendo una salida basada en el pensamiento de Nietzsche. Tomando como punto de partida algunas notas hechas por Nietzsche en 1885, este trabajo intenta discutir la distinción entre pensamiento lógico y efectivo, viendo en el primero la solución conceptual o elaboración del último, y con el pensamiento efectivo considerado como el proceso real, anterior a la lingüística, a la comunicación y a la conciencia representacional. Siguiendo al filósofo alemán, trataremos de determinar la naturaleza del pensamiento efectivo como intrínsecamente normativo, en el sentido de que consiste en un auténtico proceso judicial, una impartición de justicia entre los impulsos o partes impulsoras que se oponen, evidentemente, como contendientes.

Palabras clave: pensamiento – sentimiento – justicia – interpretación – pecado.

ABSTRACT: The aim here is to participate in the controversy on normativity by proposing an outcome based on Nietzsche's thought. Taking as a starting point some notes made by Nietzsche in 1885, this paper attempts to discuss the distinction between logical and effective thought, seeing in the former the conceptual solution or elaboration of the latter, with effective thought considered as the real process, predating linguistic communication and representational consciousness. Following the German philosopher, we will attempt to determine the nature of effective thought as inherently normative, in the sense that it consists of an authentic judicial process, an imparting of justice between driving or impelling parties, evidently contending opponents.

Keywords: thought – sentiment – justice – interpretation – sin.



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1. Introduction¹

Nietzsche dedicated the first edition of his *Human, All Too Human* published in 1878, to Voltaire, «one of the great liberators of free spirits». In Aphorism 18 of Part 1, where he considers «Fundamental Questions of Metaphysics», he begins with a «genesis of thought»², a projected «history of the rise of thought» [*Entstehungsgeschichte des Denkens*], but we could call this a fictitious beginning, as if it were already underway. Here Metaphysics is considered to be undeniably the doctrine of two antithetic worlds, the apparent and the true, totally opposed to each another, just as truth and appearance are opposites, the world of being and the world of becoming. Obviously it is in the true world where the normative is found, or even the sense or meaning itself of the idea of the norm: adapting to the norm is only conforming to or following the model of truth as consistency. And controversies are only possible in so far as we have not yet discovered the truth, when they will all be resolved.

But what Nietzsche attempts here is to convince us that this opposition of the

two worlds, of the true and the apparent, is not real, and that this can be seen in the «history of thought», which shows us how they have been inherent in thought or in what terms these same concepts of *substance and freedom* (i.e. on the one hand the thing and its attributes and on the other the subject and its actions) have evolved in language. These concepts in his opinion represent, in their mutual articulation, the core of the metaphysical mentality, as shown in this aphorism but obviously not only in it.

Nietzsche then quotes a fragment of the most important work of the «logician» Afrikan Spir³, his neo-kantian *Thought and Reality*, which states that the primordial law of knowledge is that one which forces the cognisant subject to believe that every object is substance. In other words, the mere exercise of thinking necessarily presupposes that every object of thought must necessarily be recognised in itself in its own nature, as a thing identical with itself, consequently self-existing, and ultimately remaining ever the same and immutable. What is involved here then, in Nietzsche's terms, is to show that this

supposed primordial law of thought is not as original as it is said to be, but rather, just as all the rest, it has *evolved*; the history or genealogy of thought would take us back, in this case, to the organic sensations of pleasure and pain which were the primitive bodily reactions to external and internal stimuli. But besides the sensation of pleasure or of pain (which are the basic expressions of the relationships of organisms with each other) there would be a new «*third sensation*» where we would see «the result of the two previous single sensations». This third type would immediately be identified with judgement or belief (there can be no doubt that the essence of judgement is belief), although in its simplest and most rudimentary form. The third sensation which is the result of the previous «sensation of the pleasant or the painful» is then, he says, the most elementary type of belief or judgement. A belief, say, that *this is such and such* (a belief that would only be meaningful in relation to the other two previous sensations of pleasure and pain, as this is the only thing that truly interests organic beings). Thus, «this is good» or «this is bad» would be the original as-

assessment of living beings, the third type of sensation, the outcome of primitive pleasure and pain. The pleasant or the painful relationships of some organisms with others would in this way be immediately understood as the immovable world containing substances each with its respective attributes.

«From the period of the lower organisms man has inherited the belief that *identical things* exist». ⁴ The belief that the world is a composition of things each with its own qualities and also of course, or above all, it is a complex of animae or egos carrying out their actions spontaneously or independently. From the period of the lower organisms we have therefore inherited the metaphysical beliefs, i.e. beliefs in substance and freedom.

