

Boudot, Pierre. "La méthode dia-critique: une méthode de lecture de Zarathoustra." *Nietzsche aujourd'hui* (2 vols.). Pierre Boudot et. alia. Publications du centre culturel de Cérisy-a-Salle (Paris: UGE, 1973), vol. 1, pp. 371-383. Translated by Taylor Adkins [9/07].

At each moment of his thought, Nietzsche reactivates the reasons why he is Nietzsche, and pushes a little further, a little farther away, the fundamental concepts of his thought, while varying (almost without his knowledge) the contents in combination with the problems that occupy them. The basic Nietzschean concepts do not have the same direction according to whether one makes use of them to interpret *The Birth of Tragedy* or *Human, All Too Human* or to explain their specific sense. Thus any interrogation on Nietzsche must see whether these are concepts that vary by successive implicit definitions or if they alternate when words, apparently identical as for their phonemes, push in front of them a reality which deviates differently because it is transformed from the inside by the basic themes that Nietzsche himself proposes. If the basic concepts vary, it is in order to commit a series of misunderstandings which employ them according to the innovation of the automatically corresponding problem and clearly to the innovation of words which however would be pronounced and heard in the same way: eternal return, overman, nihilism, revaluation of values, will to power.

If, on the contrary, something in the concepts does not vary, it is because they have a methodological dimension preliminary to the problem, and because it is necessary to disentangle the concepts in order to know how this dimension radically modifies the levels of reality interconnected in the concepts. Nietzsche does not dialectize these contents of reality because, to him at least, it is clear that the term "morals," for example, does not have the same sense, nor the same contents, nor the same range, nor the same problems, according to whether he speaks about it in connection with the Greeks, of the Christians, or from the point of view of the overman. The methodological structure of the fundamental Nietzschean concepts makes it possible to elucidate the difficulties traditionally analyzed by dialectical interrogation.

The first of these difficulties consists in seeing that the basic concepts are themselves double: on the one hand, they have a conceptual weight which gives them a mobility of interpretations and senses; on the other hand, they have a methodological rigor that gives them a structural stability. Consequently, on the one hand, a dynamic capability to invent contents of reality, on the other hand an authority capable of choosing or creating these relations, organizing the modalities of interior relations to these contents, enabling one to control evolution and to direct the subversion of a totality. The values of which Nietzsche speaks are indeed not limited to the moral field. They are also logical, semantic, scientific, metaphysical, historical, anthropological, and aesthetic.

However, Nietzsche is not suicidal and he knows that a similar upheaval will come about — being given the simultaneity of subversive movements — if the possibility of finality were not preserved. It is thus with the methodological dimension of the basic concepts that he asks to preserve this possibility. "How badly we reason in domains where we are not at home, however well we may be accustomed to reasoning as men of science!" (*Human All Too Human II: The Wander and His Shadow*, 277). This effort remains naturally ambiguous, because the possibility of finality is preserved and not the possibility of a single direction which would restore eschatology or a content by which determinism would reject the effort of subversion. From this point of view, Nietzsche's nihilism is the moment of passage, the moment when semantic reality changes contents, modifies its internal levels, and suspends the previous organization of the concept.

The revaluation of values, *Umwertung*, forces methodical readjustment to deviate between the apparently similar conceptual exterior and the signs of a new reality radically different from the preceding one. The eternal return finds an act and the possible ones that result from this act; the return maintains the possibility of a reorganization of reality. The will to power does not insist upon force, but on the possible as such and on the movement lending a structural becoming to this possible (*Will to Power*). As for the overman, it is not more “hierarchical” than the will to power, nor is it the will to tyranny. It is rather beyond, awaiting the other side of words which the movement of reorganization will have completed, awaiting the moment when, eternally, the one who thinks must re-encounter the words that he says. The eternal return, omnipresent, affirms the constancy of a relation between the thinker and language.

