

Nietzsche

ABOUT THE CONDUCT OF OUR SELVES IN THE PRESENCE OF GREAT THINKERS (IN FOREIGN TERMS: ETIQUETTE)

We have set out to study Friedrich Nietzsche's self-conduct, works and basic thoughts together. Before we could characterize the current stage of understanding and misunderstanding Nietzsche, we need to make an attempt at voicing a general question and a general demand and achieving some resonance to these. There could not be a more splendid and profound opportunity for this than today, just when we took it upon ourselves to appreciate Nietzsche's life's work. When facing such a great explorer of the world of man's emotions, will and thought, there are two mistakes we need to avoid at the very first.

The first mistake is consciously or unconsciously *resigning* from the attempt of appreciating the entire life's work; the second one is *neglecting* to appreciate the life's work of the other leading spirits at the excuse of appreciating this one leading spirit.

The objective and personal aspects of the problem underlying these two mistakes are:

1. Because we are forced to leave the appreciated thinker in uncertainty (read: *uncalled by name!* – for there are positive uncertainties too, which however are shut out by exactly these uncertainties we just mentioned in an apostrophe) with respect to the entirety of our cosmos of the spirit, since we live in a world of mostly modern ways of life and prejudices, in which world the most basic instinct of the spirit towards its own spiritual cosmos, and within that towards its will for itself, are smitten by curse and the most precisely engineered prohibitions. And how could we appreciate a leading spirit within the cosmos of the spirit once we let this spiritual cosmos – our world-mother and heavenly father – be alienated from us by the deep and cruel prohibitions of modern life?
2. Because – if by no other, then by the vast Babelic language confusion of epigonism – we just had to destroy *the blinding lucency of the unified manifestations* of leading individuals of various stages in history, *so that we would not be forced to measure ourselves on the scale of this vast manifestation and thus to know ourselves*. And therefore we are often forced to deny the undeniable: *that at all times we are wanting to measure* these great thinkers, these vast measurement units of our life *on ourselves!*

UNDERSTANDING NIETZSCHE AND MISUNDERSTANDING NIETZSCHE

If we had tried to give an account of the state of understanding and misunderstanding Nietzsche a quarter of a century ago, we could already have said the same thing: the same as Nietzsche himself said and knew about his own understanding and reception half a century ago, close to the years of his insanity – namely, that in the sea of misunderstandings, there are flashes of understanding every once in a while, which light up this deaf sea for some moments. And we do agree with Nietzsche, and with everyone who has ever understood the Jobian significance and weight of Nietzsche, in affirming this deaf sea of misunderstandings too; for the reason, among others, that concerns how else Nietzsche's writings could spread to all the points they need to reach were

they not protected by this deaf cotton-sea that hides better than any armor or mask.

NIETZSCHE AND THE 19TH CENTURY

If we speak about Nietzsche, who in the 19th century, at the end of the 19th century, took it on his shoulders to draw the balance of the 19th century, of world history and of Europe, it is impossible not to speak immediately about Dostoevsky and Søren Kierkegaard too – about this vast triad of leaders of the 19th century, whose names the Vorländer and Asters have always, including today, had to omit purely, unequivocally and with no exceptions, from their histories of philosophy. They would not fit. (Nietzsche is usually mentioned as a professional expert of the philosophy of life and a skeptic, and usually in the form of a couple of phrases picked up from the sidewalk. Kierkegaard's name made it up to the list of names in a couple of histories of philosophy! And Dostoevsky? Carry on.)

Indignation needs to be given up. Indignation is suspicious – and it is suspicious with good reason. Our indignation over the omission of a 19th century thinker might lend itself to the assumption of the idyllic state where thinkers of some 1500–2500 years – Aristotle and Plotinus, Lao-Tzu and Valentinus – or thinkers of our age – Eugen Schmitt or Ferdinand Ebner – do not share the same fate – whether they make it beyond the list of names or not.

