

**AMOR FATI: LOVE THYSELF BY BECOMING WHAT YOU ARE!
NIETZSCHE ON THE FREEDOM OF THE WILL**

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Abstract

Nietzsche's distinction between the master and the slave moralities is certainly one of his most notoriously famous moral and political notions. To claim that there are two main perspectives on the world, one belonging to the accomplished, the other to the unaccomplished side of humanity and, moreover, that the last two millennia of European alleged cultural progress constitute, in fact, nothing more than the history of the progressive permeation of our entire Weltanschauung, of our very values, thoughts and feelings by the so called slave morality, while all the more finding the virtue of this process in a future self-demise of this entire decadent cultural and human strain, is something that has shocked and enraged most of the ideological philosophers ever since. As such, at a certain moment, despite their substantial doctrinaire differences, almost everybody in the ideologized philosophical world, would agree on hating Nietzsche: he was hated by the Christians, for claiming that "God is dead", by the socialists for treating their view as herd or slave mentality and denying the alleged progressively rational structure of the world, by the liberals much on the same accounts, by the 'right wingers' for his explicit anti-nationalism, by the anarchists for his ontological anti-individualism (i.e. individualism), by the collectivists for his mockery of any gregarious existence, by the capitalists for his contempt for money and the mercantile worldview, by the positivists for his late mistrust in science and explicit illusionism (i.e. the notion that illusions are a necessary fact of life). However, being equally resented by all sides of the political, moral, theological and epistemic spectra might indicate that one is, if not right, or unbiased, at least originally and personally biased. Any view that coherently achieves such form of specific equal contestation, especially one that has so robustly continued to do so for more than a century, deserves some consideration.

Keywords: Nietzsche, ideology, Will, power, individualism

Motto: "There is no reality except the one contained within us. That is why so many people live such an unreal life. They take the images outside them for reality and never allow the world within to assert itself. You can be happy that way. But once you know the other interpretation you no longer have the choice of following the crowd."¹

Tellingly Nietzsche did not write systematically or, if he did, not in the manner long established by the rationalist-empiricist tradition. As Heidegger would later on put it, there is as much to be considered about what Nietzsche did not write, but can be read between the lines, as it is about what he did write². Nietzsche leaves many of his tracks of thought partially unspoken, thereby allowing his reader to complete and fulfill them for him-/herself. I take it to be some sort of show of respect on his part in allowing his reader to partake in the making of the *thought-trail*, i.e. becoming an author him-/herself. *To each his own!* and as *there are no facts, only interpretations*, there are only *definite*, but no *definitive, stone carved* writings.

Nietzsche writes aphoristically and, many times, all the more, in riddles. I think this is a good starting point, given that *the way* he writes, that is *exposes* himself to his reader, offers a most concrete and intimate glimpse into the meaning of *what* he has to say about things such as the Self, the will, freedom, character, fate, responsibility.

Why didn't Nietzsche write *systematically*, that is within a fixed, explicit, closed, coherent and, supposedly, all-encompassing logic-argumentative structure? Basically, because he thought that much of what comes to one's mind is determined by how one feels. In other words, how one views things, *the matter and its points*, so to say, depends on a set of circumstances which, for the most part, are beyond the reach and control of consciousness, but that, on the other hand, greatly reflect upon what is being thought and, ultimately, expressed. I am talking here not only of our so called *inner, deep* unconscious thoughts, feelings, or bodily states, but also about *outer* stuff such as the

¹ Hesse, Hermann, *Demian*, Fischer Verlag, 1923.

² Heidegger, M., „Wer ist Nietzsches Zarathustra?“, Gesamtausgabe B7, (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann), 2000, pp. 99-126.

room in which we happen to be in, the weather and, ultimately, the immediate state of the world into which, again, we (or rather *I*) happen to be in. In nuce, what takes part in my every thought? - everything which affects and affected me in one form or another, at one time or another, that is *everything that I am!* Quite obviously, our ability of taking into account everything that determines us *when doing the thinking* and, all the more, consciously and explicitly integrating it into what is being thought and expressed is greatly limited, to say the least. We cannot *think and speak the Whole*, as Hegel would want it, at least not according to Nietzsche.

“With regard to the superstitions of logicians, I shall never tire of emphasizing a small, terse fact, which is unwillingly recognized by these credulous minds – namely, that a thought comes when ‘it’ wishes, and not when ‘I’ wish; so that it is a perversion of the facts of case to say that the subject ‘I’ is the condition of the predicate ‘think’. *One* thinks; but that this ‘one’ is precisely the famous old ‘ego’, is, to put it mildly, only a supposition, an assertion, and assuredly not an ‘immediate certainty’. After all, one has even gone too far with this ‘one thinks’ – even the ‘one’ contains an *interpretation* of the process, and does not belong to the process itself. One infers here according to the usual grammatical formula – ‘To think is an activity; every activity requires an agency that is active; ‘consequently...’³

Psychological considerations

As such, consciousness is, along with its every thought, a product of its circumstances and, as long as it cannot wholly calculate and determine them, it cannot honestly claim to think and express itself beyond such circumstances, much less beyond and above any circumstances whatsoever, as traditional rationalist-empiricist systematic philosophy would have it. Acknowledgedly, everything is, according to Nietzsche, a *matter of perspective*:

³ Nietzsche, Fr., “Beyond Good and Evil”, CW 12, pp. 24-25/Aph. 17.

“In prison – My eye, whether it be keen or weak, can only see a certain distance, and it is within this space that I live and move: this horizon is my immediate fate, greater or lesser, from which I cannot escape. Thus, a concentric circle is drawn around every being, which has a center and is peculiar to himself. In the same way our ear encloses us in a small space, and so likewise does our touch. We measure the world by these horizons within which our senses confine each of us within prison walls. We say this is near and that is far distant, that this is large and that is small, that one thing is hard and another soft; amid this appreciation of things we call sensation – but it is all an error *per se*! According to the number of events and emotions which it is on an average possible for us to experience in a given space of time, we measure our lives; we call them short or long, rich or poor, full or empty; and according to the average of human life we estimate that of other beings, - and all this is an error *per se*!

If we had eyes a hundred times more piercing to examine the things that surround us, men would seem us to be enormously tall; we can even imagine organs by means of which men would appear to us to be of immeasurable stature. On the other hand, certain organs could be so formed as to permit us to view entire solar systems as if they were contracted and brought close together like a single cell: and to beings of an inverse order a single cell of the human body could be made to appear in its construction, movement and harmony as if it were a solar system in itself. The habits our senses have wrapped us up in a tissue of lying sensations which in their turn lie at the base of all our judgments and our ‘knowledge’ – there are no means of exit or escape to the real world! We are like spiders in our own webs, and, whatever we may catch in them, it will only be something that our web is capable of catching.”⁴

On the other hand, to say that we lack complete control over the determinant circumstances of our thought process is not to say that we completely lack control over them. We can, to some extent, choose the way we *react* to our circumstances. To what

⁴ Nietzsche, Fr., “The Dawn of Day”, CW IX, pp. 122-123/Aph. 117.

extent? To the extent we have one or several perspectives thereon. In other words, given that each new set of circumstances provides a new perspective, the more diverse the circumstances we go through, the more diverse the perspectives and therefore the wider the scope of our potential reactions - the more diversified the circumstances, the broader our perspectives and ways of reacting to them.