Nietzsche does not employ the diacritical word, but we do not think that he would have repudiated that which, in the foreword of *Daybreak*, affirms the union of faith and knowledge of which “the underground man... , the man who bores, digs and corrodes” is capable. He would have accepted that one opposes a *dia-crisis* to the Platonic *dia-noia*, i.e. the addition of the movements of transformation and recreation and of the movements of choice and decision. He would have accepted diacritics in order to reorganize the relations without the negation of a dialectical contradiction that rejects movement by hypostasizing knowledge into contemplation. Diacritics, in this sense, is set apart from the dialectical as well as the historical. What is in question is the judgment that the thinker brings to the world and to things, the certainty that nothing is magical, that behavior has no *raison d'être* and is consequently irrationally reasonable, that creation is unhindered, that the word no longer has a function of taming matter, that history no longer has a function of dominating matter, that history no longer has a function of justifying the fight between spirit and reality, that the true time of man is in front of him, is established simultaneously in a transformed concrete reality, in a semantic reality reorganized in words, in an eccentric human reality freed from dualistic crutches. We think that Nietzsche names all of this “the instinct of rhythm which embraces worlds of forms.” There is thus on the one hand what is stable and contestable on the semantic level, and on the other hand what escapes with the experience and with the immediate comprehension and which is a change of reality inside words, change based on a temporality beyond time. *In the interval* between the becoming not yet actualized and the moment when reorganized reality will be identical to time, *the presence* of the eternal return affirms itself. Thus to think it “sets one creed and absurdity against the other” (*Daybreak*); they oppose each other like the spoken word opposes itself to its semantic significance, like becoming opposes itself in the movement which makes it be time, like the overman opposes man by blaming his confidence in reason.

Nietzsche’s scepticism against the reality of progress implies a methodological requirement founded on the propaedeutic requirement of analysis, evaluation and destruction. To control becoming on the level of the thought which foresees and the level of the word which fixes reality through anticipation, is what the method must make possible and identical to this project and to the inspiration which presides over “the advent of the things.” Founding the dispute of becoming by the methodological presence of the eternal return makes it possible for the conceptual container to accommodate contents of a changed reality. The diacritical thought has thus as its function to deal with the originally assumed critical function through the interior reality of the concepts, to direct the separation of structural levels, and to clarify the choice governing the infrastructural reorganization of these levels. But it also has a function of *not determining* anything, of destroying prejudices, including those which could attach themselves to its methodological responsibility. Diacritics introduces irony into the movement and the irony itself has a systematic purpose to preserve the possibility of a double freedom: that of reality and that of language.

It is in this way that certain antinomies should be understood, certain antitheses which could let one suppose that Nietzsche becomes again in spite of himself the thinker of history, for example, of the opposition between the rabble and the overman, between the immediate and the distant, between life and death, etc. These discrepancies are only explanatory processes, not crude assertions or dialectical presuppositions. "The evidence, he writes, is against the historian," but if it is to the historical intelligence of men to which he however makes an appeal by channeling their attention to the evidence related to contradictions, he wants to attract them to the grace of the antagonistic terms of this evidence, by the possibility that it offers them the chance of thinking against its immediate and historical data. The diacritical thought is consequently a nihilist thought whose finality is all the more creative as this nihilism is not and does not want to be the cause of itself. It is also in this sense that the "clinical" character of Nietzsche's thought justifies the apprehension of the diacritical method in the interior of nihilism. To be nihilist is to take part methodically in the augmentation of the forces and movements making it possible for the world to create itself. To create itself does not mean "to repeat itself," no more than it means living without rules or values. A philosophy that repeats itself is nothing but a religion, with an ensemble of rituals, a liturgy of the word, an ear, and even a theophany of language. It is not that which produces itself. Over and against the millennia of imitation, it is necessary to establish what was lacking. It does not matter which way.

One could indeed object that we do not fashion the rather beautiful place for the Nietzsche of irrationalism, that we ignore the bond between the ruins and the breaker of tables, that we dam up "revolutionary" spontaneity, etc. None of these reproaches or arguments concern us. Irrationalism has nothing to do with the absence of rationality, the ruins do not need to be resuscitated since the adequate method is enough to show that they are identical to the appearances to which we give the names of culture or civilization; revolutionary spontaneity is unjustifiable if it is based on the individual awakening of frustrations or on the dream of a collective Eros. The diacritical method finds a finality that is not finalist, a reasoning bound to the uncertainty of the thinker and not to the certainty of the result. It acts, as Nietzsche writes in *Daybreak*, "not to represent the problem under the color of the Gordian knot or the egg of Colomb;" it therefore does not claim to overcome a ritualistic obstacle or to identify a simple answer to the complexity of a problem.

