



A consciência e a vida no limite da tragédia: Considerações nietzschianas acerca da disposição afirmativa

*Consciousness and life on the bound of tragedy. Nietzschean considerations
about the affirmative disposition*

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Resumo

O pensamento nietzschiano se propõe, em suas máximas e sentenças, desconstruir tudo o que o monumento da razão tem edificado sob a forma de consciência. Por essa razão, diante das situações dramáticas que se apresentam, não é o caso de se conscientizar sobre elas, mas antes as experienciar. A consciência, ao interpor o exercício da razão, falsifica o fato, ao passo que a vivência acolhe o que neste se apresenta de mais amplo e genuíno. Somente para além do exercício da consciência que o filósofo alemão compreende ser possível o encarar da tragédia, pois não se pensa nela, mas simplesmente a vive. E é pela vivência e não ciência do elemento trágico que Nietzsche aponta um caminho possível de afirmação da vida. Este projeto pode ser realizado na medida em que a vida é resgatada em sua dimensão integral e primigênia, sem o influxo de elementos que a ela não pertencem. E um caminho imediato à vida é o da experiência dela, para além de tudo o que se fizer em termos de operação científica. O presente trabalho se propõe mostrar que quando se estabelece qualquer esforço no intuito de se fazer ciência sobre algo se está operando um corte no exercício de se direcionar para a vida, pois se antepõe elementos que não permitem com que ela se apresente como é em si mesma, em seu acontecer, para interpor mecanismos que imiscuem a sua realidade própria da vida. O abandono da experiência mais íntima da realidade em detrimento de seu aspecto formal periférico faz com que toda a vida e ao que dela faz parte se relegue ao plano do irrisório. Toda a teorização sobre a vida nada mais é senão a sua falsificação, que é a própria consciência, como lentes que se apresentam diante da realidade.

Palavras-chave: Nietzsche; consciência; tragédia; vida; afirmação.

Abstract

Nietzsche's thought proposes, in its maxims and sentences, to deconstruct everything that the monument of reason has built in the form of consciousness. For this reason, faced with the dramatic situations that arise, it is not a case of becoming aware of them, but rather experiencing. Conscience, by interposing the exercise of reason, falsifies the fact, while experience embraces what appears to be broader and more genuine in it. Only beyond the exercise of conscience does the German philosopher understand that it is possible to face tragedy, as one does not think about it, but simply lives it. And it is through the experience and not awareness of the tragic element that Nietzsche points out a possible path to affirm life. This project can be carried out to the extent that life can be rescued in its integral and original dimension, without the influx of elements that do not belong to it. And an immediate path to life is that of its experience, beyond everything that is done in terms of its scientific operation. This work aims to show that when any effort is made with the intention of becoming aware of something, there is a cut in the exercise of directing oneself towards life, as elements are put in front of it that do not allow it to present itself as it is in itself, in its happening, to interpose mechanisms that interfere with their own reality of life. The abandonment of the most intimate experience of reality to the detriment of its peripheral formal aspect causes all of life and what is part of it to be relegated to the plane of the derisory. All theorizing about life is nothing more than its falsification, which is consciousness itself, like lenses that appear before reality.

Keywords: Nietzsche; conscience; tragedy; life; affirmation.

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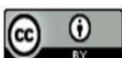
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INTRODUCTION

Nietzsche's philosophical exercise is inscribed in a register that exceeds the effort of clarifying, decoding, and dissecting, to, rather, present itself as a movement of deconstruction and dissolution of all constructs interposed by reason. However, Nietzsche embarks on this undertaking not exactly for the mere exercise of deconstruction, but rather to establish, to propose a path that leads to the overcoming of an entire era that has taken hold: nihilism. For this reason, more than simply considering Nietzsche as the iconoclastic philosopher and proclaimer of the downfall of moral values, one must perceive in his philosophy a vector that bets on an objective: that of life. In this sense, the philosopher chooses the means that help this objective to be fulfilled, namely, that life may assert itself amidst a culture that, in itself, is nihilistic.

This project can be realized to the extent that life can be rescued in its integral and primordial dimension, without the influx of elements that do not belong to it. And an immediate path to life is that of experiencing it, beyond everything done in terms of scientific operation. When any effort is made to do science about something, a cut is made in the exercise of directing oneself towards life, because elements are imposed that do not allow it to present itself as it is in itself, in its happening, in order to interpose mechanisms that interfere with its own reality of life. Thus, when, for example, one encounters certain images, one assigns a name. By proceeding in this way, the most immediate reality is hidden under the cloak of linguistic signs that do not correspond to the reality of the object to which one is referring. All this effort is nothing other than naming, for example, which ends up resulting in a movement of distancing and loss of those characteristics that make a thing what it is. Consciousness is this movement. Therefore, the philosopher considers it as the product of the least finished human development, that is, the expression that distances the human from what it is to assume a kind of falsification.

The abandonment of the most intimate experience of reality to the detriment of its peripheral formal aspect causes all life and what is part of it to be relegated to the plane of the ridiculous. All theorizing about life is nothing more than its falsification. For life manifests itself at every instant in its fullness, therefore, instants that, just as they appear with all their vividness, also soon dissolve, in a constant process. Consciousness is like lenses that appear before reality, preventing one from seeing it as it presents itself. The moment one encounters this same reality, the vision one has is nothing other than a dulling of it, caused by artifices that are placed before it, thus preventing the encounter with its reality as it is in itself. Through consciousness, all movement that occurs is delayed, since it does not reach reality itself but rather its effects. For this reason, consciousness encompasses everything that

is most unfinished and incongruous in relation to organic development. What remains of this development is only its effect, like rotten fruit from a tree, which, therefore, becomes incapable of being enjoyed and instead is left at one's feet. To the extent that one persists in accessing the world through consciousness, what one achieves is its falsification and deception. Such would be, for example, the act of naming the reality one encounters as green, hard, or cold. Now, to evoke such conclusions, one must necessarily first pass through the faculty of the intellect that associates a given reality with something already predetermined, which is nothing but deception.

