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**The statute of truth and the problem of its communication in
Thus Spake Zarathustra by F. Nietzsche**

RESEARCH PROJECT

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. *Topic.*

This project aims to face the study of the statute of truth and the problem of its communication in Nietzsche's *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, this work being considered here as a peculiar response to these two specific philosophical emergencies.

The text, always judged by the general critics as a separated work showing a specific originality respect to the remaining nietzschean production, if analyzed only from the perspective of the exception, risks to appear to be more as a purely stylistic experiment rather than a need of the author determined by the internal reasons of his philosophical reflection.

In fact, an approach which considers the content of the work as subordinated to the artistic form of its writing could be plausible in the literary domain, but not according to a text of philosophical intent and, most importantly, in the presence of a philosopher who explicitly theorized the aesthetic field as an epistemological domain. For such reasons this research aims to trace the causes for the adoption of the artistic register by Nietzsche in *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, by highlighting them as consequences of a precise theoretical path and exposing its results.

1.2 *Delimitation and research methodology.*

Among Nietzsche's texts, this survey will focus, beside the *Zarathustra*, on the works that are immediately close to it, especially *The Gay Science* and *Beyond Good and Evil*. Moreover, it will be completed by a reconnaissance of the places where, in previous writings, we could

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PLAN OF ACTIVITIES

1. Scientific articles

According to the method of research, some of the results could be presented in specialist articles on the subject.

- a) An article that focuses on “Nietzsche, interpreter of Zarathustra”.
- b) An article that, starting from the aphorism 105 of *The Gay Science*, would show the bond, established by Nietzsche, between the needs of the theoretical means of communication chosen to convey the truths and the aesthetic level, particularly the one offered by musical art.
- c) An article that presents as a key of interpretation of *Zarathustra* the proximity to the Platonic model of the use of myth, able to reject to prejudice about its leaving from the scope of philosophy and its tradition.

2. Volume “Nietzsche from Brazil”

In addition to the research presented here, the time of stay in Brazil will be dedicated to the elaboration and edition (Edizioni ETS, Pisa) of a volume in Italian Language, being entitled “Nietzsche from Brazil”, offering to the European readers a thematic insight of the contribution of Brazilian research on Nietzsche. The following ones, researchers of Universities of State of São Paulo, have confirmed their participation in this project: Scarlett Marton (USP), Ivo da Silva Júnior (UNIFESP), Eduardo Nasser (USP), Vânia Azeredo (PUCCAMP), Eder Corbanezi (USP).

3. *Research in Brazil*

During my stay in São Paulo, I will take part in the weekly meetings of GEN (Grupo de Estudos Nietzsche), to be held under the direction of Prof. Scarlett Marton, trying to give my contribution to scientific studies of Nietzsche's texts, discussing with the members of the Group about the results I will collect during my research activities.

I will take part to the issue of *Encontros Nietzsche* (where I have already presented two reports during the XXXIII edition, and another one for the XXXIV edition) whose scientific purpose, which now focuses on methodological problems of reading of Nietzsche's texts, is well combined with my interests and my research activities.

I will act as a scientific-organizational bridge between USP and: "Centro Interuniversitario Colli-Montinari di Studi su Friedrich Nietzsche e la Cultura Europea" of Pisa; "Seminario Permanente Nietzscheano" of which I am a member; the Italian groups of research that are guided by Prof. Giuliano Campioni (University of Pisa).

Finally, Scarlett Marton proposed to us to coordinate the seminars of research on Nietzsche of USP: within this project, I can give lessons in French, English, Italian and, as soon as possible, in Portuguese, as well to play the role of referent if Professors guests are invited to conduct the sessions.

find stylistic previews of the concerned work, and in the later writings, the passages in which Nietzsche performs explicit self-quotation. The purpose of this delimitation will be to identify the main philosophemes that led the author to choose to communicate through the artistic language of *Zarathustra*.

The methodological lines followed to conduct the research are from one side the philological-structural analysis of the work's genesis, and from the other side the immanent analysis aimed to highlight Nietzsche's judgments about his work and the reading lines he proposed for it.

1.3 Peculiarities of research.

So arranged, this study distinguishes itself from much of the secondary literature on the subject. This in fact, it is mainly composed by studies of explanatory interpretation of the metaphorical and allegorical figures in the text; the punctual commentaries of the chapters through periphrasis of its peculiar language; or the stylistic-rhetorical analysis of the text form.

