HOW TO GET RID OF THE SUBJECT? ON SOME ASPECTS OF NIETZSCHE'S CRITIQUE OF SUBJECTIVITY

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The article deals with the concept of the subject (also referred to as the self) in Friedrich Nietzsche's philosophy and is based on a range of texts relating to the concept of the subject, especially his numerous posthumous fragments gathered as Nachlass in Colli/Montinari's critical edition. The article argues that the question of the subject's place and meaning in general carries crucial weight in Nietzsche's thinking and forms an indispensable basis for understanding his morphology of the will to power. The importance of his critique of the concept of the subject is in fact largely overlooked, due to the fragmented treatment of this topic in his writings. This article is an attempt to re-establish Nietzsche as one of the most eminent proponents of the modern anti-subjectivist thinking and serves to indicate why his critique of the concept of the subject plays an integral role in the 20th century critical thinking.

Keywords: *Nietzsche, subject, subjectivity, self.*

The present article provides an outline of some crucial features of Friedrich Nietzsche's critique of the concept of *the subject* (also designated as *the self*) and will study them as significant ingredients closely related to a more general framework of Nietzsche's thought. In addition to Nietzsche's most celebrated books, special attention is being paid to the texts that remained unpublished during his lifetime and are referred to in the following paper under the common denomination of *Nachlass*.

It is well known that the nature of Nietzsche's thinking is difficult to be pinned down in few systematically organized propositions: one is easily caught up and lost in the interpretative labyrinth of what Nietzsche himself, in *The Gay Science*, calls 'the question of being understandable' (Nietzsche 1999c: 633–635). One could never be convinced that he has thoroughly understood what Nietzsche 'means' since his declared elitism potentially invalidates all those who believe they have reached a full understanding of what is at stake in his thinking. The question of 'being understandable' cannot be separated from the notion of style, likely to draw the line of demarcation between those likely to understand and those mislead or kept away[1].

[1] "All the more subtle laws of any style have their origin at this point: they at the same time keep away, create a distance, forbid "entrance", understanding, as said above – while they open the ears of those whose ears are related to ours." (Nietzsche 1992: 177).

This ability to be 'related' must be recognized as a fundamental feature of Nietzsche's anti-subjectivist thinking: understanding is not exclusively a rational procedure where one, by continuous efforts, inevitably approaches something 'objectively there' or 'objectively true'. Understanding is a procedure that inherently involves the turbid world of temperament and the affinity of instincts. To rely solely on one's rational capacities to understand a thinker, a text, or an idea equals to be condemned to a slow death as a thinker because one never embraces the bottom of a thought by rational means only. That is why Nietzsche does not view understanding as a matter of peaceful and detached contemplation comparable to that of scientist's or scholar's way of proceeding, but rather as a matter of perilous commitment (Nietzsche 1999m: 462–463) which consists in submitting oneself to the interpretative powers of the instincts[2] and in assuming the never-ending *polemos* that calls into question the very composition of the thinker and interpreter itself.

What is at stake in the modern concept of the subject?

Nietzsche's critique of the concept of the subject or the self has to be viewed in the larger context of his highly polemical thinking that aims at blowing up the entire structure of traditional metaphysical concepts. It goes without saying that the meaning and consistency of the subject, firmly rooted and established in modern philosophical tradition, has been in several occasions radically called into question by an eminent tradition of modern thinkers starting with Thomas Hobbes and carried on by David Hume, Immanuel Kant and numerous other renowned thinkers. Indeed, for complex reasons, the concept of the subject has retained its actuality regardless of the general disappointment or even disenchantment towards the great narratives of modern metaphysics. Nietzsche counts for one of the most vehement, although hardly ever systematic examiners of this concept. Determining "das Subjektive zu erklären" (Nietzsche 1999g: 221) as one of his major concerns, Nietzsche's fervent critical approach is undeniably one of the most decisive, although often drastically misunderstood steps in the modern anti-metaphysical criticism raised against the all-powerful metaphysical category of the subject. When searching for influences exercised on his thinking, one is confronted to a wide range of possible stimuli. On the one hand Nietzsche's initial starting-point might be hypothetically searched for in Schopenhauer's (and, more generally, in the romantic) conception of the subject's fading self-identity through suffering and the increasing feeling of oneness with the cosmic order (Nietzsche 1997: 161, also Nietzsche 1999g: 201[3]). On the other hand, Nietzsche's critique of the subject draws extensively upon the Dionysian sufferings resulting from

[2] "Der Philosoph ist nur eine Art Gelegenheit und Ermöglichung dafür, dass der Trieb einmal zum Reden kommt." (Nietzsche 1999j: 262). See also the similar statement in *Jenseits von Gut und Böse*: "…das meiste bewusste Denken eines Philosophen ist durch seine Instinkte heimlich geführt und in bestimmte Bahnen gezwungen." (Nietzsche 1999e: 17).