Thus, in the same way, the very search for the origin of events and situations is, most of the time, associated with a “why” for something being the way it is. The moment one seeks to explain why something is the way it is, one accesses consciousness. In this way, the entire set of lived experiences passes through an interpretative filter, that is, it is subjected to the explanation of why something is the way it is, causing one to lose access to pure experience, detached from the mechanisms of reason, which constantly rise up to impose its own criteria. These criteria, by imposing themselves on life, falsify it, because they do not allow access to it at its primordial source, but rather through segments that distance it. Therefore, consciousness is outlined as a spiritual and psychic state, characterized as a pathological state. In this state, science and consciousness determine the entire course of various experiences, causing them to lose what basically characterizes them: innocence. It is through innocence that great health can promote the advancement of the pointer of life, causing tragedy to begin. It is by capturing the innocent becoming of all things, in what it manifests as most genuine and unique, without the interposition of elements that interrupt its direct expression, that life can be affirmed. For life is a fact, and as such, it needs to be experienced, that is, lived, and not translated into explanatory mechanisms that support it, through conscious thinking. Consciousness exerts a kind of distancing over life from what could translate what is most unique and genuine. Thus, the cause is taken for the effects, leaving aside what is essential to remain with the accidents, what is fundamental to remain with the peripheral, affirmation is left to remain with negation and falsification.

The following proposal is configured in three movements. Initially, the path that consciousness takes to constitute itself as such is reconstructed. To this end, conscious processes are subjected to a genealogical procedure, starting from a biological development through which it travels in its constitution. This first movement is entitled “The development of the unfinished process of consciousness.” Following this, its interface with life is presented as a result of the incompleteness of the consciousness process. In this way, it is observed to what extent consciousness translates life in what it presents as most genuine and unique. This second movement is entitled: “The interpretation and translation of life by consciousness.” Finally, in the third and last movement, the distance that

exists between consciousness and life, marked by tragedy, is shown. In this sense, it is shown how, between consciousness and life, the tragic element can assume the function of a limit so that the affirmative aspect of life can show itself with all its force. This third movement is entitled “Tragedy as a structural limit between consciousness and life.” This work aims to provide greater clarity, based on Nietzschean reflections, regarding the possible relationships between consciousness, life, and tragedy. To this end, it hopes to delve deeper into the various aspects linked to Nietzsche's critique of consciousness and all the processes connected to it.

The Development of the Unfinished Process of Consciousness

Given that Nietzsche's philosophical conception is based on an organic conception, everything that opposes this dimension is considered base, small, and degenerate. It is precisely in this context that Nietzsche refers to reason and what relates to it. Reason, as he himself mentions at the beginning of his early writing: *On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense*, was the most mendacious moment in the history of the world, yet it was only an instant¹. These mentions by Nietzsche in these two passages of his writings reveal how much the philosopher has in reason the greatest part of his criticisms. Through them, the philosopher presents the principle of all the problems that culture goes through. The problem of the falsification and negation of everything that could constitute something great, strong, and elevated for culture. Now, if the organic has been undergoing a slow and long process of development, this process has in reason and consciousness an obstacle to its completion², resulting, therefore, in diminishment, weakness and incompleteness. “– Consciousness is the last and ultimate development of the organic and, consequently, also what is most unfinished and weakest in it” (Nietzsche, 1999, FW/GC, I, 11, KSA, 3.382)³. That culture attributes as the highest value, what

¹ Cf. WL/VM, 1, KSA, 1876

² Theodule Ribot, in this regard, considers that “[...] the lessons of psychology, united with those of consciousness, lead us to establish this problem in a much broader way; that memory, as common sense understands it and as ordinary psychology describes it; far from being the whole of memory, is only a particular case of it, the highest and most complex [...] which is the last term of a long evolution and like an efflorescence whose roots plunge well before into organic life” (Ribot, p. 01, 1881).

³ For quotations from Nietzsche's works, we have adopted the German Critical Edition Colli & Montinari: KSA (Sämtliche Werke: Kritische Studienausgabe) and the KGB Letters (Br/Cr) (Sämtliche Briefe Kritische Studienausgabe); After the acronym indicating the work, in German/Portuguese: GT/NT – Die Geburt der Tragödie (The Birth of Tragedy), MA/HH – Menschliches Allzumenschliches (Human, All Too Human), FW/GC – Die fröhliche Wissenschaft (The Gay Science), Za/ZA – Also sprach Zarathustra (Thus Spoke Zarathustra), WL/VM – Über Wahrheit und Lüge im aussermoralischen Sinn (On Truth and Lies in an Unmoral Sense), NF/FP – Nachlass (Posthumous Fragments), Br/Cr – Briefe Kritische Studienausgabe (Letters), followed by the

would be reason and consciousness, as the apex of development, ends up being nothing but its downfall and consequent decadence. The French psychologist Théodule Ribot, from whom Nietzsche drew inspiration, understands that to live is to assimilate, therefore “[...] it is, in essence, a biological fact; by accident, a psychological fact” (Ribot, 188, p. 01). Memory is, in this context, one of the fundamental conditions of life, and also “[...] depends directly on nutrition” (Ribot, 1881, p. 51). Thus, if nutrition is the fundamental basis of life, then its conservation and reproduction are its essential processes⁴. Along the same lines, the thought of Alfred Victor Espinas also stands out, for whom life is constituted as an organism of living bodies through a reciprocal exchange of psychic acts and a living individual consciousness, an organism of ideas⁵. However, it is fundamental to understand that Ribot and Espinas were thinkers linked to that French discussion involving scientific and metaphysical psychologies. And that, therefore, for Nietzsche's biological reading, those approaches stumbled upon the problem of consciousness, as an obstacle to experiencing life in its singular immediacy.

