

NIETZSCHE : THINKING AS LIBERATION¹

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1. The academic approach to philosophy

To talk *about* Nietzsche seems still difficult for several reasons. One of them consists in the usual academic objectivation of philosophical thinking by which philosophy becomes an externalized object fixed as a set of propositions qua true or false statements. Consequently the contemporary academic approach consists basically of a so called "rational" examination of the truth claim of these propositions. But by what means can we examine the truth or falsehood of such propositions? - As it is well known there does not exist a general method to establish the (material) truth or falsehood of any statement that would not presuppose the logical and ontological validity of its underlying concepts. The philosophical framework presupposed as the operational base of such an examination will necessarily remain out of question. It is itself withdrawn from any inquiry into its truth which is only dogmatically affirmed but not questioned. The academic reduction of thinking to a set of truth claiming propositions turns philosophy into a kind of supermarket of opinions where we can freely and according to our ability distinguish the truth value of the merchandise purchase -- our own minds. We reconfirm within the objectivated thoughts the presuppositions of our own thinking. But then we always remain the same and withdraw from the possibility to undergo a theoretical transformation mediated by objective insights : we dismiss philosophy. On the other hand the academic approach seems to be quite necessary in order to avoid any ideological subjectivation of philosophical theories. Philosophizing would then merely consist in a reproductive overidentification with a certain theory according to the emotional or ideological predispositions of the hermeneutical subject. But the theoretical intention of the academic approach turns out to be just the same abandonment of philosophical thinking. How to deal then with philosophy?

Now this seems to be quite a general problem in dealing with the history of philosophy' without any specific relevance related to Nietzsche. That the problem becomes particularly evident in dealing with Nietzsche is due to the more specific way of his philosophical thinking. We can see this more clearly if we just try to scrutinize a little bit more what has been said about the academic approach' to philosophy. Why are we at all talking about an approach'? Because we are dealing with a way of thinking, a certain attitude of relating to and dealing with theoretical contents. We might call it a certain mentality' or spirituality' as a specific cognitive disposition to deal with, mental objects' that is generated by thinking itself. If thinking can not be reduced to the propositional contents of its thoughts, this is basically because it is what it is only by generating its own 'spirituality' as the basic 'behavioural pattern' of interacting with and relating to intentional objects. Talking about an 'academic approach' we are already quite aware of the fact that thinking is much more than the sum of its thoughts : that it exceeds its intentional truths by the basic constellation it is already inhabiting as its way of relating to any possible object at all. Thinking is not only producing propositional results but first of all generating itself as a certain relationship to things in general, a certain 'spirit' of thinking. Thinking takes us from one awareness to another, makes us experience what is in different ways and is producing by this the specific consciousness of our being-in-the-world that will guide us as the underlying pattern of our way of relating to what is. It is by thinking that we become what we are as human persons; and the truth of thinking will always show up from the being of the thinker himself. So both - the ideological subjectivation as well as the academic objectivation - miss the sense of thinking as being basically the foundation of our relationship to Being in general which has to be the primary concern of philosophy : if philosophy is the radical inquiry into the last principles of Being and Knowing, by which we are supposed to found our 'êthos' - the specific place of human being in the midst of what is.

The question of philosophical thinking is so less the question of the truth value of its thematic assertions than what kind of human being it produces - who we become in our relationship to things by thinking. And it is not only Nietzsche's central philosophical concern to thematize thinking as the foundation of the relationship of Man and World but also his specific way of thinking that by its opposition to any defined set of truth claiming propositions conveys the

