

Reflections on Philosophical Running.

Having reservations about Nietzsche because his name was used by the Nazis is like having reservations about Poland because it was invaded by the Nazis. When his sister got engaged to an anti-Semitic proto-Nazi, he never spoke to her again, although this pained him deeply. In 1886 he wrote “With today's Germans, for instance, there is the anti-French stupidity one moment and the anti-Jewish stupidity the next, now the anti-Polish stupidity, now the Christian-Romantic, the Wagnerian, the Teutonic, ... or whatever else they might be called, these little stupors of the German spirit and conscience.” (*Beyond Good and Evil* #251).

Nietzsche never ran, but always walked, because he liked to talk to people (see the book *Conversations with Nietzsche* ed. Sander Gilman). Runners, rock climbers, cyclists and marshal artists are all treating themselves as ends in themselves, sure, but are also inherently selfish: its only when we treat *others* as ends in themselves (rather than as a means to an end) that we see that “consciousness is really only a net of communication between human beings” (*Gay Science* #354). In *Beyond Good and Evil* #211-12, Nietzsche explains to us what he thinks a philosopher actually is: the creator of new values. Young's eudaemonism is actually Aristotelian, and a shadow of the actual Wanderer, who understands that the good can be attained only by sharing it, and never by trying to acquire it for yourself.

In *Beyond Good and Evil* #19, Nietzsche tells us that the body is a society constructed of many souls – mortal souls (*Dawn* #501), which can also be called drives or even organs. Although Nietzsche does not believe in another “spiritual” realm behind the scenes of this one, he's also no less opposed to reductive materialism, not because he thinks there's something other than matter and its interactions, but because he thinks we radically overestimate our understanding of what matter actually is. Rather than a simple substance called “matter” out of which atoms are made, science has turned up a teeming zoo of strange particles inside atoms, not to mention “dark matter” and “dark energy.” Matter is as much a mystery as it is a reality.

This pattern of thought also applies in an evolutionary sense. Our simian pre-human ancestors could never have understood that they had rudimentary vocal chords, let alone have appreciated that these vocal chords would eventually give rise to language, culture, and civilization. Likewise, we cannot appreciate what it is about our body that will prove to be the window of

opportunity through which the über-human shall leap. But we can be certain of two things: (1) we must already have that organ or capacity in rudimentary form, and (2) we by definition can not yet conceive of the changes in the very concept of communication brought about by these changes, precisely because we are yet to undergo them. We don't yet know what matter is, and we don't yet know what a body can do: two profound realizations, already made by the way by Spinoza.

Nietzsche understands the body as an organised ensemble of drives creating their own driver, with all previous drivers nested Russian-doll style within the current one (Gay Science #54). The simian is not left behind in our evolution, but rather wrapped in the higher form of the über-ape (i.e. human). My simian ancestors are nested within me -- and their mamalian ancestors in them, and their ancient ancestors in turn inside of them; all the way right down to the billions of single-cell ancestors, each doing their own single-cell thing – all of which are also all right here, right now, in my own body, For they *are* my body. The balanced orchestration of all these competing drives and the genealogies of their drivers taken as a whole is called the will. But in BGE #16 to #19, Nietzsche says that the will is above all a complicated phenomenon, and strictly speaking doesn't even exist. We are oriented by a projection originating in ourselves – as if the conductor of an orchestra we being created by the music the orchestra was playing – but we are not the source of the origination, any more than the surfer is the source of the wave they ride, although they are the conductor of the ride they are on. The question remains, what is the conception of power we operate with? The bully conceives of power in a crude way, as violence. What the bully can't see is that there is a higher (i.e. more powerful) kind of power to be found in co-operation and consideration. The monarch who is loved enjoys a loyalty from his subjects absent for a monarch who is merely feared, just as art is a higher conception of power than mere truth. (GS#310)