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ARENA OF IDENTITY

Nietzsche's Psychology of the Self: the Art of Overcoming the Divided Self

Steven A. Stolz[1]

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Abstract
In Nietzsche's early to middle works, he has some interesting things to say about the psychology of the self. Indeed, Nietzsche explores the psychological consequences of the self that consists of a synthesis of competing opposites that are in a constant of flux. In order to make sense of the self, Nietzsche draws from the Hellenistic tradition of philosophy to conceptualise a therapeutic art of self-cultivation (*Bildung*) where the individual's life is their work of art because every work of art is first turned toward the self and then toward others. This is why Nietzsche develops a mode of self-cultivation that is intimately connected with the painful labour of self-analysis in the hope of the self's overcoming (*Übergang*); however, this is not enough by itself because it requires an understanding of the unconscious self that we have suppressed and repressed from ourselves, as well as the psychopathologies that they give rise to. To Nietzsche, the reason why we must undertake this difficult task of self-cultivation is the realisation that we need to free ourselves of narcissism, and its pathological symptoms found within the self, particularly if we are going to achieve a temperate and mature ego that is healthy for both the self and others.

Keywords Nietzsche · Psychology · Apollo-Dionysus · Self · Ego · Self-cultivation (*Bildung*)

Introduction

Nietzsche's insights into and use of psychology are a central part of his thinking about philosophy.[1] Probably one of Nietzsche's most powerful psychological insights is the

[1]For some interesting examples of literature that deals with Nietzsche's psychology, see the following: *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist* (Kaufmann 1974), *Composing the Soul* (Parkes 1994), *The Dionysian Self* (Bishop 1995), *Nietzsche's Presence in Freud's Life and Thought* (Lehrer 1995), *Nietzsche and Jung* (Huskinson 2004), and *Nietzsche's Therapy* (Ure 2008).

✉ Steven A. Stolz
s.stolz@latrobe.edu.au

[1] La Trobe University, Melbourne campus, Bundoora, Melbourne, Victoria 3086, Australia

importance of the unconscious and the relative unimportance of consciousness in our day-to-day lives. Indeed, this is a major theme found throughout his extensive corpus, and in some way explains why reason cannot account for our subjective responses as human beings, particularly the belief that the "will to power" is the most fundamental of all drives or desires in human beings. In one sense, this is why Nietzsche views all human beings ('*the over-animal*') as essentially animal or biological beings governed by the same natural laws as all other organic and inorganic matter because '… man is the animal *whose nature has not yet been fixed* …' (*BGE*, §62).[2] In another sense, Nietzsche argues that the self is not an '*individuum*', but a '*dividuum*' ('*self-division of man*' or divided self) that consists of multiple drives that are competing with and against one another in a dynamic interplay of opposites (*HAH*, I, §57).[3] In this case, *The Birth of Tragedy* is a useful starting point to understand Nietzsche's psychological approach to philosophy, particularly his concept of the self. Nietzsche makes it clear from both his preface and the opening section of *The Birth of Tragedy* that 'art is the supreme task and the truly metaphysical activity of this life' (*BT*, P) because it makes life 'both possible and worth living' (*BT*, §1). Much later in his retrospective new preface to *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche outlines a complex set of aesthetic and metaphysical aims and also excavates the origins of Greek tragedy that is communicated artistically in a Dionysian spirit.[4] Nietzsche confirms that he sees his role as both *artist and philosopher* in understanding *the truth* of the 'aesthetic problem' through 'metaphysical activity', but laments the fact that in *The Birth of Tragedy* he was not yet ready to tackle the aesthetic realm and recognise art for the sake of life and '… *to see science under the lens of the artist, but art under the lens of life*.' (*BT*, S-C, §2).

By approaching science and art this way, Nietzsche is arguing that our own existence is justified in an *aesthetic phenomenon* because the experience of Greek tragedy ('tragic view of the world') generates opposition in the psychological composition of the self as a result of being confronted by a range of contradictory responses, such as emotional and rational responses to fear, pleasure, suffering and so on. In *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche uses the Apolline and Dionysiac in a metaphysical sense to demonstrate how a pessimistic view of life can be transfigured by embracing its binary opposite, thereby awakening within the individual a psychological attitude that affirms life as meaningful despite the suffering involved.[5] Here,

[2] From here on in, I will follow the academic convention of citing Nietzsche's work using the initials of the English titles in the translations referred to in the reference section of this essay along with Arabic numerals to identify the volume, relevant part and numbered section or part, in this order (not page numbers). For details relating to the abbreviations and translations used, see the abbreviation and reference section. When required, I have referred to the original German translation of Nietzsche's *Werke* from the *Kritische Studienausgabe* edited by Colli and Montinari that is published by Walter de Gruyter. In relation to the citation (i.e. *BGE*, §62), it is worth noting the German text, which states: "… der Mensch das noch nicht festgestellte Thier ist …", particularly the terms "nicht festgestellte" which means "not firmly established".

[3] In relation to the citation (i.e. *HAH*, I, §57), it is worth noting the German text, which states: "In der Moral behandelt sich der Mensch nicht als individuum, sondern als dividuum." In this case, a narrow translation into English fails to account for Nietzsche's focus on the way values consciously or unconsciously influence the way we act, and in a sense, provide an insight into our character, or who we are as individuals (our *true* self). When viewed in this context, reference to the 'divided self' is highly apt.