The peremptory character of Nietzsche's assertions in *Zarathustra* thus does not only illustrate the idea that it is not any more a question of seeking the "Truth" or "Wisdom," but it also shows that Nietzsche does not yet know the real data of the problem with which he wishes to engage. Valéry wrote in this connection: "I did not conceive that this powerful and vast spirit would ever finished with the unverifiable." But Valéry, who precisely employs the word "unverifiable," did not understand that this is about Nietzsche's problem. Logical discourses and coherent, organized books or aphorisms seem to us to be only propaedeutic stages in the development of Nietzsche's fundamental intuition. These are landmarks that secure themselves before the pre-semantic and pre-real universe for which it is necessary to suggest the first term of the future genealogy without forcing it under the materials which are ours and that have proved their inefficiency, although we are obliged to ourselves to account for these elements.

Diacritical nihilism opposes itself to nothingness as well as to perfection, and also to the absence of the unsurpassable. Myths, images, metaphors, are so many tricks to suspend authoritative and causal logical activity. It is like a pick-pocket who raises his nose at the victim to enhance the value of his treasure or—if he has a sense of humor—to throw it down at his victim's feet! But the treasure, here, consists in the bet that, if the world fails to fall into silence, a new and original movement will be essential, able to

overturn appearances or structures and to treat them like tools, means for a natural end; this is a world whose present will not depend on becoming and will not be judged according to the past. The silence and death of the world in which we live are thus necessary for the creative passion of the one which waits. Diacritical rigor brings them to light. There is in Nietzsche a Pascal without God and eternity.

It is therefore undoubtedly not a paradox as large as one could believe to affirm that Nietzsche's constructive or aphoristic discourse basically has a methodological range and a structure of method. Between the word that tries to convince and the synthesis of the assembled formula, a distance affirms itself between what one is saying and what it will be necessary to affirm when the masses of culture browse, as through so many obstacles, the remarks which, once understood or assimilated, will transform its nature radically and will make it ready to decipher that other discourse, that which it is still necessary to dissimulate behind a metaphor: that of Zarathustra. Everything converges towards Zarathustra or everything starts from him. "One day, one will create pulpits to explain Zarathustra." Nietzsche's assertion is clear. To explain, that means here to connect to presupposed methodologies which have governed the remainder of the work and to apply a type of reading that will take account of the entire work in order to write its logical discourse, in the same way that the world to come will take account of the ruined former world to elaborate new structures without resemblance. In Zarathustra, "all the opposites establish themselves to form a new unit." What I have appealed to elsewhere as Nietzsche's ontology is comprehensible here if one remembers that we said that Nietzsche challenges our universe as being that of appearances or hallucinations and that it awaits the universe announced by Zarathustra as a dimension-to-be, of the absence of fluctuations in the provisional determinism of becoming whose great midday is the image, a reality so solid that it can be the container of all the reorganizations and reinforcements making it possible to work out a cosmology of freedom apart from any vertigo, any magic or any recourse to the creative support of God. Through the playful activity of the world, grace is impossible in a cosmology of liberty to which it is neither free, nor artificial, nor arbitrary.

The role of the diacritical method, such as one can apply it, thus consists in writing the logical discourse that Zarathustra has not wanted to write. However, he has given us the alphabet for the foundations of decryption and for those of the new writing. Zarathustra is in the center of the perspectives of which Nietzsche speaks; each work is at the same time a judgment or a totality of judgments to be analyzed and a trace to be followed in a multiplicity of problems in which it is necessary to understand what they are and how they form themselves in us. The research plans are thus already here enumerated. To study the grounds of Nietzsche's judgments, to study the levels of their expressions, to connect the external causes to their internal alphabets, to study the origin of their trace, to try to seize their trajectory at one stroke, to follow this trace while being delivered methodically to the lapse of memory of what has previously assigned the studied judgments, to follow oneself in the process of change engaged since we first affirmed the call of adventure, to connect what one discovers of oneself and what one discovers of reality, to establish correspondences, to return afterwards to our first judgments in order to abolish them, to apprehend at one stroke one's own becoming and that which is from now on behind oneself, such are the first requirements, such are the primary goals.

