

## **Nietzsche and the Interpretative Life**

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### **Abstract**

Against an alleged naturalism in Nietzsche's philosophy, this article reconstructs the Nietzschean notion of life under the issue of interpretation. It is intended to show that, for this author, the problem of life exceeds all strictly biologist framework and is concerned, instead, with an ontological dimension, as interpretation represents the configuring activity of sense, through which every living being generates and sustains its own reality. The analysis of this process leads to identify several ways of development about this interpretative life: the life as a merely natural phenomenon, the symbolic life proper of the human beings and, finally, the life of knowledge as a truly philosophical life. From this differentiated approach of the interpretative activity, new light is shed on the notion of Nietzschean perspectivism.

### **Key Words**

Nietzsche, Life, Interpretation, Perspectivism, Knowledge

### **Resumen**

Contra un presunto naturalismo de la filosofía de Nietzsche, este artículo reconstruye la noción nietzscheana de vida al hilo del tema de la interpretación. Se pretende mostrar que para este autor el problema de la vida excede todo marco estrictamente biologicista y se orienta en cambio hacia una dimensión ontológica, en tanto la interpretación representa la actividad configuradora de sentido, mediante la cual todo ser vivo genera y sostiene su realidad. El análisis de este proceso lleva a identificar varios niveles de desarrollo de esta vida interpretante: la forma de vida meramente natural, la vida simbólica propia de los seres humanos y, en último término, la vida del conocimiento como forma de vida genuinamente filosófica. Desde este planteamiento diferenciado de la actividad interpretativa se pueden arrojar nuevas luces sobre la noción nietzscheana de perspectivismo.

### **Palabras clave**

Nietzsche, Vida, Interpretación, Perspectivismo, Conocimiento

## Introduction

Greeks used two different words for what we tend to designate with the term life: *zoé* and *bíos*<sup>1</sup>. The first one refers to life as a natural and biological process which characterizes every organic being (*tò zoon*) and differentiate them from the rest of inorganic and lifeless beings of nature. The second one refers to life as a biographic and historical process inseparable to human existence. While *zoé* relates life with the natural body and its organic processes of growth, feeding and reproduction, *bíos* introduces the phenomenon in a constellation where life displays, beyond its natural determinations, in the creation of spirit and reason (the polis, culture, etc). As *zoé*, life represents, thus, the becoming of a merely natural process that philosophy has wanted to extrapolate, sometimes, to all the cosmos (vitalism), and some others, to reduce it to its minimum expression (mechanism). As *bíos*, life concerns, above all, to human life. The philosophical question that is relevant now, deals with the value of that life: what it means to have a good life? Or, to put it in Nietzschean terms, what it takes to have a superior life?

The distinction between these meanings of the term life does not come from a linguistic refinement exclusive to Greeks, but instead, it reflects a rupture that is immanent to the phenomenon itself, which is palpable in human experience. It is about the almost evident conviction that life is, in any sense, special, different and/or superior to other forms of organic life, that it always seems to be granted with an intrinsic value that does not seem to be found in other forms of life. This idea is not limited to the Greeks, but it passes through the entire western culture and determines a philosophical question that, as I want to show, is central to Nietzsche's thought. By this I mean the question about the border, or boundary, which separates the mere life from the human life, the *zoé* from the *bíos*, or the natural life from what we call the life of the spirit.

Western philosophy has answered this question by pointing the membership of human being to a higher order of being that other living organisms would be excluded from or get involved only in a secondary way (the *logos* for the Greeks, the *cogito* for Descartes or the *Geist* for Hegel). The uniqueness of Nietzsche's philosophy rests largely in the different way of approaching the problem. In fact, for Nietzsche It is not about assuring the membership of the human being to a metaphysical sphere greater than nature, which would guarantee the highest value of *bíos* over *zoé*; furthermore, this alleged superiority is questioned by him or understood purely in the sense of a greater complexity or depth [*Tiefe*] of the soul, which makes the human being 'the most interesting animal' (GM I, 6, KSA 5, 266)<sup>2</sup>. To that extent, man no longer 'comes from the spirit' but 'is placed between the animals' (AC 14, KSA 6,180), so that the root of the increased complexity that

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<sup>1</sup> I take this distinction from the Italian philosopher, Giorgio Agamben, who has recently brought it back into the philosophical arena, although within a different argumentative context (Cf. Agamben, 2003, 9).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. AC 14, KSA 6,180. In this regard, Nietzsche is far away from considering the human being as essentially different from the animal, and not even as the highest stage of evolution. Quite the contrary, he usually refers to man as 'the biggest failure' of animals (Ibid).

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characterize him, does not reside in a superior reason or spirituality outside the sphere of life, but in a movement inside life itself, by which the reactions and impulses of the purely natural bodies are transformed into vital forces of a more deeply scope and meaning.

What is the meaning of this deep significance of human life? How works this transition in human beings, that leads from a basic level of the organic processes to a more complex life of 'spiritual' production? As I have already pointed out, this transition takes place within the becoming of life process, and what I want to argue here is that this becoming, or movement of life, is bounded, primarily, by the activity of interpretation. My purpose is to show, in what follows, the way in which this interpreting, inherent to the becoming of life, adopts different ways of realization that defines the various forms of existence, from the most basic forms of organic life, until its more complex and interesting expression in human being. With this, we also want to question certain readings of Nietzsche's philosophy who take his constant reference to life, on the one hand, as a clear and unambiguous signal of biologism or naturalism (Leiter 2002, 2-3; Schacht 2012, 240) or, on the other hand, as a sort of 'vitalist apotheosis' (Meyer 1991, 120), or the use of a 'counterconcept' of the *Being* of western metaphysics (Borsche 1997, 260). The relation between the becoming of life with the process of interpretation pretends, thus, to note a strong hermeneutical aspect of Nietzschean philosophy<sup>3</sup>, and seeks to make serious objections to exegetical perspectives of metaphysical and naturalist sort.