Moreover, if it is *the habits of our senses that have wrapped us in a tissue of lying sensations which in turn lie at the base of all our judgments and knowledge*, coming to know those habits and their eventual change can lead us to a more self-aware perspective on things. I think we can understand Nietzsche's notion of *character* precisely in this sense, i.e. as a set of *habitual perspectival proclivities derived from one's recurring biographic, ontogenetic, genealogic and ultimately phylogenetic circumstances*. I furthermore hold that this is also his understanding of the ancient notions of *Moirai* (gr.) or *fatum* (lat.), i.e. *fate* - characterial quasi-predetermination of one's perspectives on things, but with an auto-recursive twist: *the eternal recurrence*. But let us not get ahead of ourselves.

One of the many passages which could support such an interpretation is the following:

"Feelings and their descent from judgments –'Trust your feelings!' But feelings comprise nothing final, original; feelings are based upon the judgments and valuations which are transmitted to us in the shape of feelings (inclinations, dislikes). The inspiration which springs from a feeling is the grandchild of a judgment – often an erroneous judgment! – and certainly not one's own judgment! Trusting in our feelings simply means obeying our grandfather and grandmother more than the gods within ourselves: our reason and experience."⁵

⁵ Idem pp. 41/Aph. 35.

So, basically, according to Nietzsche, circumstances determine our perspectives, i.e. thought process, both directly, through their *in situ* influence on the thinking subject's body and psyche and indirectly through his/her innate or inured perspectival proclivities (*character*). More specifically, according to my reading of Nietzsche, we mostly react to the *in situ* circumstances on the basis of the *characterial* circumstances (which generate a more or less specific *perspective*). The former are mostly undeterminable or, at best, *underdeterminable* with respect to consciousness, i.e. they evolve *behind its' back*, that is without its' being able to notice or control them, the latter, either inherited or inured, are again quasi-uncontrollable with respect to consciousness, given that they are the ones actually making it up and consequently pulling the strings from behind the scene. What room remains there for consciousness and its' so called *personal freedom*? Well, in my opinion, not much, but *some very important some*, which is definitive of the quality of each of our individual destinies.

More to the point, according to my reading of Nietzsche, though inherited, our character is not a fixed, immutable structure of concomitant actual psychological patterns, but a semi-structured bundle of inchoate personal potentialities, each coming to the forefront, i.e. *becoming actual* depending on the *in situ* circumstances. I shall call the former *pseudo-personalities* and the latter *situations*: therefore, each particular (type of) situation evokes a particular pseudo-personality. Each interaction between such situations and pseudo-personalities generates a certain *perspective* which feeds back into the loop. Consequently the more diverse the circumstances, the richer the array of pseudo-personalities revealed and the broader the perspectives *of our Self on itself*. That is why, in fact, I have preferred the apparently odd writing *(in)dividual* when referring to Nietzsche's notion of selfhood, stressing the fact that, to him, each so called *individual* is by no means an undividable unity but rather a *motley bundle* of semi-structured, power driven impulses, inclinations and urges greatly dependent on contingent circumstances.

As such, according to my reading of Nietzsche, our freedom would lie in (i) acknowledging this fact (avoiding self-delusion), (ii) mindfully taking hold of oneself along this process, i.e. *knowing one's character* in its' specificity, (iii) letting it happen, i.e. accepting one's character in its specificity and (iv) potentiating it, i.e. allowing for new, or even fringe circumstances to take place in order to evoke new pseudo-personalities and consequently new, *broadened* perspectives. In so doing, one eventually *edifies one's character* in both meanings of the word, i.e. *illuminates* and, at the same time, *builds* it. Apparently, for Nietzsche, just as for Robert Frost, *freedom lies in being bold*: the boldness in exposing oneself to the waves of contingency and, in the midst of such turmoil, taking hold of and affirming oneself in one's *uncanny peculiarity*. When all this becomes second nature, a fifth, very special aspect of freedom may supervene i.e. that of choosing, to a relatively limited extent, one's circumstances and incumbent perspectives. In fact, I understand Nietzsche's notion of Overman [Übermensch] precisely as such a being (*and way to be*) in the case of which the possibility of choosing both circumstances and perspectives is maximally developed. However, the emergence of this fifth aspect of freedom is something by no means certain, only probable, at best, that moreover, once attained, can always be lost and which, in fact, at some point or another, usually is. By no means, according to Nietzsche, can freedom be viewed as some innate (and therefore inalienable) feature of individuals – correspondingly, it is not something that can be protected, or guaranteed by a law, much less by one based on *generic equality*, as the liberals would have it. More on this later on.

I think Aphorism 119 in *The Dawn of Day* is especially revealing in this respect:

“EXPERIENCE AND INVENTION. – To however high a degree a man can attain to knowledge of himself, nothing can be more incomplete than the conception which he forms of the instincts constituting his individuality. He can scarcely name the more common instincts: their number and force, their flux and reflux, their action and counteraction, and, above all, the laws of their nutrition, remain absolutely unknown to

him. This nutrition, therefore, becomes a work of chance: the daily experiences of our lives throw their prey now to this instinct and now to that, and the instincts gradually seize upon it; but the ebb and flow of these experiences does not stand in any rational relationship to the nutritive needs of the total numbers of the instincts. Two things then, must always happen: some cravings will be neglected and starved to death, while others will be overfed. Every moment in the life of man causes some polypous arms of his being to grow and others to wither away, in accordance with the nutriment which that moment may or may not bring with it. Our experiences, as I have already said, are all in this sense means of nutriment, but scattered about with a careless hand and without discrimination between the hungry and the overfed. As a consequence of this accidental nutrition of each particular part, the polypus in its complete development will be something just as fortuitous as its growth.

To put this more clearly: let us suppose that an instinct or craving has reached that point when it demands gratification, - either the exercise of its power or the discharge of it, or the filling up of a vacuum (all this is metaphorical language), - then it will examine every event that occurs in the course of the day to ascertain how it can be utilized with the object of fulfilling its aim: whether the man runs or rests, or is angry, or reads or speaks or fights or rejoices, the unsatiated instinct watches, as it were, every condition into which the man enters, and, as a rule, if it finds nothing for itself it must wait, still unsatisfied. After a little while it becomes feeble, and at the end of a few days or a few months, if it has not been satisfied, it will wither away like a plant which has not been watered. This cruelty of chance would perhaps be more conspicuous if all the cravings were as vehement in their demands as hunger, which refuse to be satisfied with imaginary dishes; but the great majority of our instincts, especially those which are called moral, are thus easily satisfied, - if it be permitted to suppose that our dreams serve as compensation to a certain extent for the accidental absence of 'nutriment' during the day. Why was last night's dream full of tenderness and tears, that of the night before amusing

and gay, and the previous one adventurous and engaged in some continual obscure search? How does it come about that in this dream I enjoy indescribable beauties of music, and in that one I soar and fly upwards with the delight of an eagle to the most distant heights?