[3] "Das Individuum, der intelligible Charakter ist nur eine Vorstellung des Ur-Einen."

the disintegration of the individuality (Nietzsche 2000: 51–54) and the heroism rooted in the aspiration to see the production of the geniuses as the condition for the emergence of the culture. And of course, the modern view of seeing the subject as the authentic source of representations not only brings about Nietzsche's pessimistic epistemological considerations on the possibility of the objective knowledge[4], but also his psychological and physiological considerations touching the meaning of notions of the mind and the body, as well as their possible interaction through subjectivity. This interaction is to be fulfilled ultimately in what Nietzsche calls a 'morphology and doctrine of the evolution of the will to power' (Nietzsche 2002: 23–24) – a concrete outcome of the proclamation that (human) existence has no value of its own. It is by no means incidentally that this last claim later becomes the most pertinent argument in the eyes of those who wish to present Nietzsche as a forerunner of the existentialist thinking.

Nietzsche's thinking is a permanent struggle to get rid of the dominant 'modern image of thought', primarily associated with the supposedly autonomous, rational, fully self-conscious subject, ready to assume its ontological primacy over the world as its counterpart and eager to pass judgement upon the value of its own body as inferior component of the subject. Therefore, as Nietzsche himself emphasizes (Nietzsche 1999k: 266), the body and its creative powers tend to play a pivotal role in his philosophical genealogy of subjectivity. Another fragment dating from the same time (Nietzsche 1999k: 276) picks up Spinoza's intuition that the body, as an indirect source of unity of the subject (*Einheit des Subjekts*), has been and still is largely ignored by philosophers who tend to believe that they are entitled to legitimately infer some kind of unity of the subject beyond the multiplicity of scattered elements. However, we have to bear in mind that the notion of the body employed by Nietzsche does not really coincide with the general conception of 'the body' as it was established in the radically dualist thinking instituted by the Cartesian system, as Nietzsche tends to understand the body not in terms of spatiality but mostly in terms of intensities. Thus Nietzsche successfully resists the temptation to be trapped in the traditional binary opposition of the mind and the body, he consciously searches for an alternative by referring abundantly to researches made in the field of physiology and psychology in the second half of the 19th century. Furthermore, this struggle for inventing new modes of thinking without the subject cannot be realised without recognizing another important aspect – the seductive power exercised by language, a topic extensively treated by Nietzsche in various parts of his work (Nietzsche 1999b: 30–31; 1999l: 237–238) and intimately related to the question concerning the genealogy of the concept of the subject. Nietzsche's critical position regards the subject, as well as its modern counterpart – the object – as a direct descendant of the misleading power of language[5]. Nietzschean

[4] "Eine werdende Welt könnte im strengen Sinne nicht „begriffen", nicht „erkannt" werden…" (Nietzsche 1999k: 561).

[5] "Objekt und Subjekt – fehlerhafter Gegensatz. Kein Ausgangspunkt für das Denken! Wir lassen uns durch die Sprache verführen." (Nietzsche 1999i: 428).

'philology', supplemented by what might be called the semiotics of the body, is thus an integral part of his critique of the modern subject.

