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Interpreting Feeling: Nietzsche on the Emotions and the Self

Erika Kerruish

Abstract

Nietzsche's aspiration to "have and not have one's emotions" seems an impossible one. However, Nietzsche believes that it is possible because of his special understanding of the nature of the emotions and their relationship to the self. He views emotions as central to how individuals understand and situate themselves in the world. He assigns a vital role to emotions in his account of the formation of the self through the interpretation of bodily sensations, a view that sees emotions as both a tool and effect of social forces. As a consequence, he neither advocates a suppression of emotions nor a blind following of them. Rather he suggests that they should be acknowledged, investigated and ordered in a process that develops a focused emotional engagement while cultivating a capacity to experience a broad range of emotions. This understanding of emotions enables us to recognise their cognitive, affective and social dimensions, contributing to our ability to critically engage with emotional experience.

> To have and not have one's emotions [*Affekte*], one's for and against, at will, to condescend to have them for a few hours; to *seat* oneself on them as on horses, often as on asses—for one has to know how to employ their stupidity as well as their fire. (Nietzsche, 1990: 214)

At face value, Nietzsche's aspiration to "have and not have one's emotions" seems an impossible one. However, Nietzsche believes that it is possible because of his special understanding of the nature of the emotions and their relationship to the self. It is not my aim here to examine Nietzsche's writings about emotion in order to present a comprehensive account of what might be his "theory of the emotions", rather I am interested in focussing on Nietzsche's discussion of emotion's role in the formation of the self through the interpretation of bodily sensations. Instead of presenting a theory of emotion, I examine Nietzsche's view that emotions are essential to how individuals understand and situate themselves in the world in order to explore the ways in which it contributes to our understanding of the role and value of emotions in selves and societies.

The term "emotion" is used to refer to divergent phenomena and theories of emotion are only understandable in terms of the broader frameworks and systems of philosophy in which they occur (Oksenberg Rorty, 2004: 278). Nietzsche would be the first to point out that our use of the term "emotion", like our use of other terms, does not point to a natural kind but is a projection of similarity onto a variety of experiences (Nietzsche, 1979: 89-91). Nevertheless, his writings indicate valuable avenues of thought to pursue in our understanding of emotions, particularly with regard to the affective and evaluative nature of emotional experience. In discussing his ideas, I use the term "emotions" rather than the term often used in discussion of his work, "affects", a word that in English we tend to associate with feeling. There is much debate about whether feelings should be considered wholly or partly constitutive of emotion, or whether they are an unnecessary although typical characteristic of emotions (see for example Nussbaum, 2001: 60-64; Goldie, 2000: 50-83). Nietzsche tends to refer to affect [*affekte*], passion [*Leidenschaft, Passion*] and feeling [*Gefühl, Empfindung*] interchangeably. Although he can be fruitfully read in terms of affect and passion, I use the term "emotion" because it is better suited to refer to the complex structures of cognition and affect that I discuss, and enables us to bring Nietzsche's work into conversation with contemporary philosophical discussions of emotion.

1. Emotions and the shaping of the self

Nietzsche's thought about emotions requires an understanding of his criticism and genealogical account of the unitary and causal subject. This belief in the unitary self relies on the idea that there is a substratum of self that remains constant over time, in

which the nature of the individual is thought to inhere. It is this subject that is believed to cause an individual's actions and her thoughts, desires and emotions (Nietzsche, 1989: 58). The idea of the causal self relies on the notion that amidst all the manifestations of an individual there is a core of the self that causes actions considered contingent to the core self. For Nietzsche, this causal self is not a natural phenomenon but rather the result of the organization of the multiple phenomena of the self into a particular kind of whole.

In *On the Genealogy of Morals* we can find an account of how the causal self is formed through the temporal unification of diverse bodily experience. This occurs through the deployment of "mnemotechniques" of pain, which creates the memory and, in turn, the will (Diprose, 1993: 3-7). The contractual relationship between debtor and creditor is driven by "mnemotechniques" of pain. In order to ensure the binding nature of contracts, it is arranged so that should debtors fail to repay their debt, something else they possess can be substituted. Most of all, debtors can substitute their bodies, and it is in this substitution that we begin to see the role that emotions play in the constitution of the self. Due to the fear of the pain involved in bodily repayment, such as the agony of physical torture, the self develops a remarkable memory and a protracted will, so that the self sees itself as responsible for the action of paying back the debt.

The creation of the memory enables the distinction between chance and essential qualities of an individual over time, allowing us to think of a core subject that is responsible for its actions. The role of memory is twofold in this process (although this does not imply any causal order). Firstly, it selects particular bodily phenomena of the

individual (acts, sensations, desires et cetera) upon which a similarity can be projected. That this similarity is created rather than found is then forgotten and the similarity of experience is then said to be the result of a persisting, underlying self. Secondly, new events are interpreted on the basis of these projected similarities and new experiences are conceived of in terms of a persisting self (Nietzsche, 1986: 51). The memory organises multiple bodily phenomena by attributing all such experiences to the same self and projecting the body into the future via the fiction of the subject. It is this temporal unification that enables "a *memory of the will*; so that between the original 'I will,' . . . and the actual discharge of the will, its act, a world of strange new things, circumstances, even acts of will may be interposed without breaking this long chain of will" (Nietzsche, 1989: 58).