These inventions in which our instincts of tenderness, merriment, or adventurousness, or our desire for music and mountains, can have free play and scope – and every one can recall striking instances – are interpretations of our nervous irritations during sleep, very free and arbitrary interpretations of the movements of our blood and intestines, and the pressure of our arm and the bed coverings, or the sound of a church bell, the weathercocks, the moths, and so on. That this text, which on the whole is very much the same for one night as another, is so differently commented upon, that our creative reason imagines such different causes for the nervous irritations of one day as compared with another, may be explained by the fact that the prompter of this reason was different to-day from yesterday – another instinct or craving wished to be satisfied, to show itself, to exercise itself and be refreshed and discharged: this particular one being at its height to-day and another one being at its height last night. Real life has not the freedom of interpretation possessed by dream life; it is less poetic and less unrestrained – but is it necessary for me to show that our instincts, when we are awake, likewise merely interpret our nervous irritations and determine their ‘causes’ in accordance with their requirements? That there is no really essential difference between waking and dreaming, that even in comparing different degrees of culture, the freedom of the conscious interpretation of the one is not in any way inferior to the freedom in dreams of the other ! that our moral judgments and valuations are only images and fantasies concerning physiological processes unknown to us, a kind of habitual language to describe certain nervous irritations? That all our so-called consciousness is a more or less fantastic commentary of an unknown text, one which is perhaps unknowable but yet felt?

Consider some insignificant occurrence. Let us suppose that some day as we pass along a public street we see someone laughing at us. In accordance with whatever craving has reached its culminating point within us at that moment, this incident will have this or that signification for us; and it will be a very different occurrence in accordance with the class of men to which we belong. One man will take it like a drop of rain, another will shake it off like a fly, a third person will try to pick a quarrel on account of it, a fourth will examine his garments to see if there is anything about them likely to cause laughter, and a fifth will in consequence think about what is ridiculous *per se*, a sixth will be pleased at having involuntarily contributed to add a ray of sunshine and mirth to the world, - in all these cases some craving is gratified, whether anger, combativeness, meditation, or benevolence. This instinct, whatever it may be, has seized upon that incident as its prey: why that particular one? Because, hungry and thirsty, it was lying in ambush.

Not long ago at 11 o'clock in the morning a man suddenly collapsed and fell down in front of me as if struck by lightning. All the women who were near at once gave utterance to cries of horror, while I set the man on his feet again and waited until he recovered his speech. During this time no muscle of my face moved and I experienced no sensation of fear or pity; I simply did what was most urgent and reasonable and calmly proceeded on my way. Supposing someone had told me on the previous evening that at 11 o'clock on the following day a man would fall down in front of me like this, I should have suffered all kinds of agonies in the interval, lying awake all night, and at the decisive moment should also perhaps have fallen down like the man instead of helping him; for in the meantime all the imaginable cravings within would have had leisure to conceive and to comment upon this incident. What are our experiences, then? Much more what we attribute to them than what they really are. Or should we perhaps say that nothing is contained in them? That experiences in themselves are merely works of fancy?"⁶

⁶ Nietzsche, Fr., "The Dawn of Day", CW IX, pp. 124-128/Aph. 119.

Generally speaking, there are two main attitudes one can have with respect to such a state of affairs: one can either acknowledge and *work with(in) it*, or one can deny, or rather cover it up.

As previously mentioned, *working with(in) it* requires one to mindfully acknowledge the supervenience of one's consciousness on circumstances (be it *in situ* or characterial): i.e. to (i) accept it, (ii) to come to know oneself along it, (iii) to potentiate it and to (iv) shape oneself accordingly. The aim of such self-education is *arête* (gr. *excellence*), that meaning, in Nietzsche's interpretation, becoming the best version of one's own specific nature (i.e. character) beyond *common acceptances*. In other words, we cannot create our character, but we can shape, or at least polish it. But in order to do so we must know and accept ourselves, and it is to this process of self-discovery and -assertion to which we should dedicate our efforts (and not to the artificial complacency in various general public models). Why? Because trying to live up to some general, *borrowed* standards of *how one should be* without knowing how someone actually *is*, is first, *imitative*, i.e. *unoriginal*, second, *self-denying*, i.e. fake and third, *futile* as *one cannot really be(come) that which one is not*. Not accidentally, one can draw a parallel between such process of *self-realization* and Nietzsche's esthetic ideal of *Apollonian sublimation of the Dionysian*: one has to become the best version of oneself just as a painter in front of the canvass, or, maybe better put, a sculptor working with his wood or stone: an experienced sculptor does not try to *make anything out of anything*, but, *au contraire*, suits his envisioned figure to the material at hand by carefully studying the specific underlying configuration of webs and crevices before bringing it to light - accordingly an *accomplished self-seeker* tries to know his/her own fabric before shaping it. Michelangelo famously held that he did not create his David, in the sense of *out of nowhere bringing into existence something which hadn't been there*, but only disclosed and laid bare that which the block of marble had contained in its depths all along - the same goes for Nietzsche's *self-edification of the Self*.

As Robert C. Solomon⁷ puts it, with Nietzsche it is always the aesthetic perspective which takes the lead: in human Self-edification, just as in art, being unoriginal, fake and impersonal is the worst.

Moral considerations

This is what Nietzsche's project of *self-edification of the Self* would amount to. Esthetically I have characterized it as an Apollonian sublimation of the Dionysian. On moral terms, this would amount to an, again, sublimated, that is *metaphorically transposed* version of the master morality. I think the correspondences are quite obvious:

“There is master morality and slave morality; - I would at once add, however, that in all higher and mixed civilizations, there are also attempts at the reconciliation of the two moralities; but one finds still oftener the confusion and mutual misunderstanding of them, indeed, sometimes their close juxtaposition – even in the same man, within one soul. (...) The noble type of man regards himself as a determiner of values; he does not require to be approved of; he passes the judgment: ‘What is injurious to me is injurious in itself’; he knows that it is he himself only who confers honor on things; he is a creator of values. He honors whatever he recognizes in himself: such morality is self-glorification. In the foreground there is the feeling of plenitude, of power, which seeks to overflow, the happiness of high tension, the consciousness of wealth which would fain give and bestow: - the noble man also helps the unfortunate, but not – or scarcely – out of pity, but rather from an impulse generated by the superabundance of power. The noble man honors in himself the powerful one, him also who has power over himself, who knows how to speak and how to keep silence, who takes pleasure in subjecting himself to severity and hardness, and has reverence for all that is severe and hard. (...)”⁸

⁷ Solomon, Robert, C. & Higgins, Kathleen, M. *What Nietzsche Really Said*, (New York : Schocken Books), 2000.