The Cartesian image of thinking

We can recognize in the Nietzschean endeavour to rethink the subject an inversion of the image of Cartesian thinking which counted once as a prophetic promise of a totally new beginning for humanity and as a founding event of the modern thinking and science in general. Is Nietzsche, by his critical attitude, consciously and purposefully trying to obliterate the very image of Cartesian subject as an indivisible meaning-creating instance, autonomously capable of rational thinking and being thoroughly transparent (i.e. self-reflective) to his own mind's eye? When studying briefly the main points of Nietzsche's critique of the Cartesian subject in order to fully estimate to what extent Nietzsche contributes to the overall deconstruction of the subject-centred world-view, the question arises: is Nietzsche really the foremost post- and anti-Cartesian thinker whose thinking may be said to open completely new perspectives? When we consider Nietzsche's fundamental statement in his *Ecce Homo* (Nietzsche 1999f, chapter "Warum ich so gute Bücher schreibe", part 1) that he is not only talking about things he is thinking of, but especially about things he is living through, we are witnesses of the fundamental shift he is operating vis-à-vis the Cartesian image of thought privileging rational thinking as going beyond and eliminating the subject's individuality and his individual life as the (only) tangible source or basis of his thinking[6]. What counts for René Descartes are not the modalities of the human being as an active living being, prone to incessant biological or even sexual impulses and drives, but an abstract rational being universally capable of transcending his concrete significant circumstances, making it necessary to disentangle its thinking of all references to any particular circumstances. This is where we can by all evidence situate the kernel of the conflict between Descartes' fundamental statement of the grounding rationality and the universality of the subject and Nietzsche's acknowledged anti-Cartesianism leading to the spectacular demolition of the subject's capacity to achieve invulnerable self-knowledge of his own existence by rational means.

Rendering problematic the Cartesian devaluation of the body[7] and reinserting the body into the circuit of thinking (Nietzsche 1999j: 279–280), Nietzsche is deliberately assuming an anti-modernist position. If the origin of the predilection of the mind over the body goes certainly back at least to Plato's objective idealism operating with the truth-power of transcendent forms or ideas, Descartes' decisive step, embodied in his subjective idealism, brings him to think that the human being's condition is not subservient to some transcendent idea, but that the key for understanding the world and its premises is exclusively captured in the mind of the human being, in its capacity to reflect his own thinking as well as the

[6] Nietzsche makes this statement also in 1999i: 504: "Leben ist die Bedingung des Erkennens".

[7] "Unsere Instinkte sind besser als ihr Ausdruck in Begriffen. Unser Leib ist weiser als unser Geist!" (Nietzsche 1999k: 244).

physical world around and to possess a full consciousness of these poles as irrevocable conditions of his existence. As a result Cartesian dualism falls in the trap of its own primary statement which considers the *subjectum*, or what Descartes initially calls 'the spirit', as an object simple to apprehend through introspection (Descartes 1992: 91). His interrogation of the real tries to figure out the exact role the thinking subject (the '*ego*') plays in the overall structure of being; by showing how thinking refers to being and is intimately associated with it, Descartes confers to the thinking subject the fundamental power to know, by means of immediate introspection, one's (mental) existence as the most inalienable truth itself.

The Cartesian dualist conception of a thinking subject introduces a radical ontological split in the very heart of the human being, turning it into an irreconcilable mixture of two antagonistic components – the mind (as representative of *res cogitans*) and the body (as *res extensa*). This fundamental discrepancy in the subject makes it float in the air: the human being is neither mind nor body, but a strange compound where one element necessarily dominates the other. Nietzsche's critique takes as its object this strange compound as an unbalanced whole, it suggests to start with radically deconstructing the whole series of beliefs contained in the famous Cartesian statement "I think, therefore I am".[8] Nietzsche's radical scepticism is far from concerning only the status of the mind or spirit; it is the process of thinking that is to be examined in the first hand, including the place attributed to the body in this process of thinking. The crux of Nietzsche's critique of the basic Cartesian premise of the subject lies in the intuition that the subject should not be considered as the unique origin or ground of thinking, but vice versa: the subject is nothing but an instrument or an outcome of something we are accustomed to call by common consent 'thinking' (Nietzsche 2002: 80–81). Subjectivity, if considered in the broadest sense as a kind of primitive consciousness proper to all living organisms (Nietzsche 1999h: 544–545), seems first of all to play the role of a sign or symptom of a larger evolutionary chain of organic life: to be somehow conscious of one's needs and therefore to 'think' in subjective terms is of vital necessity to most organisms. Nietzsche's initial argument against the subject is actually an argument in favour of the subject: we still need the instance of the subject (i.e. as consciousness) mainly for pragmatic reasons. This means that consciousness has developed for the purpose of communication (Nietzsche 1999c: 590–593), for the semiotic purpose of emitting, transmitting and receiving signs, although this need for communication, as Nietzsche indicates, has been immersed into the moral requirement to be conscious of the value of one's actions. Demonstrating that