This relationship between debtor and creditor that unifies the self is transposed by Nietzsche into the relationship between individuals and their communities (Nietzsche, 1989: 71). Individuals are indebted to the communities whose advantages they enjoy and, in return, individuals "promise" not to perform acts considered hostile or destructive to their communities. Such acts are punished and, as in the creditor/debtor relationship, it is through punishment that the community creates a memory for the individual. But while in the initial debtor-creditor relationship a particular promise is remembered, in this social context the memory comes to determine individuals in a more all-embracing manner and they restrict their actions by themselves continuously, although, of course, not necessarily consciously. They see themselves to be the cause of all their acts and thus responsible for them. The causal interpretation of the self that the

fear of punishment establishes is internalised and the idea of the self's continuity over time becomes of utmost importance.

One reason that emotions play a vital role in Nietzsche's account of the process by which bodily sensations are organised into a persisting, causal self is that emotions can be conceived of as responses to change. This means that emotions involve events over time; events that need not be actual but that can be potential. As Aaron Ben-Ze'ev discusses, the existence of imagined alternative events is part of the process of generating emotions (Ben-Ze'ev, 2003). To return to Nietzsche's tale of the creditor/debtor relationship, we can see that it revolves around the debtor's fear of imagined possible events in the future. If the self is driven to think through suffering, then it is fear that drives this process, generating a particular idea of the self that orders the disparate phenomena of the self in a certain way. When we fear a possible coming event, we require that we compare our present state with the possible future state, projecting the idea of an unchanging and vulnerable self over time. Often this will involve recalling a past event to develop our understanding of the future event. Emotions such as hope and curiosity also focus on the future of the self but in doing so they emphasise different aspects of the self to those cultivated by fear (for example, initiative and inventiveness rather than watchfulness and consistency).

This depiction of the organisation of a unified self puts emotions on centre stage. There are two distinguishable although intimately related kinds of emotion in Nietzsche's description of the formation of the unitary and causal subject. The first of these are emotions that I term dominant emotions, which generate a particular type of internalised

self. Such emotions are incited by society and establish the perspective from which experiences, including those that comprise the self, are interpreted.[i] The second kind of emotion consists of the variety of emotional responses we have to different occurrences, which are derived from the general interpretive perspective of the mood or dominant emotion. For example, if my dominant emotion is fear, I might react with relief to a stranger moving on after stopping her car in front of my house. But if my dominant emotion is curiosity, I might react to the same event with disappointment. This distinction between dominant and passing emotions allows us recognise that some emotions provide stable interpretive perspectives prior to and generative of the self, in contrast to the variety of transient emotions experienced by the self. The effect of these dominant emotions can then be critically evaluated.

Nietzsche asserts that fear is the dominant emotion of the causal self, and this is not simply a fear of punishment. Punishment establishes within the subject a more general fear: the fear of the indeterminate or unknown occurrence and its possible effects, such as pain. The easiest way to render an event known is, according to Nietzsche, to attribute a causality to it, so fear motivates the self to attribute a cause to occurrences in order to render them known: "[t]he cause creating drive is thus conditioned and excited by the feeling of fear [*Furchtgefühl*]" (Nietzsche, 1969: 51; see also 1974: 301). The self interprets all events from the perspective of fear, attributing causes in order to anticipate effects.

Although the interpretation of particular events can be driven by the fear of the indeterminate, the interpreter is not necessarily aware that this is the case. This raises

the complex issue of unconscious emotions and, in particular, the idea that dominant emotions are frequently unconscious. The idea of an unconscious emotion may initially seem like a contradiction in terms for, as Freud writes, "[i]t is surely of the essence of an emotion that we should feel it" (Freud, 1957: 109-10). Despite this apparent contradiction Nietzsche, like Freud, thinks that emotions can be unconscious. If an emotion is unconscious the self does not directly feel it, so the investigation of one's unconscious emotions does not consist of examining them through immediate experience. When interpreting our own or others' unconscious emotions we interpret consciously experienced and observed phenomena as the effects, signs and symptoms of unconscious emotions. This approach can be seen in Nietzsche's account of the dominant emotion of *ressentiment*. He argues that *ressentiment* is the result of certain social conditions of humanity, in particular the need for slaves to internalise their drives while claiming that it is through choice rather than weakness that they do not express their power. Nietzsche elaborates on the unconscious mood of *ressentiment* in two ways: Firstly by determining the slaves' conditions of existence (domination by masters leading to an inability to outwardly manifest drives). Secondly, he establishes what the cognitive response to this is (creating a detailed spiritual world in which outward displays of strength are devalued) and, finally, he postulates the appropriate emotion (*ressentiment*) that motivates that particular conceptual response to the material conditions. Nietzsche, in effect, is identifying and naming the emotional state of the slave, thus enabling us to consciously reflect on the state (Nietzsche, 1969: 50). Likewise, Nietzsche names and describes the fear of the indeterminate experienced by the unified and causal self.