These are bound to the research of interior processes which will make it possible for man to be an intelligent actor of the re-creation of the world. Without innocence, we will always only see a devil in the mirror when we look at ourselves. The diacritical method, which can seem strict because its propaedeutic dimension always involves the requirement of hermeneutics, is actually accompanied by

an individual asceticism. “Another ideal runs in front of our steps..., the ideal of a spirit which plays naively... with all that is brought up to the point of the sacred, the good, the intangible and divine” (*The Gay Science*). Nietzsche proposes here an incomparable balance between intelligence and sensibility. The great midday is the center of this balance. It is not moreover an asceticism of deprivations of which we speak. Otherwise, Nietzsche would be read from a Stoic point of view, and this would be an error. Asceticism acts contrary to what there is in the heroic, in which all knowledge is pushed to the limit. Asceticism is at the heart of immoralist existence. To abolish the sin in which it comprises a judgment on the act, is to abolish the Christian dialectic of deprivation and the middle-class mechanism of inhibition. To act in and on the infrastructure of our personality requires, on the other hand, an effort of elucidation much more fertile than what occurs through us if, by the same occasion, we discover a correspondence between our infrastructures and the infrastructures of the worlds and the discourses which the diacritical method puts in order through the movement or movements that it discovers. We do not study Nietzsche any more thoroughly, but we arrive little by little at being simultaneously the creator and the theorist who he was in Zarathustra. Identical to creation and the divergent movements that the creative force can only gather along with the pedantry alleviated in our irony with regard to ourselves, we learn how to keep or organize the reflexive distance without which it is impossible to know.

Practically now, the program remains to be seen which this diacritic method can implement, “to put together for the first time the question of why and of how “(*Ecce Homo*). That could comprise three stages:

–To note first of all what Nietzsche to some extent isolated from what he proposes cannot be Nietzsche without motives. To suppose that these motives are not due only to their specificity, but to the whole of the reactions which they had against their time and the culture related to our civilization. To explain consequently the logical presence of Nietzsche in history, without ever forgetting that this discourse is a rupture, that the madness of Nietzsche is the heritage of our culture and the discourse of his century. To observe aesthetic, anthropological, religious, moral, sociocultural, metaphysical, scientific, theological, and finally epistemological spaces. To see Nietzsche’s time under each one of these prospects through his relations with authors or the problems which enabled him to approach them.

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This is the discussion following Pierre Boudot's essay in the Nietzsche aujourd'hui volume translated by Taylor Adkins [9/28/07].

Robert Sasso: I am surprised to hear you presenting your lecture program without many references, some allusive, to works already devoted to readings of Nietzsche, his relations with other authors, the civilization of his time, for example, those of Andler or, more recently, of Morel. It is certainly not about ignorance, but a setting between brackets of which I would like to understand. In addition, when you propose a collective task, extremely vast moreover, how do you conceive the execution of it?

Pierre Boudot: It is quite obvious that I do not ignore the importance of the work of Andler and Morel, nor that of many other books written on Nietzsche. But to each its own character! Some clarify obscurity by requiring the thought of others to be used as a springboard or method. They do the necessary work of historians. Still others—including myself—seek to advance all alone. I know the work of others, but your problem addressing my communication relates to that of the sources which would have influenced my work or inflected my thought. This is not the place to discuss it. I however can specify that I never forgot a meeting that I had with Bataille in 1961, a few months before his death. I had spoken to him about the impossibility of reflecting on Nietzsche without including his will to create silence and death. Bataille had agreed with me. With this double illumination, it seems to me that the works that have accumulated have led us to a point where we will no longer be able to write on Nietzsche except according to default options already rejected by him. Thus now we must use what was known so as to go beyond, to try to know finally what Nietzsche's logical discourse is to the extent that—you will grant me this much—*Zarathustra*, which is his fundamental book, has not explained what it wanted to say. To clear the ground for thematizing Zarathustra's logical discourse is a task that includes part of a research whose program appears too vast to you: on Nietzsche's logical madness in relation to our heritage, on the thematization of all his books (edited or aphoristic), on metaphor (in the sense already brilliantly engaged by Sarah Kofman), etc I have the impression that, compared to Nietzsche, we remain prisoners of propaedeutics, especially when we try to explain his work in its totality, and I believe that we understand better if we wondered why are we only at this stage of propaedeutics.