Consciousness leads to all sorts of errors that manifest in the impossibility of accessing the fact, the moment experienced, but only effects, fallacious and deceptive aspects of what is attributed as true. By interposing itself between the fact and the observer, consciousness acts as a lens, making reality visible according to what it determines. In this way, direct and experiential contact with the fact is replaced by a deceptive expression of it made by consciousness and its fallacious processes. At the same time that fantasy is achieved through the processes of consciousness, this fantasy is clothed in a tyranny exercised against everything that points towards experiencing and living life in its fullness and integrity. The tyrannical aspect of consciousness stems from its arrogance in believing itself to possess the truth, as the core of all that is highest and most venerable on the face of the earth. The greatest danger in this lies in a feeling of resigned complacency, because the process of improvement ends up stagnating due to the belief that one is at the peak and pinnacle of everything that is strongest and most elevated. Thus, the development process becomes unfinished, since there is no longer any commitment to embarking on the adventure of improvement. Biological development is halted by the intervention of processes contrary to everything that can foster the desire and will to overcome.

number, in Roman numerals, indicating the chapter, if any, the aphorism number, KSA or KGB, the volume number and the page.

⁴ “To preserve and reproduce: all the essentials of memory are thus linked to the fundamental conditions of life” (Ribot, 1881, p. 163).

⁵ “To live is, first and foremost, to nourish oneself and to perpetuate oneself as a species. It is to this double end that all the phenomena studied so far conspire” (Espinas, 1924, p. 366).

Wilson Antonio Frezzatti proposes focusing attention on authors who are part of the second half of the 19th century, “[...] contemporary to the development of the doctrine of the will to power. It is necessary, in order to understand the role of Nietzsche's biological readings, to understand what the main questions about life were in the biology of that period” (Frezzatti, 2018, p. 33).

Being the last, consciousness, within the process of organic development, evokes something that ensues from it: the last man. It is this man to whom Nietzsche opposes the overman, the one capable of overcoming the degenerative process that degrades and diminishes. In this way, consciousness and ultimate man are associated with a meaning that points to nihilism in its passive version. If consciousness has been praised so much, being considered the greatest advance achieved by civilization, then nothing remains but stagnation in the face of the greatest event that has occurred. The logical consequence of such an event is weariness and resignation, typical of those who consider themselves satisfied with the fact that everything that could be achieved has been accomplished, leaving nothing more. For this reason, there is no longer any reason to fight, since nothing more can be added to what has already been achieved. The struggle is, therefore, a fundamental requirement for life to be affirmed, as the German embryologist Wilhelm Roux recalls: “The struggle of the parts of the organism” (Roux, 1881, p. 01). The action of this struggle occurs as “Functional Adaptation” (Roux, 1881, p. 01). The struggle, within this context pointed out by Roux, acts beyond a merely mechanical principle⁶ of natural selection for the functional adaptation of the parts of the organism, also as a finalistic, therefore metaphysical, principle, which is “[...] the capacity for self-formation of the necessary” (Roux, 1881, p. 217). The struggles of the parts follow the adaptation to the modifications of vital events.

The struggle, therefore, has life as its goal. With nothing else to do, all that remains is to ponder everything that should interest, desire, and avoid. And, faced with countless situations, what conscience leads us to avoid is isolation and everything that points to the individual as if it were something dangerous. Instead, conscience provokes a desire for the herd, to live in society. “The argument of isolation. – The rebuke of conscience. [...] – Thus speaks within us the herd instinct”

⁶ The German biologist offers a Darwinian reading of the process of aggregation and disaggregation of matter by the pre-Socratic philosopher Empedocles of Agrigento, who discovered the philosophical principle of the struggle between matter and the opposing forces of love and hate: a process of transformation and origin of living beings would occur through the selection of the most resistant aggregates (cf. Roux, 1881, pp. 1-2).

(Nietzsche, 1999, FW/GC, I, 50, KSA, 3.415). Consciousness has the impetus to provoke unease in those who strive to cultivate isolation as a pursuit of self-care.

Against this tendency towards self-discovery is exerted the movement provoked by the consciousness of fleeing from oneself, of evading oneself, considering everything related to self-discovery as something evil, and therefore to be severely repressed. Faced with such a situation that inhibits everything that promotes isolation, the German philosopher suggests slavery, which emerges from the gregarious culture itself by inciting life in herds. Everything that leads to the individual living, understood in their singular dimension, is considered an attack on the life of the collective. The singular individual⁷, according to this conception, becomes the great enemy to be severely combated. And this is precisely what the slave instinct says: fight the individual so that the herd may be saved. “Where there is slavery, individuals are few in number, and have against them the herd instinct and conscience” (Nietzsche, 1999, FW/GC, III, 149, KSA, 3.494). Through conscience, the herd instinct is inoculated, like poison against the individual. Conscience generates, maintains, and nourishes the feeling that one can never be with oneself, which is considered a sin against the herd. And to sin against the herd is to sin against its Shepherd, the one responsible for ensuring its life and well-being, by making each one what he is: “*What does your conscience say? – ‘Become what you are’*” (Nietzsche, 1999, FW/GC, III, 270, KSA, 3.268). Becoming what one is can be considered nothing other than becoming a slave, and a slave not of oneself but of the herd. By distancing each one from himself, the conscience brings him closer to the herd, which results in the absence of the spirit, since this can only be cultivated on the basis of self-cultivation.

Since the tactic of nurturing consciousness is guilt (*Schuldbewusstsein*), as an aspect that indelibly marks life, individual living causes the element of consciousness to be imprinted on the memory, reminding one not to forget the fact that the herd was sacrificed for the sake of individual living. In this way, consciousness traces back to the history of an error initiated by moral sentiments, where everything was guided by morality, with nothing escaping its dominion. “With this we come to the knowledge that the history of moral sentiments is the history of an error, the error of responsibility, which is based on the error of free will [...] since certain actions cause unease (‘consciousness of guilt’)” (Nietzsche, 1999, MAI/HHI, 39, KSA, 2.63). The error pointed out by Nietzsche in this history of moral sentiments lies, above all, in conducting science on the guilt that arises from having

⁷ The dimension of the singular individual is so important that even Herbert Spencer considers it a principle of biology, in which genesis, generation, and reproduction are particular processes of multiplication, therefore always linked to the individual. Spencer even mentions a dynamic equilibrium constituted by the vital relations in each individual (cf. Spencer, 1864, pp. 209-223).

abandoned the herd in favor of the individual. This allows for the possibility of conducting science on this state of unease, thus creating, once again, a fascination with reason that presupposes the reality that there is a being upon which an entire theoretical framework is constructed. Not that this construct of reason helps to affirm life, “[...] but in fact refers to *esse*, which is the act of a free will, the fundamental cause of an individual's existence; man becomes what he wants to be, his will precedes his existence. – The error in reasoning lies in inferring, starting from the fact of unease, the justification, the *rational admissibility* of this unease” (Nietzsche, 1999, MAI/HHI, 39, KSA, 2.63-4). The rationalization of unease, that is, the making science of a given human condition, makes such a situation distant from human reach to control it. In this sense, man no longer becomes what he wants to be, considering what reason establishes as such, the will not being truly free, but rather constrained by the domains of reason.