⁸ Nietzsche, Fr., “Beyond Good and Evil”, CW 12, pp. 228-229/Aph. 260.

Quite obviously, there is an important connection between Nietzsche's master morality and his notion of Overman. I think the link between them is his aesthetic ideal – in fact, I hold that Nietzsche's Overman is the Apollinically sublimated version of his Dionysian master, i.e. one that by knowing, accepting and potentiating one's *character* achieves the freedom of choosing different perspectives on the world and their corresponding circumstances. Of course, that, concretely speaking, this is an insurmountable task, but in this, as in very few cases, the struggle *is* its own reward as it illuminates and builds one's character, while at the same time expressing it in forms which are ever more *delicately robust*, that is *essentialized*. Just as a work of art, each Overman is unique and *perpetually unfinished*.

There is however, according to Nietzsche, another form of morality and corresponding psychology: the slave morality and its incumbent *tschandala*⁹ character. Being born out of a congenital lack of individual life resources, it is:

- (i) *self-denying*, i.e. derived from lack of self-respect;
- (ii) *resentful*, i.e. stingily spiteful and envious;
- (iii) *self-dissimulative* i.e. it purports, both to others and itself, to be something other than it is: *objective* morality instead of *will to power* (as it resents master morality for being);
- (iv) *gregarious*, i.e. undiscerningly favoring the common over the specific with respect to both human beings and culture;
- (v) *exocentrically comparative* i.e. the point of reference of its comparisons (and judgments) is the others, while master morality being *endocentrically comparative* i.e. having as comparative and judicative point of reference the Self – in short, according to my reading of Nietzsche, while the master is preoccupied what *he/she* thinks of him-/herself, the slave's main concern is what the *others* think of him/her. Correspondingly, slave morality has a collective and impersonal notion of *alterity*, while master morality an

⁹ The name of the lowest Indian caste.

individual and personal one – in other words, while the master tends to regard the Other as an *other*, as a specific individual, the slave tends to relate to the Other as an *others*, that is as a collective and anonymous entity.

In what follows, two (of the many) relevant paragraphs in this respect: the first from Nietzsche's *Will to Power* regarding the psychological distinction behind the master and the slave moralities (i.e. *the strong* and the *weak will*), the second from *Beyond Good and Evil*, an essentialized analysis of the slave morality (counterpart to the previously quoted passage on the master morality):

"46. Weakness of the will: that is a metaphor that can prove misleading. For there is no will, and consequently neither a strong nor a weak will. The multitude and disgregation of impulses and the lack of any systematic order among them result in a 'weak will'; their coordination under a single predominant impulse results in a 'strong will': in the first case it is the oscillation and the lack of gravity; in the latter, the precision and clarity of the direction."¹⁰

"260. (...) Supposing that the abused, the oppressed, the suffering, the unemancipated, the weary and those uncertain of themselves, should moralise, what would be the common element in their moral estimates? Probably a pessimistic suspicion with regard to the entire situation of man will find expression, perhaps a condemnation of man, together with his situation. The slave has an unfavourable eye for the virtues of the powerful; he has a skepticism and distrust, a refinement of distrust of everything 'good' that is there honoured – he would fain persuade himself that the very happiness there is not genuine. On the other hand, those qualities which serve to alleviate the existence of sufferers are brought into prominence and flooded with light; it is here that sympathy, the kind, helping hand, the warm heart, patience, diligence, humility, and friendliness attain to honour; for here these are the most useful qualities, and almost the only means of supporting the burden of existence. Slave-morality is essentially the morality of utility.

¹⁰ Nietzsche, Friedrich, *The Will to Power* (New York: Vintage Books), 1968 pp. 28/Aph. 46.

Here is the seat of the origin of the famous antithesis ‘good’ and ‘evil’: - the power and dangerousness are assumed to reside in the evil, a certain dreadfulness, subtlety, and strength, which do not admit to being despised. According to slave-morality, therefore, the ‘evil’ man arouses fear; according to master-morality, it is precisely the ‘good’ man who arouses fear and seeks to arouse it, while the bad man is regarded as the despicable being. The contrast attains its maximum when, in accordance with the logical consequences of slave morality, a shade of depreciation – it might be slight and well-intentioned – at last attaches itself even to the ‘good’ man of this morality; because, according to the servile mode of thought, the good man must in any case be the safe man : he is good-natured, easily deceived. Perhaps a little stupid, *un bonhomme*. Everywhere that slave-morality gains the ascendancy, language shows a tendency to approximate the significations of the words ‘good’ and ‘stupid’ – A last fundamental difference: the desire for freedom, the instinct for happiness and the refinements of the feeling of liberty belong as necessarily to slave-morals and morality, as artifice and enthusiasm in reverence and devotion are the regular symptoms of an aristocratic mode of thinking and estimating. (...)”¹¹

In other words, according to Nietzsche, the fact that the *tschandala* lacks individual resources does not derogate from the finality of his/her will as *will to power* – but he/she will try to make up for this precariousness by adopting a gregarious and dissimulative strategy in this respect: the *tschandala* develop together an average model of humanity, a common notion of *what it means to be human* thereby covering any (in)dividual specificity and preoccupation therewith: *Human nature is such and such and it must be chosen and willed upon anything calling itself human!*. Obviously, this brings about a process of progressive homogenization of (in)dividuality – basically, the history of this process is, according to Nietzsche, the entire post-Platonic European history: each *human* being, irrespective of any preoccupation with its own specificity, must live up to a certain

¹¹ Nietzsche, Fr., “Beyond Good and Evil”, CW 12, pp. 230-231/Aph. 260.

borrowed set of standards of humanity. This is what I have somewhere else called the *personalist* or *Apollinist* model, basically amounting to the post-Cartesian understanding of humanity according to which each of us is provided *a priori* with the same generic structure: we have a consciousness that is both essentially unitary and immutable which observes and records *outside things and states of facts* (its own body and sensations, events of the world etc.) through its cognitive apparatus. Once *making up its mind* about such things and facts this consciousness has the ability to choose some or other of their potentialities and *will them into existence* by determining its attached body to act in certain ways. In other words, our (common) consciousness determines the world on three levels: bodily, personal and social. Fact of the matter is: history is a product of conscious choice or, if it is not, should become so by eliminating and subjecting everything unknown, indeterminate or pre-given to the rational will of consciousness (which, again, is essentially the same for any human).¹² All the more, history was also reinterpreted as if it had always been a product of human choice or, more extremely, as inherently and immutably directed towards this goal (as with Hegel). As said, there is no room for anything unknown, mysterious or (in)dividually specific in such a world, no self-search or – discovery – all humans must do is comply to specific, commonly prefabricated standards of *how one should be*. And the trickiest part is that all this is done under the pretense of the so called *ontological aprioricity of human freedom as choice*:

“Error of Free Will.—We no longer have any sympathy nowadays for the concept 'free will': (...) I shall give here simply the psychology behind every kind of making people responsible.—Wherever responsibilities are sought, it is usually the instinct for wanting to punish and judge that is doing the searching. Becoming is stripped of its innocence once any state of affairs is traced back to a will, to intentions, to responsible acts: the doctrine of the will was fabricated essentially for the purpose of punishment, i.e. of wanting to find

¹² Approximately along similar lines with what Heidegger would later on call *Ge-stell* (*Enframing*) i.e. the *calculatory preemptive progressive securization of the world* (which he would, though partly, still unjustly, at least in my opinion, impute precisely to Nietzsche).

guilty. The old psychology as a whole, the psychology of the will, presupposes the fact that its originators, the priests at the head of ancient communities, wanted to give themselves the right to impose punishments—or give God the right to do so ... People were thought of as 'free' so that they could be judged and punished—so that they could become guilty consequently every action had to be thought of as willed, the origin of every action as located in consciousness (—thus the most fundamental piece of counterfeiting in psychologies became the principle of psychology itself)."¹³

In other words, with the *rise of the tschandala*, freedom was taken for granted as an inborn feature of any human being, with consciousness as its' a priori source. As such, any humanly conceivable action and deed was taken as freely chosen, therefore intentional, therefore *responsibilizable* i.e. as potential ground and rationale for moral reprehension and punishment. Of course, that it wasn't necessarily used so with every given occasion, but only with respect to such (in)dividuals which, for one reason or another, did not comply with the standard model of humanity at the time. *In nuce*, the *freedom of the will* as a *doctrine*, constituted a *castigative pretext* rather than an actual expression of the alleged inherent liberty of any human (in)dividual.

Political considerations

Therefrom Nietzsche's critique of all political ideologies supervenient on the doctrine of the freedom of the Will: institutionalized Christianity, liberalism and socialism. In short, his argument points out the fact that all these apparently alternative, but actually collateral, ideological views, along with their correlative political arrangements are equivalent expressions of the so called *herd mentality* typical to the *tschandala* psychology we have previously discussed. The most obvious symptom thereof is that in all their discussions, arguments and debates, individual freedom is made dependent on equality, and that is *universal equality*, which is just another word for *ubiquitous the-*

¹³ Nietzsche, Fr., *Twilight of the Idols*, (New York : Oxford University Press), 1998, pp. 31-32/Aph. 7.

same-ness or, otherwise put, *individual identity*. Contemporary *democratic* society has no room for self-search, -edification and specificity; through its stress on equality reduces any (in)dividuality to the identikit of the *institutionalized individual*.

In brief, the nodal points of his argument are the following:

(i) The atomistic generic notion of individual self, understood as individual identity (i.e. *personality*) is by no means a metaphysical truth, but a mere *cultural artifact* historically generated in specific and contingent socio-political circumstances in order to (unconsciously) dissimulate, manifest and legitimate the *power interests* of a certain group within humanity, i.e. the *tschandala*.

(ii) All of our so called *individual* features and faculties are the byproduct of a long civilizational (pre)history: in particular, the doctrinaire pair individual freedom – individual responsibility is actually the product of the secular disciplination of the (in)dividual through (slave) moral coercion.

(iii) One's actual *being a person* (especially the capacity for more or less autonomous reflection and action) is, according to Nietzsche not something *a priori* given, but quite the contrary, involving, as we have seen, constant self-scrutiny, - search, - discovery, - acceptance and – exercise. If one does not go through this, he/she cannot become an (actual) person and, if not constantly continuing to do so, he/she can always lose his/her personhood. As you probably remember, earlier on I have called this *Self-edification*. Such Self-edification depends, among other contingencies, on social practices: the latter can either impair, or potentiate it. They can potentiate it by promoting the preoccupation with and respect for authenticity (including its conflictual aspects, at least to some degree): self-curiosity, - awareness, - honesty, courage and resoluteness. They can impair it, obviously, by instituting *the cult of the common* i.e. *conformism* and the best way to do so is by convincing everybody of *the generic aprioricity of their personhood* i.e. first that they are necessarily born as persons and they do not have to do anything about

it, second that the structure of their personhood is the same as all the others' and, consequently, that precisely such common aspects are worth keeping and cultivating.

Which of the two alternative types of social practices characterize contemporary society is quite obvious. Imitative mass education and culture are obvious both symptoms and causes thereof. Besides them, another social feature that is greatly efficient in instituting conformism is the utilitarian cult of money and property, or, in other words, the mercantile worldview which gained ever more ground with the ascent of modern bourgeoisie:

"Danger in wealth. -Only someone who has spirit should possess property: otherwise property is dangerous to the common good. The proprietor, that is, who does not understand how to make any use of the free time that his property could provide for him, will continue forever to strive for more property: this effort becomes his entertainment, his stratagem in the battle with boredom. Thus in the end real wealth is produced from a moderate property that would satisfy someone with spirit: and, to be sure, as the glistening result of spiritual dependence and poverty. But now he appears to be completely different from what his impoverished lineage led us to expect, because he can adopt the mask of cultivation and art: he can buy masks. He thereby awakens envy among those who are poorer and less cultivated -who basically always envy cultivation and do not see the mask in the mask-and gradually prepares the way for a social revolution: for gilded coarseness and histrionic selfinflation in the supposed 'enjoyment of culture' gives them the idea that 'it is simply a matter of money' -whereas it is somewhat a matter of money, of course, but much more a matter of spirit."¹⁴

Money is quantitative and therefore excessive preoccupation therewith *quantitatively homogenizes* any form of qualitative (in)dividual specificity: freedom, exclusively understood as acquisitional liberty does neither reflect, nor promote (in)dividual authenticity (given that *as money*, everything and everyone is the same).

¹⁴ Nietzsche Fr. *Human All too Human II* CW4, pp. 119-120/Aph. 310.

Furthermore, by instituting the cult of the ontological freedom of human will and consequently denying, or rather *covering up*, any form of predetermination, be it destinal (*Moirá*) or just characterial, modern European culture and civilization, in all its political alternatives, (i) precludes any preoccupation with and discovery of actual (in)dividual specificity and, at the same time, (ii) annuls from the very start any eventual (in)dividual confrontation with and potential liberation from such predetermination.