[8] "W[w]enn ich den Vorgang zerlege, der in dem Satz „ich denke" ausgedrückt ist, so bekomme ich eine Reihe von verwegenen Behauptungen, deren Begründung schwer, vielleicht unmöglich ist, – zum Beispiel, dass ich es bin, der denkt, dass überhaupt ein Etwas es sein muss, das denkt, dass Denken eine Thätigkeit und Wirkung seitens eines Wesens ist, welches als Ursache gedacht wird, dass es ein „Ich" giebt, endlich, dass es bereits fest steht, was mit Denken zu bezeichnet ist, – dass ich weiss, was Denken ist." (Nietzsche 1999e: 29–30).

consciousness, as a product resulting from the encounter with the outer world (Nietzsche 1999l: 67–68), has been determined by evolutionary changes in time, Nietzsche questions the supposedly unchanging nature of this (self-) consciousness (Nietzsche 1999c: 382–383). When clinging to the idea that our consciousness[9] is something above the general rule of becoming, we are deliberately misunderstanding ourselves as multiple biological organisms and refuse to acknowledge that we are still living beings, which basically means beings with no persisting essence.

Arguing that the subject is the precondition for the act of thinking and thus furnishes an explication to the question of authorship, one is caught in a vicious circle expressed in the sentence "Sum, ergo cogito: cogito, ergo sum" (Nietzsche 1999c: 521). Either we assume that there is no act of thinking possible without the subject being already there, or we have to admit that any subject we encounter is already a completed subject, not only capable of thinking rationally, but in fact already thinking, which means that the subject comes to existence as a kind of miracle *ex nihilo*, and the formation of the subject makes no sense since we are no longer able to make a meticulous distinction between different states of this formation. Hence Descartes' presumed short-sightedness consists in his failure to define the subject in terms of becoming and of constant struggle for differentiation and his conviction that the subject and the intuition it has of itself really is an immediate or founding certainty[10] falls into decay. Moreover, Nietzsche's epistemology, regardless of his often repeated affirmation of the real, is actually based on the sceptical intuition that the so-called real world is out of our reach because all knowledge in our disposition is in the strictest sense the result of the work of our faculties (Nietzsche 1999h: 624–625, 1999k: 368–369)[11], which means, in Nietzschean terms, essentially a fable or fabrication [*Erdichtung*]. Therefore the myth of disinterested and selfless knowledge, freed from any subjective vestiges turns out to be a myth or a simple lie (2002: 97–99).

This scepticism applies also to the 'I' as a witness of this fable. As witnesses of certain processes of thinking and representing, we still lack proof that something like an 'I' exists, likely to be the real source of the process of thinking and representing beyond the simple suggestion of accompanying representation worked out by Kant (Kant 1998: 99). Similarly, even if we maintain to some degree the existence of an 'I', we have ultimately no chance to prove the ultimate self-identity of the subject – it is to be

[9] Of course, when we are talking about consciousness here, we are referring to its narrower meaning: to be conscious of one's self is far from the all too naïve statement that all the 'I' ever thinks should "penetrate into the consciousness" (Nietzsche 1999c: 590–593), or, to put otherwise, should be recognized as properly 'my' thinking. The question about the consciousness defining the subject is thus inevitably associated with the question of authorship: who thinks in the shadow of 'I think'? and who is this concealed witness bearing witness to the supposedly unconcealed process of thinking?

[10] *Unmittelbare Gewissheit* (Nietzsche 1999e: 29) or *Grundgewissheit* (Nietzsche 1999i: 569–560), or *subjektive Gewissheit* in *Götzen-Dämmerung* (Nietzsche 1999f: 77–78).

[11] Or, as Nietzsche says elsewhere, "d[D]ie Welt, soweit wir sie erkennen können, ist unsere eigene Nerventhätigkeit, nichts mehr." (Nietzsche 1999i: 436).

expected, as Hume did, that this thinking and perceiving 'I' is necessarily apt to change whenever it has the impression of perceiving something. Nietzsche, assuming Humean point of view, attacks the metaphysicians of the subject by qualifying the subject as a pure 'construction of thought', a 'regulating fiction' (Nietzsche 1999j: 526, 1999l: 383). There is finally nothing that remains unaffected by the processes of change, the subject being forced to invent itself as an artificial principle of consistency. In order to counterbalance the unconditional belief in the concept of the subject understood in terms of the identical (*das Gleiche*), the similar (*die Ähnlichkeit*) and the persistent (*das Beharrendes*), Nietzsche proclaims the ever-changing and the not-identical-with-itself, questioning the established forms of rational thinking.