Nietzsche's understanding of the role of emotion in interpreting the self is further developed in his discussion of ascetic Christianity, which employs a range of emotional techniques. One way in which it treats emotions can be seen when an emotion is considered to be part of the self's particular bodily interests. The view that the spiritual and transcendent self is superior to the phenomenal and material self means that the body and the emotions associated with it are devalued. Accordingly, such emotions are to be transcended and eliminated. The suppression of what are thought to be self-interested emotions is an effective technique for controlling behaviour because, among other things, it discourages the recognition of material dissatisfaction that is considered part of mere bodily interests. It is in this context that Nietzsche writes that one of the ascetic priests' methods for minimizing the displeasure of the "herd" is to reduce "the feeling of life [*lebensgefühl*] in general to its lowest point . . . all that produces affects [*Affekt*] and 'blood' is avoided" (Nietzsche, 1989: 131).

Ascetic Christianity's complex cultivation of emotions does not end here. It also includes the invention and manipulation of particular emotions, such as the pain of the conscience, guilt, and pleasure of the conscience, virtue, which are perceived as spiritual and derive their value from Christian cosmology. As we have seen, the explanation of a particular emotion is determined through the invention of its cause. In the case of the ascetic Christian subject this cause is thought to be God and the unknown feelings are deified. The ascetics' seeming passivity when overcome by emotions leads them to attribute the cause of emotion to something else, something that is entitled to overpower them (Nietzsche, 1968: 86). In "The Four Great Errors" Nietzsche writes of how "*unpleasant* general feelings [*Allegemeingefühl*]" are interpreted as punishments, traced

back to a sin and called guilt. Similarly, "*pleasant* general feelings [*Allegemeingefühl*]" are traced back to trust in God or the consequences of a good act (Nietzsche, 1969: 52).

In Nietzsche's view the emotion of guilt is intensely cultivated in ascetic Christianity. While non-ascetic sufferers seek to attribute their feelings to a cause other than themselves, another agent that is the source of their suffering upon which they can "vent . . . affects [*Affekte*]" (Nietzsche, 1989: 127), ascetic Christianity inverts this urge, teaching sufferers that they are to blame for their suffering, leading them to vent these emotions upon themselves. It is in this manner that the direction of *ressentiment* is shifted away from an external cause of suffering and back towards the one who suffers. Such a manipulation of emotion leads to an intensification of emotion that can then be appropriated and given meaning by Christian morality and cosmology. Nietzsche's discussion of ascetic Christianity illustrates the way in which ideas and statements about emotional experiences change those experiences, as well as future emotional experiences.

The intensification of emotion is a form of intoxication that combats the initial pain of suffering. Nietzsche locates this process as "a desire to *deaden pain by means of affects* [*Affekt*] . . . by means of a more violent emotion [*Emotion*] of any kind" (Nietzsche, 1989: 127). This intoxication can be attributed to a higher world that dwarfs the lowly interests of the individual. Guilt provides the fundamental form of intoxication, but all such means of combating pain involve "some kind of *orgy of feeling* [*Gefühl*]" (Nietzsche, 1989: 136; see also 1989: 139). So ascetic Christianity's extirpation of personal emotions on the one hand merely serves to conceal its covert and violent

employment of them on the other. Daniel Conway suggests that this affective investment in the destruction of our emotional life characteristic of the ascetic ideal ignites a "mutually destructive clash between affective systems" (Conway, 1991: 103-113). The will to nothingness, considered as the will to negate our emotional engagement in this world in favour of an emotional engagement with an afterlife, is problematic for two reasons. Firstly, it restricts emotional engagement with the world because its response to the world is constantly one of fear and denial of other emotional engagements with the world. Secondly, the ascetic ideal leads to a war between affects that prevents their successful hierarchisation and organisation. This confusion and conflict between the affects means that they come to be disruptive and demanding, so that the refusal to engage in affective life ultimately leads to a "triumph of affect".