unique spiritual attitude specifically 'Nietzschean'. The general insufficiency of the academic approach to philosophy becomes so particularly evident in the case of Nietzsche, his thinking being less a theory than a continuous exercise in questioning the relationship we assume to what there is by thinking. It is his anti-systematical and artistic way of thinking, unfolding itself into the complexity of an aphoristic fragmentation, full of contradictions, open to shifts and changes, playing with coquettishness and self-irony, exaggerations and caricatures borne by a serene maliciousness, which makes his art of writing an invincible challenge to every academic attempt to talk *about* Nietzsche as of a well defined theory. It is in this sense that Nietzsche admonished his readers, to read him "with all doors left open"². But then the question arises, how we can talk about Nietzsche at all. Perhaps, first of all we have to take into consideration our own spiritual attitude' to things, the presumed relationship to Being in general that we are used to apply within thinking. Thinking about Nietzsche becomes thinking about thinking, thinking about ourselves - our relationship to what is. And we might discover in the light of Nietzsche's problematization of thinking how helpless, superficial and even ridiculous our usual academic approach of dealing with 'philosophy' is.

And is not all academical philosophizing taking itself just too seriously?
- And that means - not seriously at all? - Would it therefore not feel insulted and indignant by being called 'ridiculous'? - And would not a deeply serious thinking feel itself honoured by the laughter about its ridiculousity? - How is thinking relating to itself?

2. Nietzsche's artistic attitude of thinking

From the theoretical point of view Nietzsche's 'artistic' attitude of thinking appears as the refusal to take thinking in an ultimate sense seriously. Thinking is a way of playing, resolving itself into the serenity of laughter as a changed awareness of the factual reality of our being-in-the-world. It engages itself in liberating our relationship to world. But this would not make sense, if our being as relating to things were not bound by some essential gravity and heaviness. Thinking is - as Nietzsche points out - overloaded by the 'spirit of gravity'³ : oppressed by its own necessity to take our human being in an ultimate sense seriously. Why? - Because it is thinking by which we found our relationship

to things - and there is no reference outside thinking which would break down its loneliness into a cosmic complicity that could share with us the burden of thinking. Thinking has 'to take the measure' in order, weigh all things' and see, what they are worth'⁴; but how can it measure the universe itself included? - There is no other way, and yet without it man can not find his place in the midst of what is. The gravity and solitude of thinking bearing the burden of the whole universe constitutes its tragical essence and makes out of the philosopher a 'tragical donkey'. Nietzsche writes : "Can a donkey be tragical? - To have to perish by a burden, you can neither bear nor throw off? - The case of the philosopher"⁵. The donkey is the dionysical animal, tragical by the antagonism of his 'must' and his 'can' which is affirmed by his desperate cry (in german I-A, which makes 'Ja' = Yes) as the dionysical affirmation of the tragical essence of life⁶. The tragical animal is as 'Yes-sayer' - it says 'yes' to its unbearable burden - its being-in-the-world. It is basically this unconditioned affirmation of the tragical, unbearable and intolerable essence of human being that constitutes the 'great liberation' as the resolution of the 'spirit of gravity' into the serenity of a free and liberated relationship to the facticity of being, making thinking light and easy, laughing and dancing.

This anti-systematical and artistic attitude of thinking becomes the mark of a newly gained intellectual probity and sincerity overcoming the inherent tendency of self-betrayal in all human being. The world - the factual reality - is not a system. "Every system is", as Nietzsche writes, "a deficiency of intellectual probity and sincerity"⁷, hiding what is within the conceptual framework of thinking itself. Intellectual probity and sincerity as the first principle of thinking consists essentially in this, not *to want* to see things differently from what they are⁸. The want and the need, to see things *not* as they are, to alter the perception of reality, to distort and falsify the proper consciousness of what there is appears to be the very essence of thinking. May be that every relationship to the facticity of Being is deeply immersed in illusion. Thinking in its objective- theoretical sense might just be an ontological function of the appearance. Every pretension to know what is in itself might be void. Thinking becoming aware of itself as an illusionary function of Being dissolves into a new awareness of the factual reality. What is reality - is pure appearance, a mask - with nothing behind that could be explored and revealed by theoretical thinking. There is no 'true' structure of things beyond their physical way of