But how can we have begun «now» to recognise that the characteristic beliefs of metaphysics are inherited from the distant past? Simply because this past has now been superseded: «more advanced» science has finally shown us how to think in terms of the law of cause and effect, and inherent in this is the rejection of substance and freedom understood as self-determination. In other

words, it includes superseding metaphysics, which in the end will depend on the emphatic negation that identical things *may* exist.

However, we must remember that later, as the work of the philosopher developed, he was to question the idea itself of the causal regularity of nature, tracing in turn its genealogy, this time starting precisely from our own experience of volition: cause and effect were also placed on a «mythological» level, not different from the level of substances and their attributes, the fictitious level of the ego and its voluntary actions. ⁵ Thus he was to end up questioning classical mechanistic science, exploring the fundamental notion of force. The universe of Logic and of Number would also be traced back to the original moment of non-identity, the point at which *there are* no numbers nor anything which might be «logical».

2. Logical thought⁶

There is a *mode* of thought we call «logical thought», but this is not simply because it is «what Logic talks about» or what Logic is responsible for regulating.

So what then differentiates it from other modes of thought? Essentially, logical thought puts itself forward, proposing (logical) thought as the cause generating thought. This is probably because every *concept* has logical relationships, for example of implication and opposition, with an endless list of other concepts. As human beings we certainly need each other and so we have to understand each other, and thus there is consciousness, language, and therefore also logic.⁷ It must be understood that we all have to «lie» in the same or a similar way, i.e. following or respecting the structure of this *columbarium* where the concepts are pigeon-holed.⁸ Ultimately, the natural origin of logical normativity would be the need for survival, i.e. this normativity would spring from humans having to live together, in a precarious peace treaty which is ratified as Logic.⁹ Thus, thought itself, for itself, seen from this angle, would consist of the *production* of thoughts by thought itself. Something along the lines of the *self-movement of the concept* which made Schopenhauer laugh at Hegel, his rival. In logical thought it is the thinking of the concept which brings along with it

more and more thoughts, as if one generated the other by implication and opposition in a strictly regulated generation, as it occurs at a merely conceptual level. This is therefore a necessary generation: we are confronted here, for example, by the rules of inference of what is called the «*calculus of natural deduction*», such as $[(X \rightarrow Y) \ \& \ X]$ gives Y. What also appears here is the illusion that logical rules will allow any discrepancy to be solved, taking us back to the desired harmony instigated by this peace treaty found in the origins of co-existence where controversy, all controversy, will be nothing more than sporadic and momentary.

But what is involved here, with this belief in the conceptual production which is the inherent belief of Logic, is nothing but pure «fiction», because in fact exactly the opposite occurs, that thinking «really» lacks effectiveness on its own account, i.e. as merely conceptual thought. The concepts would not be able to put forward other concepts starting from nothing more than their own substance. The thought process, if we consider it only here in its final logical culmination —we mean here

conscious, conceptual—, lacks effectiveness of its *own*. In other words, it is not a truly causal process in itself, the concept left to itself does not move at all. It would not be a force for generating thoughts if it is only displayed within the conceptual circle. The logical necessity is limited to reflecting another necessity of which we have no idea, but which in comparison is the «real» one. Logical thinking, therefore, deceives itself, and we deceive ourselves along with it, when we put thought as the cause of thought. Thus we end up with the *epiphenomenalism of thought*¹⁰, but of thought as a conscious process, with conceptually structured content.¹¹ For the representational consciousness is merely epiphenomenal, which simply means that our image of consciousness as the supposed *Ego-Oculus* which intuitively states is just that, purely imaginary.¹² Thinking is undoubtedly an effective event, perhaps the most effective, the pure production of thought; but it would be precisely like the other aspect of the concept, previous to the concept, that of thinking as pure force or physiological thought, a torrent of the expanding *physis*. A pure event

which would pass by almost unnoticed and whose conceptual representation is nothing but an echo, a side effect or instrument and also always manipulation. The representational consciousness is «like a hand» which manipulates: «Consciousness is the hand with which the organism reaches out furthest: it must be a firm hand».¹³