The will⁸ that desires impels the exercise of initiative over life in all its domains, so as to experience life in its fullness at every moment, to make contact with it directly, and not in an arbitrary or even falsified way. That diligent exercise of a will that desires opens space for consciousness. “Diligence and consciousness are often antagonistic, because diligence wants to pick the fruits while they are still green on the tree, while consciousness leaves them for a long time, until they fall and crumble” (Nietzsche, 1999, MAI/HHI, 39, KSA, 2.331). The voluntarist exercise of a will that desires becomes preferable to conscious movement, which only comes into contact with the fact through belated and dull expedients. All this dulling of the facts and situations one encounters occurs precisely because they are not experienced in what is most original and unique about them. The experience of an event cannot be equated with awareness of it; otherwise, awareness becomes a matter of experience, that is, life is reduced to the awareness one has of it. In this way, life comes to be considered something devoid of its fundamental qualities, namely, its originality and not a superficial copy, its uniqueness and not an anonymous mass-produced set, its capacity for overcoming and not something static and submissive.

Passing through the sieve of consciousness, life is incapable of reaching any level of completion that would give it consistency and solidity, but only fragments resulting from an unfinished process. This results in a life perceived as incompleteness and negation. Now, if life is the target and goal of all

⁸ The will here is understood not in the sense of a 'psychological theory', of a subject behind the action. On the contrary, as Scarlett Marton reminds us, the subject is not the executor of the action, but its effect, which also leads to abandoning a metaphysical conception of the will, as the 'in-itself of things'. The will is a commanding affect, to which no choice is allowed, but a free feeling, therefore of superiority (cf. Marton, 2016 p. 422).

Nietzsche's thought, everything that opposes it is considered an obstacle to the process of its development, improvement and completion. Naumburg's philosopher seeks in scientific reflection elements that illuminate this process of configuring an affirmed life. To this end, he detects within this process what presents itself as a threat and obstacle, as seen in the above quotations from *Human, All Too Human* and *The Gay Science*, both works from this period known as skeptical positivism. And it is in consciousness that the philosopher finds the threat to the unfolding of life. Consciousness, as a process of the conduction of reason to the biological, organic development of life. The processes led by consciousness trample underfoot everything that results in meaning, understood in its organic dimension, resulting, therefore, in the destitution of all vital basis. For life to be affirmed, nothing can stand in its way in the sense of interposing any kind of obstacle to its manifestation. By vital manifestation, nothing other than experience itself is understood, or rather, the lived experience that presents itself in the most direct way possible, organically speaking, without any kind of translation or interpretation, as often happens with consciousness.

The Interpretation and Translation of Life Through Consciousness

If consciousness has ended up reducing all of life to processes circumscribed by the register of reason, then the challenge is to carry out the opposite process, that of reducing consciousness to life. That is, to make all processes mediated by reason a direct channel that passes through lived experience, as an eminently vital experience, without the blinding lenses of consciousness. With respect to Nietzsche's critique of consciousness, Tereza Cristina Calomeni underlines “[...] the illusory and fictional character” (Calomeni, 2011, p. 228) that this mechanism exerts on life⁹. For this reason, the question arises as to what extent an experience can be interpreted, considering consciousness? And, in so doing, to what extent could this be achieved without prejudice to the integrity of life, in its genuine singularity? Wouldn't the process of interpreting be operating interpolations and even falsifications in what is understood as life in its originality and singularity? Thus, to be an interpreter of any experience, it is necessary to detach oneself from one of its mechanisms: reason. Now, if life is the strongest expression of the organic world, and this is moved by the senses, drives, instincts, and fantasies, then nothing can stand in the way of accessing the source of these organic experiences, under penalty of falsifying life itself with the experiences that follow it.

One of the forms of interpretation of experience that Nietzsche presents is the one that is lacking in the founders of religions, which is the honesty with which they have carried out their experiences.

⁹ Illusion and fiction translate as a distant, strange, and therefore falsified experience of life.

“There is an honesty that has always been lacking in the founders of religions and people of that type: – they never made their experiences a matter of conscience for knowledge” (Nietzsche, 1999, FW/GC, IV, 319, KSA, 3.550-1). At first glance, reading this passage might lead one to understand that the philosopher is encouraging the prioritization of consciousness over religious experiences, when, in fact, the opposite is true. What Nietzsche is pointing out is the lack of clarity in making religious experience a matter of consciousness. Ultimately, what the philosopher wants is for one to confront the reality of what is being done, so that one can assess to what extent such experience truly reflects the senses¹⁰. “What did I really experience? What happened then within me and around me? Was my reason sufficiently clear? Was my will alert to the deceptions of the senses and courageous in defending itself against fantasies?” (Nietzsche, 1999, FW/GC, IV, 319, KSA, 3.551). For an experience to enjoy its full vitality, it must open itself to a process of honesty and probity with oneself, without creating any kind of subterfuge that might hide one's true experience, lest one hide in fantasy and self-deception. For this reason, more than being against reason, it is against the process of experiencing oneself. And this latter process transcends consciousness. Submitting oneself to experience is equivalent to: “Wanting to be our own experiments and guinea pigs” (Nietzsche, 1999, FW/GC, IV, 319, KSA, 3.550-1). That is, such experiments lead to the reality of the self, making everything converge on the most singular experience possible, without the intrusion of elements foreign to it. And to the extent that it overcomes all elements of estrangement, one moves towards honesty with oneself. Being honest with oneself means listening to one's own voice and not to the voice of that which precedes oneself, namely: the voice of conscience. This process occurs from the fact of concluding something as one has defined and judged it to be right, as being within the expected standards. That is, in this process, conscience is what defined the act as right; therefore, it is a moral act. “So: when a man judges ‘*This is right,*’ then concludes ‘*Therefore it must happen,*’ and does what he has thus recognized as right and defined as necessary – then the essence of his act is *moral!*” (Nietzsche, 1999, FW/GC, IV, 335, KSA, 3.560-1). Conscience is the path through which morality is indicated¹¹. And, being morality responsible for the decline into which culture has entered, it is