Nietzsche disapproves both of the attempted elimination of emotion and its orgiastic cultivation, raising the question of how he thinks we should relate to our emotions. Clearly we should not attempt to eliminate them: "[t]o exterminate the passions [*Leidenschaften*] and desires . . . this itself seems to us today merely an acute form of folly" (Nietzsche, 1969: 42). The seeming destruction of emotions is actually the replacement of one emotion by another: "[t]he will to overcome an emotion [*Affekt*] is ultimately only the will of another emotion [*Affekt*], or of several others" (Nietzsche, 1990: 98). Nor does Nietzsche think that emotions should be immediately followed (Nietzsche, 1968: 490; 1989: 139). Emotions are not naive reactions but are inextricably intertwined with social needs and norms, as well as with the means and mechanisms of establishing and internalising these norms. We can trace our emotions into a labyrinth of moral judgements, social norms and conditions of existence. Or alternatively, we can

trace our morality to particular meanings, treatments and relationships between emotions: "moralities too are only a *sign-language of the emotions* [*Affekte*]" (Nietzsche, 1990: 110).

For this reason Nietzsche neither advocates the immediate following of emotions nor the denial of them and their significance. If I ignore my emotions then I am ignoring an important source of information about my beliefs and values, including about the motivations for, and consequences of, my beliefs and values. If I follow my emotions blindly I am unquestioningly embracing the value system with which they are bound up and I fail to take a distanced and aware stance towards them. To avoid either of these approaches, we must ask: What is the relationship between our emotions and our sense of self? How do our emotions interpret our bodily sensations? Why do certain emotions come to dominate and what happens if they do? What are the consequences of our emotional frameworks for our affective engagement with the world? It is only by asking such questions that we can take a reflective stance towards the self and the processes by which it is formed. What we require instead of epistemology, as Nietzsche notes, is a "perspectival theory of affects [*Affekte*] (to which belongs a hierarchy of affects [*Affekte*]; the affects [*Affekte*] transfigured; their superior order, their 'spirituality')" (Nietzsche, 1968: 255). Of course, maintaining such a distant attitude towards one's emotions is not an easy task. To experience emotions while simultaneously remaining in control of them is apparently contrary to the very nature of certain emotions, such as some types of fear, of which being overwhelmed seems to be an intrinsic part. Nietzsche's emphasis on aloofness in the face of emotions—his idea that we should

"condescend" to them—is one strategy that combats the patent difficulty of dominating certain emotions while embracing the experience of them.

To live as emotional beings while not unhesitatingly following emotions leads Nietzsche to the view that the self should cultivate an emotional engagement that is well-structured and focused on matters of interest to the self, while also leaving room for the self to experience and acknowledge a broad range of emotions. According to Nietzsche, passion should be both great and controlled by the will. This sublimation of emotions is a "*domination* of the passions [*Leidenschaften*], *not* their weakening or extirpation!" (Nietzsche, 1968: 492). The sublimation of, and discrimination between, emotions allows them to be placed in an order of rank rather than eliminated. This approach to acknowledging and engaging with emotions does not imply an impulsive and fragmentary existence, but sees them as part of exercising will. Indeed, the process of the will itself is emotional: "the will is not only a complex of sensation and thinking, but above all an *affect* [*Affekt*]: and in fact the affect [*Affekt*] of command" (Nietzsche, 1990: 48). Recognising the will as a feeling of command helps us understand the complexity of Nietzsche's evaluation of the Christian subject. If the will is the feeling of command it also, as Nietzsche points out, involves the feeling of obedience. While he objects to fear as a dominant emotion because it restricts and disguises our emotional engagement with the world, he approves of the great obedience, discipline and sense of command it develops (Nietzsche, 1968: 70; 1990: 87). The will to nothingness of the ascetic ideal, while driven by the problematic emotion of fear, has strengthened the will as a sense of command and enhanced the ability to focus emotional engagement in the world. But the ascetic cultivation of fear problematically emphasises the role of

obedience in the will rather than that of command (Nietzsche, 1990: 120). Will, conceived of as a feeling of command, needs to be cultivated while ascetic Christianity's emphasis on obedience needs to be curbed. This allows the will of the self to develop independently of the fear of supernatural forces.

Contrary to ascetic Christianity's denial and concealment of the role of emotions, Nietzsche prefers that emotions are recognised and hierachised. Whether emotions are considered to be positive or negative depends on their context and interpretation. And while in the past humanity has been more able to acknowledge and cultivate its emotional engagement in the world, unfortunately modern man has "sustained some loss in this domain" (Nietzsche, 1986: 367; see also 1968: 530). This is a situation that Nietzsche intends to remedy.

2. Qualities of Nietzsche's treatment of the emotions

It would be a misrepresentation to describe the Western philosophical tradition as failing to acknowledge or continuously denigrating the emotions.[ii] Certainly, in recent years, there has been an explosion of philosophical work investigating the nature and significance of emotions. This has occurred to redress influential traditions of thought about emotions that have regarded our emotional life as peripheral or even threatening to aspects of the self that we value, such as its rationality and ethical integrity.