So then, if we leave fiction aside, what in fact is the type of thought we call logical? The rules of inference provide a «formal scheme» which man uses as a «filtering device» to simplify and slim down this event which is real thinking (what is called in this context *das geistige Geschehen*, the mental event), a kaleidoscopic event of maximum complexity. With this procedure of Logic we successfully face the necessary challenge of how to fit effective thought into *signs*. In other words, we pare down real thought symbolically, strictly speaking we de-realize or *falsify* it. For this way we make it manageable, or what comes to the same thing, shareable by human beings. The principle of non-contradiction is simply the human viewpoint, which means that it is the expression of *our* incapacity to think in another

mode. Nietzsche versus Aristotle: this principle is nothing to do with any supposed objective articulation of being. The best way to represent precisely the significance of the type of thought which we call logical, would be to think of numbers, comparing this thought with arithmetic. Because clearly, numbers «do not exist», i.e. they do not refer to anything real and effective, but instead numerical formulae are simply regulatory fictions. This means that when we use them we obtain a pragmatic outcome: once again, by using them we simplify and arrange the effective or the real, subjecting it to our human measurement, to the measure of our linguistic consciousness, to a human way of life or, in Nietzsche's terms, to the measure of «our stupidity» or inevitable limitations. We do this to feel at home, or even to have a home, the house of man, no less, in M. Zambrano's terms.¹⁴

Logical thought is, therefore, neither original nor originating but simply a pure construct, result, arrangement, confection, artifice or «falsification» as we have already said. But the only drawback to all this is that it deceives us and deceives itself with its idea that, on

the contrary, it would respond faithfully to the effective process of thought, gathering its essence; the inverted idea that thinking, just that, as the power of thought, would be «logical».

Logical thought is conceptual thinking, not so much the process of conceptualization as the play of the concepts. This means, first of all, that this type of thought is conscious and linguistic, and it can be so because it always sets out its content as an example of a general type; I think that Socrates is a man and I am satisfied thinking that thus I have Socrates the individual under control. In other words, logical thinking is the thought which articulates its content conceptually: S is P , $f(x)$ and so, just in this sense, we say that it is conscious, linguistic or social.

3. Nietzsche thought¹⁵

This conceptual organization of the content of thought which would lead to logical and fully self-conscious thinking could, however, only take place if it *started from* something previous, which then, according to what we have already said, would be the *essential*, in the sense

that in it and not in the other is where the genuine productivity of thinking would lie. This concept is a radical «falseness», a deceptive distortion, because generating thought is not in fact within its possibilities, in contrast to what the concept tries to make us believe, since it also undoubtedly believes this itself. What happens is that this *effective* process or «real event» which we call «thought», but which is certainly not logical thinking, cannot be «modelled» on the basis of algorithms, which regulate a type of series such as discrete mental states with conceptually organized content.

Instead, the polishing or refining of thought which «arrives» in its raw, uncut state, occurs in an absolutely arbitrary or even «capricious» (*willkürlich*) way, in the sense of involuntarily, not with any conscious *rational* volition according to a law, and also without any type of mechanical guidelines or automatism. This refinement of thought, starting from how it comes to us and how this is carried out, depends on the interpretation, the *Auslegung*, the *Interpretieren*: on the translation, metaphor, transference. In other words, an unpre-

dictable process with an indeterminate outcome. Just like in Popper's creative universe¹⁶, for example, nobody knows beforehand what the outcome will be.

Thus neither *res cogitans* nor *res extensa*—nothing is explained with the category of substance. Neither teleology, nor mechanism; neither the material nor the spirit would consider thought as a real event, above all because thought is not «something», it is not the activity of a subject, i.e. it is not anything which can be «accounted for» as Logic expects, but instead could even be considered a capricious *whim* of the body.

It is certainly the case that thought «comes», wells up, whether we like it or not; thought occurs, it occurs to me, it happens to me, without me or the ego or volition having any say in its coming, its intrusion, its occurrence. «Thought comes when it wants, never when I want it to».¹⁷ And if we attempt an intellectual approach to the supposed place where thought comes from, the supposedly original and originating point, it will be in vain, for the origin of thought remains hidden, below the level of consciousness. We cannot know where it comes from or why it comes;

why this thought comes and not another one; why it comes now and not before or after; why it is clear or obscure; either sure of itself or timid and needing support. Although obviously this is not to say that thought does not have an *origin* [*Ursprung*], its own source.