[4] The new preface to the reissued edition of *BT*, titled 'Attempt at a Self-criticism' was published in 1886. Here on in it will be cited as '*BT*, S-C'.

[5] Soll (1986, 1988, 1998) quite rightly questions whether Nietzsche's view of life should be called 'pessimistic' because he changed and nuanced Schopenhauer's pessimism into something of positive value by developing his own pessimism of the strong which rejects the view that life has no value and should be avoided as much as possible.

what is of interest is the 'essence' of the two opposing drives or artistic impulses expressed as '… interwoven artistic impulses, *the Apolline and the Dionysiac*' (*BT*, §12), and Nietzsche's project of aspiring to become one of the ideal types ('higher man') through the integration of competing opposites ('discipline') and the promotion of unity ('wholeness') as the highest of art forms ('creator' or 'creating').

In the spirit of Nietzsche, one of my aims in this essay is to carry on the process of reinterpretation and revaluation of Nietzsche's project, and at the same time extend on this work by taking both the discourse in a new direction and thereby making a contribution to the literature. Consequently, for the purposes of this essay, I will be concerned with the discussion of two issues: first, I provide a brief account of Nietzsche's psychology of the self. Here, I provide the development of Nietzsche's earlier thoughts about the self, and his subsequent change in position from his middle works onwards in favour of a biological or naturalistic self that is less idealistic and psychologically authentic; and, lastly, I argue that Nietzsche's philosophy is best viewed as a way of life where the individual's life is their work of art because every work of art is first turned toward the self and then toward others. For Nietzsche, the idea of a 'true' philosophy involves existential self-integration, self-creation and self-mastery. In order to bring this about, he develops the idea of self-cultivation (*Bildung*) that is intimately connected with the difficult and painful labour of self-analysis. To Nietzsche, the reason why we must undertake this self-cultivation is to free ourselves of narcissism and its pathological symptoms, particularly if we are going to achieve a temperate and mature ego that is healthy for both the self and others.[6]

Nietzsche's Psychology of the Self: Aesthetic, Metaphysical and Psychological Opposites

In Nietzsche's early works, the 'duality of the *Apolline* and *Dionysiac*' are presented as diametrically opposed tendencies of art ('gods of art'), human beings ('physiological states') and life ('the serious, the gloomy, the sad'), that overlap between the aesthetic, metaphysical and psychological (*BT*, §1). It is not the case that art is privileged over metaphysics or psychology, but a case of artistic 'powers', 'urges', 'states' and '*natural artistic impulses*' are in a sense part of our 'nature' or 'will' and basically manifestations of our drives to be artistically creative as a means to overcome the repugnant reality of existence (*BT*, §2). To Nietzsche (*PTAG*, §5), the reality of the 'human, all too human' condition, is that:

> Ordinary people fancy they see something rigid, complete and permanent; in truth, however, light and dark, bitter and sweet are attached to each other and interlocked at any given moment like wrestlers of whom sometimes the one, sometimes the other is on top. … The strife of the opposites gives birth to all that comes-to-be; the definite

[6] Unfortunately, it has become *de rigour* in the psychoanalytic tradition to depict Nietzsche as a narcissist and/or associate his psychological insights with narcissism. Certainly, Freud's ambivalence toward Nietzsche has certainly contributed to this view; however, recent work by Parkes (1994) has demonstrated the significant contribution Nietzsche makes to analytical psychology. It is worth noting Nietzsche's prophetic words in *EC* (*EC*, 'Why I am A Destiny', §6), when he states: "Who before me at all among philosophers has been a *psychologist* and not rather its opposite 'higher swindler', 'idealist'? Before me there was no psychology. To be the first here can be a curse, it is in any case a destiny: *for one is also the first to despise … Disgust* at mankind is my danger …".

> qualities which look permanent to us express but the momentary ascendency of one partner.

Here, Nietzsche brings to our attention how human beings are deceived by an error of false causality because we all have the power to think, and as a result 'intuitively' arrive at a relative truth that has been derived from a peculiar weakness of human insight (*TI*, 'The Four Great Errors'). Compounding the issue further are commonly accepted assumptions behind 'primitive psychology' conspiring to fool us into believing that 'free will' has its origins in consciousness; however, the 'doctrine of the will' has been 'invented' by theologians and 'priests' to '… essentially justify punishment through the pretext of assigning guilt …' (*TI*, 'The Four Great Errors', §7). So what we commonly believe to be 'free will' or 'willing' is the resulting ruling drives, instincts, or 'serviceable "under-wills" or under-souls' identifying with the successes of the 'commonwealth' (*BGE*, §19). In this case, Nietzsche rejects the 'old "I" ...' or Christian view of the soul as a '*falsification*' because the driver of our bodies is not the soul (*BGE*, §17). Instead, Nietzsche's intention is to reconstruct the self in a more biological or naturalistic manner that can account for the multiple and continually competing drives, instincts, emotions and so on found within the plausible self. Nietzsche goes on to warn that if the divergent forces of 'two qualitatively different opposed activities' do not seek to 're-unite' then there is a real danger that this may give 'birth' to the divided self where the strong opposite dominates at the expense of the weaker opposite (the question of '*strong* and *weak* wills').[7]