In contrast to this spiritual 19th century, the 19th century above-ground (and this above-ground is still continuing, and may not even have reached its culmination) created and re-created the teaching of Nietzsche in its own image! This 19th century achieved an “understanding” of Nietzsche.

The above-ground 19th century was the century of Darwin, but certainly that of Darwinism. “Natural selection” is showing off a fine problem-sensitivity with the emphasis on “man does not at all derive from monkeys – neither Darwin nor real Darwinism ever claimed such nonsense! Men and monkeys are merely cousins deriving from the same ancestors!” Yes, that is where we are, in the world of this triumphant above-ground 19th century, which raised soul-less psychology to the rank of an ideal (see Fülep's article in *Válasz*, etc) and above all disseminated the doctrine of the “struggle for survival” to both small and large as the highest ideal at the threshold between past and future.

And thus, when Nietzsche's name and a few of his sentences – taken out of context in a rather more than less strained manner – started to become known in wider circles, this Darwinist 19th century occupied Nietzsche for itself as the one who finally put the dot on the i by drawing the necessary consequences of Darwinism within ethics and the world of the spirit in general. Why should it have bothered with the fact that Nietzsche, who knew Darwin and Darwinism exquisitely well, never expounded anything *but* criticism in relation to it (even though he loved to explore the positive sides of even the most obnoxious doctrines and lies – even at the cost of great sacrifices). And why should it have been bothered that Nietzsche's teaching about life was as precise a complementary opposite to the Darwinian doctrine of “the struggle for survival” as one could be! All that was of course clear to everyone who had ever read and understood a single work of Nietzsche's. How few people this “everyone” meant, we can only assess from how many defended Nietzsche against the useful but ridiculous misunderstanding of Darwinism.

Nietzsche knew Dostoevsky, but even the fame of Kierkegaard only reached him towards the end of his life. The three of them, along with St Paul, St Augustine, Meister Eckhart and Pascal, were the deepest psycho-pneumatologists of Europe.

Not mere psychologists, like La Rochefoucauld, Shaftesbury or Freud, not pure pneumatologists like John the evangelist or Lao-Tzu, either.

The common points of Nietzsche's and Dostoevsky's view on life could for now be summarized as follows:

1. the unlimited and extreme dialectic of instincts (self-torturing conscience out of sadism; a treacherous, vengeful behavior poisoning and imbuing all life out of a weak impotency);
2. Christianity – is possible at every moment even today (Kierkegaard doubts this; according to him, it is rendered impossible by the existence of the National Church of Denmark)
3. an agonizing clairvoyance: the unstoppable flood of nihilism;
4. decomposition of pessimism and nihilism which live ever so powerfully within Nietzsche and Dostoevsky too;
5. the contra-position of a life lived in the deepest suffering and with the highest and most outbursting joy against the Lust-Unlust world of nihilism.

Kierkegaard, preceding Nietzsche by nearly a half century, draws the balance of the evolution of European spirit: it is 18 centuries of the Christian Europe that needs to be destroyed, made unhappened in order to make individual, Christian life possible once more. This simple, paradoxically sharp position he ends up representing even outwardly toward the end of his life. Even though his conception of Christianity is essentially identical to that of Nietzsche and Dostoevsky, it is still he, the one whom his father almost dressed and trained for Christian theology in the way that is only customary in strict and extreme monasteries, he who truly did become a theologian, he who had the chance to personally face the first tremors of Hegel, Schelling and the early German romanticism, he who was the one born into and indeed who lived within the stream of the European Christian tradition in the deepest and broadest sense of the great triad, it is he who finds the least excuse for the prevailing European Christianity. It is no one but he who finds himself opposing 18 centuries with the most single-sidedly acute paradox. Nietzsche, the free spirit has a thousand laudations, a thousand excuses and a thousand jublations for even this prevailing European Christianity; and here, at this point he embraces all his indignation and all his tearing keenness into one great Yes. (See: of the episcopal type, on asceticism, on the Bible, *Wahrhaftigkeit*, on renaissance papalism, on breaking barbarism, on Judaism and Christianity – both the real kind and the prevailing one as Judaism raised to a power)