In principle, Nietzsche brings the intuition of the 'thinking I' basically back to the same level with any representation we are likely to observe as mere bystanders. Submitting the famous sentence "cogito, ergo sum" (Descartes 2000: 66) to a rigorous scrutiny, he comes to the conclusion (Nietzsche 1999i: 569–570) that there is no plausible evidence to be found to support the hypothesis of the substantiality of the 'thinking I'. The only 'thing' we can detect with some degree of certainty is that there is some kind of thinking (or representing) to be witnessed! Considering thinking as a process involving a change, we have come to maintain necessarily the unchangeable nature of the thinking subject in order to attribute thinking to something beyond the thinking process itself because we are inclined to see a minimum of persistency beyond alteration. But what if this thinking subject is nothing but a part, or even a product, and not the precondition, of the thinking process? And what if the process of representing has no element likely to remain the same throughout the whole process: if the representation is itself ever changing, how could the hypothetic source of the representation still remain the same (Nietzsche 1999i: 543–544)[12]? If the representing process is subject to perpetual change, Descartes' extremely original intuition '*Ego sum, ego existo; certum est*' (Descartes 1992: 76) appears to be unverifiable, if not completely implausible – our knowledge does not permit us to confer any substantial status to the subject.

Philosophy of the psychology of the depths

Should we continue to argue that some substantial element is still to be discovered, a nucleus called the 'I' or the 'self' and that this self persists beyond the accidental and the perishable, as several religious and spiritual traditions seem to believe? Should we suppose that this element can eventually be reached by some kind of introspection where one digs down to what is hidden in one's self? Nietzsche's radical anti-metaphysics and consequent anti-subjectivism strictly rule out this possibility, since liberating one's self does not imply the process of arriving at one's true or authentic self, but the process

[12] "Damit es überhaupt ein *Subjekt* geben könne, muß ein Beharrendes da sein und ebenfalls viele Gleichheit und Ähnlichkeit da sein <…> Nun aber glaube ich: das Subjekt könnte entstehen, indem der Irrthum des Gleichen entsteht…"

of liberating oneself of social, cultural, and moral prejudices and constraints that prevent us from realizing ourselves as free individuals, irreducible to incumbent social rules and regulations. Thus Nietzsche's intuition governing this argument takes here an ethical rather than epistemological turn, anticipating existentialist thinking, when he affirms that this freedom inevitably implies the obligation to take on our shoulders the weight of our existence[13]. But the path from the ethical affirmation of "responsibility to ourselves for our own existence" to the epistemological affirmation of the self as a unique element of its own is not a straight line to follow, because it still presupposes an answer to the question: what do we mean by the self? For Nietzsche, the answer still is and remains out of reach: on the one hand, the permanent, detectable essence of the self has turned out to be a mere illusion (Nietzsche 1999j: 408)[14], on the other hand it becomes clear that as soon as we try to eliminate shells that separate us form the outside, we are forced to conclude that the enterprise is condemned to fail and the inner is but a reflection of the outer shaped and determined by our instincts and needs (Nietzsche 1999l: 108)[15].

Indeed, the impossibility to distinguish the inner from the outer has for unknown reasons passed unnoticed in the particularly modern belief "es giebt Subjekte" (Nietzsche 1999l: 102). Nietzsche develops a fascinating critical psychology leading to the rejection of the cause/effect hypothesis: the explication of all events (*Geschehen*) by intentionality and will is to a great extent insufficient to explain the functioning of human thinking. Nietzsche is eager to reduce the hypothesis of the subject to a perspectivist illusion (Nietzsche 1999l: 106), his unpublished fragments frequently take account of this reduction. Anxious to emancipate psychology from moral prejudices, Nietzsche's approach is moving towards a philosophical psychology of depths (see 1999e: 38–39), whereas his purpose is to explain not the structure of human psychology in the most general form, but the functioning of the human *psyche* as a field of violent encounter where different powers, either conscious or unconscious, are inexorably intertwined. Moreover, this psychology is not concerned with establishing the overall structure of human behaviour, but it rather studies the way the human physiology covertly affects our thinking and the values we generate. Psychology naturally rejoins physiology (Nietzsche 1999k: 64 and 99). Thus the goal of Nietzschean psychology is not concerned with the soul or any other apparently permanent metastructure, but with the body and its affections, as they become the legitimate object of psychology as *Affektenlehre*, itself a definitive form of the morphology of the will to power (Nietzsche 1999m: 214). Nietzsche's *Affektenlehre* is certainly an original contribution to the studies on the unconscious, although loosely rooted in Eduard von Hartmann's

[13] "We are responsible to ourselves for our own existence; consequently we want to be the true helmsman of this existence and refuse to allow our existence to resemble a mindless act of chance." (Nietzsche 1997: 128).