Norman Palma: You developed, starting from Nietzsche, a whole negative ontology which seems important to me on several points. First of all, Nietzsche does not cancel out the opposition of contraries; he tends rather to accentuate them. Then, you insisted on Nietzsche's perspectivism; I would not be completely in agreement on your identification of nihilism with the determined negation of the Hegelian type. But what is essential is that you had seen that the Nietzschean perspective cannot be understood if one does not take account of the reason why Nietzsche criticized the universe of his time. Nietzsche bids us to recreate the world, to build a new house, but the question is about knowing whether this house is repressive and uncomfortable or, on the contrary, comfortable and not repressive.

Pierre Boudot: No one can have that knowledge.

Norman Palma: Of course. Then it is absolutely clear: it is a question of restructuring domination. Contrary to Marx, who tends to the suppression of the dialectic, Nietzsche goes toward stressing the dialectic.

Pierre Boudot: I was perhaps badly understood. Jean-Noël Vuarnet very clearly showed us that in fact there are no oppositions end to end, even if the words are doubles. For my part, I believed to have said that, when Nietzsche still uses antinomies, it is not a question of what you call a stressing of the dialectic, but of explanatory processes from which, in my sense, the antithetic value of the terms, as a value, disappears. Moreover, I did not make a Hegelian reading of Nietzsche.

Norman Palma: Insofar as you make nihilism the force of the negative, it is almost a negative ontology that you develop from your reading of Nietzsche.

Pierre Boudot: I accept “negative ontology” insofar as Nietzsche’s manner of recreating the world according to the eternal return supposes a negativity of becoming.

Maurice de Gandillac: Going beyond the dialectic is visible in a title like *Jenseits von Gut und Bösen*, which is to say: “Beyond the Good and the Evil,” understood as abstract entities. *Gut* and *Böse* are adjectives in the nominative here: “Beyond good and evil,” i.e. of two concrete qualifications. This “beyond” is neither a Böhmanian *Ungrund*, before the separation of two fires—that which lights and that which burns,—the lost paradise of an original innocence, nor a Hegelian (or Marxist) synthesis founded on the work of the negative. It is a position completely specific to Nietzsche and with which Boudot tries to conduct an attack by one of the possible ways of approach, but as much as we have an interest, in spite of the charges of historicism which one will make of us, to seize Nietzsche in his time—and Vivien was not wrong to evoke a Baudelairian modernity and even the fate of the bacteria of the “good Europeans” of the 20th century,—I believe it is dangerous to want to bring our problem back to a permanent confrontation either with Marx, or with Freud because, besides having different languages, they also propose different fundamental problems and goals.

Norman Palma: It is however essential to understand why Nietzsche criticizes the bourgeois universe.

Maurice de Gandillac: He never employs this word in its Marxist sense.

Norman Palma: No, but he speaks about merchants. Why does he criticize this universe in which the merchants have seized power, and which perspective does he propose to destroy it?

Maurice de Gandillac: You will find the criticism of the merchants in all the moralists since Antiquity. At least since Aristotle, who hardly understood the role of big business in the economy of his time, the contempt of the “chrematistic” became a commonplace. But he is not a critic of capitalism!

Pierre Boudot: Indeed, Nietzsche is not located in the field of production or of a merchant economy and, more than Marx, it is Flaubert with whom he would join because of his aversion to stupidity and hideousness.

Norman Palma: In the Prologue of *Zarathustra*, he speaks about a universe of slaves who seize power, and who will create the universe of the last man. Nietzsche wants to accentuate the opposition between master and slave.

Pierre Boudot: It is very contestable. In *Übermensch*, *über-* corresponds rather to *trans-* than to *super-*.

André Flécheux: My question addresses the relation between the title of your monographs and the style in which you have presented. On the one hand you maintain the concept of a program and, on the other hand, you propose the organization of a collective work that preserves for the university its traditional role.

Pierre Boudot: It can be done at the university or elsewhere.