## Reality and interpretation

How to link the problem of life with interpretation? Before addressing this question, is relevant to highlight the general place of interpretation in the framework of Nietzsche's philosophy. The term 'interpretation' [*Auslegung, Interpretation*] only appears, repeatedly, in the late works of the philosopher, but this does not mean that it should be introduced as a theoretical novelty<sup>4</sup>. In its

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<sup>3</sup> It can surprise the idea that the hermeneutical potential of Nietzsche's philosophy should be found in the connection between the notion of interpretation with the question of life. In fact, the most explicit attempts to introduce Nietzsche inside of hermeneutics do not follow this guidance. Further, it is not obvious that the most representative schools of hermeneutics at the moment have any essential link with the question of life. If one thinks, for example, in Paul Ricoeur, for whom Nietzsche accounts as a representative of the 'hermeneutics of suspicion' (Ricoeur, 1969), or in Gianni Vattimo, who found in Nietzsche's work, the pre-elaboration of a hermeneutic ontology which serves as a framework to the 'weak thought' of post-modernity (Vattimo, 1989), it is clear that the recovery of the phenomenon of interpretation in Nietzsche is not made from the perspective of life (and much less from life as *bios*). On the other hand, another group of comments on Nietzsche's work, identifies and highlights the convergence between life and interpretation around the theme of the body and its organic assimilative and selective processes, but either they fail to identify something like a Nietzschean hermeneutics (Cf. J. Figl 1982; Schacht 1986) or they openly deny such a possibility (G. Abel 1984). For us, we believe that the thematic constellation between life, interpretation and the problem of hermeneutics has a crucial precedent in the hermeneutics of the facticity in the young Heidegger, and therefore a dialog between Nietzsche and this early Heidegger's project, should make clear a hermeneutical vein in Nietzsche, poorly known until now. I found a first indication in this sense, in a Jean Granier observation, who stated that Nietzsche's work should be read taking the body as the thread of interpretation, which would dissolve the great misunderstanding of the late Heidegger with respect to Nietzsche (1966 Granier, 336s). Johan Hofmann has followed this indication, promoting a dialog between these two authors from Heidegger's hermeneutic of existence (1994 Hofman, 219s). Unfortunately, Hofmann focuses only in *Being and time*, leaving in the shade the most proper hermeneutical aspects of his previous lessons. It is in those works in which Heidegger shows, with more radicalism, that life is fundamentally an interpretation that is deployed in several levels or modes of realization. Our standpoint, that it is possible to identify several levels of interpretation in Nietzsche – and connect them with several forms of life – comes to us from this glimpse on the young Heidegger (but also from the recent interpretative philosophy of Günter Abel) (Abel 1995). Therefore, this article wants to be read as a first exploration of this hermeneutical vein in Nietzsche.

<sup>4</sup> In fact, the notion of interpretation can be found, although prematurely, in Nietzsche's early philological writings, who continues to play a key role in the trans-valued philology of his last texts: "Philology as *ephexis* in interpretation" (AC 52, KSA 6,233). Here, however, we had left this theoretical record of the concept to focus on the connection of the interpretation with life.

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general features, interpretation refers to the human activity which gives and confers meaning to an event or phenomenon, initially muted and meaningless. In this broad use, the idea of interpretation is already involved in the attack against philosophical realism that Nietzsche deploys very early. In a work such as *The gay science*, he says:

“You call yourself realist and insinuate that the world really is the way it appears to you [...] Your love of 'reality', for example, - oh, that is an old, ancient 'love' – in every experience, in every sense impression there is a piece of this old love [...] That mountain over there! That cloud over there! What is 'real' about that? Subtracts just once the phantasm and the whole human *contribution* [Zutat] from it, you sober ones! Yes, if you could do *that!* [...] There is no 'reality' for us – and not for you either, you sober ones” (GS 57, KSA 3.421), translation modified).

As one can clearly see, Nietzsche attacks in these lines the very core of realism: the belief in the existence of a subsistent reality in which the human being does not intervene in any way. Now Nietzsche talk of a human 'contribution' that comes into play in the constitution of what we call reality, and a contribution as something that is not simply attached to a reality that has been already formed, but a contribution that cannot be detached from reality without annihilating it. This contribution is nothing more but what has been provided, through human interpretation, to a mute becoming. Interpretation is not merely conceived as a human praxis secondary to the higher exercise of reason or understanding, by which one access the objective and final sense of reality. Rather, there is no reality without this human contribution of the interpretation: in this way, it achieves a fundamental ontological range. The alleged substantiality of the real is finally reduced to the interpretative assessments of human beings on the real thing; the essence of things is dissolved in appearances, that is to say, in the ever-changing forms as they 'appear' before the interpretative observation of humans. The existence and consistency in itself, the independence of things with regard to human knowledge, i.e., the basis of all realism, fades away when it is recognized the bond of things with the meanings that humans grant them, that is to say, the critical nexus between what is called the 'real' and the meaning that has been introduced by an interpretative conscience in the middle of a pure happening.

Nietzsche will never abandon, in its fundamental features, this conception of reality. Some later unpublished fragments confirm and develop this approach in formulations that are much more concise. In 1885 he says: "*Appearance*, as I understands it, is the true and only reality of things (...) I don't opposed 'appearance' to 'reality' but, inversely, I took appearance as reality, which resists its conversion into an imaginary 'world of truth'" (FP 40 [ 53], KSA 11,655 ). Then, in a fragment of 1888, he writes: "The 'apparenciality' belongs itself to reality: it is a form of its being, that is to say, in a world in which there is no being, it has to be created first, by appearance, a kind of predictable and calculable world of identical cases (...) The 'apparenciality' is an arranged and simplified world in which our practical instincts have worked (...) the world making abstractions of our condition of living in it, the world that we have not reduced to our being, our logical and psychological bias does not exist as a world 'in itself'" (FP 14 [ 93], KSA 13,271 ). Thus, the idea stated in the passage from *The Gay science* according to which the essence of reality is configured

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with an ingredient provided by men; the idea that our assessments and names of things 'are more important than these latter are', has been developed in these fragments up to the point of stating that such an appearance, what we provide, coincides with the full reality as such. What in that work is presented as a critique to realism, in these later writings gain autonomy and explicitly appears as a new ontological position. According to this, appearance, that all the metaphysical western realism has always conceived as the kingdom of deceit and lies, as an imperfect imitation and a counterfeiter of true reality, is rather the essential feature of reality itself: everything that exists are not more but appearances, simplifications and arrangements made with a practical purpose from particular points of view, beyond which there is no world in itself. In other words, everything that exists is nothing more than the final result of an interpretation<sup>5</sup>.