Nietzsche's use of the terms Apollo and Dionysus in *The Birth of Tragedy* serve as a useful starting point to understand the archetypes of the self. In this case, Apollo (*BT*, §1) is associated with the 'deity of light' (or 'shining one') that redeems life by creating a 'beautiful illusion' to overcome the 'reality of existence', and at the same time the power that creates art, also holds up a 'transfiguring mirror to itself' (reflection of the human condition), or the principle of individuation (*principium individuationis*) which reaches its consummation in the symbolism of Greek 'sculptor' (visual appearance). In Nietzsche's (*BT*, §1) own words, Apollo is:

> … the deity of all plastic forces, is also the soothsaying god. Etymologically the 'shining one', the deity of light, he also holds sway over the beautiful illusion of the inner fantasy world. The higher truth, the perfection of these states in contrast to imperfectly comprehensible daily reality, the deep awareness of nature healing and helping in sleep and dreams, is at the same time the symbolic analogue of soothsaying powers and of art in general, through which life is made both possible and worth living.

Perhaps the hallmark of Nietzsche's conception of the Apollonian and the Dionysian is the radical departure from a cognitive understanding of art, human beings and life that aims to exclude aesthetic experience. To bring about this reinterpretation and ultimately the semblance of organic unity, Nietzsche employs the use of Apollo and Dionysus as a means to remind us of the powerful hold phenomenon, particularly the experience of art can have on us because *aesthetic phenomenon* emerge from and originate in nature itself and hence why he dwells on the phenomenon of *dream(ing)* and *intoxication*. By what he means by the use of these terms can best be understood as the symbolic application of the Apollonian drive or 'artistic impulse' which seeks to create order out of the unbearable chaos of existence through the creation of art. According to Nietzsche, since beauty is

[7] To Nietzsche, the idea of 'free will' is a myth, and hence why he states that in '… real life it is only a question of *strong* and *weak* wills' (*BGE*, §21).

known to all human beings means that the 'beauty of "illusion" speaks to us', and hence this 'intoxicating' power felt from both creating and transforming the spatio-temporal world brings about individuation.[8] The manifestation of the Apollonian drive aims to redeem life and make it tolerable through the '*Apolline illusion*' that is elaborately created as a 'dream' or an '*illusion of illusion*' as a means to provide a metaphysical and psychological consolation that overcomes and transfigures the horror and absurdity of existence by making it more beautiful (*BT*, §3–§4). Indeed, Nietzsche makes it clear that the 'real artistic intention of Apollo' is to 'interpret dreams' in a radically different way that 'reflects his transfigured form' from the real world of ordinary experience which in turn makes 'life worth living' and urges us to 'experience the next moment' (*BT*, §25). He goes on to argue that 'joyful illusion' is something we are 'utterly caught up in' because it consists of our '… continuous becoming in time, space and causality … as empirical reality' (*BT*, §4). Nietzsche is suggesting here that we all experience the world according to this illusionary scheme, and as a result compelled to consider it true because of the internal coherence it possesses in making life tolerable. Indeed, Soll (2001) makes the strong point that when Nietzsche refers to dreams and art as an '*illusion of illusion*' he is intending to challenge and reverse Plato's well-known preference for reality over illusion.[9] This brings to our attention Nietzsche's crucial insights into psychology and his psychology of the self, particularly the emphasis placed on both the unconscious and instinctual and the relative unimportance of the conscious. For instance, some of his insights are as follows: (1) when we distort 'empirical reality' we also pervert truth; (2) even though it makes no sense from a rational point of view, human beings prefer illusion over reality; (3) human beings possess a multiplicity of diametrically opposed drives, impulses, instincts, wills and so on; and, (4) conscious will or free will is not the cause of our actions, but commanded by the 'unknown sage' called the 'self'.

In direct contrast, the Dionysian artistic drive or impulse is concerned with the 'destruction of the veil of Maya' (Apollonian illusion) by transcending illusion with a desire to know more about undistorted reality and the 'essence of nature' so the whole 'body', the 'mouth', the 'eye', 'all the limbs of the body' and so on can find 'impetuous expression' primarily through the forces of music (*BT*, §2). It is important to note that the drive toward knowledge is not epistemic in nature, but rather knowledge of 'primal unity' or basically what it means to be a human being that is in harmony with ourselves, with others and with nature as a whole. When operating independently, the Dionysian artistic drive or impulse is associated with more primitive experiences found in life, and hence why they are revealed and made known to us through a 'witches brew' found in the collective expression of orgiastic festivities, and often associated with music, dance, wine, sex and so on. Indeed, the Dionysian artistic drive or impulse is antithetical to that of the Apollonian dreamworld because it expresses the 'real' world without any 'illusion', and hence why it is liberating in the sense that we come to know what it means to be a human being in an authentic way. At the same time, Nietzsche was also fearful of the Dionysian artistic drive or impulse, particularly if it is left unchecked due to the

[8] Neither the concepts of the 'will to power', nor the '*Übermensch*' are part of Nietzsche's thinking at this juncture in *BT* as they are developed in subsequent works. See the section titled, 'The will to power as art' in *WP* §794–853 it is worth noting that Nietzsche classes 'beauty' as a 'biological value' because it is known to all human beings and yet taken for granted until we are reminded of 'ugliness'. This is why beauty is a 'biological value' because it serves a life sustaining need, in the same way as air, water, food and so on.