being encountered within their casual and fragmented bursting out as dispersed events. Thinking as the falsifying and distorting power transcends (meta) the physical way of being into a *metaphysical* system detached from the factual awareness of being and is true only within the realm of 'pure thinking'. 'Pure thinking' believes basically in its own products as physically detached entities - be they ontological or mathematical structures, that are supposed to be the 'real reality' behind the 'apparent reality'. Theoretical-metaphysical thinking produces a reality of its own: It never takes the appearances *as such* seriously; that is, as the truth of Being. What we are doing in theoretical cognition is always the same : we are constituting another structure of Being supposed to be the 'reason' - the rational foundation - of the appearances. Theoretical cognition is as such 'meta-physical': it relies on something behind the mask only to be explored, unconcealed and given within 'rational cognition'. In opposition to the metaphysical act of transcending onto another reality than the one phenomenally and physically experienced, the intellectual probity commits us to transcend and overcome thinking itself - its inherent want of self-betrayal and illusion by intentional truth claims about the world. Thinking is basically the effort and process to transcend itself, to overcome its own fixations as illusions; its innermost impulse is transcendence as liberation from every conceptual appropriation of Being that could be erected as the prevailing measure of human existence. It is -- as Ursula Schneider wrote -- the "taste of freedom and liberation, that increases" in dealing with Nietzsche⁹. It is this sense of liberation that includes the basic maliciousness and contempt that makes Nietzsche's thinking the 'high school of suspicion'. Thinking that suspects the untruth in every truth claim is bound to overcome its theoretical and ontological project to cognize reality; it tends to a way of 'an-ontological' thinking that is more concerned with our relation to what is than with a true knowledge about it. And as thinking is a 'school', it is basically as 'education' how to be, how to relate to and deal with things; it is Nietzsche as an 'educator' who claims, that we should always come out of his books profoundly changed and transformed - even if we don't share or even remember any of their, theoretical propositions'. His thinking works as the continuous formation of thinking aiming at a liberated relationship to reality as it is and it is this 'spirit' that all his writings intend to convey.

It is in this perspective that Nietzsche wrote his famous sentence, that

“truth is the kind of error a certain species of living beings can not live without”¹⁰. Taken in a theoretical sense this is of course - as Aristotle already showed - non- sense. If truth is a kind of error and the distinction of truth and error blurred, then everything is error, illusion. But without reference to truth we won't even be able to speak of error and illusion. So 'everything is error' equals 'nothing is error'; it's the same to say 'everything is error' and 'everything is truth'. So nothing is said at all. Nietzsche is well aware of this. If we abolish truth we abolish thereby appearance too¹¹. Nietzsche's point is a quite different one : according to him the distinction of truth and falsehood in the theoretical sense can not serve as an ultimate parameter to structure, organize and orientate thinking and human being-in-the-world. Thinking goes beyond the ontological framework of truth and falsehood where it is bound to establish the 'êthos' of human being. Why? - Because a certain - metaphysically predetermined - way of relating to what is is already presupposed in order to establish our relation to the world within the theoretical-ontological parameter of truth and falsehood. Ontologically it presupposes the difference of appearance and reality. It is this difference, that is explored by rational (meta-physical) cognition. 'Truth' stands for a certain understanding of reality founded in a certain relationship to world. It is that - theoretical - relationship that Nietzsche puts in question. Neither Plato nor Aristotle founding the occidental tradition of philosophical thinking made any attempt to show why human being-in-the-world should be measured and determined by the concept of theoretical truth : it goes along with their definition of the essence (qua true being) of human being as a 'rational animal'. But what is human being? - And what is 'being rational'? - Don't we have to rethink the concept of human being prevailing in the occidental tradition to what is that can very well be questionable? - In this case thinking has to go *beyond* 'truth' and 'falsehood' as well as *beyond* 'good' and 'evil'; it has to re-think all the concepts that have become the prevalent references of the ontological self- understanding within the occidental tradition. It is this, 'going beyond' that constitutes the innermost sense of Nietzsche's thinking as liberation.