## Instincts and chaos

But what is the foundation of this ontology<sup>6</sup> recently exposed? Where this particular ontology does come from, which refers the being of reality to the interpretative performance of human beings? This is not about, as one might think, a simple extension of a transcendental or idealist subjectivism that make of consciousness, and its categories, the focal point of reality. More than a cognitive performance of the understanding, the exercise of interpretation are linked in Nietzsche with the most elementary forms of life activity; this is, not only of human life but also of the whole organic life: not only of *bíos* but also of *zoé*. - This can be better understood, if we pursue the concept of instinct.

The first important use of this term is obviously found in *The Birth of Tragedy*, where the conception of a metaphysical reality being divided between two competing principles is reflected under the image of a continuing struggle between the two 'natural' instincts, namely, the apollonian and the dionysian. There is, however, another sense of the term in Nietzsche that becomes more crucial: this is an almost naturalist meaning of instincts. In this new meaning the action of the instincts is sometimes explained in the framework of a question about knowledge. This knowledge seems to come from sensations. What we experience through the senses is clear to us in appearance: we have sensations and we are aware of them, even more, we can, to some extent, master them, avoid them or repeat them. However, that conscious knowledge that give us the senses, says Nietzsche, is not the fundamental knowledge, since the sensations are experienced always, and at the same time, such as pleasant or painful, and that already presuppose a trial, that is to say, another knowledge prior and unconscious: "Before there was sensation, there was, after a long time - that is

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<sup>5</sup> A late fragment illustrates well the connection of this constellation of life and interpretation with the ontology of will to power: "One should not ask 'who' interprets, but the very issue of interpreting, as a form of will to power, has being [*Dasein*] (but not as a 'being' but as a *process*, a becoming) as an affection" (KSA12.140).

<sup>6</sup> We are aware of the controversy if something like an ontology, in the sense of a doctrine of the being in general, can be derived from Nietzsche's approaches. As is well known, this discussion was triggered by Heidegger's interpretation according to which Nietzsche's will to power would be the answer to a question of the *Being of being*, an interpretation that will originate the thesis that Nietzsche's philosophy represents the culmination of western metaphysics. When we assert here the existence of an ontology, we do not commit ourselves, nevertheless, with this reading. Our idea, which has been presented in detail in other works, is that from Nietzsche's approaches it is possible to develop a response to the question about the total character of *being* and, to that extent, it is possible to speak about an ontology, but this response, however, does not relate the *being* to an absolute foundation or a metaphysical essence but, on the contrary, reveals a 'chaos' on the basis of the ontic reality. For Nietzsche it is about a non-metaphysical ontology of chaos, a notion to which we will refer at the end of this section.

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to say, since always - knowledge: a knowledge which has the function to recognize and conclude. Knowledge is the property of all driving forces" (KSA 9, 438). Unconscious knowledge embedded in the driving forces is the knowledge that proceeds from an accumulated experience by the living organisms since immemorial times and that, before a new event, or in the presence of something unknown, comes to compare, recognize and conclude if this new event is harmful or helpful. In this way, the mere sensations do not give us, according to Nietzsche, an objective access to reality; far from being neutral they are already 'informed', charged of valuations and prejudices that come from some organic impulses acting on us before the conscious act of feeling<sup>7</sup>.

These unconscious and interpretative forces turn out to be the basis of what Nietzsche called the instinct. The driving forces of living beings are triggered before each stimulus in an active or reactive way, so that the response will ensure the preservation of the organism, enhancing its capacity to adjustment and its ability to solve the challenges that constantly introduces the environment. The constant repetition of some stimulus produces, thus, a given response that, little by little, turns into a habit. This habit becomes so strong that even the real presence of the stimulus is no longer needed: only by imagining it, the usual response can be spontaneously released. Such a force that has accumulated a wealth of experience and that, for that reason, has become accustomed to respond to certain stimuli in a certain direction, Nietzsche called instinct [*Trieb; Instinkt*]<sup>8</sup>: "I am talking about *instinct* [*Instinkt*] when any *judgment* (the *taste* in its lowest state) has been incorporated, so from now on it is spontaneously produced and need no more to wait for more sensations to provoked it" (KSA 9, 505). The instincts are, therefore, a bunch of organic forces that are pointed toward a particular purpose, in virtue of a process of domestication that took place by the fortuitous and contingent repetition of the same stimulus over the living organism. That is why the instincts multiply according to the number of stimuli that affect living organisms and the diverse range of actions they provoke, particularly in men. It is surprising the richness with which Nietzsche reproduces the instincts within his discourse. A quick review of his work reveals the countless composed expressions that are formed by linking the term instinct with an activity that gives meaning to it: metaphysical instinct [*Metaphysischetrieb*], artistic instinct [*Kunsttrieb*], knowledge instinct [*Erkenntnistrieb*], truth instinct [*Wahrheitstrieb*], logical instinct [*Logischetrieb*], ethical instinct [*Ethischetrieb*], etc<sup>9</sup>. Besides, not every instinct is located on the

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<sup>7</sup> With this idea of an unconscious knowledge that precedes and determines the conscious act of feeling, and in general of the so-called conscience, Nietzsche becomes a predecessor of the depth psychology and particularly of Freud's psychoanalytic method. The unconscious represents for Nietzsche the 'great reason of the body', a sort of 'undercover physiological process' to which the conscious life is a layer rather superficial and insignificant (Cf. In 199, KSA 3,113).