[9] In *The Republic* (Book X), Plato argues that art imitates physical objects, which in turn imitates the Forms. In other words, art is a 'copy of a copy' of a Form and best viewed as an 'illusion' and something not 'real'.

intoxicating power it can have over us. Nietzsche realised that when Apollonian and Dionysian drives or impulses functioned independently from each other than there is a significant risk that a person will become 'sick' or 'unhealthy' because the Dionysian on its own is dangerous since it destroys Apollonian subjectivity, and vice versa, the Apollonian alienates the individual from the world by distorting the 'true' understanding of reality. Since the Apollonian and Dionysian are only known in unity, and if each fail to reunite, will lead to the disproportionate development of one drive or impulse at the expense of the other. This in turn will result in what Nietzsche considered to be an 'unhealthy' weakness. The use of the term 'healthy' by Nietzsche is a crucial concept that connects with his naturalistic method of philosophy and the notion that the suffering endured through 'illnesses' are a 'great stimulant' to life, particularly those who seek out Dionysian 'intoxication' because we all know the 'biological value of the *beautiful* and the *ugly*', and as a result it 'seems impossible to be an artist and not to be sick'.[10] In 'Dionysiac tragedy', the Dionysian is associated with 'satyr choruses', which in turn affected a sense of ecstasy in the 'Dionysiac' spectator that breaks down the barrier between spectator and stage. The barrier that Nietzsche wants to break down is the 'metaphysical consolation' and the '*illusion of illusion*' of the Apollonian artistic drive or impulse that shields the spectator from the full impact of the Dionysian artistic drive or impulse with its evocation of primordial universality. For Nietzsche, this is the value of the Dionysian aesthetic state because it brings to our attention how it is 'only as *an aesthetic phenomenon* that existence and the world are eternally *justified*', and reminds us why the divided self needs to be overcome through self-integration, self-creation and self-mastery as a means of *becoming* healthy (*BT*, §5). This is reinforced by Nietzsche (*BT*, §1) when he states:

> Not only is the bond between man and man sealed by the Dionysiac magic: alienated, hostile or subjugated nature, too, celebrates her reconciliation with her lost son, man. … Now, with the gospel of world harmony, each man feels himself not only united, reconciled, and at one with his neighbour, but *one* with him, as if the veil of Maya had been rent and now hung in rags before the mysterious primal Oneness.

Nietzsche makes it clear that aesthetic phenomenon of Dionysian tragedy is at its most powerful when felt and experienced in a profound way by the spectator (individual) and artist (creator) because it activates an aesthetic, psychological and metaphysical confrontation with contradictory opposites, such as illusion and reality, suffering and pleasure, fear and happiness, beauty and ugliness and so on, in such a way that 'man feels himself' and his or her true nature when both Apollonian and Dionysian artistic drives and impulses are untied as '*one*'.

From *Human*, *All Too Human* (including *Assorted Opinions and Maxims* and *The Wanderer and His Shadows*) onwards, Nietzsche's position toward the inextricable synthesis of aesthetic, metaphysical and psychological opposites in art, human beings and life change considerably compared with earlier works. This is in part due to what he considers to be a 'mistake in reasoning' with metaphysics answer to the perennial philosophical question: 'How can something originate in its opposite, for example rationality in irrationality …' (*HAH*, I, §1). Nietzsche argues that metaphysics default position is to claim that a 'highly valued' and 'miraculous source' or Kant's 'thing in itself' is the origin. To Nietzsche, this response devalues life because knowledge to the metaphysician is a priori knowable, and hence not contingent on human experience due to the datum that sentient

[10] See *WP*: the reference to 'illness' as a 'great stimulant' to life is taken from §1003, the 'biological value of the *beautiful* and the *ugly*' is taken from §804, and the condition of the artist is taken from §811.

human beings are easily deceived. Later in *Beyond Good and Evil*, he equates metaphysics with a dogmatism that insists that between the opposites of truth-falsity, good-bad, higher-lower values and so on, there can be no connections because the '… fundamental faith of the metaphysicians is *the faith in antithetical values*' (*BGE*, §2). Nietzsche's desire to expose metaphysics is grounded in the view that metaphysicians have been deceived into believing that 'the truth' of this world comprises an ideal world perceived to be of higher value that is in direct opposition and completely disconnected from an empirical understanding of the world held to be of lower value. According to Nietzsche (*HAH*, I, §9), part of the problem why a faith in the 'metaphysical world' should be refuted is due to an emphasis being placed on negating our existence within it because value now resides within an ascetic ideal of self-denial which is considered to be a higher value. He goes on to argue that knowledge of the metaphysical world is basically irrelevant and can be likened to the '… most useless of all knowledge: more useless even than knowledge of the chemical composition of water must be for the sailor in danger of shipwreck' (*HAH*, I, §9). Indeed, Nietzsche makes it clear that he wants to replace 'metaphysical philosophy' with his 'historical philosophy' as a means to demonstrate that '… there are no opposites, except in … metaphysical interpretations … [due to] … a mistake in reasoning …', but there '… exists strictly speaking, neither an unegoistic action nor completely disinterested contemplation; both are only sublimations …' (*HAH*, I, §1). Although it may appear that we see opposites in the world around us everywhere, such as 'warm and cold', but to Nietzsche these 'human, all too human' habits of seeing opposites are in fact 'differences of degree' or 'transitions' (*HAH*, II, Part II, §67). From *Human*, *All Too Human* to *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche's thinking changes to a refutation of a metaphysical conception of reality and life as static, stable and objective that is concerned with *being*, to a dynamic, subjective and pluralistic concern with *becoming*. While the metaphysician seeks knowledge of life and the world that is a priori and hence considered to be stable and permanent, Nietzsche holds the inverse view. To Nietzsche, metaphysicians do not seek 'truth' because metaphysical knowledge of life and the world is not objective, but an illusion that has been constructed to console individuals who value the denial of their own lives and the world they live in. Rather, Nietzsche holds the view that our own 'truth' of life and the world around us is subjectively interpreted through our own instinctual experiences, feelings, sensations, intuitions and so on, because these are more authentic and fundamentally determined a posteriori.