¹⁰ In the Posthumous Fragments of 1877, Nietzsche shows how far conscience is from a true experience of enjoyment, from a profound experience of life. “In criticizing the enjoyment of nature, there is much to take into account that is by no means due to aesthetic excitement, for example, climbing a high mountain, the effect of the thin, light air, the awareness of the difficulty overcome, the rest, geographical interest, the intention of finding beautiful what others have found beautiful, the anticipated pleasure of recounting. (Nietzsche, 1999, NF/FP of late 1876 and summer of 1877, 23[117], KSA, 8.445).

¹¹ Nietzsche distinguishes consciousness by employing the term *Bewusstsein* to refer to, “[...] the idea that it would have a biological origin [...] to warn of its falsifying character” (Marton, 2016, pp. 154-5) and *Gewissen* to emphasize its moral character, which “[...] arises from the introjection of

necessary to confront it in a way that does not consider culture as defined by morality. Through consciousness, “duty” is placed as the goal to be achieved. Now, duty rises as a foreign element to restrain any and all human manifestation. Therefore, it is necessary to detect in every manifestation of human experience what contributes to fostering the expression of that which translates, with greater force, the original and unique aspects of these experiences, as well as that which inhibits them.

'That is right' is an act – couldn't one judge in a moral way and in an immoral way? Why do you think that, precisely that, is moral? The aspect of “duty” always translates a reality that establishes itself by overriding another, in the sense of restraining it. In this way, is consciousness activated when pointing to morality? – 'Because my conscience tells me that it is so; the voice of conscience is never immoral, for only it determines what ought to be moral!' (Nietzsche, 1999, FW/GC, IV, 335, KSA, 3.561)

All “ought to be” shows itself as an external and foreign import on something that is experienced in more genuine terms by the senses, impulses, and affections. “‘*This is right*’ has a prehistory in its impulses, inclinations, aversions, experiences and in-experiences” (Nietzsche, 1999, FW/GC, IV, 335, KSA, 3.561). That entire basis of right and wrong is not founded on intellectual consciousness, but rather on the capacity to become aware of the role that consciousness plays in life in distancing life from what characterizes it, namely, from that whole set of impulses and affections, inclinations and experiences that constitute life in its most fundamental aspects. As one listens to consciousness, one strengthens those parameters of right and wrong, which were established on a moral basis, thus distancing life from everything that characterizes it as a fundamental instinctual basis. And, since life is constituted on this basis, it is a contradiction to establish universal judgments to characterize it. Thus, everything that is considered by my conscience can never be considered as conscience: “[...] under no circumstances would you call this your ‘duty’ and this your ‘conscience’ duty and conscience any longer” (Nietzsche, 1999, FW/GC, IV, 335, KSA, 3.562). The universalization of a conscience, which, in itself, can only be considered in the singular, is, from its very foundation, based on a moral understanding. Since morality has a tendency to universalize everything that cannot, in itself, be universalized, under penalty of incurring all sorts of undue generalizations, depriving life of that which characterizes it as a set of drives and affects in struggle for control. Now, when consciousness, based on this generalization, interprets life, it ends up distancing it from what constitutes it¹².

aggressive impulses [...] that only at the end of a long process will acquire the moral aspect of a guilty conscience” (Itaparica, 2016, pp. 156-7).

¹² When we talk about generalization, the very dimension of the herd comes to mind, as well as the language linked to it. “Nietzsche understands that consciousness is intimately linked to language; both are founded on the common ground of gregariousness.” (Marton, 2016, p. 155).

One will only be able to assess what consciousness represents to the extent that one learns to live without it. To that end, the challenge is to seek to exercise the art of interpreting and translating life beyond consciousness. “The problem of consciousness (or, more precisely, of becoming conscious) only appears to us when we begin to understand to what extent we could do without it” (Nietzsche, 1999, FW/GC, IV, 354, KSA, 3.590). The bad conscience of something, be it an idea or a sensory perception, awakens a feeling of how much better it would have been if one did not have such consciousness. Therefore, one begins to realize how much better it was before having consciousness, when one was only able to act freely, without any kind of premonition and/or worry. With this, the whole life is lived without the need for it to be reflected upon as through a mirror. Access to life is direct, because otherwise, using a mirror, with its inherent blurring, can translate life with all sorts of imperfections and irregularities. All methods employed as means of translating and interpreting a vital experience, whether mirrors, photographs, or other images, end up compromising the very capacity to enjoy life in its most genuine dimension possible. These methods are, most of the time, used out of the need to communicate the content of what is experienced to others. For this reason, “[...] *under the pressure of the need to communicate*” (Nietzsche, 1999, FW/GC, IV, 354, KSA, 3.591), consciousness, in order to operate a “[...] network of connections between people” (Nietzsche, 1999, FW/GC, IV, 354, KSA, 3.591), begins to operate gregariously. To communicate the content of what happens internally, in terms of vital experience, since it is something unique, it is necessary to use artifacts that are easily absorbed by the herd. Now, when translating this whole range of experiences into words, gestures, and other signs of the kind, one runs the risk of distorting the lived experience itself, falsifying it.