<sup>8</sup> This notion is central in Nietzsche's thought and remains throughout his work. It is undeniable that the substance of the concept is clearly naturalist, but it must be note that this naturalism is not exclusive to the sciences of life, as by his time it was also present in several aesthetic theories. In particular, the notion of instinct has a long history in this field, which goes back to the German pre-romanticism up to Wagner, passing by through Schiller and Hölderlin. Paul-Laurent Assoun has done a comprehensive account of this history. According to him, the basic Nietzschean idea to understand instincts as engines that operate in the human reality, could be a legacy from the *Sturm und Drang* movement. The concept is also central to Emerson who provides an element that will be fundamental in the Nietzschean use of the term: Emerson uses the term instinct as a means to find the immediate sense of the world that cannot be achieved simply through the arid reason. In a similar way, we saw how Nietzsche appeals to the instinctual forces of living beings, to refer the primary unconscious experience of man in the world, even previous to the conscious sensitive experience (Cf. Assoun 1984, 93-101). It is therefore clear that the notion does not entail a strictly biological character. This dual aspect of the term – ontological/aesthetic and scientific – should be highly attractive for Nietzsche who, already in *Human, all too human*, understood his reflection as a 'philosophical science' opposite to the pure metaphysical abstractions.

<sup>9</sup> In this sense Assoun speaks of the 'escisiparasitarian mode of reproduction' from Nietzscheans *Triebe*. The above cited are only a small sample from a list of over 60 terms that brings this author (Cf. Assoun 1984, 82-83).

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same level, but some are more powerful than others inasmuch as, at the fate of many similar excitations, they have been exercised more and, so to speak, become 'hardened'.

Of course, this doesn't exhaust Nietzschean ontology frame given that, for itself, instincts don't have any reality at all. In fact, they are only as they manifest, and they only manifest if they are being pushed by an external event. With this, we are not talking about something like an 'external world' as a 'reality in itself' that is outside men'. External *estimuli* don't come from a world of established things, but from a shapeless happening that only attain its consistency and meaning in the interpretation that the instincts elaborate over it. Hence the active and creative character of the forces that constitute instincts. These are not reactive impulses that restrict themselves to passively pick up what happens, as the Kantian forms of intuition. Instincts are, above all, dominant forces that throw themselves over what happens, in order to put it at its service; to give it its own shape and find, in that way, its own satisfaction. Events not only lead instincts towards such a response but, reciprocally, they also interpret the happening in such a way that this ends up provoking the excitations they are get used to. That this events are malleable by instincts forces, means that the happening is not, so to speak, something finished and conclusive; is not the world of enduring objects or the reality, firmly in appearance, given to the common sense. This unpredictable and eventful happening is simply 'what happens', the happening that is imposed on us by the force of need and that Nietzsche calls, eventually, 'chaos' (KSA 12, 395)<sup>10</sup>.

To some interpretative instincts correspond a certain happening that allows it to be interpreted. These instinctual forces that are abandoned into this chaos of happenings in order to satisfy its vital impulse constitute what Nietzsche will call *will to power*<sup>11</sup>. The concepts of force and instinct provide the basis of a new conception of reality, anti-metaphysic and anti-idealist in its purposes: reality is not a substantial and permanent structure, nor the mere subjective representation of it; rather, it is a mobile structure that is generated and maintained in the reciprocal action of a random force of a pure happening and the interpretive force of the instincts; reality is change, transformation, *dinamis*, the force that is originated in the combined action of two others which are mutually dependent: the result, constantly generated, between randomness and power, between event and meaning, between chaos and instincts.

## The deployment of interpretative life in levels

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<sup>10</sup> On the notion of chaos in the sense of a becoming that is braided with the interpretative instincts Cf. Haar 1993, 179ss. It is also very useful the analysis of Cox 1999, 206SS, as well as the work of Muller-Lauter 1999, 140ff.

<sup>11</sup> Already inside *The gay science* it is clear that the doctrine of will to power evolve from these concepts of force and instinct. For example, the fragment 349 says: "To wish to preserve oneself is a sign of distress, of a limitation of the truly basic life-instinct, which aims at *the expansion of power* and in so doing often enough risks and sacrifices self-preservation (...) the great and small struggle revolves everywhere around preponderance, around growth and expansion, around power and in accordance with the will to power, which is simply the will to power" (GS 349; KSA 3,585). It should be noted that this text belongs to the fifth book and that's why it is later (1886) to the rest of the work. But that Nietzsche inserts this book into the existing structure is a proof of the continuity that he saw between the 'physiology of instincts' that we have been noting and the theory of will to power. Otherwise, this fragment is a clear indication of the controversy of Nietzsche with Darwinism. In effect, to take the '*expansion of power*' as the 'truly basic life-instinct' is to consider that the most genuine force that drives evolution does not lie, as stated by Darwinism, in a passive adaptation to external

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The foregoing analysis let us point out the fundamental link between the natural phenomenon of life (*zoé*) and the interpretative activity. From this perspective, life is instinctual and natural life, configurations of driving forces and organic impulses. But even at this basic level, life is not performed simply as a repetitive and structured process according to the natural mechanisms of growth or reproduction. Even in its lower forms, life takes place as a mobile, creative and dynamic activity, which responds to the changing conditions of a chaotic happening that imposes challenges, which are always different. For Nietzsche this activity is already a form of interpretation: it is the primary level of interpretation that takes place in every organic shape of the *zoé*. This interpretation, as it must be clear, not only provides an account of the adaptative functions of any organism to its environment; it is in fact, a highly creative exercise whose deep ontological sense is not captured if it is understood merely as an adjustment of any organism to its natural habitat<sup>12</sup>. The interpretative life as *zoé*, doesn't adapt itself to a natural environment already given, but provides meaning to a chaotic flow of sensitive stimuli, this is, it shapes and creates, with the forces of chaos, what can only be called environment, habitat or natural reality. This provides the interpretative life with a deep ontological significance; it is more than the unity of biological or physico-chemical processes, it is the vector and the sense force that has control over a chaotic becoming in order to configure what is called reality. But, as it should be noted that life is more than just a natural process, it must be remembered that life is, for Nietzsche, much less than a metaphysical absolute instance. The interpretation of life is not an unconditioned act that has created the world and reality from nothing. Interpretative life is confronted by a chaos, a primary happening that life can't dominate or predict and which enters, instead, into a tense correlation from where it permanently springs, as a result of reality, i.e., the constant play of two vector forces<sup>13</sup>.