One of the reasons why emotions have been devalued is the association of them with our bodies due to the physical symptoms that frequently accompany them, such as changes in heart rate, body temperature and skin colour. Because the body has

frequently been considered less central to our identity and intellect than the mind, emotions have been devalued by this association (Solomon, 1983: 8-12; James, 1997: 1-25). Despite their association with the body, emotions have always caused difficulties for the maintenance of the distinction between the mental and the physical, even in what are commonly considered by modern philosophy to be paradigmatically dualist accounts of the self, such as Descartes', because of the role of beliefs and other mental phenomena in emotions.[iii] Despite Descartes's early recognition of the difficulty of simply attributing emotions to the body, subsequent theories have maintained that emotion is nothing more than physical excitation. Such a position is often thought to be exemplified by William James's view that our body reacts in certain ways to events and that our perception of this bodily reaction is the emotion.[iv] As might be expected, this account has encountered objections, centrally Walter Cannon's objection concerning the lack of correspondence between the variety of emotional states and physical ones (Calhoun and Solomon, 1984: 143-151). Contemporary thinkers still struggle to determine the relative roles of cognition, affect and bodily states to emotional experiences. One objection faced by contemporary cognitive theories of emotion is that they have rehabilitated the value of emotion by relocating emotion in the realm of the cognitive or mental, evading the question of the role and value of affect.[v] Although contemporary cognitive theorists tend not to subscribe to mind/body dualism because they consider cognitive operations to be physical processes, they retain a split between intellectual and affective processes. Reinstating the worth of the emotions by discarding their affective dimensions serves to reinforce the notion that affective processes are not valuable attributes of the self.

Nietzsche's understanding of the self and emotion offers us a different way to approach this dilemma. His account of emotions is connected to an insistence on the bodily nature of the mind that avoids mind/body dualism and removes the separation of cognition from affect. The idea that the self is a result of the interpretation of bodily feelings into a temporal unity eliminates the division between the cognitive and the physical. The continuity of consciousness with the body means that the role of thought in emotions is not that of representing or perceiving bodily states, nor is it entirely independent of bodily sensations. Bodily sensation and conscious thought are interdependent parts of the same, ongoing process of self-formation. This way of conceiving of consciousness as a bodily process additionally brings together the cognitive and the affective. The relationship between affect and thought is indissoluble and broad, not limited to experiences that we commonly designate as emotional. Thought always occurs in an affective context of one sort or another and always has an affective dimension. In the interpretation of the body's circumstances, affects drive the formation and adoption of ideas while ideas consolidate the meaning of affects and, in doing so, alter them.

Nietzsche's thought on the emotions acknowledges the important part that cognition has to play in emotion without placing the significance of an emotion entirely in its cognitive content. While the cognitions associated with an emotion determine to some degree what an emotion is "about", affect has significance prior to its association with cognitions. For example, in Nietzsche's account fear is the emotion used to cultivate the unified and causal subject. The question that needs to be asked is why is fear employed and not, say, curiosity? Fear is employed because of its affective character, which has qualities prior to its association with cognitions. Fearful affects are a reaction to the

actual or potential hurt or destruction of an organism; a reaction to the possibility of the loss of an organism's thriving and persistence. Fear facilitates a certain idea of the self and a particular kind of organization of bodily phenomena. While for Nietzsche cognitions can direct and manipulate affects, affects retain an importance of their own. This is why some manipulation of the emotions, such as the aesthetic priests', can be construed as a dangerous misuse of affect. If the significance of affects was entirely reducible to the cognitions associated with them, then it would not matter how affects were manipulated by associated cognitions—cognitions could not be construed as having better or worse relationships with affects.

Nietzsche's approach overcomes the misleading opposition between the idea that different emotions must correspond one to one to different affects (or in some accounts physical states) and the idea that emotions are affectless cognitions. Emotions are complex, temporal phenomena that are distinguishable from, but intimately related to, episodes of affect (Goldie, 2000: 12-14, 68-69). This allows us to acknowledge that affect is an important part of emotional experience while not requiring that we are conscious of it in all emotional experiences. Characteristics of emotions such as the possibility that they are unconscious, and the way in which our ideas and judgements about emotions change our experience of them, can be accounted for. The idea that there is a close relationship between emotions and affects can be retained alongside the idea that emotions incorporate socially formed concepts and beliefs.

The capacity of Nietzsche's thought to circumvent the difficulties emotions raise about the relationship between cognition and affect flows through into his treatment of reason.