The obligation to communicate all this content of lived experiences is a consequence of a need to express everything that one lacks to one's peers: “[...] he needed his equals, he had to know how to express his refinement and make himself understood – and for all this he needed first 'consciousness'” (Nietzsche, 1999, FW/GC, IV, 354, KSA, 3.591). In order to express everything he felt, therefore to know how to say what he felt, he made the conscious mechanisms be activated and expressed in the form of communication¹³. Therefore, these end up being linguistic extracts distant from what is

¹³ Nietzsche himself, in a letter to Marie Baumgartner, when expressing his feelings, presents consciousness as a necessary vehicle, even if unconscious: “Now that everything has become very clear and clear after a year being with myself (— I cannot express how rich, how creative, despite all the pain, I feel as soon as I am alone —) now, consciously, I tell you also, knowing that I will not return to Basel to stay there. How it will end, I do not know; but my freedom (— ah, the external conditions for this must be as modest as possible —) I will conquer that freedom” (Nietzsche, 1999, Br/Cr to Marie Baumgartner, August 30, 1877, 661, KGB, 5.282).

considered the basis upon which the entire range of lived experiences rests, simply satisfying the need to make comprehensible what happens internally within the herd and not the experience itself, which reflects life itself. In this way, life is compromised in the service of satisfying the herd thirsting for explanations and clarifications, which end up being shadows and falsifications of all that is internal vital experience. Every internal vital experience escapes registration and translation into external communication, “[...] for only this conscious thinking *occurs in words, that is, in signs of communication*, with which the origin of consciousness itself is revealed. In short, the development of language and the development of consciousness (*not of reason, but only of the self-awareness of reason*) go hand in hand” (Nietzsche, 1999, FW/GC, IV, 354, KSA, 3.592). Consciousness is a movement that includes reason itself, but also surpasses it. Becoming conscious moves towards realizing one's own existence and the action of reason, that is, knowing oneself to be moved by the reason that acts in all vital behavior. And this whole exercise of self-awareness while moved by reason grew as the need to transmit all this to others in the form of language increased, and, in doing so, resulted in the falsification of this very vital experience. Each life experience is unique, and in its singularity it can never be reproduced by any mechanism of translation, under penalty of distorting and degenerating it. Therefore, such singular life experiences can only be classified in a single order, one that exempts all and any ordering, which is the phenomenon of the tragic. As a tragic experience, life has a single demand, beyond all conscious exercise of interpretation and translation: the simple act expressed in an affirmative disposition.

Tragedy as a structural boundary between consciousness and life

For life to be affirmed with all its expression of strength, every experience must be lived in the most singular way possible. And living a life guided by such singularity is only possible through enjoying experiences that are lived in the very immediate unfolding of events, as the very unraveling of tragedy. The tragic aspect of life is precisely what is most singular and immediate in it, therefore, without being aware that one is experiencing such an experience. For this reason, by stripping oneself of any and all conscious traces, it is possible to experience, in all its purity, the tragic aspect of life without any explanation of why things present themselves as they are¹⁴. No energy is wasted seeking to inquire into the why of nothingness; one simply welcomes and enjoys the fact in its purest singularity. And, in this singular atmosphere, with Nietzsche, one asks: “[...] where should tragedy originate? Perhaps from *pleasure*, strength, overflowing health, an excessively great fullness? (Nietzsche, 1999,

¹⁴ The Greeks are a very clear example of this aspect of the tragic element (cf. Nietzsche's Br/Cr to Francisca and Elisabeth of February 15, 1873, 295, KGB, 4.122).

GT/NT, Attempt at Self-Criticism, 4, KSA, 1.16). In this realm of the tragic, permeated by pleasure, strength, and the overflowing of health, “[...] consciousness is merely an *accidens* [accident] of representation, not its necessary and essential attribute; that, therefore, what we call consciousness constitutes only a state of our spiritual and psychic world (perhaps a morbid state)” (Nietzsche, 1999, FW/GC, IV, 354, KSA, 3.598). Consciousness does not correspond to what is most intimate in life as a whole, but rather to something accessory and peripheral¹⁵. Or rather, consciousness is a kind of error along the way, and an error that leads to the very loss of oneself and, consequently, illness and disease. It is therefore necessary to establish a therapy of existence that will cure what has become impossible to live in it, by dissolving all the conscious aspects expressed in it.

Everything that passes through the sieve of the mechanisms of consciousness becomes low and leveled, that is, everything that becomes conscious contributes to losing what constitutes novelty and creation, to be content with what is sameness, framework, number. However, despite being low and incipient, consciousness exerts a lordship, a command, as previously presented and also as Zittel attests: “Consciousness is compared by Nietzsche to a sovereign authority (Herrscher), which, however, has no knowledge of the procedures that take place in its domains” (Zittel, 2019, p. 372). When speaking of consciousness, it is necessary to remember that it refers to a very large range that encompasses it, whose classification could be that of levels ranging from the most general to the most individual¹⁶. Therefore, consciousness could be institutional consciousness, common sense consciousness, and personal consciousness. Institutional consciousness would be linked to all those conscious factors that constitute institutions, therefore, at this level of consciousness there is the presence of highly systematized elements that make consciousness something extremely rigid, expressed in orderings that manifest themselves in laws. Consciousness linked to common sense is that in which conscious mechanisms remain at a less rigorous level than the previous one, since conscious mechanisms pervade life in what it presents in terms of signs, sayings and situations that permeate daily life, without the force of law. At its personal level, consciousness expresses itself within the subjective realm, influencing one's way of thinking and acting as a subject; however, “[...]”

¹⁵ Klaus Zittel, in this context of the peripheral dimension of consciousness, speaks of a “[...] transitory and occasional status of generated units, such as self-consciousness and self-knowledge, is a drastic limiter” (Zittel, 2019, p. 372).

¹⁶ It is worth remembering that consciousness is also a topic extensively explored by areas such as Philosophy of Mind, as Günter Abel sublimates: “Consciousness has emerged as a key theme in contemporary philosophy of mind. This is a rather remarkable phenomenon, since the philosophy of consciousness in particular has had bad publicity until now and was considered outdated” (Abel, 2001, p. 01).

even the most personal consciousness succumbs to the leveling magic of the 'great number'“ (Nietzsche, 1999, FW/GC, V, 368, KSA, 3.618). Even being a consciousness at a subjective level, it carries the influence of the herd, which ends up influencing the subjective way of thinking and acting, which, in turn, compromises all sorts of possibilities of creating and constantly distancing oneself from the herd. Although Nietzsche expresses the term “consciousness” in this last passage, cited above, as *Gewissen*, which is its moral sense of consciousness, and not *Bewusstsein*, the biological sense, as has been followed throughout this work.