[14] "Immer rühren wir nur an das Bild, und nicht an uns selber."

[15] "Bewußtsein ist so weit da, als bewußtsein nützlich ist."

theory of the unconscious (see Jensen 2006). The particularity of Nietzsche's approach can be explained by his constant attempt to show that the realm of the unconscious has no substantial existence of its own. Furthermore, human subjectivity is not an unalterable stability submitted to the rational power of the self-consciousness, but a violent sphere of activity where different sets of forces, for the most part unconscious and irrational, meet and clash (Nietzsche 1999c: 471–472), without necessarily being brought into consciousness. But the central thesis advanced by Nietzsche may be said to be anti-psychologist and is obviously deduced from the particular nature of his morphology of the will to power: if our thinking is primarily determined by instincts[16] and can be described as a kind of battlefield of different instincts, the primary interest of instincts is not so much to obtain satisfaction (or to gain happiness), but to become more active and powerful, to gain in power and intensity (Nietzsche 1999m: 300–301). Nevertheless, happiness can still be regarded as a co-product of the surplus of power because happiness always involves "a high state of tension" (Nietzsche 2002: 154), rendering it almost unbearable to be lived through.

Abandoning the idea of the substantial unity of the thinking subject, Nietzsche's thought inevitably approaches the unsettling question about what is that which thinks under the surface of the subjective formation designated as the cause and source of thinking. And vice versa, if we are ready to admit that 'thinking' may comprehend 'something' that more or less escapes the control exercised by the consciousness, we may no longer define thinking as a conscious and rational process exclusively in the service of the 'I'. If we determine 'thinking' in the most general sense not only as the process of organizing a response to some irritation or stimulus, be it 'inner' or 'outer', but as a complicated process of producing signs (*Zeichen*), words and concepts, we are already assuming some essential multiplicity underlying and influencing the process of thinking. This is why Nietzsche's definition of the man as a multiplicity of 'wills to power" (Nietzsche 1999l: 25)[17] seems to be an appropriate conclusion concerning the manifold nature of thinking. In fact, Nietzsche's suggestion turns the image of conscious thinking upside down: he comes to understand thinking as a surface effect emerging from the depths not reached by the eye of consciousness, thus refusing to confer to thinking any immediate transparency and self-presence imagined by Descartes. Furthermore, the main ontological question whether being is deducible from thinking or coextensive with it looses its value, as it is transformed into semiotic question about the meaning (and thus about the value) of subjective processes (Nietzsche 1999k: 173–174, cf. also Nietzsche 1999m: 257–259). If thinking ceases to require the absolute presence of the consciousness and is defined as a radical

[16] "Ich rede von Instinkt, wenn irgend ein Urtheil <…> einverleibt ist, so daß es jetzt selber spontan sich regt und nicht mehr auf Reize zu warten braucht. Es hat sein Wachstum für sich und folglich auch seinen nach außen stoßenden Thätigkeits-Sinn." (Nietzsche 1999i: 505).

[17] "Der Mensch als eine Vielheit von „Willen zur Macht": jeder mit einer Vielheit von Ausdruckmitteln und Formen."

multiplicity with no underlying substantial element, we come to define thinking as a symptomatology because every thought taken apart is nothing but a symptom or a sign of some hidden event resulting from the arrangement of many instincts[18]. After all, it makes no sense to ask where exactly thinking takes place because thinking is a changing configuration of relations.