As such, I do not think Nietzsche is necessarily a fatalist – as you have seen, the adequate attitude provided, freedom is, to some extent, possible (including as *choice*). However, this is something that is (in)dividually gained at the end of much turmoil and not something to be commonly and gratuitously found at the beginning of each existence. As such reducing it to the status of a homogenous inborn feature of humans, along with an eventual correlative political right that is supposed to guarantee and protect it, is about the surest way to lose it:

“My Idea of Freedom.—The value of a thing sometimes depends not on what we manage to do with it, but on what we pay for it—what it costs us. Let me give an example. Liberal institutions stop being liberal as soon as they have been set up: afterwards there is no one more inveterate or thorough in damaging freedom than liberal institutions. Now we know what they achieve: they undermine the will to power, they are the levelling of mountain and valley elevated to the status of morality, they make things petty, cowardly, and hedonistic— with them the herd animal triumphs every time. Liberalism: in plain words herd-animalization... While these same institutions are still being fought for, they produce quite different effects: then they are actually powerful promoters of freedom. On closer inspection, it is war that produces these effects, war waged for liberal institutions, which as war allows the illiberal instincts to persist.

And war is an education in freedom. For what is freedom! Having the will to be responsible to oneself. (...) The free man is a warrior.—How is freedom measured, in individuals as well as nations? By the resistance which must be overcome, the effort it

costs to stay on top. The highest type of free men would need to be sought in the place where the greatest resistance is constantly being overcome: a short step away from tyranny, right on the threshold of the danger of servitude. This is psychologically true, if one understands here by 'tyrants' pitiless and terrible instincts which require the maximum of authority and discipline to deal with them—finest type Julius Caesar—and it is also politically true, if one simply takes a walk through history. The nations which were worth something, became worth something, never did so under liberal institutions: it was great danger that turned them into something worthy of respect, the kind of danger without which we would not know our instruments, our virtues, our defences and weapons, our spirit—which forces us to be strong... First principle: you must need to be strong, or else you will never become it.—Those great hothouses for strong, for the strongest kind of people there has yet been—the aristocratic communities such as Rome and Venice—understood freedom in exactly the same sense as I understand the word freedom: as something which one can have and not have, which one can want, which one can conquer..."¹⁵

I agree with Robert C. Solomon's¹⁶ warning that we shouldn't succumb to the temptation of taking Nietzsche's belligerent language too seriously and include him in the *typical warmonger mentality*¹⁷. To do so would be to miss the entire point: Nietzsche's is an inner, not an outer war – it is a war between the various inchoate power driven pseudo-personalities within human Self and for the sake of (in)dividual Self-edification. It is greatly different, or even opposed to, actual *army war*. And I ask those who would disagree to consider the following point: Nietzsche's war is a quest for (in)dividual specificity and there is no mass army or mass army war based upon individual specificity, but quite the contrary (the individual dissolves itself in the homogenous mass of the *unit – corp – country*). Nietzsche prefers such language, I think, in order to evoke the tension and

¹⁵ Nietzsche, Fr., *Twilight of the Idols*, (New York : Oxford University Press), 1998, pp. 64-65/Aph. 38.

¹⁶ Solomon, Robert, C. & Higgins, Kathleen, M. *What Nietzsche Really Said*, (New York: Schocken Books), 2000.

¹⁷ As for example Bertrand Russell does.

turmoil of this inner conflict that demands, ultimately, the same kind of contradictory characterial virtues as *outer war* does: courage, resoluteness, honesty, acceptance, empathy.

Now, aside from that, where does Nietzsche stand politically? Well, first of all, I think it is very ironical that he, being one of the fundamental political thinkers *for* the 20th century, was very skeptical about the capacity of politics in addressing the important issues of *(in)dividual Selfhood*. Now, with that being said, I think his attitude changes over time from some sort of *epistemic aristocratism* to sheer anarchism (though he would most certainly have resented such qualification). Aphorism 318 in *Human, All too Human* is relevant in the former, *aristocratic*, respect:

“Of the mastery of those with knowledge. -It is easy, ridiculously easy, to set up a model for electing a legislative body.

First, the honest and trustworthy people of a country, those of them who are also masters and experts in some field, would have to separate themselves out, by having a nose for and reciprocally acknowledging one another: from them, in turn, in a narrower vote, those who are the experts and knowledgeable people of the first rank in each individual area would have to select themselves, likewise by reciprocally acknowledging and guaranteeing one another. If the legislative body consists of them, then, finally, only the votes and judgments of the most specialized experts must decide each individual case, and the sense of honor of all the others must be large enough and have simply become a matter of decency, to leave the vote to the former alone: so that in the strictest sense the law would proceed from the understanding of those who understand the best.

At present, parties vote: and for every such vote there must be hundreds of people whose consciences are ashamed-those who have been badly taught or are incapable of judgment, those who repeat others' words or follow along or are carried away by passion.

Nothing degrades the dignity of a new law as much as the blush of dishonesty that adheres to it under the pressure of every party-vote. But, as I said, it is easy, ridiculously easy, to set up something like this: no power in the world is strong enough at present to bring about anything better-unless, that is, the belief in the supreme utility of science and of those with knowledge were finally to enlighten even the most malevolent and to be preferred to the now-reigning belief in numbers. Mindful of this future, let our watchword be: 'More respect for those with knowledge! And down with all parties!' ¹⁸

I think the passage is explicit enough no to require any further clarification. The only point I want to make in this respect is that it is, again, ironical that despite his explicit anti-Platonism, Nietzsche's political regime, at least at that phase of his thought, resembled Plato's precisely in its most fundamental aspect: *epistemic aristocratism*. And if so, it is precisely Nietzsche's arguments against Plato that could be adapted against this type of political view. One of the arguments could go as follows: provided that Nietzsche is right and the last two millennia or so of European history constitute nothing more than a long process of permeation of our entire worldview by the slave morality, it would be naive to think that this wouldn't take its toll on the epistemic world as well. Consequently, the so called *experts* Nietzsche is talking about, the members of this epistemic aristocracy to which political participation should allegedly be limited, would be in fact none other than the most accomplished representatives of the slave mentality, i.e. those that excelled at assimilating and promoting the *tschandala Weltanschauung*. This would be even worse than the current state of facts.

It is maybe such considerations that led later Nietzsche to a somewhat more *anarchist* position:

"On the New Idol. Somewhere still there are peoples and herds, but not where we live, my brothers: here there are states. State? What is that? Well then, lend me your ears

¹⁸ Nietzsche, Fr., *Human, All too Human*, CW4, pp. 121-122/Aph. 318.

now, for I shall say my words about the death of peoples. State is the name of the coldest of all cold monsters. It even lies coldly, and this lie crawls out of its mouth: 'I, the state, am the people.'

This is a lie! The ones who created the peoples were the creators, they hung a faith and a love over them, and thus they served life. The ones who set traps for the many and call them 'state' are annihilators, they hang a sword and a hundred cravings over them. Where there are still peoples the state is not understood, and it is hated as the evil eye and the sin against customs and rights.

This sign I give you: every people speaks its own tongue of good and evil – which the neighbor does not understand. It invented its own language through customs and rights. But the state lies in all the tongues of good and evil, and whatever it may tell you, it lies – and whatever it has, it has stolen. Everything about it is false; it bites with stolen teeth, this biting dog. Even its entrails are false. Language confusion of good and evil: this sign I give you as the sign of the state. Indeed, this sign signifies the will to death! Indeed, it beckons the preachers of death!