Although it may appear that Nietzsche is rejecting metaphysical opposites, or even appears to be contradictory in his views by promoting certain opposites, the former needs to be nuanced within his general project of refuting a particular account of metaphysics and its opposition to subjectively determine a posteriori experience. As for the latter, Nietzsche intentionally promotes opposites as long as each are experienced and affirmed in the reconstruction of the self in a more biological or naturalistic manner. Indeed, Nietzsche argues that our 'true self' is concealed within us because '… [b]ehind your thoughts and feelings … stands a mighty commander, an unknown sage – he is called Self. He lives in your body, he is your body. There is more reason in your body than in your best wisdom.' (*Z*, I, '*Of the Despisers of the Body*'). Here 'The Self' has become not an '*individuum*, but a '*dividuum*' (*HAH*, I, §57) with a multiplicity of drives competing with and against each other because 'every drive is tyrannical'. Since the opposing instincts of 'The Self' is to constantly dominate, leads to a dynamic state of continual change with some of the leading drives identifying with strong will or a 'will to power' (*BGE*, §13), Nietzsche claims '*who*' a person is depends on the '… order of rank the innermost drives of his nature stand in relative to one another.' (*BGE*, §6).

In one sense, Nietzsche (*BGE*, §36) is arguing that the only thing that is 'real' and meaningful in this world is our natural instincts because:

> … nothing is 'given' as real except our world of desires and passions, that we can rise or sink to no other 'reality' that the reality of our drives – for thinking is only the relationship of these drives to one another …

In another sense, 'The Self' constantly takes 'sides *against* [it]self' (*HAH*, II, Preface, §4) due to the battle of being 'torn back and forth by conflicting motives' (*HAH*, I, §107) in the establishment of the dynamic self which is not a fixed unity (*HAH*, II, Part I, §17). According to Nietzsche, the self does not consist of a fixed metaphysical entity within or even beyond itself; however, 'The Self' consists of a multiplicity of drives that give rise to becoming 'all that comes-to-be' as a result of confronting the '… definite qualities which look permanent to us express but the momentary ascendency of one partner. But this by no means signifies the end of the war; the contest endures in all eternity' (*PTAG*, §5).

According to Huskinson (2004), Nietzsche's change in position from the "old" self constituting an inextricable synthesis of aesthetic, metaphysical and psychological opposites in favour of a "new" account of the self that is psychologically plausible is grounded in a revised view of the self. The aestheticism of Nietzsche's earlier work is no longer required as a 'metaphysical comfort' from the horrible reality of our existence, particularly the notion that we have no conscious control over our actions in life. In response, Nietzsche's intention in his middle works is to reconstruct the self in a more biological or naturalistic manner that is less idealistic and psychologically authentic. As such, Nietzsche's attention turns to the arduous task of coming to know the new self that is composed of a multiplicity of competing unconscious and involuntary drives that are in constant state of flux, and hence why he developed the concept of self-cultivation (*Bildung*) that is intimately connected with the difficult and painful labour of self-analysis.

Nietzsche on the Art of Overcoming the Divided Self

Nietzsche begins his middle period of work with a cautious warning that we need to awaken from the 'errors' of metaphysical men and their 'splendid' and 'intoxicating' metaphysical illusions (*HAH*, I, §3). Instead of metaphysical systems, Nietzsche argues that the 'art of psychological dissection' is lacking in the life of all classes of people because there is much talk *about* people in general, but nothing specific 'about *man*' per se (*HAH*, I, §35). Nietzsche makes it clear that his 'modest labour' of psychological observation aims to capture the complex and dynamic nature of the psyche through a psychological self-observation '… that does not weary of heaping stone upon stone, brick upon brick …' (*HAH*, I, §37) as a therapy of the 'souls of men'. This 'self-observation' that Nietzsche refers to is an arduous struggle because the patient labour of self-analysis is often defeated by ourselves due to 'man' being '… very well defended against himself, against being reconnoitred and besieged by himself …' (*HAH*, I, §491). Even language and our use of language is lacking in explaining our 'inner processes and drives', particularly the '… *extreme* states: the milder, middle degrees, not to speak of the lower degrees which are continually in play, elude us, and yet it is they which weave the web of character and our destiny' (*D*, §115). Yet to Nietzsche (*D*, §115), we

construct the so-called 'ego' (*Ich*) because we '*misunderstand* ourselves' into thinking we know ourselves due to 'extreme outbursts' or 'violent exceptions' that are a result of effects accumulated from suppression and repression. Although the ego may appear to be pathic and only made known in extreme emotional states, such as anger, hatred, love, pity, desire and so on, he remarks we 'mislead the observer' and 'mislead the person in whom they occur' into falsely believing that we know the 'nature of our self' (*D*, §115). Nietzsche argues that without turning to the patient labour of self-observation and self-analysis we are not only deluded in our own '*opinions of ourselves*', but we will also remain an immature form of egoism. To Nietzsche, this task is so important because if we fail to overcome our 'human, all too human' selves, we will be limited to an archaic ego which only serves to discharge a mass of congested affects, to the point that our lives will be dominated by a series of compulsive reactions or psychopathologies (*GS*, §49).