The idea that emotions are disruptive and undermining of reason, like the association of emotions with the body, often leads to the relegation of our emotional life to the margins of what we value in the self, while reason is considered central. This position is clearly articulated by Kant who writes that "[a] mind that is subject to affects and passions is always ill, because both of them exclude the sovereignty of reason" (Kant, 1974: 1999). Reason is epistemologically privileged in its access to truth because it is thought to accede to the universal and objective whereas emotions are thought to provide us with distorted, subjective and irrational perspectives on the world. Our emotions, it is supposed, ignore the objectivity of the world in favour of the particular, self-interested and therefore erroneous. Sartre is one thinker who considers emotions to be a subjective, "magical" transformation of the world that ignores its objectivity. He maintains that emotions "try to change the world" and that in emotional states we "live as though the relations between things and their potentialities were not governed by deterministic processes but by magic" (Sartre, 1962: 63).[vi]

The perceived irrationality of emotions is encouraged by what can be described as "discharge theories" in both philosophy and psychology.[vii] Such theories tend to perceive emotions as a side effect of our psychic economy, this economy being conceived of as the competition between various drives in order to gain their release through expression or action. For example, Freud's early view of affect assumes that when drive energy is used for action, no affective discharge occurs apart from the feeling of pleasure at the relief of tension.[viii] While Freud modified his view of affect as merely the result of our psychic economy, his later view continues to associate affect, particularly intense affects, with powerlessness or with a pathological substitution for

action, noting that they are "precipitates of primaeval traumatic experiences" (Freud, 1979: 244). Affects are "hysterical attacks" and contrasted with effective, rational action (Freud, 1979: 245). This disjunction between action and emotion is also seen in Sartre's view that affect is a result of an action thwarted by reality — "emotive behaviour" is not "effective" (Sartre, 1962: 60). This notion that action arising out of emotion is ineffectual and irrational fails to recognise the valuable role that emotion can play in determining action.[ix]

Nietzsche's rethinking of the relationship between the body and mind, cognition and affect brings with it scepticism towards the idea of disinterested or transcendent reason and a rethinking of the relationship between emotion and reason. In agreement with a number of contemporary views of emotion,[x] he does not view reason as conflicting with emotion but as integral to it (Nietzsche, 1968: 208; 1974: 261; 1990: 66). Reason requires the presence of emotions by which it is employed and between which it adjudicates. And not only does reason function within an emotional context, the exercise of reason itself is an emotional experience, for instance, when it takes the form of the will to truth (Nietzsche, 1989: 159-161). Indeed, according to Nietzsche the self does not discharge an emotion and subsequently attain an emotionless state but emotions shift in intensity and replace one another. When Nietzsche writes of the sudden discharge of the emotions, their "explosion", for example in his discussion of ascetic Christianity's cultivation of an orgy of feeling, he is referring to deliberate intensification and manipulation of emotional experience. He criticises this ascetic treatment of emotions because of its lack of reflection on the significance of emotions and its squandering of their power. Nietzsche prefers that emotions are held in tension,

admiring "that longing for an ever-increasing, widening of distance within the soul itself, the formation of ever higher, rarer, more remote, tenser, more comprehensive states" (Nietzsche, 1990: 192). This tension is not a tension that results in an emotional discharge, but that which occurs when a broad affective engagement with the world is achieved. Such organisation of the emotions recognises that the value of emotions changes depending on the context in which they appear, and aims to sublimate rather than eliminate affects.

The context in which emotions appear includes the social and discursive frameworks by which we understand and interpret our emotions. The idea that emotions are part of cultivated social frameworks means that they are not simply subjective feelings. Groups share the ideas, material conditions and values that shape emotions and consequently, to some extent, an emotional repertoire. Emotions are not the result of a gap between a person's drives and desires and the 'reality' that they must face, but are themselves generated by, and congruent with, external social and material environments. In this way, emotions are integral to the social processes by which we understand and interpret the world. The importance of social and discursive frameworks in generating emotions is acknowledged in Nietzsche's treatment of unconscious emotions. Unlike Freud, Nietzsche does not view unconscious emotions as a side effect of the repression of natural drives (Freud, 1957: 110).[xi] He sees unconscious emotions as inculcated and cultivated in various ways by society. In the constitution of the causal subject, we see that the unconscious emotion that Nietzsche locates at its source, that of fear, is one that is incited by society and cultivates certain kinds of thought and behaviour.

The idea that particular emotions and discursive frameworks for understanding the emotions are related to social and material conditions external to the subject overcomes a strict division between inner subjectivity and an outer world. This point recalls and contrasts with Heidegger's account of moods, which he sees as revealing the way in which we are "tuned in" to the world around us through our activities. Moods are not subjective: "having a mood is not related to the psychical in the first instance, and is not itself an inner condition which then reaches forth in an enigmatical way and puts its mark on Things and persons" (Heidegger, 1973: 176). A mood cannot be inner or outer because it is prior to such a distinction and "comes neither from 'outside' nor from 'inside,' but arises out of Being-in-the-world, as a way of such Being". Like Heidegger's idea of mood, Nietzsche sees people as always in an emotional state of one kind or other — there is no emotionally neutral state. But Nietzsche's idea of mood is more historically and socially contextualised than Heidegger's. While anxiety as a mood is privileged by Heidegger as the mood that "individualises Dasein for its ownmost Being-in-the-world" (Heidegger, 1973: 232), Nietzsche's account of the significance of the moods of fear and *ressentiment* ties them to particular, shared historical situations in which they are part of the process of cultivating a particular kind of self.