Far too many are born: the state was invented for the superfluous! Just look at how it lures them, the far-too-many! How it gulps and chews and ruminates them!

'On earth there is nothing greater than I: the ordaining finger of God am I' – thus roars the monster. And not only the long-eared and the shortsighted sink to their knees!

Oh, even to you, you great souls, it whispers its dark lies! Unfortunately, it detects the rich hearts who gladly squander themselves! Yes, it also detects you, you vanquishers of the old God! You grew weary in battle and now your weariness still serves the new idol! It wants to gather heroes and honorable men around itself, this new idol! Gladly it suns itself in the sunshine of your good consciences – the cold monster! It wants to give you everything, if you worship it, the new idol. Thus, it buys the shining of your virtue and the

look in your proud eyes. It wants to use you as bait for the far-too-many! Indeed, a hellish piece of work was thus invented, a death-horse clattering in the regalia of divine honors!

Indeed, a dying for the many was invented here, one that touts itself as living; truly, a hearty service to all preachers of death!

State I call it, where all are drinkers of poison, the good and the bad; state, where all lose themselves, the good and the bad; state, where the slow suicide of everyone is called – ‘life.’

Just look at these superfluous! They steal for themselves the works of the inventors and the treasures of the wise: education they call their thievery – and everything turns to sickness and hardship for them! Just look at these superfluous! They are always sick, they vomit their gall and call it the newspaper. They devour one another and are not even able to digest themselves. Just look at these superfluous! They acquire riches and yet they become poorer. They want power and first of all the crowbar of power, much money – these impotent, impoverished ones! Watch them scramble, these swift monkeys! They scramble all over each other and thus drag one another down into the mud and depths. They all want to get to the throne, it is their madness – as if happiness sat on the throne! Often mud sits on the throne – and often too the throne on mud. Mad all of them seem to me, and scrambling monkeys and overly aroused. Their idol smells foul to me, the cold monster: together they all smell foul to me, these idol worshipers.

My brothers, do you want to choke in the reek of their snouts and cravings? Smash the windows instead and leap into the open! Get out of the way of the bad smell! Go away from the idol worship of the superfluous! Get out of the way of the bad smell! Get away from the steam of these human sacrifices! Even now the earth stands open for great souls. Many seats are still empty for the lonesome and twosome, fanned by the fragrance of silent seas. An open life still stands open for great souls. Indeed, whoever possesses little is possessed all the less: praised be a small poverty! There, where the state ends,

only there begins the human being who is not superfluous; there begins the song of necessity, the unique and irreplaceable melody. There, where the state ends – look there, my brothers! Do you not see it, the rainbow and the bridges of the overman?”¹⁹

One way to reconcile the two positions would be to say that the former, aristocratic one, was for the human, while the latter, anarchist one, for the Overman. In order to clarify this point, we have to filter this passage through his main thesis in the *Will to Power*, namely that traditional (tschandala) European culture is essentially life-denying. In being life-denying it is also bound to ultimately undermine itself. Nihilism is not so much the cause, as the symptom of such self-undermining. However hurtful, such self-undermining is a beneficial event in that it brings about the breakdown of an irrecoverably crooked and distorted mode of existence (i.e. thinking, feeling, valuing, acting) along with all its individual representatives. This is not necessarily to be understood as a physical disappearance, but more like some sort of complete depersonalization on their part, leaving behind precisely those who were, or became, independent of such Weltanschauung (or *existential horizon* as Nietzsche calls it). However, everybody needs a Weltanschauung, but in the latter's case they have the capacity for (in)dividually generating their own Weltanschauung, or, in other words, their *perspective on existence*. As you might have guessed, these are the (specifically different) representatives of what Nietzsche calls the Overman: one who can create/choose and self-induce oneself one's own existential horizon, ability gained precisely through such process of self-edification which I have discussed in the earlier part of the paper. In nuce, according to my understanding of Nietzsche, only those who already *became themselves* can survive (as persons) the imminent self-dissolution of the European Weltanschauung. However, given that one's such Weltanschauung is the profound expression of one's actual (in)dividuality and one's (in)dividuality is dependent on one's specific character (and way of coping with it), such (in)dividual Weltanschauungs will also be mutually

¹⁹ Nietzsche, Fr., *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, (New York: Cambridge University Press), 2006, pp.34.

exclusive. In Nietzsche's vision of the future, each Overman will be *on its own*, that is in its own world: mutual contacts will not be necessarily impossible, but most probably avoided.²⁰ As such, Nietzsche's Overman is a profoundly (in)dividualistic notion – each Overman is unique, *a species in a world of its own*, this making any eventual notion of an *Overmen community* (be it social, political or racial) a sheer abuse and misinterpretation of Nietzsche's philosophy.

As mentioned earlier, for Nietzsche *Overmanhood* is neither inborn, nor collectively developed, but something (in)dividually, and possibly only provisionally, gained: it is something that one earns on one's own, difficultly and loses easily. This is precisely what sets Nietzsche apart from the anarchists of his time as they, on either side of the political spectrum, share an *a priori*, almost Cartesian, understanding of individuality; according to them one is born an individual, i.e. an unitary island of rational self-awareness and precisely therefore one is entitled to certain inalienable rights that usually societies and states tended to neglect or infringe upon. In Nietzsche's view, this is basically the same argument we can find with both the liberals and the socialists, that postulates the *aprioricity* of individual identity, thereby understood as *universal the-sameness* of all human beings, from which it derives the essential equality of all supposed individuals: no one may be treated differently as everybody is the same – the basic principle of the *herd mentality*.

Nietzsche on the other hand could be called an *a posteriori contingent individualist*. As we have seen, for him, (in)dividuality is, at least initially, just a *contingent motley bundle of semi-structured power driven tendencies* each seeking to assert itself over the others. However, depending both on the inborn resources of each of these *power drives* and on the general *outer circumstances*, in time, a relatively stable *inner* hierarchy of such drives crystalizes. This is what Nietzsche calls *character*, and consciousness, though still

²⁰I think Hermann Hesse's character Harry Haller from his 1927 short novel *Steppenwolf* could be taken as an approximate example in this respect.

important, is just a tiny fraction of it. Once crystalized, character is rather difficultly changed, at least consciously – this is not to mean that character doesn't change but only that if it does, it mostly does so not by virtue of direct conscious will but rather according to a *will of its own* resulting either from the inner balance of power among its various drives, or from contingent outer circumstances, or, most probably, from a combination of the two. As such, consciousness can still steer the tide of these inner drives, at least to some degree, precisely by choosing, as much as possible, the aforementioned contingent outer circumstances that feed one drive or another. Basically, this is what Self-education as self-discipline amounts to for Nietzsche. However, in order to achieve it, one must first come to know and accept the making of one's own character and one cannot do so if occupying one's entire existence with the strive for complying with a prefabricated generic model of individuality. This is what Nietzsche has to impute to all the major post-Illuminist ideologies of his age: nationalism, conservatism, liberalism, socialism, (classical) anarchism.