Thinking is liberation -- and not -- thinking as theoretical- ontological cognition of what is. This is the decisive point in understanding Nietzsche's artistic attitude of thinking. Nietzsche's is not just another theory about what is -- but another way of dealing with what is. If there is neither ontological truth within thinking nor any purpose to achieve such truth, the question might still

be how we are dealing with Being in general -- our own being and the being of everything else. And it might be the task of thinking not to pretend to know the ontological constitution of reality, but to explore and clarify, as Wolfgang Struve wrote, our relationship to world¹². This might give way to quite a different formation of thinking than the one known to our occidental tradition, which has been basically theoretical - ontological. I shall now try to outline some of the fundamental issues of such a transformation of thinking by pursuing one of the major topics in Nietzsches writing : the conflict of Art and Science.

3. Thinking within the opposition of Art and Science

Modern philosophy after Hegel can be understood to quite a large extent within the framework of the opposition of Art and Science. The question if philosophy is to be conceived as Science or if it is rather to be referred to art is one of the major issues in the foundation of modern philosophy. While within Analytical Philosophy, Philosophy of Science, Logical Empirism and the like, Philosophy is conceived as Science that should adopt entirely the logical-mathematical paradigm of the positive sciences, the dialectical, phenomenological and hermeneutical schools of thought tend to view philosophical knowledge in a closer relationship to what Art might reveal about being and human existence. We can even and without any exaggeration say that modern philosophy *is* the antagonism of Science and Art taken as the foundational orientation patterns of philosophical thinking. But what is at stake here? - The question whether Science or Art should be the leading, prevailing and measure-giving paradigm of human being-in-the-world. Can 'truth' as it is generated within the positive sciences be the fundamental ontological paradigm for our philosophical knowledge of human being-in-the-world? - The positive sciences might be useful pragmatical instances for our technological needs without any ontological truth that could claim to be an ultimate pivot to organize human being-in-the- world. The opposition of Science and Art becomes theory, a constitutive part of the modern inquiry into the foundation of philosophical thinking. Science and Art do not count as different and equally ordered realms of human activity, but as paradigmatical instances organizing man's relationship to world. As such they are mutually exclusive while within the formation of philosophical thinking they might intermingle into a complex cognitive form of

relating to Being in general. To think philosophy as Art will never exclude and abandon the achievements of the scientific spirit grown up and cherished by the occidental tradition of philosophy. Nietzsche's thinking - orientation itself towards Art - remains not only deeply indebted to the scientific spirit of the occidental tradition but would also refuse any attempt to cancel thinking into the vanity of a pure so-called 'artistic' subjectivity. His principle of intellectual probity and sincerity stands for this obligation to the scientific spirit.

'Science' in the oppositon to 'Art' means for Nietzsche not primarily the modern type of mathematical rationality but the scientific spirit generated by philosophy. It is this 'scientific spirit' that is at the root of occidental philosophy as founded by Socrates and elaborated within the platonic-aristotelean tradition, thus becoming the dominating factor within the formation of occidental philosophy up to Hegel. Consequently the question of the origin of Science/Philosophy as a specific way of relating to the world has to be seen against the background of the Greek religion whose principle is Art; Art being basically represented by Greek tragedy. The original of scientific philosophy is as such the negation of the tragical experience of human being in the world. 'Science' is therefore in Nietzsche's language 'scientific optimism'; that is, the conviction that rational cognition can as such serve as the fundamental measure of our relating to what is - ourselves and everything else. The negation of the tragical experience of our being-in-the-world by 'scientific optimism' includes the negation of Art as its prevailing orientational pattern. Art becomes thereby confined to an esthetical experience without any truth. For all this stands Socrates, "the turning point and pivot of the so called history of the world", as Nietzsche names him¹³. Failing to understand the Greek tragedy Socrates becomes the origin of science. Nietzsche's central point is that the scientific-rational attitude towards things in general makes a complete turning point in man's attitude towards the terrific aspects of life, towards its terrible and tragical essence and finally towards the negativity of Being in general. 'Scientific optimism' stands for the abolition and repression of the ontological negativity of Being. What we consequently find in Nietzsche is a completely new evaluation and appreciation of the negative phenomena of life - death and illness, madness and error, falsehood and illusion, appearance and voidness, evil and maliciousness, finiteness, pain and suffering and so on. It is basically the Negative that generates the new awareness of reality claimed by intellectual

probity and sincerity. To talk about the relationship of Man and World means then to talk about how human being is relating to the negativity of Being.