Among the original results that our research aims to offer, for a correct interpretation of *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, two of them appear more remarkable. First, we would trace and show a plan of continuity with the theoretical path of the Nietzschean *corpus*, attenuating the apparent eccentricity and character of sudden deviation that is customary to accept to read the text. Under this perspective, it will be possible to identify theoretic and expositive characteristics that bring the text closer, more than what is commonly thought, to a classic line of thinking, in particular pre-Socratic and related to the use of Platonic myth.

Secondly, the research offers to examine the purely philosophical reasons that led the author to speak a peculiar language in order to express his thinking: these reasons constantly run the risk of being ignored if they remain excessively tied to misleading questions of stylistic nature.

2. PHILOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF THE WORK'S GENESIS

Often analyzed as a uniform work and the result of a homogeneous compositional process, on the basis of a statement of Nietzsche which is interpreted too much literally¹, *Thus Spake*

¹ F. Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, "Thus Spake Zarathustra", §4.

Zarathustra is actually one of Nietzsche's writings that has experienced more discontinuous gestation, being made of fractures, different projects, sketches, and numerous variations and changes, during the preparation of its four parts².

Through the implementation of the genetic philological-methodology of textual analysis that characterizes the school of Giuliano Campioni in Pisa, the research will be primarily devoted to the reconstruction of the path that Nietzsche undertook from 1882 to winter 1884/85, when he would end the fourth and last part of the work. We will examine the significant posthumous material, especially the workbooks of *Zarathustra*³, analyzing the characteristics through a comparison of the drafts actually used, the discarded ones and then used otherwise⁴, the abandoned projects (such as to enrich the text with books V and VI), the unrealized assumptions or changes of mind (for example the idea he considered several times to end the work with the character's death; to consider the text definitely concluded with Part III, or decide to hold the part IV as separated from the previous ones⁵). The purpose of this genetic philological work will be to provide a clear picture of its compositional process, bringing out the specific theoretical nucleuses that Nietzsche thought as necessarily linked to the expressive form of *Zarathustra*.

We will use further work tools for this part of the research: the volume VI/4 of *KGW*⁶, and the material, yet little studied, showed in the Italian edition of volume IV of Letters. It can trace in *Zarathustra*, *inter alia*, numerous cases of transformation of specific episodes in the life of the author, being highly useful for the explanation of the work.

² Cfr. S. Marton, "Ansi parlait Zarathoustra": *l'oeuvre à la fois consacrée et reniée*, in *Goethe, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche. Saggi in memoria di Sandro Barbera*, ETS, Pisa 2013, pp. 481-498.

³ They are, in particular, the notebooks that have been classified by the critical edition, after the themes of H.J. Mette, *Der handschriftliche Nachlass Friedrich Nietzsche*, Leipzig 1922, like M III 1 (spring–autumn 1881) N V 9a, N VI 1a, Z I 1, Z I 2, Mp XV 3a (Winter 1882–Summer 1883); N VI 2, N VI 3, N VI 4, Z I 3, Z I 4, N VI 5, Z II 1, N V 6, N V 7, N V 8, Z II 2, Mp XVb, Z II 3, Z II 4 (Ma 1883- end 1883); Z II 6, Z II 7, N VI 9, Z II 8, Z II 9, Z I 2c (autumn 1884- autumn 1885).

⁴ Through the analysis of the "notebooks of Zarathustra", we realize an important fact: the rich material that has not been used to write *Zarathustra*, it was widely used for *The Gay Science* and *Beyond Good and Evil*, beside the poetical works of 1884 (cfr. *Opere Friedrich Nietzsche*, Adelphi, Milano, 1964, VI/4 pp. 150-213) and *Dionysus Dithyrambs*.

⁵ See the letter to H. von Stein of mid-March 1885; the letters to his sister and Overbeck on 7th May 1885, the letters addressed to the two publishers Credner and Fritsch at the end of January 1886, and the 16th of August 1886.

⁶ F. Nietzsche, *Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, begründet von G. Colli und M. Montinari, Weitergeführt von W. Müller-Lauter und K. Pestalozzi, Vol. VI/4, *Nachtbericht zum erten Band der sechsten Abteilung. Also sprach Zarathustra*, De Gruyter, Berlin 1991.