This first level of interpretation proper of every natural life is not the character of an intellectual activity and is not even performed as a conscious process. It is about a spontaneous exercise of life whose function is not cognitive or theoretical but practical; with this, it meant to establish a ground of stability where life itself can flourish. Therefore, for what at this level is called interpretation, has for Nietzsche the form of a simplification of chaos of what is happening in relatively constant frames of reference:

*“Simplification is the foremost need of the organic; to perceive relations in a more concise*

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circumstances, i.e., in the mere preservation instinct, but precisely in an active willingness to affirm the living that seeks to increase its vital power – and not just adapting to their environment.

<sup>12</sup> Here again, it is clear that there is a controversy of Nietzsche against Darwin: life don't tends, primarily, to adapt to its environment and to conserve itself; in all living things it is visible, rather, an impulse to exceed and 'want more' (KSA 13,301 ).

<sup>13</sup> It seems to me that this ontological aspect of life as interpretative life passes unnoticed quite frequently. This is evident in the well-known analysis of Alan Schrift, whose goal – as our own – is in part to study the relationship between Nietzsche and hermeneutics. Schrift recognizes the universalization of the interpretative process that takes place in Nietzsche (Schrift 1990, 182), as well as the place of this process before any distinction between subject and object (ibid., 191), even more, he recognizes that the will to power is nothing but another name for this interpretativity (ibid., 183), but he avoids, however, to provide this process an ontological status. When, on the other hand, he propose to take the issue of lifestyle as a criterion for ranking the interpretations (ibid., 176), what he does, is to create a distance between life and the action of interpreting, when, in truth, is the same process at the basis of the real. Schrift does not develop the notion of life, and much less warns about the ontological character that this one has on both interpretative processes. Something similar can be said of the famous study of Nehamas (Nehamas 1985) that again recognizes in will to power the principle of interpretation and reinterpretation of the world, but opting for an image of the world as a text with the purpose of deny any ontological structure (Nehamas 1985, 96s). With this gains more relevance a philologist Nietzsche than a vitalist one, which leaves in the background the role of life, its forces and instincts. We would like to emphasize that a notion of life such as interpretation, that is, a vital process of fundamental interpretativity (in conjunction with chaos), represents for Nietzsche the last background of being, that is, its own ontology.

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way, to capture the cause and effect without the various intermediated links, to find similar many dissimilar things - this was needed. That is how an incomparable vaster search for food and assimilation took place, since the belief that it would be something to eat was often excited - with great advantage to the growth of the organic!" (KSA 9.563).

Nietzsche here descends to the level of the more primary relations of the organisms with its environment. At this level, the instincts that begin first to be released, are the basic instincts to survive. For example, the feeding instinct, presupposes the development of other instincts: the simplification instinct, by which unequal stimuli are taken as equal thus creating recognizable forms of what is edible or poisonous. In this way also emerged, and was gradually strengthened, the belief in the existence of things identical and substantial:

"The *sensations* and the object that *provokes it* are mixed up from the beginning! The equality of the excitements gave rise to the belief in 'equal things': the excitements of *equal duration* raised the belief in 'things', 'substances'. The *principle of life conservation* should be explored in the ways as the first organic formations experienced the excitements and judged what was external to them" (KSA 9, 544).

Here Nietzsche speculates about the vital forces of the primitive forms of life (the protoplasm) that, since then, and overexcited by the happenings of the environment, were strengthened to become instincts: similar stimuli provoked the belief in the existence of 'objects', of 'permanent things'; then this belief, many times repeated, becomes an instinctual force and then no longer expects new excitements, but rushes over what is happening and interprets it as populated with these 'identical objects'. The belief, common today, in a world of fixed objects and events that are interconnected through relations of cause and effect, arose only as a result of millennia of evolution during which these instincts of simplification, constancy, causality and identity, have become so powerful, that its interpretation of the stimuli that happens, appears to us as immediate and unquestionable<sup>14</sup>.

The act of interpretation means, in this primary level, the activity by which every organic being constitutes its own reality; the constitutive activity of life itself, given that, only from the stable ground that any interpretation creates in the middle of the random happenings, life can flourish. For this need of interpretation Nietzsche provides multiple formulations: the need for illusion, or more commonly, the 'will of appearance', but it is clearly not an appearance that hide a substantial reality, but a will to project, to make appear, from the interpretative instincts, a relatively solid field where the natural process of life can be achieved.

However, the life that unfolds in such a way, not always remains in this basic development of the constitution of an environment. In fact, regarding to human beings, this represents only a first

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<sup>14</sup> "The preponderating inclination, however, to deal with the similar as the equal - an illogical inclination, for there is nothing equal in itself - first created the whole basis of logic. It was just so (in order that the conception of substance should originate, this being indispensable to logic, although in the strictest sense nothing actual corresponds to it) that for a long period the changing process in things had to be overlooked, and remain unperceived; the beings not seeing correctly had an advantage over those who saw everything in flux (...) The course of logical thought and reasoning in our modern brain corresponds to a process and struggle of impulses (...) so rapidly and secretly does this primitive mechanism now operate in us" (GS 111; KSA 3.471).