In order to overcome what Nietzsche views as the pathological symptoms of the psychodynamics of the self, he draws from the Hellenistic tradition of philosophy to conceptualise a therapeutic art of self-cultivation (*Bildung*) that is principally concerned with transforming the self. In a sense, a central theme from *On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life*, and *Schopenhauer as Educator* onwards is an attempt by Nietzsche to reconstitute a Hellenistic notion of philosophy which is made evident when he criticises German academic philosophers for not having the courage to practice philosophy as an art of living. In Nietzsche's own words (*PHT*, §48):

> The philosopher's product is his *life* (which occupies the most important position, *before* his *works*). His life is his work of art, and every work of art is first turned toward the artist and then toward other men.

Here, Nietzsche makes it clear that he subscribes to a Hellenistic tradition of philosophy where the individual's life is *their work of art*. In the former work (i.e. *On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life*), Nietzsche picks up on some of the themes found in *On the Future of Educational Institutions*, and argues that education—particularly of German youth—proceeds from a false and superficial conception of culture that has been practised in a way that it does serious damage to notions of *becoming* truly educated. This blame is attributed to 'historical education', and the way in which history is studied as knowledge of the past via 'monumental', 'antiquarian', and 'critical' approaches. According to Nietzsche, part of the problem with historical education is the way in which it attacks "life's plastic powers", and hence why it is fatal to all living things because historicism assigns a person, or people or a culture, with a predetermined history (*UM*, II, §1). Here, the concept of 'plastic power' is meant to serve as a reminder that we are not bound to history or cannot escape our past, in fact, human beings possess the capacity to transform and transgress ourselves in such a way that we can break these chains, but first and foremost, we need to stop sleep-walking, and wake-up to life. In order to liberate the self, Nietzsche argues that the 'antidote to the historical is called – *the unhistorical and the suprahistorical*' because the former serves the purpose of '*forgetting*' and at the same time encloses oneself within a bounded '*horizon*', and the latter has the power to '… abolish all limitations of horizon and launch mankind upon an infinite and unbounded sea of light whose light is knowledge of all becoming' (*UM*, II, §10). Nietzsche goes on to argue that since the German believes in the '*aeterna veritas*' (truth) of his system of education means that much needs to be 'unlearned', and so the best way to 'become *human* again' is to heed the Delphic command: 'Know thyself'. Subsequently, the lesson to be learnt from the Delphic command is to '*organise the chaos*' within ourselves in such a way that we come to the

realisation that qualities of character, such as 'honesty', 'strength' and 'truthfulness' are the foundations to becoming truly educated. Since we usually fail to emerge from our 'animality', Nietzsche argues that a *true* education involves the liberation of the 'true self'; however, this requires a considerable amount of 'courage' and 'strength' of character to overcome the *old* self ("what one is" now) due to the suffering involved, and the realisation that the metaphysical and existential goal of genuine selfhood is a never-to-be-completed process of *becoming* that is central to *Bildung*. In Nietzsche's (*UM*, III, §4) own words:

> All that exists that can be denied deserves to be denied; and being truthful means: to believe in an existence that can in no way be denied and which is itself true and without falsehood. That is why the truthful man feels that the meaning of his activity is metaphysical, explicable through the laws of another and higher life, and in the profoundest sense affirmative …

Selfhood to Nietzsche in *Schopenhauer as Educator*, is not an unchangeable essence, nor can we 'construct' ourselves because our 'true self' is something I have to '*become*', and yet it is also 'what one is' now (*being*). Even though the implications of this new conception of *the self* and its connection with *Bildung* does not reach its full expression until the middle and later periods of Nietzsche's extensive corpus, we start to see his commitment to a psychological approach that involves existential self-integration, self-creation, and self-mastery (i.e. *Bildung*).[11] As a result, Nietzsche's psychological approach springs from the realisation that we need to overcome the divided self, free ourselves from narcissism and its pathological symptoms, particularly if we are going to achieve a temperate and mature ego that is healthy for both the self and others.[12]

By bracketing or suspending metaphysics, Nietzsche's aim is to use his psychological insights for the purposes of promoting '*health*' or '*spiritual health*' (*D*, §202). To Nietzsche, metaphysical philosophy has been used as a 'prop, a sedative, medicine, redemption, elevation, or self-alienation' that has resulted in 'illness' or 'sickness' due to our narcissistic tendencies to avoid pain, suffering, loss, shame, division, finitude and so on (*GS*, Preface, §2). In the middle period of Nietzsche's work, the bracketing of metaphysical philosophy is crucial to his general project of psychology which entails excavating and artfully reconstructing the self from the 'magical veil' of metaphysics divine aura that surrounds archaic layers of the self (*HAH*, I, §218). Even though the origins of the self is difficult to excavate because we have mostly 'forgotten' who we really are as a result of a complex mix of 'habit', 'self-interest' and 'self-will' (*HAH*, II, Part II, §40), this necessitates what he describes as psychological dissections as a means of self-understanding and self-knowledge (*HAH*, II, Part II, §19). Nietzsche's

[11] Nietzsche's work titled, *On the Future of Educational Institutions* provides a useful starting place to some of his earliest thoughts on the concept of *Bildung*, particularly why he was concerned with the concept, and how he thinks it can be cultivated as an ethics of character. To Nietzsche, the strong emphasis on *Bildung* is consistent with his ethics of character because each are concerned with the notion of striving to *become* better human beings by overcoming the *old* self through the 'revaluation of all values' in order to affirm ancient Greek values considered valuable to a person's character, such as courage, wisdom, justice, honesty, temperance, and so on. See for example, the following: 'Nietzsche on aesthetics, educators and education' (Stolz 2017), 'A genealogical analysis of the concept of 'good' teaching: A polemic' (Stolz 2018), and 'Nietzsche: truth, perspectivism, and his concern with *Bildung*' (Stolz 2019).