3. IMMANENT ANALYSIS OF THE WORK

A very common critical tendency, created in the wake or by resonance of certain post-structuralist assumptions, seems to have led to the gradual shift of the exegetical focus from the author to external factors, leading to the explicit or implicit theory of the priority of the interpreter above the author himself, the first one having more effective hermeneutical tools and being inserted into a wider critic horizon than the latter. This would allow us to read the text even beyond or against the explicit intentions author.

Without entering into a refutation of this methodological approach, this research moves instead from the belief that, especially in the case of Nietzsche and particularly as concerns *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, an immanent analysis of the work would be decisive, on the contrary, returning to give extreme importance to what the author asserts about it. This can happen thanks to specific elements, such as the peculiarity of the writings and thought of Nietzsche in general, offering a high rate of freedom of interpretation which, if left without boundaries under the arbitrary judgment of the exegete, it is likely to be a factor of impediment to the understanding of the author's page and to easily generate misunderstandings. Secondly, considering the uncommon amount of material that Nietzsche, as a few other authors, offered us, where he comments on himself and his own writings (for example, *Ecce Homo* is a kind of intellectual autobiography). Thirdly, the experimental nature of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, which determines difficulties for an immediate understanding, thus making valuable the many hints the author provides about it.

Therefore, we will trace and analyze the passages in which Nietzsche speaks of his writing, with the intent to bring out the reasons that led him to evaluate it as his best work («my freest work», often called “mein Sohn”⁷) and the philosophical and expressive purposes that Nietzsche felt achieved in *Zarathustra*. This study will be conducted, beside the rich section dedicated to the work in *Ecce Homo*, using the Letters, the Posthumous Fragments and the later works in which, for expositive-conceptual needs, Nietzsche quotes his own text. In particular, we consider of high interest the study of these occurrences, for it would highlight what philosophical nucleuses Nietzsche felt expressible only through the form adopted in

⁷ From 27 April 1883 to 7 May 1885 this expression occurs nine times.

Zarathustra, so that he chose the self-quotation rather than a paraphrase or a different exposition.

The immanent analysis of the work could then indicate the interpretative hints Nietzsche provided for his own writing, and respect them as precise boundaries for the interpreter, identifying at least four lines of demarcation explained by Nietzsche: 1) to consider his work fully philosophical, as being written outside the scope of literature⁸; 2) to emphasize the intentions of anti-Christian polemic, conceptually and stylistically animating the text; 3) the aim of the work to perform a reconfiguration in the perception of the human being and of his conception of time, morals and language 4) the belief he had found with *Zarathustra* the long-sought perfect union between the truth to communicate and the most suitable expressive form.

4. INTERPRETATIONS

Zarathustra has divided the Nietzschean interpreters, being considered by many as an unnecessary diversion from the remaining production of the author, and even as a way out of the scope of philosophy itself. Through the steps listed above, the research aims to present an opposite view and interpret the script as a direct consequence of the theoretical path of Nietzsche, bringing back the essence of the work within a strategy of recovery of greek philosophical models, in voluntary antithesis to contemporary philosophy⁹: a specificity such that – wanting to find traditional antecedents - make it akin to the use of the Platonic myth and its theoretical-expositive goals. Although this topic is still hotly debated by the specialists, it is possible to establish a parallel between the characteristics that emerge from accredited studies accredited about the Platonic argumentative need to resort to the myth, and the Nietzschean choice to give voice to his affirmative meditation through the aesthetic construction of *Zarathustra*¹⁰.

⁸ See the letters to Overbeck on November 9, 1883; to Meysenbug in early May 1884; and F. Nietzsche; *Ecce Homo*, “Thus Spake Zarathustra”, § 6.

⁹ Although their different angles of interpretation, G. Colli, *Dopo Nietzsche*, Adelphi, Milano 1974 K. Löwith, *Nietzsche Philosophie der ewigen Wiederkehr des Gleichen*, Kolhmmmer, Struttgart 1935 E. Bertram, *Nietzsche. Versuch eine Mythologie*, Bond, Berlin, 1918, trace this line of exegesis, and their proposals will be particularly considered by this research.