In order to avoid misunderstandings we have to distinguish two terms of 'negativity' :

1. In the Phenomenological-ontological sense 'negativity' means all phenomena of Being that have a negating character or are constituted by the negation. The negation is a fundamental trait of Being itself insofar as being is coming-into-being and passing-away, being-finite and transient, fugitive and exposed to all kinds of deficiencies and privations, contrarities and inhibitions.

2. In the axiological-metaphysical sense which is commonly used 'negativity' indicates a lot more than only the negational structure of phenomenal being : it denominates not only a negative phenomenon but a negative phenomenon as something which *as such should not be*; something that being negative *should* be excluded from Being, *should* be negated and abolished, overcome and transcended into the 'positivity' of being. It contains a negative 'evaluation' of the negativity of Being handing it over to all kinds of negational attitudes.

It is quite clear that in this second - axiological/metaphysical - sense, 'negativity' stands for a certain - 'negative' relationship to the negativity of Being. It is exactly this relationship that is at the root of the Socratic shift from tragic Art to 'scientific optimism' constituting thereby the basic pattern of the occidental way of being-in-the-world. 'Science' stands basically for a certain - negative - way of relating to the negativity of being. It is this, negation of the 'negative' that constitutes the scientific-metaphysical spirit of occidental thinking which Nietzsche undertakes to re-think. The essential question is then : What - if not a presupposed theoretical truth - is this root out of which thinking grows in its different ways of relating to the world? - If we dare a highly condensed answer - the Negative itself.

It would go far beyond the present essay to unfold this answer into all its conceptual and speculative implications. Instead of this I will try to roughly outline its meaning in order to understand better what Nietzsche considers to be the foundational root of thinking.

Let me first of all try to give a rough account of the traditional - scientific-metaphysical - relationship to the negativity of Being. How is this relationship negating the negativity of Being? - By scientific-rational cognition. In what way? - Scientific-rational cognition relates to the phenomenal sphere of Being - the way things appear to us, show up and disappear. But never are the phenomena taken *as themselves* and for what they are *as phenomena*. They are the appearance *of something else*, which is *ontologically different* from them : their pure essence and their formal interrelations and consequences, or their mathematical structure - in any case something which *is not* in the way of the finite, fugitive and transient, evenemental and unseizable character of the physical phenomena and our basic relationship to them, but eternal, stable, imperishable and thereby 'a-physical'. Whatever is known as the true being of the physical phenomena - as that, what they *really are* - is as such not-physical, a-physical : It constitutes another world as that which is the basic realm of our physical-phenomenological experience. Theoretical cognition, transcending the evenemental realm of phenomena, constitutes necessarily and by itself another - ontological distinct - realm of propositional facts : a 'meta-physical world' or - in Nietzsche's paradoxical language - a 'world behind the world'; as, for example, the set of logical-mathematical theories that is supposed to be the explanatory pool of physical facts. This 'Meta-world' constituted by the theoretical cognition itself is ontologically different from the physical structure of Being and ontologically identical with reason itself, defining the physical structure of Being as mere appearance of something which as itself is not-physical but 'ideal' - 'ideality' denominating the way of being of rational entities as such. They *exist* only within rational thinking. Consequently the real reality as that which is known by rational cognition to be the 'truth' of the phenomenal world is free of all negativity : What really is - the truth of rationally cognized being - is a 'de-negativated', purely positive reality without any negativity, deficiency and privation, all negativity of Being belonging to the realm of the physical-phenomenal world of appearance. It is deprived of any ultimate ontological reality. 'Negativity' is as pure appearance un-real, un-true; it *is* real only for the physical, phenomenal and esthetical experience of Being that is not yet overcome the apparent world by rational cognition and insight in its true foundations. The negativity of Being - void of all true reality - will vanish before the theoretical insight of reason into the lost 'reasons' of Being; and reason itself will discover the last foundations of Being as being identical