Following Nietzsche's intuition that the 'I' is conditioned by thinking[19], thinking is extended beyond or underneath the conscious and the reflected: thinking has no solid rational ground of its own, it is continuously emerging from something to which we even cannot assign a name. In order to neutralize the sovereign power of the 'I think', Nietzsche proposes a formula 'It thinks' ('*Es denkt*' – Nietzsche 1999e: 31), although he soon realizes that the 'It' is still a simple remnant of the 'I'. As far as we state that this 'something' is thinking, we still remain victims to the schema prescribing that thinking necessarily implies a precise and unique origin – an author – making no difference between 'cogito', 'cogitat' or 'cogitatur' (Nietzsche 1999k: 639–640). We still need to examine this 'something' that is said to initiate the very process of thinking. The 'It' still remains a metaphor, as thinking in general is a metaphor and thus comes to designate this hazardous and strange authorship whose precise nature is still largely unknown. When the 'I' refuses to make sense, it ceases to think and is carried away by the turbid waters of the bodily processes liable to contest any transcendent instance[20] that poses itself as a monarch at the head of the plurality of instincts. This is where the bodily self comes into play: as *Thus Spoke Zarathoustra*, through poetic metaphors, tries to convince us, the self is the body (Nietzsche 1999d: 39–41), but this body is already a multiplicity. Paradoxically, Nietzsche never ceases to recognize the usefulness of the fiction of the subject as well as its capacity to order, simplify, falsify and separate (Nietzsche 1999l: 382). But the nature of this fiction, as well as its precise implication in the body yet remains to be elucidated.

As already indicated, Nietzsche is by no means a very systematic critic of the concept of the subject, if one looks towards his presumed theory of the 'will to power' his criticism nevertheless serves a very precise aim – to discard the modern conjecture of the rational and self-conscious subjective mind presumably underlying both our behaviour and our general capacity to apprehend the so-called outer world. Nietzsche's approach to subjectivity downgrades the subject to a mere perspective illusion. As he points out, our conscious life is for the most part at the service of our body, which means, at the service of the intensification of life – *Lebenssteigerung*

[18] "Unter jedem Gedanken steckt ein Afekt. *Jeder Gedanke*, jedes Gefühl, jeder Wille ist *nicht* geboren aus Einem bestimmten Triebe, sondern er ist ein *Gesamtzustand*, eine ganze Oberfläche des ganzen Bewußtseins und resultirt aus der augenblicklichen Macht-Feststellung *aller* der uns constituirenden Triebe…" (Nietzsche 1999l: 26).

[19] "D[d]urch das Denken wird das Ich gesetzt." (Nietzsche 1999k: 597)

[20] "Aber es giebt kein solches Substrat; es giebt kein „Sein" hinter dem Thun, Wirken, Werden; „der Thäter" ist zum Thun bloss hinzugedichtet, – das Thun ist alles." 1999e: 279).

(Nietzsche 1999m: 39–40). In this sense his thought leaves behind the simple humanist thought which makes the human being the centre of the universe and identifies in Hegel's sense the real with the rational. In order to prepare this revolution, Nietzsche takes into consideration the entire chain of life and leaves behind the accidental distinction between the human, the animal and the vegetable. Nevertheless he still acknowledges the subjective constitution of what we perceive and live as our world (Nietzsche 1999m: 280–282). His approach inevitably shifts towards a more complex account of human agency and thinking through the primary impact of the irrational unconscious plural element contained in what we usually denote as 'the body'. One is even faced with the question whether Nietzsche's whole work is not essentially a powerful and uncompromising reflection on the body and on forces keeping it alive. His critique of the concept of the subject and of the autonomous rational mind does not stand alone as a kind of ivory tower for its own benefit, it rather forms a precondition of what finally enables him to turn to the enormous multiplicity contained in the body[21], those minimal organic activities or pre-subjective personifications[22], each with its own perspective. Thus if we are ready to admit that 'thinking' may comprehend 'something' that escapes the control exercised by the consciousness, we cannot define thinking any more as an exclusive propriety of the self-conscious instance of the 'I'. So there is no central place, no central organizing faculty where thinking takes place: the mind (or the brain) may not be regarded as the space where thinking emerges out of nothingness, it is a screen on the surface of which we see mere results of the bodily processes concealed to the eye of the consciousness.

Departing form the hypothesis that the conscious part of thinking consists most of all in naming, simplifying, organizing the so-called facts in view of our usage, of our life (Nietzsche 1999k: 637–638), Nietzsche's redefinition of 'thinking' allows to enlarge considerably the extent as well as the meaning of these processes. It aims at revealing how the human subjectivity, imprisoned by common consent in the immaterialized mind to the detriment of the body, is a major modern impasse that must be unveiled and overcome. What is properly radical in Nietzsche's thinking about the human agent is to consider it not as a universally determined agent, but always as radically accidental, a singular set of forces, although the impact of the social and the moral, as he suggests, is not to be ignored. Hence emerges the opportunity to go further, to unbound human agency and to demonstrate its natural inconsistency. Nietzsche's way of thinking obviously privileges immanence and basically rejects any transcendent forces likely to push the human to its limits. These forces must be searched for in the immanence of the human being and not elsewhere, in some set of religious principles or rigorous moral codes applicable from outside (Nietzsche 1999k: 210). In the situation where the

[21] "Hinter deinen Gedanken und Gefühlen steht dein Leib und dein Selbst im Leibe: die terra incognita." (Nietzsche 1999j: 225).