Under what conditions does thought come? In such a way that it is impossible to know what it is saying or what it means *in itself*. When it arrives, thought is confused and obscure. First of all, because it arrives in a bundle, i.e. wrapped up in other thoughts, accompanied by feelings, wishes and refusals, to the point where it can be confused with what it is not, in its identity as this thought, not any other. It could be considered, too, that the arrival of the thought is a sign indicating something, like a message. The problem about this sign is that it means or could mean many things, perhaps too many; a sign that in the end with its ambiguity it is as if it does not mean anything at all, a sign signifying nothing.

When the thought occurs or comes, when it occurs to me, it is truly a provocation for our consciousness, a challenge, almost an insult, demanding effort,

a requirement to clarify it, to know what it says, what it involves.

The product which is also the thought, just as it is at this point, newly born, therefore needs *interpretation* [*Auslegung*]. In other words an explanation, exposition or commentary, able to reduce it, making it relatively unequivocal, limiting it, narrowing it down. Thus, it requires an interpretation which makes it *a* thought, *this* thought, which therefore says something definite and not anything else. The interpretation will first extract the thought from the bundle in which it arrived, and then we can clean it and set it on its own two feet. What is strange about this hermeneutic refining process of the thought is that it lacks any *specifiable rules*, it cannot be programmed, its outcome cannot be foreseen. This is to some extent an arbitrary and capricious —again, *willkürlich*— process. From this point of view, a machine cannot think because a computational system would never be so capricious, so fickle, so whimsical. Robots do not have whims and that is why they are so anodyne. But of course, there is no sense in asking who the interpreter is. It is taken for granted that

«the interpretation will come about», it will simply happen.

We are present, after the semi-conscious appearance of the thought, at the interpretation of the thought, which turns it into *this* thought, an interpretation which will obviously also be thinking or thought. But on our part it is like attending a performance, almost without taking part, more than anything just as spectators. Interpreting the thought — which is in itself thought— is not done by me, nor by the ego, and this can be seen in that fact that it's astonishing speed is not marked by any feeling of speed. Kant's famous transcendental ego, which must be able to accompany all my representations, so that they are something, or something for me¹⁸, is no more than the greatest result of our superstitious belief in ghosts. Because if one thing is clear, it is that the thought is not *mine*, it does not belong to me at all, to me or to anyone. If anything, it is quite the opposite that I belong to the thought, because it has me at its disposal.¹⁹

The point here is to discover what the thought that has appeared is about, what the thought that has just arrived

consists of. This means that it has to be translated, impersonally but not algorithmically; or else taken from the confusion of its point of arrival, to become relatively unequivocal.

To discover meaning requires interpretation, or perhaps it would be better to say that the (capricious) construing of meaning is interpretation; of meanings in the plural, that is.

Now, *and here we get to the core*, finding out what the thought in question means, interpreting it or really thinking it in the sense of completely thinking it, is exactly *the same* as knowing whether this thought is *right* or not. That is, if there is any justification for saying what the thought wants to say, i.e. whether it has the *right to say* it or not. The question of meaning is the same as the question of *quid juris*. To approach the thought without considering whether it is right or not right, in other words approaching it as if it had nothing to do with rightness or with reason, would mean destroying at the outset the very possibility of the thought. The meaning of any more or less completed thought is a kind of *agreement* following an internal battle: the origin of the thought

could be considered a peace treaty²⁰, which will be revealed in greater detail by subsequent thinking. Obviously the thought is not the effect of any cause in a mechanistic sense, but neither is it the activity of an ego with free will.

Thus *the force of a thought and its rightness are one and the same thing*. Whenever the force is fully deployed i.e. it communicates with the other forces, as understood in the language of forces, «if it is not separated from what it can do»²¹, the interplay of the forces justifies itself, just as in any other game. Or also, there is justification in unleashing oneself, doing everything one can. But there is no justification at all for blocking the force, inhibiting it, misappropriating it, when it does not become a thought; e.g., using the predominant «morality» to moralize the thought, separate it from what it can do, frustrate it as such.

142

The disambiguating process of thought turns out to be a truly judicial process, with the thought brought urgently before the judge and prosecutor who listen to the evidence for and against of other witnesses, of other thoughts. It is important to remember that the judicial

process of thinking is not that of simple logical argument such as in Platonic dialogue. It is not simply a question of applying the calculus of natural deduction, which is not even particularly important here. To think the opposite would be childishly naive, and would imply being fraudulently, *absurdly* logical.²² It is another language, another «logic» which counts here, the logic of the impulses; a dense, material, carnal, affective logic; flesh and bones justice, precisely where creativity is to be found, and only occasionally agreement.