Even in its moral sense, conscience translates as an impediment to life manifesting itself in its most genuine reality, which is none other than that expressed as tragedy. Whenever conscious mechanisms act, everything related to the phenomenon of tragedy is inhibited, since tragedy does not question what is right or wrong, it simply acts, it works, aiming at the affirmation of everything that leads to the affirmation of life, in its most immediate aspects. To experience this feeling of fullness, overcoming the obstacles that arise, it is necessary to act; therefore, only “He who climbs the highest mountains laughs at the tragedies on the stage of life” (Nietzsche, 1999, *Za/ZA*, I, On Reading and Writing, KSA, 4.49). This dimension of the immediate experience of the tragic phenomenon is accentuated by the fact that, in order to act, one cannot think beforehand, cannot reason about the content of one's action, under penalty of weakening and even falsifying everything that pertains to the action, in its most intimate dimension. Therefore, thinking before acting causes such thought to distance and denigrate the content of the action¹⁷. For this reason, when one acts, one simply acts, without the intervention of elements that express themselves as inhibitors to it. Now, in the tragic phenomenon, all that exists is action, everything else being nothing but dullness, mystification, distancing, and paralysis. Once again, therefore, the fundamental aspect that emerges from tragedy is emphasized. Nothing can be placed before it as a substrate except something that succeeds it in terms of consequence, and a consequence, as unfinished as possible, as reflected upon when discussing the most unfinished biological development of the human organism, which is consciousness. Everything that is linked to it stands out as something that breaks that pattern of immediacy, fundamental for life to be affirmed in its most potent dimension possible. And it is in this potency of life that the fundamental aspect of the tragic is expressed, its Dionysian vein. “The richest in fullness of life, the Dionysian god and man, can afford not only the vision of the terrible and debatable, but even the terrible act and all the luxury of destruction, decomposition, negation” (Nietzsche, 1999, FW/GC, V,

¹⁷ Action is the expression of force and is ultimately obscured by consciousness: “Everything that becomes conscious is the result of what appears only on the surface of an active and hidden pulsional happening” (Zittel, 2019, p. 372).

370, KSA, 3.620). The immediacy of tragedy does not allow for reflection and evaluation of the actions to be put into practice, under penalty of ceasing to act and stagnating the capacity for overcoming. There is no judgment in destroying, decomposing, and negating; one simply embraces it with a joyful affirmative disposition. And, the more one affirms, the more one secures oneself in terms of the capacity for free action. For it is only through free action that life can be affirmed in what constitutes it as most primordial, original, and therefore, magnificent.

Life does not need any kind of mirror to stand in its way as a reflection, as would be all the “[...] enchantments and deceptions of consciousness found in every powerful belief” (Nietzsche, 1999, FW/GC, V, 375, KSA, 3.627). It is precisely through consciousness that moralists have used to imprison life, preventing its free enjoyment. The imposition of any kind of belief makes life hostage to something by which it feels incapable of self-realization. One of the powerful mechanisms that has spread through consciousness is guilt. Through the consciousness of guilt, one is deprived of oneself, as another comes to exert dominance, in the sense of enslaving and holding hostage the one who has kidnapped them.

Feeling guilty, the awareness of guilt, fuels the power exerted over the victim, making them incapable of breaking free from such a chain. One literally lives in function of the one who exerts dominance, imposing submission and obedience. By nurturing a belief of this moral nature, one experiences a firm and unwavering security in something without which one can no longer live, which consequently gives rise to a feeling of incapacity to act in the direction of overcoming it. Now, if the tragedy consists in accepting the fact that presents itself in the most naked and raw way possible, as a totality, in an integral psycho-physical dimension¹⁸. Thus, all the capacity for overcoming is engaged, which is the affirmative acceptance of the fact with joy. So, consciousness consists of passively submitting to the fact, and therefore being incapable of interposing actions that open up to overcoming it. Consciousness presents itself as the path of self-falsification, not allowing itself, through this, to carry out any movement that leads to self-affirmation, but rather a feeling of loss and weariness of oneself and of life. And, through such feelings, only the afflicted and disconsolate writhing of one who has been captured by the teeth of consciousness remains. Given this situation, one cannot deny the existence of an illness that affects all members, rendering them unable and incapable of taking action

¹⁸ The replacement of a conscious view of life can be understood through an agonistic lens: “Nietzsche thinks here holistically, insofar as, for him, each of the contents of consciousness are epiphenomena and determined by an integral psycho-physical conjunction, conceived here antagonistically. He understands the relationship between impulses and consciousness as an agonistic fabric, that is, as a struggle of different interacting interpretations” (Zittel, 2019, p. 373).

to overcome it. Therefore, there is a feeling of not even recognizing oneself. In this state of self-weariness, nothing remains but to lean on what presents itself as the great dawn of existence. “How could we, after such visions, and with such voraciousness for science and consciousness, be satisfied with present-day man? (Nietzsche, 1999, FW/GC, V, 382, KSA, 3.636). Therefore, consciousness presents so many ambitions that it is practically impossible to even recognize the fact of what it is to be human, that is, the fact of its being itself. Everything connected to the human in its present state is disregarded in favor of a promise of future gain. This stratagem was, therefore, that of Paul's Christian belief, in proposing the forgetting and even denial of the body in favor of a world to come. This world is founded on super-powerful beliefs, but which, distant from worldly reality, do not have the reach to ensure the human the minimum capacities for subsistence. The tactic of consciousness is to, by all possible means, distance the individual from that which could truly satisfy him, reducing him to a state of self-dissatisfaction, in favor of feeding on hopes in an imaginary and distant world.

This whole situation of self-doubt can find its antidote in the very reversal of everything that represents the future, the goal, the objective, hope. No longer feeding hopes on a belief that keeps the individual enslaved to consciousness, but rather managing to make “[...] the destiny of the soul turn around, the clock hand move forward, the tragedy *begin*...” (Nietzsche, 1999, FW/GC, V, 382, KSA, 3.637). It is necessary that the destiny of the soul, as conceived within a modern world and conception, not be one that presents itself as an end to be achieved in a world that despises this world of life, but rather a destiny rethought in relation to this world of life, in whose existence it becomes full at every instant. And this happens every minute that marks life in its eternal becoming, in a tangle of relationships¹⁹. In this sense, life can recover its capacity and enthusiasm to constantly overcome each setback that unfolds during each epicycle through which it passes. In this way, each individual completes their eternal restart, through tragedy, which presents itself in a constant process of provoking life to express itself as fullness in favor of the affirmative acceptance of everything that comes to it. Therefore, life and tragedy cannot be dissociated by a particular conception of consciousness that separates them and imposes conditions, but rather, by expressing themselves as a living and affirmative whole, they convey the twilight announcement of modernity.