In the process of temporalising bodily phenomena to form a unified self, the ideas on hand are those in our social and discursive environment. Nietzsche is hoping that the ideas about emotion encouraged by ascetic Christianity and their negative effects on the self can be transformed. His interpretation and evaluation of the ascetic's treatment of the emotions indicate a valuable line of thought with regard to the emotions. It suggests that to take the role of emotions seriously is not only a matter of examining individual

emotions or of building ahistorical emotional theories, but also of examining overall frameworks for organising and understanding the emotions. As Amélie Oskenberg Rorty writes: "A person's—a society's—characteristic emotional repertoire, its pattern of dominant and recessive emotions and attitudes, is structured by, and in turn reinforces, political and economic arrangements" (Oskenberg Rorty, 2004: 276). Many contemporary discussions focus on the advantages and disadvantages of particular emotions (love, hope, compassion, anger, jealously and so on), but fewer examine the organisation of emotional management and repertoires as a whole. Nietzsche's discussion of ascetic Christianity's treatment of the emotions indicates that we need to be able to evaluate some emotional regimes as preferable to others. He evaluates different emotional frameworks in terms of whether they are life enhancing and allow for a healthy affective investment in the world (Conway, 1991). The important point to recognise here is that the evaluation of emotional frameworks is not just necessary because of their cognitive content. Although analysis of the beliefs and judgements inherent in emotions is an important task, as Elizabeth Spelman's discussion of the emotional repertoire of insubordinate groups demonstrates, emotional frameworks also need to be evaluated in terms of their capacity to nurture a beneficial and sustainable affective life (Spelman, 1989: 263-73).

For Nietzsche the most fundamental feeling from which all emotions are derived is the will to power. The will to power, as the "most primitive form of affect" (Nietzsche, 1968: 366, 688), is the feeling of our encounters with other forces, the experience of quantity as quality that Nietzsche interprets as the concept "will to power". Considering the will to power as an emotion brings to mind Heidegger's reading of Nietzsche, in

particular the section "Will as Affect, Passion, and Feeling" in *The Will to Power as Art*. Of the two forms of feeling distinguished by Heidegger, affect and passion, he ties the will to power most closely to passion. He distinguishes between affect and passion: "[a]ffect: the seizure that blindly agitates us. Passion: the lucidly gathering grip on beings". Passion has an ability to provide "cohesive power", to grant "vision and premeditation" and to "bring perdurance and permanence for the first time to our existence" (Heidegger, 1979: 48). Consequently Heidegger writes of rapture, the physiological state of the artist, as a passion and not as an affect (Heidegger, 1979: 101-2). This preference for passion over affect as an aspect of the will to power is tied to the mastery of the world that passion gives us in comparison to the passivity of affect thought of as seizure and agitation.

But it is precisely the passive dimension of emotion that Nietzsche values and sees as fundamental to interpretation. Nietzsche notes: "[t]he will to power not a being, not a becoming, but a *pathos*—the most elemental fact from which a becoming and effecting first emerge" (Nietzsche 1968: 339, 635). This characterisation of the will to power as pathos emphasises its passivity, a passivity that is necessary to interpretation. For Nietzsche, one's mastery of the world is inextricably tied to the ability to sense it. The capacity of the will to power to generate meaning is dependent on its capacity to sense the relationship of "forces" to the self. Nietzsche writes that "[i]n order for the will to power to be able to manifest itself it needs to perceive the things it sees and feel the approach of what is assimilable to it" (Nietzsche quoted in Deleuze, 1983: 63).

Without the passive aspect of emotions we cannot effectively interpret the world. Emotions monitor how we are doing in relation to our aspirations as individuals, our success in projects such as surviving, creating, forming relationships and maintaining our freedom. Martha Nussbaum writes that emotions "evaluate the external object or person as an important part, not of the world from some detached and impersonal viewpoint, but of the world from the viewpoint of the agent's own goals and projects" (Nussbaum, 2001: 82). While she mistakenly attributes the evaluation that is characteristic of emotions to only their cognitive content, she is correct to attribute to emotion the role of evaluating experiences in terms of our individual aims and endeavours. Emotions incorporate a passive capacity to sense the world in the context of a person's efforts towards persisting and thriving in the world. An overly restrictive and manipulative way of managing the emotions such as ascetic Christianity undermines the capacity to sense the world from one's own perspective, limiting the self's ability to successfully interpret. As Kathleen O'Dwyer discusses, this includes limiting the self's capacity for love and friendship with other people (O'Dwyer, 2008: 56-63). Hence Nietzsche characterises the will to power as pathos. The growth and flourishing of a self in an environment requires the ability to passively suffer the emotions that monitor its condition.