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stage of a becoming of life that will take place in subsequent developments due to a growing momentum of the interpretative activity. With this, we go from a merely animal life to a truly human life: the transition from *zoé* to *bíos*. For Nietzsche this transition does not happen as a leap to access another sphere of the being of life, qualitatively superior to the field of the natural organic life. On the contrary, is from the same field of interpretative instincts that this step is determined and life is pushed toward a different level of development. Nietzsche often bases this specific development of life in human life, in the exacerbated development of a communicative instinct proper of those particular organisms that are human beings. Human life is conscious life of itself, and this consciousness, according to Nietzsche:

"only has been developed under the pressure of the need for communication (*Mittheilungs-Bedürfnisses*) [...] While [the man] is the animal in greater danger, it required assistance, protection, of his peers, he had to express his penury, know he was making himself understand - and for all this, he needed first and foremost the 'consciousness', thus 'to know', by himself, his needs, 'to know' how he feels, 'to know' what he thinks" (GS 354; KSA 3,591).

In this way, the specific human fact of conscience of itself rests for Nietzsche in the particular instinctive settlement of the human species, which includes, within this network of forces and impulses, one that springs from an eminently natural and corporal need (*Bedürfniss*), to inform the physiological states of individuals. This is the force he calls here an instinct of communicability. And what is surprising is that this instinct - which, as any instinct arises from a natural need and acts in an unconscious way - ended up being, after a long process of growth and development, in the phenomenon of human communication, or language, and with this, in the exercise of conscious thought that we call rational. In a rather indiscernible way, in the human being, and only in him, can be verified a transition by which a natural instinct evolved until it opens a field of action for the instincts that goes beyond the scope of the organic nature. Thus, the step from *zoé* to *bíos* takes place, not as a sudden displacement of the field of animality up to the free kingdom of the spirit, nor is pull on by a pure reason in an instance beyond life. Instead, it arises from life within, as a continuous movement that springs from itself and raises from the simple processuality of the organic to another kind of praxis. Of course Nietzsche is unable to identify the device or event that triggered this transition. From the genealogical perspective that leads his analysis, it is only possible to interpretatively reconstruct, backwards, the type of previous needs that responds the emergence of a phenomenon. For this reason, that rational thought arise from a natural instinct, is only a genealogical interpretation - although based on good reasons - that does not posit any explanatory device that explains this transition, but in any case is most obvious and less fantastic than the metaphysic conjecture according to which reason is an unconditional fact or came from a divine provenance<sup>15</sup>.

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<sup>15</sup> Nietzsche's genealogy could be seen, from this perspective, as an 'inverted' naturalism, that is to say, not as one that tries to deductively derive, from a natural principle, the diversity of human life, but one that reconstructs - psychological and historically - how the human reality has become significantly different from the natural reality of animals, that humans presume to come from. This genealogical naturalism that does not reduce the spiritual to the natural (the *bíos* to the *zoé*), highlighting, however, a continuity between the two

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But, what is the nature of this praxis bonded to *bíos*? What is the meaning of the 'superiority' of *bíos* over *zoé*, that makes humans the 'more interesting' animal (GM I, 6, KSA 5,266)? Conscious human life is such, because the symbolic language allows men to take distance from their own environment and then turns back upon themselves. The individual who invents signs breaks the immediacy that links, inextricably, the animal with its environment, and sets before him an objective field which can be characterized in different directions, while he apprehends its own activity and becomes conscious of himself. An instinctual need for communication takes men to develop a capacity for communication by language of signs, and these, at the same time, led them to the development of consciousness and rational thinking. – The real human life is, thus, the conscious life of the logical thinking, but logic is not meant to be here the correct process of a thinking that reflects – as metaphysics assumes – the very structure of being; the logical thinking is rather a symbolic thought that introduces fictitious schemes in the shapeless happening of the real in order to make it manageable (Cf. KSA, 11, 505). These schemes – for example, the cause-effect relationship, numbers, etc. – are developed and become more complex with new refinements of sign language and memory. With all this the *bíos* establishes a device of simplification whose function is to filter and shape chaotic events in ways that make them stable and manageable<sup>16</sup>. The chaos of stimuli and impressions, that in the basic instinctual forms of *zoé* has been subjected to a first simplification, experiments then, on the horizon of bios, a new reductive schematization that reduce its unpredictability and tame it in regular patterns that make possible the stability and growth of human life<sup>17</sup>.

This second simplification of chaos comes, in any case, from a quality quite different from the first one. From the simplification of *zoé* results the establishment of a habitat or environment that meets the demands of a purely animal or organic life. This environment is virtually unchangeable while the living conditions of the organism remain substantially unaltered. The *logification* of chaos performed by the conscious life of the *bíos* is, instead, a fluid and changeable schematization, one that is not crystallized in a rather constant environment of repetitive stimuli and responses, but one that introduces a world of signs always open to new determinations of sense.

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fields, seems, for Nietzsche, the only possible way for naturalism. With his idea of a naturalized normativity, Richard Schacht is close to this approach (Schacht 2012, 241, 249), without detect, nonetheless, the interpretative ontology of life that leads the genealogical analysis of the philosopher.

<sup>16</sup> "As long as we establish that fiction as a scheme, in which, somehow, as we think *we screen* the factual happening through a device of simplification, we turn this happening into a *writing of signs*, and to the *communicability* and *perceptiveness* [*Merksamkeit*] of the logical processes" (KSA 11,505 ). Cf. KSA 12,396.