What we have to know, in fact, is what the thought which came to us actually means, i.e. we have to determine whether the thought has any right to think what the thought thinks. We will not be able to discover many details of the trial either. Because I am not the one who does all this, generally this does not fall within the remit of the ego, and all that reaches me is a suspicion of what is happening. This ignorance with regard to the thought process is partially due to our poor education, because we have not been trained in the habit of thinking about thinking, or thinking about thinking when thinking.

We end up discovering that the nature of thinking in itself is normative: «thought thus reveals itself to us almost as a kind of exercise and act of justice». *Thinking would be like imparting justice*, so that a thought without reason or right is not strictly speaking a thought, but instead a failed thought. The truth of thinking is justice, like the free play of forces.²³ Understanding exactly what someone is saying is the same as knowing whether or not they have the right to say it. In the hermeneutic sphere of thought, it is truly meaningless to make a distinction between fact/value.²⁴ Or in other words, here we find ourselves in the non-differentiation of force and meaning which Ricoeur commented on as the most important philosophical contribution of psychoanalysis, a non-differentiation which in no way corresponds to confusion.²⁵ So that normativity would be not only the medium of thought, but also constant controversy, only partly and momentarily resolved, the true condition of its possibility. Thinking has never been able to reach any *definitive* result and will never be able to. Which proves, on the other hand, that becoming never flows out into being.

But what might this judicial conception of thought and of understanding mean? We will discover it if we realize that all we have said only becomes meaningful by recognizing that a *plurality of personae* takes part in thought. 'For there is not a single anima'-above all note the use of «single» —but there is a kind of society of animae which would in fact be the body in Nietzsche's sense: «our body, in fact, is no more than a social structure of many souls».²⁶ Thought and knowledge must be related to the struggle between all these different personae. The plurality of voices would be like background music which must accompany all «their» representations; and the more voices the better, more thought. Thinking is social, because it is the same as discussing using arguments which prevail over positions easily refuted by the force of reason, which is the same as the *reason of force*, as long as this is uninhibited force, i.e. developed without using inhibiting tactics. This is because winning is only really winning if the enemy has been able to deploy itself fully on the battlefield. Crucial events in the wider world and in our own lives are undoubtedly the

outcome of chance, served up to us by the cosmic child throwing dice.²⁷ But the different drives or «personae» in our make-up will all throw themselves avidly at the outcome of each event, to make full use of it and try to gain some advantage over the others. All these personae, both our own or those of other bodies, try to interpret these events in their own way, for themselves and for us. «For every drive is dominating; and as such he tries to philosophise».²⁸ This means giving their opinion on them, defining the situation as best suits each of them, which is the same as saying exactly how they see it, as long as they are not inhibited. Because giving this opinion consists precisely in adapting the meaning of the events to the conditions for growth of each driving persona, i.e. the meaning emerges just from this adjustment of what happens to the growth conditions of each of them; and without this adjustment, there would be no meaning in what happens, just as there is no sense in the result of throwing dice.

And so the opinion that manages *to do the greatest justice* will be established momentarily over the opposing opi-

nions of the personae fighting each other within and without our bodies, in that society of minds which is the society of bodies; i.e. that manages to make sense of them: this is thinking and nothing else. In other words, when thought is achieved as that thought and is not inhibited and cut short, it makes no difference if we call it «knowledge»: the consummation of thought, or strictly speaking, thought. The perhaps incompatible pretensions of the different driving personae are gathered together by the thought, which attempts to rebalance their respective rights, and establish a hierarchy of personal pretensions. The essential problem is just that, of hierarchy, or rather of order of rank [*Rangordnung*]²⁹, but we will not go into that here. Thinking would be adjusting, or perhaps *justifying* confronting points of view and the justification is the thought achieved, the knowledge or understanding. And in the end what will prevail are the opinions which the majority of people can continue to hold, whether they are commanding or obeying.

The hypothesis which brings together this whole thought process is that as thinking is only tentatively conscious

or linguistic, —when the thought has come and its equivocity has been refined and justice imparted— we are in fact faced with a *symptom* i.e. with the signor indication of something taking place on a different plane, previously related, relatively original and originitive; another type of process, much wider in scope, but subconscious nevertheless.³⁰ In terms of its more originitive other, the thought process is effective, the most effective we can imagine. In this case, the thought is the expression in signs of our whole radical state; making bodily signs, we might say, or signs of the momentary hierarchy of the driving personae which I am. Finally, we must add that thinking will never manage to transcend itself, to go beyond its precincts: by simply thinking we only touch on thoughts, but never on anything different, however much we think. We do not reach beyond thought by thinking, only by feeling, the alter ego of thinking, which obviously colours our thought, but also supports it. This has obviously also to do with the body, even more directly. In the end we are talking about feeling, which cannot really be separated from thinking.