[22] "Der Trieb selber ist aber nichts Anderes als ein bestimmtes Thätig sein: ein Personification" (Nietzsche 1999j: 321–322).

human agent traditionally called 'the subject' ceases to retain its traditional metaphysically established consistency, one can ask whether this inconsistency, referred to as properly human, is not a manifestation or reflection of some larger inconsistency? Does not the human include and reflect the non-human as its origin and also as its proper limit or even ultimate goal? Of course, the 'thinking I' itself[23], as Nietzsche's own thinking witnesses, is an act of inconsistency: consistency is systematically destroyed in favour of new forces that seize thinking and seek to reign over it. Therefore Nietzsche's thinking participates in this act of inconsistency: thinking cannot rely on forces already manifest and acknowledged, thinking is fed by forces eager to go beyond of what is assimilated. When no invention is carried out, thinking is sooner or later reduced to mirror some kind of (higher, truer, imaginary) reality, to be just a simulacrum or a false copy of the true original. And it is this fate that Nietzsche struggles against most vigorously throughout his work, turning the principle of surpassing into the very principle of all becoming. In order to transform ourselves as human beings, one has to start with the radical change in the way we think.

Conclusion

In this article we have been exploring Nietzsche's critique of subjectivity in order to see on what purposes Nietzsche is willing to throw overboard the concept of the subject as it has been developed and discussed by the modern philosophical tradition. Nietzsche recognizes in this concept one of the most fatal features of the modern metaphysics – the belief that in order to make knowledge possible, one has to reach some ultimate solidity beyond this knowledge. That is why Nietzsche's critique may be said to be to a certain extent anti-humanist while the human subject has secretly become a matter of faith. But we have found that this anti-humanism is profoundly human as to its premises: Nietzsche's critique of the subject is in fact inseparable from the consideration that the Cartesian way of understanding thinking one-sidedly reduces the human to the rational and the reasonable and at the same time more or less overlooks the body and sexuality in their inherent multiplicity. The human in the subject is still a matter open to debate: Nietzsche proposes to enlarge the limits of the human in order to embrace the irrational and the instinctive in the human. In this way, he manages to redefine thinking, detaching it from the rigid arrangement into consciousness and freeing the creative forces immanent in the unconscious processes of the body. Thinking makes no sense without body! Hence thinking has no primacy over body, it depends on the body viewed as the field where meaning is constantly created, interpreted and overcome.

[23] "„Denken", wie es die Erkenntnißtheoretiker ansetzen, kommt gar nicht vor: das ist eine ganz willkürliche Fiktion, erreicht durch Heraushebung Eines Elementes aus dem Prozeß und Substraktion aller übrigen, eine künstliche Zurechtmachung zum Zweck der Verständlichung…" (Nietzsche 1999m: 53-54).

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KAIP ATSIKRATYTI SUBJEKTO? APIE KELETĄ NIETZSCHE'S SUBJEKTIŠKUMO KRITIKOS ASPEKTŲ

Margus Vihalem

S a n t r a u k a

Straipsnyje analizuojama subjekto (kartais vadinamo savastimi) samprata Friedricho Nietzsche's filosofijoje, remiamasi tekstais, susijusiais subjekto samprata, ypač gausybe pomirtinių fragmentų, paskelbtų kaip *Nachlass* Colli ir Montinari kritiniame leidime. Straipsnyje tvirtinama, jog subjekto reikšmės klausimas užima reikšmingą vietą Nietzsche's filosofijoje ir yra būtinas jo valios valdyti morfologijos supratimo pamatas. Iškilaus filosofo pateikiama subjekto sąvokos kritika yra dažnai nuvertinama dėl šio klausimo fragmentiškumo jo raštuose. Straipsniu siekiama vėl pristatyti Nietzsche'ę kaip vieną iškiliausių šiuolaikinės antisubjekyvistinės mąstysenos proponentų ir parodyti, kodėl šio mąstytojo pateikiama subjekto sampratos kritika yra integrali dvidešimtojo amžiaus kritinės minties dalis.

Pagrindiniai žodžiai: Nietzsche, subjektas, subjektiškumas, savastis.

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