Moreover, Nietzsche's understanding of the self as comprised of multiple phenomena organised into a whole emphasises an additional aspect of emotions. Not only do they monitor the self's relationship to the external world, they also sense the relationship between, and condition of, the diverse internal phenomena of the self in the context of its environment. As we have seen in Nietzsche's account of the relationship between the

causal self and fear, emotions are essential to organising and maintaining diverse bodily phenomena as a whole. Emotions provide vital guidance and feedback to the self in the process of adjusting to the environment while maintaining a balanced self-organisation. The danger to the self of emotional frameworks that suppress the capacity of the emotions to perform this role is that the self cannot maintain itself as an organised whole.

Nietzsche's emphasis on the passive dimension of emotions indicates that any evaluation of social, emotional regimes needs to consider their ability to allow individuals to attend to, in a receptive fashion, both the cognitive and affective aspects of a range of emotions. To not do so is to risk entrenching interpretations of phenomena destructive and dangerous to the integrity of the self. For example, ascetic Christianity's management of the emotions responds to events with ideas and feelings of fear, which leads to an indiscriminate reaction to events, undermining the interpretative capacity of the self. In this way, frameworks for understanding and reacting to the emotions can restrict the ability to recognise, interpret and respond to events. It is Nietzsche's hope that the legacy of ascetic Christianity's mismanagement of the emotions, the tendency to view them as dangerous and disruptive, to combine denial and repression with an unreflective indulgence and a manipulative intensification, can be replaced with emotional frameworks that allow people to critically engage with their emotions.

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NOTES

[i] This kind of emotion can also be thought of as a mood, albeit one with an intentional object.
[ii] Susan James argues that the excision of the passions from the discipline of philosophy, encouraged by the splitting off of disciplines such as psychology from it, is a relatively recent development that has been read back into the history of philosophy (1997: 15-18).
[iii] Descartes discusses the passions as physical excitation, for just as an external object is present to our senses, a passion is our observation of an internal, physical "commotion". But this picture is complicated by his discussion of the role of beliefs, desires and perceptions as also central to the passions, at which point he introduces the notion of "animal spirits" in order to account for the close interaction between mind and body (1994: 238-332). Seventeenth century philosophy is often thought to be the beginning of the reification of reason as opposed to passion, and philosophers such as Descartes seen as rigorously upholding a split between the mind and body. But as Susan James points out, seventeenth century philosophers were vigorously engaged with the discussion of the passions and affects and how these related to both the mind and body (1997: 15-18).
[iv] Seen as exemplified in William James's statements such as: "*the bodily changes follow directly the* PERCEPTION *of the exciting fact, and that our feeling of the same changes as they occur* IS *the emotion*" (James and Lange, 1967: 13).
[v] For example, cognitivist theories such as those of Martha Nussbaum (2001) and Robert Solomon (1983) make sense of emotions by viewing them in terms of propositions, more specifically in terms of judgements. Concerns with an overemphasis on the cognitive aspects of emotion are raised by Goldie (2000: 50-83).
[vi] Sartre acknowledges that "the emotional consciousness is primarily a consciousness of the world" and is "a specific manner of apprehending the world" (1963: 56-7) but still assumes that this apprehension of the world is one that denies its objectivity. It is worth noting that Sartre does not think of emotions as an external disruption to subjectivity (1963: 91). Nevertheless, given that "the consciousness leaps into the magical world of emotion, plunges wholly into it by debasing itself" (p. 78) it is difficult to see how Sartre is actually attributing any worth to the emotions as part of the structure of consciousness.
[vii] Solomon calls discharge theories, "hydraulic models" (1983: 139-150). Unlike the account presented here, Solomon considers Nietzsche to be a discharge theorist.

[viii]While Freud did not consider that reason could control the emotions and granted affectivity an influential role in the self, he considered affects to be the expulsion of tension that would otherwise be used in action (Freud, 1957: 111). For instance, Solomon's account of Freud attributes three different conceptions of emotion to him: "That emotion is 'instinct' itself"; "The emotion is an instinct bound to an idea" and "The emotion is affect", that is, just a side effect of the interchange between forces (1983: 144-145).

[ix] For discussion of action arising out of emotion see, for example, Goldie (2000: 37-49).

[x] For discussions of emotions and rationality and the ways in which emotions can be conceived of as being rational see, for example, discussions by Goldie (2000: 43-45), Ben-Ze'ev (2003) and Solomon (1983: 238-250).

[xi] Freud modified his view in his later writings, stating it "was anxiety which produced repression and not, as I formerly believed, repression which produced anxiety" (1979: 263). It is notable that Freud does not completely discard his earlier view, allowing it to remain alongside his new conclusion. Freud's later view considers fear as part of the ego's defence process in a situation of danger. The difference between neurosis and normal affect is that the neurotic's reaction to the dangers is excessively intense. Displacement of the original object of fear on to a surrogate turns this strong reaction into a neurosis.

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