4. The insensate interpretation³¹

Something of the same also occurs with feeling when it comes, also unexpectedly, just like thought. And feeling, in itself, does not have any definite meaning either and so we immediately start to interpret it. There are many different ways of interpreting feeling, which will inevitably conflict, but we start by saying that some will be not only *strange* but also «false», above all as *insensate*, delirious, «sickly». Remember that here in this area of sentiment, interpreting an event would be like assigning it a cause³², or even a basis, breaking down yet again the distinction between motive and reason, because in the case of what we call «*affect*», i.e. a feeling interpreted causally and only thus identified as such, the non-differentiation between force and meaning would again be expressed.

As an example of this we can use the one Nietzsche often used, of feeling discomfort or even pain. Thus, there would be a *sensate* way to interpret suffering; to construe the affect of the pain causally, placing at its source a physiological event, in Nietzsche's sen-

se rather than conventionally (as for example: «the almost unconscious need of the bowels» rather like the ever-useful and well-known excitation of the C fibres). So, we would have located *the correct type of causes*—but also, or above all, «correct» in the sense of *just-*, in the bodily region, in the Nietzschean, not in a conventional sense.

Thus, this would be the way to treat ourselves, i.e. to treat our body, in the Nietzschean sense of «body»—a mode which was crystallized in cultural terms as a way of life in a historical period (e.g. with reference to diet, climate, occupation, housing, exercise, sleep, sexuality, addictions³³—, which in the end would have conditioned the well-being or malaise felt, and so determined the individual and collective feelings, which would then be interpreted affectively by the different authorities who had any say.

But the interpretation mentioned above, of the Nietzschean body, which clearly is «only» that, an interpretation³⁴, would be an *enlightened* interpretation³⁵, of those who know and are educated, that is to say in no way the interpretation of human malaise valid

for so many cultures around the world, valid up to such a universal point that we could almost consider it as inherent in the human phenomenon. This «false» or *insensate* interpretation which places the origin of the pain or malaise we feel within the psychic-moral drama of offence, breaking the law, blame or «sin».³⁶ If life hurts me, if I find more pain than pleasure in it—this would be the very formula of *decadence*— then someone must have done or not done or thought something; someone is to blame, for example myself, or someone else: in general, blame or resentment.

My suffering is therefore deserved, because it means paying the price for my crime, even if I do not really know what it was, so that with the pain the debt will be paid, the pain itself is the means of overcoming the pain. My actual pain is reparation for the pain caused, with suffering as international currency, the true economy of cruelty, the «hangman's metaphysics».³⁷

This popular interpretation is «false» to start with, because the genuine effectiveness of the processes will never reside immediately in the psychic-moral region of the conscience as much as in

the representational consciousness; and it is also *insensate* as the only thing it achieves is absurdly to increase the suffering instead of lessening it. So how then can a conscious, cultural interpretation such as this can be so harmful, if the consciousness is merely an epiphenomenon? Perhaps we have to think that the interpretative nucleus is not conscious at all, that it is more like an unstoppable physiological flow, in the Nietzschean sense, which at times becomes conscious. When the representational consciousness manipulates, what is really manipulating is the hand of the subconscious organism, in fact exercising its own power.

With this insensate interpretation we are faced with the most usual way of making sense of suffering (as for example in many religions). In the startling reasoning of Schopenhauer³⁸, if my soul pains me, it is because I am guilty and I deserve it, on the contrary it would not hurt me. This is because for humans what is really important is that their pain should be meaningful, whatever this may be. Turning pain into the currency of salvation is to conceptualize it as payment.³⁹

A particular application of all of this can be seen in the devastating tedium which was seemingly so characteristic of the lives of 19th century puritans and which they interpreted as a «guilty conscience», instead of considering their insensate way of life as its origin. This was not 'sin' at all, but rather their unreasonable behaviour in relation to their own body which was the cause of their unhappiness. This is like when the inquisitor tortured the prisoner, who almost always ended up confessing he was guilty. With this the poor man made his pain meaningful, presenting it as *deserved*, and so hoping that the torture would stop, when in real terms the only effective cause of pain is *physical*. It is not repentance which will save me from more pain, but simply if the torturer stops applying the red hot iron and the doctor treats my burns, if he can. Naturally, as well as suggesting it, the inquisitor reinforced the meaning less interpretation of the prisoner, because often by recognising the guilt, the torture stopped.