André Flécheux: Nevertheless the problem is about the university and that, on this point, Nietzsche expressed himself in 1872 very well. I ask myself to what extent do you not fall under an accusation that Nietzsche carries himself contrary to a certain style. Since you spoke about *Zarathustra* as the text to decipher, and in which finally would be the secret to an enigma that we still have in front of us, how do you interpret, at the end of *The Gay Science* (§ 342), the title of that aphorism on the “tragedy” that *begins*? Nietzsche does not say that it only “recommences,” which would return us to the perspective of *The Birth of Tragedy*, i.e. to a political function of the spectacle, which was, to an age where the classical Greek city, hardly constituted, threatening to explode again,—to maintain a communal bond, a morality, an aesthetic sublimation. When you say that we should read Nietzsche from the point of view of a program which would reveal levels of truth, I wonder whether you do not cancel the explosive side of Nietzsche, if you do not present it as too easily integrated in a culture of the university type, where there would be an over-language, a meta-language, whereas its major force coincides with an aristocratic culture where one will not communicate perhaps any more with others, with all the others. And there, I return you to the fragment (1) of Heraclitus on the *logos*; finally the political game that the Platonic *logos* plays has nothing to do with the *logos* of Heraclitus, irrational to the others and perfectly rational to himself. Perhaps it is necessary to recognize a whole space of Nietzschean discourse that is about the plot, the secret, an internal reason, and a space of the outside which, it seems to me, would be equivalent to nihilism. It is thus unrealistic to seek to reconstitute a Church, to make the university a place where the Nietzscheans would be the Kantians or Hegelians of the 20th century!

Pierre Boudot: Nietzsche wrote that, in his work, *Zarathustra* holds a place separately, and that “one day, we will create pulpits to explain it.” It is necessary insofar as *Zarathustra*’s logical discourse is not yet written, but there Nietzsche helps us to admit it...

André Flécheux: The word “logical” obstructs me...

Pierre Boudot: I believe in the capacity of thinking that there is rationality in and behind and beyond Nietzsche’s irrationalism, and I act on Nietzsche’s authority himself to take an interest in *Zarathustra*, without any chronology, as the center of all the perspectives that it has opened.

Of course it is not a question of constituting a troop of Nietzschean terrorists. Moreover ‘Nietzschean’ and ‘Nietzscheism’ are two meaningless words that I never employ. Why, moreover, challenge the university as my place of research? Our critical possibility gives us the tools of language as well as the means of possibly going beyond the institution. It is not a question “of recovering” Nietzsche—that is a term for ragmen rather than philosophers—and I concede to you readily that it is not a question of building an exclusively logical corpus. Nietzsche’s logic also consists in destroying the *logos*, but it is necessary to know how it reaches that point, because at this time something again becomes possible

which I have called the advent of things. There is a movement of the world, a freedom of the world, a cosmology of freedom also...

André Flécheux: These are words that Nietzsche has crossed out.

Pierre Boudot: How are you so sure?

André Flécheux: The “world”, do you believe that for Nietzsche this exists in the metaphysical sense?

Pierre Boudot: “Like a golden apple, thus the world offers itself to me”...

André Flécheux: This is all a problem of the relation between the poetic text and the critical reading.

Pierre Boudot: The poetic text clarifies the positivity of nihilism, its creative dynamic; it helps to avoid a suicidal misinterpretation for our thought and our civilization. I am more conscious than anyone of Nietzsche’s prophecy and of his apocalyptic perspective, and if I sometimes agree with this perspective, I do not want to die under the ruins of the temple; my instinct of self-preservation is stronger...

André Flécheux: It is a perfectly Christian language!

Pierre Boudot: It is a perfectly human language! I do not ask anyone to console me. I simply ask for the god of the apocalypse to let me live behind it and in front of it insofar as it is possible, since this god is no longer transcendent and since this occurs on our level.

André Flécheux: The Nietzschean form of the apocalypse is anesthesia...

Pierre Boudot: No, it is discovering the logic of hallucination in a world of appearances, without feeling dead or committing suicide, allowing the unthinkable to emerge.

Maurice de Gandillac: Does Flécheux eliminate completely and by principle, like a poetic trap, formulae that are consistent from the beginning to the end of Zarathustra? The Sun has sense only because there are men and animals to receive its gift; similarly, the security which you reject as necessarily Tertullianesque (I do not simply say ‘Christian,’ because Tertullian was almost a heretic), do you deny that he makes visible, in the form of a tenderizing peace, in the last sentences, with the doves, the lion, the tears, the great midday? Admittedly we do not know what this apocalypse is. Pautrat said it very well and others too; something is awaited, perhaps impossible, not the same as Utopia, because the true Utopia always projects a possible reality to come, that is nevertheless a lived or present reality and, in a certain way, a reality of communication, a “being-with” like that of the oarsmen of the raft of the Jellyfish, about which Deleuze spoke earlier. But I agree that the poetic imagery remains rather conventional here, as are (moreover) the melodies of Nietzsche the musician.