¹⁰ Collecting the features that characterize the Platonic myths, suggested by the major works on the subject (above all, G. Most, *Platons exoterische Mythen*, in Janka-Schäfer, *Platon als Mythologe. Neue interpretation zu den Mythen in Platons Dialogen*, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, Darmstad, 2002; G. Droz, *Les mythes platoniciens*, Éditions de Seuil, Paris 1992; F. Ferrari, *I miti di Platone*, Bur, Milano 2006) it is possible to

Considering the results emerged from my previous research on the *pars destruens* of Nietzsche's thought, particularly regarding the use of skepticism¹¹ – indeed, the project described here is an ideal completion – we could assert that the path of Nietzsche's philosophy placed under explicit criticism the logical, dialectical, linguistic and theoretical tools, being the foundation of post-Platonic Western thinking. According to this critique, Nietzsche had therefore identified the aesthetic level as a possible place of truth, other than what proved to be false on the speculative level. Therefore, there is a need to present a new core of truth – alternative to contemporary philosophy – and at the same time to search for a communicational vehicle that does not fall as rejected. In those theoretical causes, the exact origin of a work like *Zarathustra* is to be found, where Nietzsche presents the main positive philosophemes of his meditation (The Eternal Return, the *Übermensch*, the antimoral Dionysian vision in opposition to Christianity and Romanticism¹²) and the need to produce an aesthetic-persuasive language which is alternative to the logical-demonstrative one¹³. This is not determined by merely formal reasons, but for the theoretical nature of these concepts, as indicated and understood by Nietzsche as belonging to the sphere of intuition, what Plato defines *noesis* or Spinoza the third kind of knowledge¹⁴.

Through an analysis of the intuitive nature of the truths expressed in *Zarathustra* and their relationship with the aesthetic-persuasive method adopted for them, we could finally bring out a further key of interpretation, reintroducing the work within the Greek tradition, that is the psychagogic purpose, its ambition to transform the human being and, in particular, as explicitly stated by the author, to work through its own writing a remodeling of the

identify 7 theoretic-expressive characteristics that are full correspondent with Nietzsche's *Zarathustra*: the Platonic Myths 1) are monologues and not dialogic, 2) are narrated by an old man to a young audience, 3) belong to the oral dimension of speech and listening, 4) deal with topics or events that are out a possible range of verification and experience 5) gain authority thanks to the reliability of the speaker, who is not exposed to dynamics of rebuttal, 6) have a precise ethical psychagogic function and they pursue their aim through the storytelling enchantment (*Epode*), 7) are not argumentative or dialectical, but they are built on the use of images and similes, which can represent in synoptic form the theoretical points, otherwise difficult to grasp in their entirety.

¹¹ S. Busellato, *Nietzsche e lo scetticismo*, Edizioni Università di Macerata, Macerata 2012.

¹² It is important to note that the philosophemes of *Zarathustra* can be attributed in large part to the Greek thought. Even the *Übermensch*, the notion which Nietzsche probably conceived from the studies on Greek sources, more than the those that were chronologically close to him. On this see C.P. Janz, *Nietzsche. Biographie*, Hanser, München-Wien 1978-79, II pp. 190-224. Also K. Löwith (quoted above, p. 56.), he sees *Zarathustra* as an attempt to «get at the height of anti-Christian modernity, the ancient vision the world».

¹³ Concerning the relationship between Plato's Socrates and Nietzsche's *Zarathustra*, Deleuze and Guattari take the two characters as a model of what they call the «personnages conceptuels» in the philosophical writing. G. Deleuze, F. Guattari, *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie*, Éditions de minuit, Paris 1991; italian translation, *Che cos'è la filosofia*, Torino, Einaudi, 2002, p. 174.

¹⁴ On the epistemological statute of intuition, in opposition to the dialogic knowledge, see E. Scribano, *Angeli e beati. Modelli di conoscenza da Tommaso a Spinoza*, Laterza, Roma-Bari 2006.

conception of time, morals and language. In this way, he proposed a revival in the modern era of what the classical thought calls «spiritual exercise», in order to meet a specific «way of life», i.e. that in which Hadot identifies the essential difference between ancient philosophy and the later philosophy¹⁵.

The conclusions and result of our study, which are expressed according to the points we indicated, constitute therefore the proposal for an original interpretation of *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, able to provide clear guidance on the purely theoretical reasons that led Nietzsche to compose such a work, to show its coherence within the theoretical path of the author and, finally, its full belonging to the philosophical culture and to peculiar stages of its tradition.

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¹⁵ P. Hadot, *Exercices spirituels et philosophie antique*, Albin Michel, Paris 2002; italian translation Einaudi, Torino 2005. It is no coincidence that Hadot sees in Nietzsche the first to reintroduce in contemporary philosophy elements of pre-Christian philosophy (ivi, p. 67).

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