with reason a physical, pure positivity. The scientific spirit is metaphysical by its constitutive distinction of appearance and reality, facts and explanation. The distinction emerges out of the specific way theoretical thinking is transcending the realm of the phenomenal world. Exactly this constitutes what is called the 'method's of cognition; that is, the operating way of mediating the phenomenal world of appearances into the rationally cognized structure of true Being. The concept of 'method' constitutive for all scientific cognition implies the mediation of the grounded into its ground overcoming the factual given world into an ontological different set of entities as their de-negativated truth. The facticity of physical-phenomenal being is reduced to a pure transient stage of thinking never taken ultimately serious in itself. The supersession and repression of factual being is the essence of the scientific transgression of the phenomenal world. This transgression constitutes the metaphysical realm of true Being as its ontological transcendence. The 'axiological' (metaphysical) term of 'negativity' is nothing but the concept of this negation of the facticity of Being. Its primary gesture is that the negative should not be; its insight, that it is ontologically inexistant and mere appearance. The scientific-metaphysical relationship to world is essentially constituted by the repression of the negative - the tragical and terrific essence of Being; and this - the tragical and terrific essence of Being - is basically what all Art is revealing as the truth of human being in the world.

The opposition of Science and Art now becomes clearer. Art never transcends the physical-phenomenal reality onto something ontologically different but stays within it; and this is the very condition of the possibility of Art as the inner transfiguration of the physical-phenomenal reality into beauty. Beauty reconciliates us with our finiteness and the negativity of Being in general-without constituting the metaphysical transcendence of an ontologically different world. Art constitutes a non-metaphysical way of a free and reconciliated relationship with what is : it liberates from the negativity of Being without repressing it. Art sticks to the world as appearance. But why should we stick to it at all? - Because, as it is the point of departure and arrival of all scientific - metaphysical thinkings, it is the comprehensive realm of all validity of its concepts and thereby the unsurpassable truth of our being. If the world - the facticity of Being - is not ontologically reducible to something other than itself, it is in its physical-phenomenal and evenemental way of being mere appearance - of nothing : the mask of the void. 'Mask' is Nietzsche's name for the

ontological reality of the world; the mask is the (apollonian) transfiguration of the terrible, terrific and tragic (dionysical) essence of life and Being in general into Appearance. World as the transfiguration of the terrible, the masking of the void is not a system, but a "self-being artwork"¹⁴, that is revealed as such by the tragical Art. Art reminds scientific-theoretical thinking of its true being-in-the-world, demasking its pretention to conceptually transgress the abysmal superficiality and superficial depth of World¹⁵. Art generates the pre-theoretical awareness of World as a play of masks, a skin and surface with nothing behind. Art reveals World in its profound enigmaticity by withdrawing from every attempt to ontologically seize and explain what is. But then the 'Negative' is not any more a superficial and apparent aspect of reality overcome by the rational cognition of the true 'positivity' behind, but the innermost nucleus of a permanent transfiguration into the masks of Being as a self-bearing artwork. This transfiguration - and not the theoretically constituted ontological transcendence behind the world - generate the possibility of a free and reconciliated relationship to what is.