Andre Flecheux: I understand well and I agree, but I wonder then, in your point of view, which relation you see between lived experience, poetic language, and thought. Insofar as Nietzsche’s thought is a thought which sometimes bursts into madness, this thought carries over into the relation between lived experience and poetry; lived experience is included in an anthropological diagram that does not have the same dimension of power as the thought which hangs over it.

Maurice de Gandillac: Undoubtedly, but one does not therefore have to dismiss it itself as an experience and as an unreasonable demand.

Jakob Böhme (1575-1624) was a German mystic [Tr. Note].

Groundlessness [Tr. Note].

Of or pertaining to money, from the Greek *khréma*, meaning riches or possessions [Tr. Note].

Boudot, Pierre. *L'ontologie de Nietzsche*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1971. 5-9. Original Translation by Taylor Adkins.

I like the total renewal of Nietzsche's thought in each one of his books. Its creative requirement moves in a counter-current, but I consider it able to release to our time the individual sources of genius in the environment of humanity. If our society does not understand that, electronic machines will dictate the laws of writing to us before the end of the century. One who reads Nietzsche does not have to write about all his life in the same book. The freedom that this allows is stronger than its deficits. We are victims of dogmas, of doctrines, even of ideologies which impose an *alleged* evolution in its cumbersome immobility. On the other hand, those who understand the lesson of Nietzsche will not be "Nietzschean"; instead each of their creative acts will have to be considered different in kind from the preceding one. The painful alchemy of these disavowals forces us into silence, modifies our remarks or retains it without solidifying it, elaborating a glance which hates that which it skims over, which is from another age, not of a new time.

To hold creation in one hand and death in the other in truth is not simple. Nietzsche, so near to Heraclitus and the Parmenidian One, also had the vocation of an encyclopedist. German, he wanted to be Polish, nourished Greek culture, extolled Latinity, practiced a meticulous philology that sliced into the vastness of metaphysics, identified his thought with a synthesis, did not want to give up the analytical inventory, sought the simultaneous achievement of thought and action, declared himself a historian, and concerned creation with the destruction inherent in its nature. It was impulsive, but it gives us the inclination to grant this violence to traditional form. It invites us to a festival of the intellect, to a pleasure of the genius which leaves behind any trace of bitterness or trouble because its love is too vast. It has entrusted a new language to ontology and grace to which it proposes a method making it possible not to yield to the whims of fashion. He is the only thinker of our time capable of simultaneously untying interior and exterior alienations. He is, in my view, the only one not to render man captive of his fight against any slavery. He helps us detest the resentment of such processes which, after having disappeared, lack any complacency in the effort which overcame it or in the way in which one will speak about it.

In the midst of all that: Zarathoustra: fascinator, irritator and liberator. If I had a reproach to make to him, it would be that I have enjoyed too passionately what he believed was necessary to separate. If I had to summarize to myself I would say that his best lesson is in the voluntary art which lacks its own happiness. The glare of this failure reveals the range of it: being given the world to which he addressed himself, he did not want to succeed because it would have been the end of creative freedom that he wanted to rescue from every one of us. Its victory would have forever overwhelmed us. But it has shown the way. One should simply read the first page of the Prologue of *Zarathoustra*. The Sun is stronger than the sea, fire is victorious over water which is not its opposite but a horizon, a material bridge making it possible for the thought to disappear without destroying itself. What the light became at night, Zarathoustra was to men. When it goes from itself towards them, the Sun declines while the light remains. Where this spark appears in the middle of the crowd, it is Zarathoustra, who is also the first to vanish into darkness. The book thus opens on an ontological wager based on the freedom of men and on a trick of the light triumphing over the night which radiates around it. This trick is what I call hope.