Conclusions

Now, to sum up, our discussion revolved mainly around Nietzsche's notion of character, thereupon focusing on his correlative moral and political view. Obviously, as any conceptual reconstruction, it involved some measure of personal rearrangement of his claims, but in so doing I have attempted, and hopefully succeeded, in remaining (critically) true to his spirit.

To that end, I have devised three sets of interlocked considerations, loosely organized along three axes: psychological, moral and political.

With the psychological considerations I have attempted to provide an account of his notion of character *per se*. I have set about from Nietzsche's particular, i.e. *aphoristic-riddish*, way of writing, claiming that we can find therein an expression of his specific understanding of selfhood: as the contingent product of two sets of circumstances – (i)

genealogical and (ii) *in-situ*, both of which remain largely outside the direct control of self-awareness and conscious will. *In nuce*, I think Nietzsche understands selfhood not as an atomic unit of rational self-awareness (as in the Cartesian and post-Cartesian tradition), but as a motley bundle of loosely-interlocked, mostly discordant, power driven vital forces and impetuses that are actualized depending on contingent *in-situ* (i.e. *outer*) circumstances. For the sake of concision I have called the former pseudo-personalities and the latter situations, basically claiming that each (type of) situation evokes a corresponding pseudo-personality that generates a particular *perspective* – the *great absenter* in this game is the traditional *immutable nucleus of self-awareness*, or, in other words, the ego. Its lack however, does not mean the impossibility of any (in)dividual selfhood – though initially lacking, one can be created by a process of, what I have called, Self-edification, involving the long term (in)dividual discovery and cultivation of one’s character. What this amounts to, in other words, is the creation of a network between the aforementioned pseudo-personalities precisely through the personal *trial and error* exploration of a wide variety of situations. Nonetheless, this involves, (i) the discovery, acceptance and potentiation of one’s specific characterial configuration, mostly irrespective of common preconceptions, be them moral, epistemic or esthetic and (ii) their long term creative cultivation (through human interaction, literary and artistic creation and so on). With some notable exceptions, both these aspects mostly lack, and have actually always lacked, in the European paideic and cultural model, fact leading to the mass creation of impersonal individuals and the imminent breakdown of European culture. The exploration of the causes behind this takes us to the next section of the paper.

Acknowledgedly, according to Nietzsche, the most direct and hurtful expression of the aforementioned individual homogenization is the so called *slave morality*, having behind a particular kind of character and power psychology: the *tschandala* (the ancient Indian name for the lowest caste). Synthetically, the *tschandala*, designates those lacking

individual resources, or, in more lay terms, *personality*. As such, despite its subsequent ideological appropriation and abuse, the term was used by Nietzsche not so much as an apriori (racial) label, but rather more harmlessly, namely as referring to the individual unpreoccupied with its own selfhood-specificity, but rather with *fitting in*, i.e. being *commonly accepted*. Based upon my reading of several (partially quoted) corresponding passages, I have determined five generic (interlocked) features, Nietzsche ascribes to slave morality (and tschandala psychology): (i) it is *self-denying*, i.e. derived from lack of self-respect; (ii) *resentful*, i.e. stingily spiteful and envious; (iii) *self-dissimulative* i.e. it purports, both to others and itself, to be something other than it is: *objective* morality instead of *will to power* (as it resents master morality for being); (iv) *gregarious*, i.e. undiscerningly favoring the common over the specific with respect to both human beings and culture; and (v) *exocentrically comparative* i.e. the point of reference of its comparisons (and judgments) is the others (while master morality being *endocentrically comparative* i.e. having as comparative and judicative point of reference the Self).

As such, according to Nietzsche, despite its lack of individual resources, the tschandala psychology is still will to power, only that, given its *personal* precariousness, it resorts to a (self-)dissimulative and gregarious strategy in this respect: it develops a common model of humanity, i.e. of *what it means to be human*, which then it imposes, or rather *institutes*, upon all individuals. The widest cultural expression of this project is the doctrine of the *aprioricity of human personhood* and the freedom of the Will, in other words, that we are all born with the same structure of personality that unmediately manifests itself as freedom in our apparent ability to choose: we are all born as persons, in the same way, and, essentially, there is nothing we have to do, *no particular choices we have to make*, in order be, or remain, so. Obviously, what the general acceptance of this model precludes is precisely specific Self-cultivation. According to Nietzsche, this is a subjacent dogma of all modern political ideologies (including anarchism), which takes us to the next section of the paper.

In the third section of the paper I have tried to develop a political argument for the previous claims. In other words, I have attempted to provide a Nietzschean interpretation of the major political ideologies of the modern age as alternative avatars of the same homogenization process based upon the interlocked *dogmas* of the (i) apriority of human personhood and (ii) the freedom of the Will. In so doing, I have set about from offering an account of Nietzsche's criticism of the mercantile worldview: *Money is quantitative and therefore excessive preoccupation therewith quantitatively homogenizes any form of qualitative (in)dividual specificity: freedom, exclusively understood as acquisitional liberty does neither reflect, nor promote (in)dividual authenticity (given that as money, everything and everyone is the same)*. Moreover, the act of buying does neither motivate, nor educate or discharge the creative power of (in)dividuality. As such, *aprioricizing* individuality as (i) rational consciousness and (ii) ontological freedom of the will and then institutionalizing it as (iii) acquisitive option is about the surest way to lose it. And these assumptions constitute, in one way or another, the reference system of all (post-)modern political ideologies, both favorable and opposed to the mercantile worldview. The consequences are clear enough not to require any further clarification.

Nietzsche's opposed project is the Overman, which, despite its ideological appropriation and abuse, is by no means an a priori (racial) label, but a designation for the preoccupation with and achievement of (in)dividual specificity through Self-curiosity, - experimentation, - discipline and cultivation (through both cultural and direct inter-individual interaction) as opposed to homogenizing mass-institutional education and existence. This takes Nietzsche's later view close to post-modern anarchism, maybe closer than even he would have wanted to.

What about Nietzsche's *mistakes*? Well though there is a certain amount of truth to the accusations regarding his misogyny and anti-Semitism, I do not think they form an inextricable part of his thought, but, au contraire, they can be extricated precisely on the basis of his general principles of thought, i.e. by *further Nietzscheanizing Nietzsche*.

Despite his radicalism, he most certainly fell prey to some of the common preconceptions of his time and place, but who doesn't? One's incapacity of thinking completely beyond one's existential horizon is, after all, one of his central themes. On the other hand, disregarding and ignoring Nietzsche on such grounds, would mean to deprive ourselves of a most profound and original thought-tool which, among other things, could prove useful precisely in training us to avoid such *uncritical, commonplace truths* to which he himself, though trivially, still unfortunately, succumbed. ...*The errors of great men are venerable because they are more fruitful than the truths of little men...*²¹.

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