4. The soteriological concept of thinking as liberation

We can now try to bring out what Nietzsche considers to be the foundational root of thinking. In what way is this root the 'Negative'? In basically two ways :

1. First of all, relating to the facticity of Being is relating to its finiteness and to everything that constitutes its fundamental 'negational' traits. The awareness of what is is basically the awareness of being-finite, being-to-death, being-exposed to every kind of negation. Human being has to deal with the Negative insofar as its own being is only possible in view of its own negation (death). We relate to Being only insofar as we found a relationship to the negativity of Being which enables us to deal with and to handle our own being as immersed into the negativity of factual being-in-the-world. The object and issue, the purpose and even the root of founding a relationship to what is by thinking - be it religious or artistic, scientific or metaphysical - is the negativity of Being; and only a being exposed to its own awareness of the negativity of Being can 'think' and has to 'think'. What makes us think is the Negative -

never what is or seems 'positive'. Thinking is born out of the experience of the negativity of Being and it is this what commits us into thinking as developing a relationship to what is.

2. Secondly 'negativity' is one - if now *the* - basic trait of thinking itself. Thinking is thinking only as the force of Negation. The negation itself is the force to distinguish and discern one thing from another in order to conceive it *as such*. But the negation is much more than this : The simple 'not' in all its manifold ways constitutes the negativity of human being itself, plunging us into all forms of human violence but also generating all kinds of possibilities to restrain ourselves, to free and liberate ourselves from our own violent - that is 'essentially negating' being. Without the negation we would not only be unable to conceive, understand and know anything of what is, but we would be completely unable to found a relation to what is. So the 'negativity' is at the root of our own being insofar as it 'possibilizes' our relationship to the negativity of Being - the mark of our freedom and liberty to handle our relationship to what is¹⁶.

That means, that the relationship of Man and World is not basically founded in a theoretical, ontological conception of the world nor is this the heart of it. The relationship of Man and World is essentially 'soteriological', dealing with 'salvation' and 'liberation' (soteria) of human being-in-the-world.

In this perspective Nietzsche is trying to give a general account of the formation of the relationship of Man and World within its traditional patterns of religion and metaphysics, including science. Even if they are not only different but strictly antagonistic and contradictory with regards to their theoretical and propositional contents we can discover a common root in their soteriological way of dealing with the negativity of Being. The metaphysical (socratic-platonic) and in consequence scientific attitude towards Being is all well as the religious (christian) relationship to world born out of 'the spirit of revenge' - the resentment against the negativity of Being - leading thus to its ontological 'de-valuation' as mere appearance of the real, true realm of positive being. Thinking is taking revenge on what is by applying its force of negation to the constitution of a 'Meta- world' which is the rational truth of the phenomenal

facticity of Being. In a different way thinking might just renounce the world - its destructive essence which Nietzsche calls 'will to power' - as is the case in all kinds of quietisms, the doctrine of the Buddha and even Jesus Christ himself as distinct from Christianity. It is for Nietzsche certainly the distinctive mark of early Greek religion - and generally of all early, archaic religions commonly called 'Religions of Nature' - that they articulate their relationship to the world within the Art- principle, that is *within* the physical-phenomenal truth of the world. The turning point within history - which in occidental history is indicated by the name of Socrates - is therefore a profound change within the relationship to the physical world as the realm of the negativity of Being giving thus origin to Metaphysics. Science and the World-religions like Buddhism, Christianity and Islam.

In this perspective modern scientific-technological rationality itself proves to be nothing more than the ultimate fulfillment of Metaphysics as 'scientific-optimism' by the idea of the progress of humanity towards a final de-negativated state of things where all 'negativity' would be strictly - technologically - abolished. We are already witnessing today how human being becomes the object of de-negativating technologies not only in the field of their possible physical applications but also within social and political, psychotherapeutic and ideological technologies. Modernity is the project to eradicate the Negative - and it is this project that proves nowadays to be the indefinite propagation and inflation of human negativity itself. According to Nietzsche this soteriological project of modernity is bound to produce man as 'the last human being'; that is, the human being who "invented happiness" and "can not despise himself anymore"¹⁷. The modern invention of happiness technologically pursued and secured 'generates the human being who can not overcome and transcend himself anymore. Man loses his negative force to despise himself, to overcome and transcend himself, to create himself as a work of art - that is as the reconciliation with the negativity of Being. What Nietzsche calls the human being as 'superman' means basically human being as transcendence, self-overcoming into the affirmation of something that simply can not be affirmed otherwise than by this self-overcoming into the freedom of the tragical awareness of what is, the free and liberated play of the world as the laughter of the mask.