Another example from our own days: a spokesman for a religious organization recently said on the radio that the

mothers of mentally disabled children should reflect on their sins as the cause of the plight of these children, and in particular on their disorderly sexual life before the children were conceived. The pain can be rationalized by considering it as a punishment they deserve. This is truly an attempt at thought, or rather of justification, of justice done. But evidently this is completely senseless, it is a non-justice.

In one of his early works, which for many made him famous, the Spanish writer Pío Baroja⁴⁰ offers the following discourse on the moral effects of a culture which brings up the young with the «crushing» idea of sin:

The school, which looked like a huge barracks, was a place of torture; it was like a great press for crushing the brain, which ripped out the feelings of the heart, and took hold of the young men, already weakened by the legacy of a sad and sickly race and tossed them back into life suitably transformed into idiots, fanatical and brutish; with the good as timid, cowardly and stupid; and the bad as hypocrites and liars, with the perfidy acquired joined to their natural wickedness; all of them, good and bad, terrified by the crushing idea of sin, which hovered over them all like a great black butterfly.

Baroja calls this insensate interpretation of sin a great black butterfly, which hovers over the young men «terrifying them», and finally falling on their heads and crushing them, i.e. an idea which brutally separates them from what they could do or could be, making their life a stunted one. This interpretation which turns our life into something «stunted» is therefore a *delirious* interpretation which should be fought against relentlessly. Here then, is the definitive normative criterion for all interpretation, which has to resolve the conflict of interpretations: the undeniable criterion of their value in terms of life, if they favour or hinder the flowering of human lives.

Notas

¹ Abbreviations of Nietzsche's Works in English: *BGE*, *Beyond Good and Evil. Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*; *D*, *Daybreak*; *GM*, *On the Genealogy of Morals*; *GS*, *The Gay Science*; *HH*, *Human, All Too Human*; *NL*, *Nietzsche's Posthumous Notebooks*; *TI*, *Twilight of the Idols. How to Philosophize with a Hammer (TI Ancients, TI Errors, TI Morality, TI Reason, TI Socrates, TI Skirmishes)*; *TL*, *On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense*; *Z*, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. Specifically these two posthumous fragments, which were brought to my notice by Luca Lupo («Una trinità discutibile: sentire,