<sup>17</sup>With the names of *bíos* and *zoé* I identify two ways of performing the interpretation in Nietzsche, that keep a parallel with the distinction that trace Abel between an interpretation as *grammatical functions* that restrict, preconsciously, the horizon of a possible articulation of the world, and an interpretation in the most basic sense of the *interpretative circle of what happens* (Abel 1985, 53). This points to the fundamental process of the act of interpretation, that is extended in all the organic and inorganic processes (ibid., 60). Obviously, these two levels of Abel will correspond, respectively, to the forms of interpretation of *bíos* and *zoé*. The difference between my approach and that of Abel's, is that the latter pretends that this deployment of the interpretation at levels not to compromise Nietzsche with an ontological position, and, rather, leads to the non-realization of any ontology (ibid., 61). For me, I would argue that Nietzsche has an ontology and that this one is a basic vector in the exercise of the interpretative life. - Another approach that is close to what is exposed here can be found in Boredal (Boredal 2005). This author identifies two levels in the world of the becoming, or Nietzsche's chaos of the happening, which would correspond to the two processes of interpretation and simplification. To the level that is more primary he calls it by the name of proto-level [Ur-ground] which is the common background that we share with all the percipient creatures, a background that is open by an indefinite number of creatures according to their own perceptive designs. However, when we open this level of agreement with our human possibilities we create a human horizon that Boredal calls the human-level [Human-ground] (Boredal 2005, 15). In a more concise way, in the first background is sight the one who assumes the simplification –

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This is what the interpretative activity of *bíos* is all about; through it, chaos is not simply remade and structured in an animal environment, but this environment becomes significant, i.e., it becomes symbolic, therefore communicable, aware and changeable. In man:

“Due to the nature of animal consciousness, the world of which we can become conscious is merely a surface – and Sign-world, a world turned into generalities and thereby debased to its lowest common denominator” (GS, 354; KSA 3.593).

The praxis of *bíos* is the praxis of interpretation as well, but this interpretation is no longer the mere quietness of chaos in an environment, but in their significance in a world always open to the sense. In this lies the 'superiority' of human being, i.e., his 'problematic and interesting' character. The *zoé* – the instinctive life of every animal species, but also acting in the human being – is basic interpretation, that is to say, an interpretation whose performance consists, not only to be adapted, but first and foremost to make adaptable the unfathomable happening of reality. The *bíos* – the specifically human life – is interpretation in a more complex development: in it reality becomes a field of significant possibilities, a horizon changeable in multiple directions that makes it possible for countless developments of life. - To each form of realization of life belongs a different praxis of the interpretative exercise. To interpret turns out to be, firstly, that unconscious and quiet activity of the instincts by which living beings set out in the chaos of the happening, a firm structure that serves as their foundation for its vital deployment. But after that ontological constitution common to all vital species, the human being carries out its life in another direction since, unlike (other) animals whose instincts are settle down and become a routine in the world that they have formed, his instinctual configuration constitute and reconstitute, over and over again, a world of 'signs and surfaces' that is always incomplete, that keeps appearing as enigmatic, imprecise and re-signifying in new directions. In other words, the worlds of the different vital species are the result of an interpretation, but only for the human being the world – that is to say 'his/her' world – is being offered as a text and not as a solid structure, and like any text requires, always, of new interpretations<sup>18</sup>.

## Perspectivism and knowledge

These two achievements of interpretation that we have identified here with the names of *zoé* and *bíos*, may not be clearly visible through Nietzsche's motley and fragmentary writing<sup>19</sup>, but in my

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interpretation process, whereas in the second is language (ibid., 14, quote 28). Jumps to the sight, the similarity of these two backgrounds with what here I identify, respectively, as *zoé* and *bíos*.

<sup>18</sup> More than life and its interpretative instincts, the problem of interpretation in Nietzsche, usually refers to the notion of the text. Such is the case of the above-mentioned study of Nehamas (Nehamas 1990), the earlier reading of Granier (Granier 1966) and especially the approaches of Sarah Kofman (Kofman 1983). This last analysis is particularly related with our own position, as Kofman identifies in Nietzsche two achievements of the interpretative exercise. For her, the text is not, as Granier would think, the being at the basis of interpretations: what Nietzsche proposes, she believes, is to "decipher from behind all the secondary interpretations, initial interpretations, symptomatic of the kind of will it evaluates; this has to do with the text of nature, text that is not given, but constituted" (Kofman 1983, 196). The point at which I differ with Kofman, is when she denies this text, which is none other than the text of life, all ontological value (ibid., 136). As in the case of Schrift or of Nehamas, excessive prevention against any questioning for the being leads Kofman to deny the ontological nature of many of Nietzsche's theses, in particular, the one of life as interpretative life.

<sup>19</sup> Even more, it could be objected, taking into account some of his writings, that for the philosopher happens just the opposite of what has been exposed. Some may say that in a writing such as *Truth and Lie in a Extra-moral Sense*, the exercise of the intellect, reason, logic and language – i.e., of the bios – is more generally identified with an impulse to simplify and schematize the wealth of sensation and

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opinion this distinction is inherent to his thought and helps to clarify and refine many of his approaches. This is true, for example, for the concept of *perspectivism*. To indicate the interpretative nature that is essential to every form of life (without distinction between *zoé* and *bíos*) Nietzsche speaks of the "perspective character of existence" and the nonsense [*Unsinn*] that represents a form of existence devoided of interpretation (GS 374; KSA 3,626). In this general sense of the term, the perspective of interpretative existence makes reference, both to the different perspectives with which human beings interpret the world – that sort of interpretation of the text of the reality, or better, the interpretation of an interpretation –, as to the most primitive and primary with which each species organize and maintains what is, in each case, the basic furniture of their realities. However, it seems obvious that the perspectivism of *zoé* implies different consequences than what is proper to human *bíos*. On the first one it is stated:

"The whole organic world is a chain of beings, each one surrounded by small universes that they have created by projecting outward their force, their wishes, their common experiences, to build their *outside world*. The ability to create [*Fähigkeit zum Schaffen*] (to configure, to invent and to fantasize) is their basic capacity [...]. What about the creative [*das Schöpferische*] in each organic being? – That everything that is for each one their 'outside world', represents a set of value judgments; green, blue, red, hard, soft are inherited *value judgments* and its signals" (KSA 11,503).

The perspectivism of the *zoé* implies that each organism develops, in conjunction with the chaos of what is happening, their own living space. However, as human intellect is also confined within its own world and perspective, it is not possible to say a word about these other universes that belongs to different species that are equipped with different configurations of instincts. In this sense the philosopher can only launch the conjecture that the world could be infinite [*unendlich*], "insofar as we cannot reject the possibility *that it includes infinite interpretations*" (GS 374; KSA 3,626).