From all sides, with men of all conditions, one feels today an immense aspiration to express negatively: we want to survive, sometimes positively: we want to live. The extreme misfortunes that struck our

civilization, our culture and the depths of our nature since the beginning of this century have modified our relation to the world. We adults, and with us on every land most of the youth, are not certain that there is still a "world." The structures of everyday life do not allow more to our action or to the judgment which we relate to it in order to recognize ourselves in them. They are compromised too much by the centuries and the generations which forged the impossibilities of being happy. We are exhausted from making an inventory of negative morals, of feeling our back against the wall, not to be bound to the positivity of the human, to what in the action has raised itself to the rule, to what in the rule has allowed chance to emerge. We are exhausted to think in the same way apart from the assumption of a planetary war, which we are likely to die from without having known happiness. Therefore Nietzsche's reflection on creation, in spite of its ambiguity and because of its dead ends, appears resolute to me today. I wanted, in this book, to show his single character without dissimulating what it sometimes has of the arbitrary, without hiding what I did not know how to bypass. Nietzsche is, with Marx and Freud, one of the three thinkers whose work is particularly necessary for us. On the one hand, it clarifies some of our needs and, on the other hand, it enlightens us on the connected risks to our effort. Better than any other he shows that in human thought there are mixed to the point of appearing identical good and evil, life and death, creation and destruction, synthesis and analysis, love and hatred.

The method that I have called diacritical^[1] enabled me to divide certain elements of this thought without separating them. Left to the creation to which Zarathoustra invites us, I walked on his road and noted the simultaneity of work performed and of the work to be made, of the judgment and the interrogation. I do not believe to have created anything that logically expresses the term of this reflection by seeing in it an encounter with death that both challenged and desired it. It is from this point of view that by studying the need to destroy the unnecessary elements, I saw that this effort ends up destroying the essential: man. Along the path on which I discovered the exciting absolutization of this action, I also discovered with sorrow that darkness has its own radiation. My method in addition allowed me to highlight the apparent difficulties by which one writes on Nietzsche. This writing must constantly avoid rolling up its thought around his, and it must take care not to be choked by it. So that if I separated without dividing what is basically dependent on Nietzsche, I would have to include it to link my concern with his, while separating them at the same time. This makes explicit, during the course of reasoning, the passage from hermeneutics to diacritics and vice versa.

To work out my reflection I gained a great deal of support from Georges Bataille during a conversation that I had with him a little time before his death. I spoke to him about my astonishment in the face of the rise of the totality of destruction in desired creation. He approved and answered to me in a voice filled with the most extreme distress and combined with the highest serenity: "If we are right, it is foreboding." Nietzsche had haunted Georges Bataille, and yet he had analyzed him. He lived his thought in his own way and remained himself throughout this variation. I wished to restore the world of existential interpenetration, calling it the diacritical. Bataille has not spared warning statements more than me. He speaks about "the freedom of Nietzsche who cuts down," of "doctrines which are the most violent of solvents," of "Nietzsche's philosophy not of the will to power but of evil." His concern of returning justice to Nietzsche—and of requiring that he not be betrayed—does not prevent him from writing: "Nietzsche, prophet of the new ways? But for the superman, the eternal return is as empty as the reasons of exaltation or action." This is no less true than the requirement of creation that I analyze as being lived under a new light in a new world, although it starts, Bataille says, "like the chance of lovers dedicated to struggle in the night."

But after this combat, the lovers also agree to lead it into the grandeur of day. In the testing period of love, which must be able to survive its occasional grimaces, beauty installs itself and hope emerges. I spoke about the one and other. The unreality that is given to love by the night will be surpassed by the day, and the lover will learn how from now on not to see the lie in reality. The image that one dreams does not resemble the real object, but if the object appears less beautiful, it is more likely to last longer. It is the same if, to accept it, one should treat it like a dream!

If our world survives its contradictions, perhaps someday one will say that it has, in this century, found a new beginning in the dream. Because, applied to the reality which changes and dies in its duration, a dream seizes it and maintains it in itself, tearing it off with its death and the time of its death. To find the agreement between the reality discovered to be hideous and the one considered to be beautiful and eternally alive, to find this agreement that will make us give up the desire to die and forget the fear of this desire, will carry us above our dreams necessary to the tragic patience of our humanity.

–Taylor Adkins

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1. Diacritical means ‘serving to distinguish’ or ‘capable of discriminating.’ [Translator’s Note].