NIETZSCHEAN CONTRADICTIONS

The sources of Nietzsche's contradictions

1. intellectual honesty plus the fistfight of subtlety and monumentality – the confusion of great wealth;
2. the incarnation of both 19th centuries in one person. The nihilist and the great Amen;
3. self-consciousness and self-criticism of the genius;
4. in lack of the minimal resonance, Nietzsche could not reach a living overview of his own achievement;
5. privations: dimension-consciousness, Hamannian language-wisdom, natural science, century long periodicity of technology and economy (see later: positivism, the grand lawsuit, creed and Lippenbekenntnis, sensitivity, abstraction, science as opposed to scientists, law,

technic, shaman, Macht, asceticism, Newton/Freud...)

What does the personal union of Nietzsche the nihilist and Nietzsche the believer mean, and what did it need to mean?

That the believing, building and creating Nietzsche's fate was a Mosaic one, staying on this side of the Jordan but trusting in and *seeing* into Canaan: the basic and target thoughts of the believing, affirming Nietzsche, even in having to remain short of full maturity as his nihilistic, Ivan Karamazov-esque, Mosaic mission warranted, still represent such a wealth and such a strength of life as is since unmatched.

It is Jaspers who says that interpretation is the reference and application of central theses to each other. Well, the most delicate and most rewarding task right after interpreting the Bible is that of interpreting Nietzsche – the reference and application of Nietzsche's central theses to each other. Jaspers – who can naturally not do anything but reiterate the life view of his book *Psychologie der Weltanschauungen* in every single one of his works, including his Nietzsche-interpretation; and who even though in his sublimated, drug-shot Herman Bang-esque disintegration, and on the crumbling ground this meant still gave us the best book on Nietzsche to date – cannot pose the question of interpretation in a sharp form; but that is exactly what we need in general and especially in Nietzsche's case.

If interpretation is the reference and application of central theses to each other, we must ask the question: “are the central theses of equal rank?” The answer, in each case, is: no! They are not. Yet the question must be asked in each and every case: “which one is the first among equals (centrals)?” The task is to measure uncertainties, contradictions, boundary-problems and transcendences on each other, to refer and apply them to one another and thus control them.

Continuity (analytic form), positive and negative circuli and self-application are sacral criteria in this case too.

As we saw, Nietzsche's contradictions stem on the one hand from intellectual honesty, a rich view of reality and the difficulties these involve, and on the other hand from a positivistic philosophy of language, from his inability to catch a glimpse of the rank problem in the cosmos of language. It is true that in contrast to Dostoevsky or Kierkegaard he did see the wealth of inner trends in science and economy, but he did not yet see the circle of these trends closing on themselves (in a lesser perspective) (cf. Goethe, Baader, German romantics, Fichte, etc)

But besides Dostoevsky and Kierkegaard, it is still Nietzsche whose theological philosophy finally shows off the insufficiency of the dominant everyday, of expert science and expert philosophy for encompassing the world of problems this 19th century was aging underground. The paradoxes of Dostoevsky, Kierkegaard and Nietzsche – despite the fact that neither of the three became aware of the Hamannian significance of language – are vastly powerful objections against the *crippling of language*.

Nietzsche's example is a brilliant demonstration of the methodology and the minimal intellectual honesty demanding us to provide the *position* of our own problems, or at least our chief problems, within the transcendental hierarchy, the mundus intelligibilis and the system of dimensions (between the extremal dimensions of the theos and a point-like sensing).

In addition to the methodological minimum there is a methodological ideal as well: the proportional – golden-proportional – composition of implication and analysis! (Work of art? Holy scripture!)

Translated by István Cziegler