If thinking is rooted in the negative and therefore basically the soteriological pursuit of a free relationship to the world it has to overthink and revolutionize its traditional 'metaphysical' attitude towards Being. Only liberated from any resentment against what is, any 'spirit of revenge' or 'renunciation', will thinking constitute itself as the 'gaya scienza' of the 'free spirit', the serenity of the 'tragical donkey'. Nietzsche's 'school of thinking' is basically one of a self-overcoming and transcending liberation - not *from*, but *to* the world as perceived within the intellectual probity which makes thinking pass beyond its inherent need for conceptual self-betrayal. This includes the dismissal of the traditional attitude of theoretical- ontological thinking as it forms the dominating mainstream of occidental philosophy. There is in the traditional theoretical sense no ontology in Nietzsche, no attempt to conceptualize what is into a theoretical framework of true insights and cognitions. What looks like an ontology in Nietzsche - and Heidegger has given the most pertinent interpretation of it¹⁸ - does not have any theoretical status but is in Nietzsche's published works modalized into the completely different 'artistic' status of aphorisms or a poem such as the 'Zarathustra'. The awareness of what is, transfiguring itself into the language of Art, does not claim any theoretically 'true' sentences and propositions determining Being in itself but is the function of a liberated relationship to what is, a perception of the empirical-speculative enigmaticity of the world we can not avoid to relate to and speak about. Every ontological interpretation of Nietzsche - like the one of Heidegger - is based on the unpublished work of Nietzsche taken as a theoretical discourse. It neglects the artistic modalization of ontology into a non-theoretical status : the poetical saying of how world appear to a 'free spirit' born out of a liberated way of being-in-the-world. Thinking is the pure surplus of Being, nothing but the free and gratuitous moment of its intricate negativity overcoming itself into the freedom of Being. Nietzsche's education in thinking, in 'an-ontological' and 'soteriological' thinking, is surely a difficult one. Institutionalized into a new academical approach it could only revolutionize our contemporary philosophical institutions and their way of dealing with 'philosophy'. We would less engage in generating formal wits and cleverness and educate more spiritual attitudes of dealing with what makes us think - the Negative. And may be this is what we need most today - more attention to what makes us thinks.

NOTES

1. Presented at the Conference held at Gargi-College, New-Delhi (India) on the occasion of the Seminar on : Nietzsche's Superman : Divine or Demonic, to commemorate Nietzsche's 150 th Birthday (19th December 1994).
2. KSA 3, 17. In this sense J. P. Schobinger, *Miszellen zu Nietzsche* (Basel 1992), proposed as a different hermeneutical approach to Nietzsche the method of 'operational interpretation'. See for a very radical 'anti-academic' lecture of Nietzsche : Gilvan L. Fogel, *Nietzsches Gedanke der Überwindung der Metaphysik* (Diss. Heidelberg 1980).
3. KSA 4, 241.
4. KSA 4, 36.
5. KSA 6, 60.
6. KSA 4, 390.
7. KSA 6, 63.
8. KSA 3, 16; KSA 6, 267, 371.
9. In her excellent book : *Nietzsche. Grundzüge einer Philosophie des Glücks* (DeGruyter, Berlin 1983).
10. W III, 844.
11. KSA 6, 80.
12. *Welt und Wirklichkeit in : Scheidewege 2* (1972), 97.
13. KSA 1, 100.
14. W III, 495.
15. In this sense Nietzsche wrote, that the Greeks were 'superficial' out of profoundness (KSA 3, 352).
16. See for further clarifications my monograph : *Heidegger. Sein und Wissen. Eine Einführung in sein Denken* (Wien 1993), 349 ff.
17. KSA 4, 19 f.
18. M. Heidegger, *Nietzsche I, II*. Pfullingen 1961.

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