- pensare, volere. Pagine de psicología nietzscheana», *Rivista di Estetica*, vol. 45, nº 28, 2005, 181-197) are NL 1885, 38 [1] and 38 [2], KSA 11: 595-597. Marie-Luise Haase («Friedrich Nietzsche liest Galton», *Nietzsche-Studien* 18, 1989, 633-658), in turn, shows that these two fragments had appeared in a draft a year earlier (NL 1884, 26 [92], KSA 11: 173-174), and that they should referred back to Nietzsche's Reading of the work of Francis Galton (*Inquiries into Human Faculty and its Development*, London, J.M. Dent & Company, 1883).
- ² HH 18, KSA 2: 38-40. (KSA: Nietzsche, F., *Sämtliche Werke. Kritische Studienausgabe in 15 Bänden*, Giorgio Colli / Mazzino Montinari (eds.), Munich / Berlin / New York, DTV / De Gruyter, 1980).
- ³ Spir, A., *Denken und Wirklichkeit: Versuch einer Erneuerung der kritischen Philosophie*, Leipzig: J.G. Findel, 1873.
- ⁴ HH 18, KSA 2: 39.
- ⁵ BGE 16, 19, KSA 5: 29-34.
- ⁶ NL 1885, 38 [2], KSA 11: 597.
- ⁷ GS 354, KSA 3: 590-593. See also Constâncio, J.: «Consciousness, Communication, and Self-Expression. Towards an Interpretation of Aphorism 354 of Nietzsche's *The Gay Science*», in *As the Spider Spins. Essays on Nietzsche's Critique and Use of Language*, edited by J. Constâncio and M. J. Mayer Branco, Berlin / Boston, Walter de Gruyter, 2012, 197-233. And also Stegmaier, W.: *Nietzsches Befreiung der Philosophie. Kontextuelle Interpretation des V. Buchs der Fröhliche Wissenschaft*, Berlin / Boston, De Gruyter, 2012.
- ⁸ TL, KSA 1: 882.
- ⁹ In this logical sense of normativity, no matter how often we re-read the writings of the young Nietzsche in *On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense*, they are always thought-provoking.
- ¹⁰ The great question here would be that of the problematic Nietzschean epiphenomenalism, which we should consider now rather as an inevitable rhetorical reflection of his contesting the modern hypervaluation of consciousness. To quote some important titles in this current debate, among others, see Leiter, B.: «Nietzsche's Metaethics», *European Journal of Philosophy*, 8, 2000, 277-297; Constâncio, J.: «On Consciousness. Nietzsche's Departure from Schopenhauer», *Nietzsche-Studien* 40, 2011, 1-42; Welshon, R., *Nietzsche's Dynamic Metapsychology. This Uncanny Animal*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2014; Katsafanas, P., *The Nietzschean Self. Moral Psychology, Agency, and the Unconscious*, Oxford University Press, 2016.
- ¹¹ See Katsafanas, P.: «Nietzsche's Theory of Mind: Consciousness and Conceptualization», *European Journal of Philosophy*, 13, 2005, 1-31.
- ¹² See Dennett, D., *Consciousness Explained*, New York, Boston, London, Little, Brown and Company, 1991; *From Bacteria to Bach and Back. The Evolution of Minds*, New York, London, W.W. Norton & Company, 2017.
- ¹³ NL 1885, 34 [131], KSA 11: 464.
- ¹⁴ Zambrano, M.: *El hombre y lo divino [Man and the Divine]*, in *Complete Works III*, Barcelona, Galaxia Guttenberg / Círculo de Lectores, 2011, 110-363.
- ¹⁵ NL 1885, 38 [1], KSA 11: 595-596.
- ¹⁶ Popper, K., *El universo abierto. Un argumento en favor del indeterminismo. [The Open Universe. An Argument for Indeterminism]*. Madrid, Tecnos, 1984.
- ¹⁷ BGE 17; KSA 5: 30-31.
- ¹⁸ Kant, I., *Crítica de la razón pura B 132 [Critique of Pure Reason]*, Madrid, Ediciones Alfaguara, 1984.
- ¹⁹ NL 1885, 35 [35], 38 [3], KSA 11: 526, 597-598.
- ²⁰ GS 333, KSA 3: 558-559.
- ²¹ See Deleuze, G., *Nietzsche y la filosofía [Nietzsche and Philosophy]*, Barcelona, Anagrama, 1971, 83.
- ²² TI Socrates, 10, KSA 6: 72.
- ²³ See Rodríguez González, M.: «Saber sobre las pulsiones. ¿Sería apropiado hablar de una epistemología nietzscheana?» [«Knowing Drives. Would it be appropriate to speak

- of a Nietzschean epistemology?»], *Estudios Nietzsche*, Madrid, Trotta, 2012, 147-161.
- ²⁴ See Putnam, H.: *The Collapse of the Fact / Value Dichotomy and other Essays*, Cambridge Mass.: London: Harvard University Press, 2002.
- ²⁵ Cfr. Ricoeur, P.: *Freud, una interpretación de la cultura* [*Freud, an Interpretation of Culture*]. México, Siglo XXI, 1970.
- ²⁶ *BGE* 19, KSA 5: 33
- ²⁷ *D* 119, KSA 3: 111-114.
- ²⁸ *BGE* 6, KSA 5: 20.
- ²⁹ *HH* Preface 7, KSA 2: 21.
- ³⁰ *NL* 1884, 27 [29], KSA 11: 283.
- ³¹ *NL* 1885, 38 [1], KSA 11: 595-596.
- ³² *TI* Errors 4, KSA 6: 92.
- ³³ *NL* 1888, 25 [1], KSA 13: 638.
- ³⁴ *BGE* 22, KSA 5: 22.
- ³⁵ *Z*, KSA 4: 39.
- ³⁶ *GM* III, 20, KSA 5: 389.
- ³⁷ *TI* Errors7, KSA 6: 96.
- ³⁸ *El mundo como voluntad y representación* [*The World as Will and Representation*], Barcelona, Círculo de Lectores / F.C.E., 2003. II, 562.
- ³⁹ *GM*-III, 15: 375.
- ⁴⁰ *Camino de perfección* [*Path of Perfection*], Madrid: Caro Raggio, 1974, 229.