[12] It is worth noting that even though Freud denied having read Nietzsche's work, there is persuasive evidence that he was both directly and indirectly familiar with his general corpus. Interestingly, Freud (1914/1917) does acknowledge and concede that Nietzsche 'anticipated' his central themes, and in many instances psychoanalysis confirms his psychology. See, *The History of the Psychoanalytic Movement*.

psychological analysis of the self aims to reveal how theological and metaphysical illusions fuel the most powerful sensations, passions, and moods, which in turn are the cause of violent and dangerous neuroses. Nietzsche (*HAH*, I, §244) declares:

> We have Christianity, the philosophers, poets, musicians to thank for an abundance of profound sensations: if these are not to stifle us we must conjure up the spirit of science, which on the whole makes one somewhat colder and more sceptical and in especial cools down the fiery stream of belief in ultimate definite truths; it is principally through Christianity that this stream has grown so turbulent.

For Nietzsche, theological and metaphysical interpretations toward the world, our place within the world, truth, and so on, are not higher states of being, but symptoms that require the 'spirit of science' to 'coolly' analyse their historical sources in the hope of the self's *übergang* (crossing, transition, bridge) to a 'temperate zone of culture'. What Nietzsche means by the use of the geographical metaphor connects with the notion that the self needs to *übergang* from a tropical to a temperate culture if our '*existence*' is going to make any 'progress' (*HAH*, I, §236). He goes on to argue, that this 'transition' to a temperate self or 'new' health is only available through the difficult labour of self-analysis, as well as the 'art' of learning a 'new nourishment, a new sun, a new future' from exploring the 'opposite and unexplored *clime of the soul*' (*HAH*, II, Preface §5). In order to 'cultivate' a temperate self as 'artistic self' (*HAH*, I, §274), the initial '*retrograde step*' of understanding the psychological roots of metaphysics (*HAH*, I, §20) is the catalyst for illuminating our unconscious self that we have suppressed and repressed, as well as the pathologies that they give rise to. For instance, we often delude ourselves into thinking we are 'fictitious beings' that we love so much (*HAH*, I, §629). This continual 'self-deception' of our ego and 'self-forgetfulness in love' is an unhealthy manifestation of narcissism that forms the basis of Nietzsche's psychoanalytic therapy or psychological approach toward the self (*HAH*, II, §37). This is reinforced by Nietzsche (*HAH*, II, §37) when he states:

> … we are engaged continually on this self-deception. – And do you think, you who speak so much of 'self-forgetfulness in love', of 'the merging of the ego in the other person', and laud it so highly, do you think this is anything essentially different? We shatter the mirror, impose ourself upon someone we admire, and then enjoy our ego's new image, even though we may call it by that other person's name – and this whole proceding is supposed *not* to be self-deception, *not* egoism! A strange delusion! – Those who conceal something of themselves *from themselves* and those who conceal themselves from themselves as a whole are, I think, alike in this, that they perpetrate a *robbery* in the treasure-house of knowledge: from which we can see against which transgression the injunction 'know thyself' is a warning.

Nietzsche uses 'self-forgetfulness in love' to highlight how we constantly 'shatter the mirror' as a means of censoring the ugly truth of who we are from our minds and memory as a protective device to avoid narcissistic suffering. It is this paradoxical function of concealing ourselves and projecting onto others a constructed loved other is how we continue to deny our true self. Both the 'loved other' and the narcissistic love that Nietzsche is so concerned with here is a delusional form of 'self-deception' that is damaging to self-knowledge and self-understanding because we remain camouflaged from ourselves. Nietzsche makes it clear that

narcissistic self-seeking love takes pleasure in trying to 'maintain itself by again and again changing something new *into ourselves*', or a mirror that reflects our ego ideal (*GS*, §14). By attempting to possess our ego ideal in this way, he goes on to warn that by finding ourselves in losing ourselves in the other results in the 'most inconsiderate and selfish' of 'dragon[s] guarding his golden hoard' (*GS*, §14). Consequently, to Nietzsche, the dark art of self-deception is motivated by a desire to avoid self-knowledge and self-understanding that is connected with our fear of narcissistic loss, and most importantly it ignores the spirit behind the first Delphic command of 'know thyself'.[13]