¹⁹ “Consciousness is understood by Nietzsche in a strictly relational and functional way” (Zittel, 2019, p. 373).

CONCLUSION

The exercise of consciousness sets in motion a whole process of distancing oneself from life, in what it presents as most original and experiential. Therefore, the result of this process leads to the abandonment of life itself, and even to its negation. And, when life is negated, the result is not to be expected, namely, cultural decadence that is expressed in the weakening of the very source from which life emanates: force. Consciousness acts as a kind of lens that interposes itself between experience itself and the individual who experiences it. Therefore, the experience that the individual carries out does not touch life at its primordial source, but rather in what is filtered through the lenses of consciousness. And since consciousness has, in its lens, a compound formed by gregarious morality, which pre-establishes everything that can be read and interpreted, as well as the way in which such processes should occur, the experience that takes place ends up being a falsification of everything that is intended. In this sense, instead of a direct experience, one ends up choosing to base life on a reflection of it, and a reflection extremely distant from its primordial source.

In the course of these pages, the very path that consciousness travels has been presented through a triadic movement, from its biological procedural incompleteness, through how life is translated and interpreted by this same consciousness, to finally show how consciousness establishes a structural limit that prevents the most plastic conception of life, tragedy, from being expressed. Through this path, it was possible to obtain some answers regarding the mechanisms interposed by consciousness, in its most diverse modalities and expressions. Consciousness betrays what constitutes the most basic point of existence, that of living life in what it presents as most physiologically present, as drives and instincts in constant struggle and tension. In its efforts to frame and standardize, consciousness filters and paralyzes any movement directed outward, towards the expression and maximization of everything that represents the organic, as a process of constant destruction and creation. For it is in the midst of this process of destroying to create that life can express itself with all its strength, not in falsified images of itself, but in organic processes.

As one of the stages of organic development, consciousness also has a place. However, it is a final stage, and therefore the least significant, because it cannot translate what life is, except in very distant and broken fragments. Therefore, for this reason, it is also presented as the most unfinished process, that is, the most fragile and inept process to characterize life. Consciousness, in this sense, acts as a kind of dissolution of everything that represents the efforts resulting from biological development. Now, if organic development has been a process of gradual increase and potentiation, then the action of consciousness represents an interruption in this process. With this interruption of the process, the

experience of life suffers a break, because one ceases to have direct contact with everything that represents the organic, to be left with what represents the interpolations of reason, namely, with a whole fictitious world, distant from life and what it represents. Consciousness, therefore, refers to everything that is most fragile and unfinished. It cannot reach the core of what truly touches vital processes, but only their peripheral surface. For this reason, through the exercise of consciousness, one cannot translate life, under penalty of going in the opposite direction to it, but only what in life represents the most refined and incipient.

Life, translated and interpreted by consciousness, ultimately leads to its negation. The negation of everything most intimate to it, namely, the organic processes expressed in drives, instincts, and affections. The translation and interpretation of life through consciousness follows a logical and rational pattern that frames, rigidifies, and crystallizes it into prescriptive moral orderings of everything that should be done. Therefore, consciousness, instead of enabling the experience of life's intimacy, simply prescribes a 'should be.' This 'should be' is aligned with what is predetermined by the mass of the herd. Consciousness does not take into account everything that happens in terms of a vital experience, but rather what is presented in terms of translation and interpretation decoded by consciousness, which is nothing more than the result of the exercise of reason. It is a process of making science out of each and every vital experience, marked by what is most intimate and genuine. In this sense, the question that arises, in the face of this process, is to what extent the result of this process of translation and interpretation can reverberate as a source of expression of what is truly experienced in vital terms. And an experience simply happens, occurs, without any kind of accompanying processes intervening, under penalty of restricting them.

This, therefore, is what tragedy means for life, a fact that simply happens, occurs, in the face of which there is no way to establish any kind of science or even prediction. Everything happens in the most unusual way possible, and, for this reason, what remains is only to experience it in order to experience what is most unique about it. The phenomenon of the tragic therefore represents what is strongest and, at the same time, most specifically vital, in the sense of providing a plunge into the field of experience. As it is a unique experience, it is something unrepeatable, which occurs in the present moment of life and in a full way. And in the face of this manifestation in its fullness, no science can interpose itself against it, since either such science will remain limited, or it will falsify the content it expresses. Tragedy is an event that provokes enjoyment in the present moment of life, and such enjoyment occurs not through the scientific study of this event, but through an experience that is realized from it.

All of Nietzsche's invectives concerning the phenomenon of consciousness are directed at the realm of life. That is, the philosopher identifies all aspects that stand in the way of the experience of life, in its immediate reality, as obstacles to the realization of a fuller experience. The action of consciousness distances and falsifies the intended experience of life, and, in so doing, corroborates its own contempt and negation. The tragic element constitutes, for this reason, the most genuine and appropriate vehicle to act in that space that consciousness claims for itself. Through the experience of tragedy, it is possible to enjoy life in all its genuine reality, as directly as possible, without presenting any “why” as to why such an experience is this way or that, but simply experiencing it, enjoying it to the fullest of what it offers. The singularity of this experience activates and promotes life in its volitional aspect, so that, instead of examining its episteme, one wants it, desires it, thus marking the limits between consciousness and life. It is through this disposition of experiential singularity, devoid of “whys” and any other explanation, that life can be affirmed. Therefore, instead of doing science about the fact of life, one is led to experience it, and an experience that touches the purest, most immediate and organic dimension—requirements that are particularly present in the dimension of tragedy. Life is thus constituted as an eminently tragic phenomenon, and it is through a tragic disposition that it can be affirmed.

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