Nietzsche's psychoanalytic therapy or psychological approach demands that we temper our narcissism by knowing ourselves through analytical self-dissection, and in turn overcoming any poor health through self-cultivation (*Bildung*). Within this context, Nietzsche in *Daybreak* §109 outlines 'six essentially different methods of combating the vehemence of a drive' to assist in 'self-mastery' and 'moderation' that is meant to be used for self-cultivation (*Bildung*). These being (1) avoid opportunities for gratification in the hope that absence will weaken the drive, (2) adhere to a strict schedule of gratification so that the drive naturally arises at certain times, (3) unrestrained gratification in the hope that the drive will be disgusted by overconsumption and in turn weaken or repulse the drive, (4) Construct negative associations with the object of the drive, just like Christians do with the idea of 'Hell', (5) train and focus all of one's energy on something else with the aim of exhausting the despised drive and (6) exhaust one's entire constitution with the aim of weakening the detested drive. Toward the end of the first volume of *Human, All Too Human* (§630–631), Nietzsche makes the point that a 'scientific spirit' in human beings is crucial because '*cautious reserve*' or moderation is a central feature of the 'practical life'. This is why Nietzsche argues that the idea of self-cultivation (*Bildung*) involves 'ceasing to treat oneself as a *single* rigid and unchanging individuum' (*HAH*, I, §618), but rather as a '*dividuum*' which is composite and lacks an individual essence (*HAH*, I, §57). Understood in this way, Nietzsche's alternative notion of free-spirited 'wanderer' is an apt symbol of a mode of self-cultivation (*Bildung*) in *Human*, *All Too Human*, because it requires both the art of making the self the main 'object of *making* the new being' and part of 'one *discover*[*ing*] *oneself*' (*HAH*, II, §267).

Conclusion

In the first section of this essay, I provided a brief account of Nietzsche's psychology of the self. In Nietzsche's early to middle works, he explores the importance of the unconscious by arguing that free will, willing, and consciousness are illusionary concepts found in primitive forms of psychology that are grounded in certain theological and metaphysical ideals. In order to contextualise Nietzsche's exploration of the self, I turned to his dynamic interplay of aesthetic, metaphysical and psychological opposites of Apollo and Dionysus found in *The Birth of Tragedy*. These diametrically opposed impulses or drives of art, human beings and life are advanced through the use of Greek 'art deities' in the form of Apollo and Dionysus. Just as in ancient Greek religion, each deity has a set of

[13] See *Charmides* from Plato's dialogues. The two Delphic commands being: 'know thyself' and 'nothing in excess'.

functions and characteristics, and in this case, Nietzsche associates Apollo with dreams, illusion and visual appearance, whereas in direct contrast, Dionysus is concerned with undistorted reality, feelings of experience, nature and natural fertility. The nature of these opposites are explored by Nietzsche from an aesthetic, metaphysical and psychological point of view that leads to an abstract reduction of rationality coupled with the Apollonian impulse or drive, and the irrational or instinctual coupled with the Dionysian impulse or drive. While metaphysics and the metaphysician seeks knowledge of life and the world that is a priori knowable, and thus considered to be fixed, Nietzsche holds the inverse view. To Nietzsche, our life and our own existence within it is subjectively interpreted a posteriori. The 'metaphysical comfort' found in Nietzsche's earlier works, and the resulting theological and metaphysical foundation of the old primitive psychological self as fixed has been replaced by a new psychological self that is dynamic and authentically acknowledges that the self is composed of a multiplicity of competing unconscious and involuntary drives that are in constant state of flux. In a sense, this is Nietzsche's crucial starting point in his concept of self-cultivation (*Bildung*) that is intimately connected with the difficult and painful labour of self-analysis.

In the second section of this essay I argued that Nietzsche draws from the Hellenistic tradition of philosophy to conceptualise a therapeutic art of self-cultivation where the individual's life is their work of art. This is why the middle period of Nietzche's work from *Human*, *All Too Human* onwards demonstrates his commitment to a psychological approach of self-integration, self-creation, and self-mastery. Indeed, Nietzsche's psychoanalytic therapy or psychology arises from his serious response to the Delphic command of 'know thyself', which in turn necessitates the need to free ourselves of narcissism, and its pathological symptoms, particularly if we are going to achieve a temperate and mature ego that is healthy for both the self and others. In order to bring this about, Nietzsche develops a mode of self-cultivation (*Bildung*) that is intimately connected with the painful labour of self-analysis in the hope of the self's *übergang* from a tropical to a temperate culture. This transition; however, is not enough by itself because it requires the art of learning about the 'new' unconscious self that we have suppressed and repressed, as well as the psychopathologies that they give rise to, such as a delusional form of self-deception. In one sense, the bracketing of metaphysical philosophy is one part of making progress toward 'health' or the art of 'discovering oneself'. In another sense, metaphysics provides the catalyst for illuminating our unconscious self, and the paradoxical function of concealing and projecting onto others a constructed loved other in our continual denial of our true self. By identifying narcissistic love as a pathological symptom, Nietzsche's aim is to treat its maladies and restore the self to psychological health.

Key to abbreviations used for Nietzsche's work:

Nietzche's published works: *BT* The Birth of Tragedy, *UM* Untimely Mediations, *HAH* Human, All Too Human, *D* Daybreak, *GS* The Gay Science, *Z* Thus Spoke Zarathustra, *BGE* Beyond Good and Evil, *GM* On the Genealogy of Morality, *TI* Twilight of the Idols, *NCW* Nietzsche Contra, Wagner *A* Antichrist, *EH* Ecce Homo, Nietzsche's Nachlass: *PTAG* Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks, *WP* The Will to Power, *FE* On the Future of Our Educational Institutions, *P&T* Philosophy and Truth. Includes: *PHT* = "Philosophy in Hard Time"

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