When on the contrary one refers, not yet to the animal perspectivism at the level of the *zoé*, but to the perspectivism of the *bíos*, Nietzsche no longer speaks in conjecture about the *infinite* of interpretations that might arise from the possible infinite number of organism, many of whom we don't even know yet, but he refers to the *plurality*<sup>20</sup> of meanings that may have a human existence, that it should not be stripped of. In this direction he points out the following fragment:

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intuition, with a tendency to stop the unstoppable flow of chaotic impressions in constructs of sense rather superficial. The *bíos* then appears as dominated by a 'truth instinct' (KSA 1,881) whose effect is to build a false world of laws and regularities, opposed to the sensible world of the immediate impressions (ibid), i.e., the world of the *zoé*, which is open to the becoming and the unpredictable. For us, however, these approaches do not refute our central argument, because in this writing the controversy of Nietzsche is directed against a kind of man committed to discover the universal and absolute truth that would be latent in the middle of the chaos of the sensitive, but such a man – the theoretical or scientific man – hardly embodies the form of realization of the interpretation that we call here *bíos*. On the contrary, he represents the kind of existence that forgets and inhibits the power of the interpretative life, dissolving the metaphors in concepts and erecting, as an absolute truth, his own abstractions, closing the possibility of embracing new senses. This young text is aimed, at last, against the theoretical life that forgets that it is also an interpretation. But the very issue of interpretation and its several forms of realization can't be found here yet, which only gain relevance in his subsequent writings. However, the second part of the text shows Nietzsche's attempt to reduce the truth instinct into an 'instinct to create metaphors' 'whose elimination would mean the elimination of man in itself' (KSA 1,887) and in which we find already the interpretative activity of *bíos*. Indeed, the individual inventor of metaphors embodies an emancipated intellect that shatters all his constructs of sense, and mixes, reprocesses and reformulates them permanently (KSA 1,888), revitalizing the interpretative power of life that the so-called 'pure knowledge' has weakened and that, in any case, doesn't come from the simple *zoé*.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. GS 373; KSA 3.624

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"Insofar as the word 'knowledge' has a meaning, the world is capable of been known; but it is interpretable [*deutbar*] in many ways and it does not have a meaning behind it, but countless of senses - 'perspectivism'. our needs *to interpret the world*: our instincts, its pros and cons" (KSA 12, 315).

This way, the doctrine of perspectivism must be considered differently according to the interpretative realization we find ourselves. There is perspectivism in the *zoé* that refers to the infinite realities that the different – and probably infinite – types of organic life have formed in its simplifying interpretation of chaos. There is, then, a perspectivism of the *bíos* which assures that human beings configures in multiple ways, through their use of reason and its symbolic language of signs, the meaning of the world, and this plurality of sense does not amount to an infinity, because the possibilities of an opening of meanings are limited by the particular instinctive settlement which is proper to us. –The perspectivism in the *zoé* implies that as long as the interpretative experiences of other organisms are unknown to us, the universe of their environment is unknowable. The perspectivism of human thought, leaves open, on the contrary, the possibility to access other forms of sense installation that other human beings and other cultures, even at different times, have drawn to make significant their environment and their world. – Between perspectives of the *zoé* there is incommensurability; between perspectives designed by a symbolic and interpretative reason there is always the possibility of knowledge. But this knowledge of the perspectivism no longer takes place as the gradual discovery of the essential truths of being and of the real, but only as the inexhaustible effort to mobilize and to introduce other possible meanings to the world. This, says Nietzsche, is the only possible sense of the word knowledge: not the revelation of the being of things, but the active proliferation of interpretations of the *bíos*, the constant signification and re-signification of the text always open of the world<sup>21</sup>.

## **The human tension between *zoé* and *bíos* and the life of knowledge**

We have glossed the transition that in human beings leads from the elemental sphere of *zoé* to the achievements of *bíos*, as a becoming that takes place inside the interpretative life. In the first case, it is the merely animal life, i.e., the simplifying interpretation which makes from chaos an environment of stability; in the second one, it is the human life itself, i.e., the interpretation in signs, reason and language, which gives meaning to the chaos and turn it into a world, this is, an horizon open to new meanings. The 'superiority' of *bíos* over *zoé*, the greater complexity and problematization of the first one lies here: in the richest creative deployment of its interpretative activity, in the always renewed possibility of opening new sides of chaos and turn it into a world.

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<sup>21</sup> It is not possible to make this distinction between a perspectivism of the *zoé* and one of the *bíos* in the framework of the traditional comments that see perspectivism essentially as an epistemological doctrine and not an ontological one (Schrift 1990, 145; Nehamas 1985, 73), who are unfamiliar with the fundamental ontological phenomenon of the interpretative life which sprout from different realizations of the interpretation, the specific perspectives of the animal species and the multiple perspectives inside the human species. Our distinction seems to be, among commentators, more basic than those that distinguish an immanent perspectivism from a transcendental one (Nehamas 1983; Strong 1998), or between a weak perspectivism and a strong one (Hales, Welshon 2000). To demonstrate this, however, goes beyond the purposes of this article.

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With respect to these two achievements of interpretative life one must be aware against a reading that sees these two fields of action radically separated and heterogeneous. In fact, even when *bios* refers, more properly, to the actions of men, nor the human existence is purely rational and symbolic realization that had left behind the life of *zoé*, nor can we distinguish, in the human-animal, a field of purely animal instincts, and draw a limit with clarity from the field of interpretative forces proper of *bios*. However, neither can we assure that in the particular case of that species, i.e. the human-animal, the impulses proper of *zoé* have been fully reabsorbed in the *bios*, where they would acquire a higher significance. Such an approach could hardly be distinguished from the Hegelian *dictum* according to which 'the spirit is the truth of nature'. Of course Nietzsche would be willing to recognize that a good part of the actual animal needs of the human being have already lost the rudeness of the purely natural and have been reinterpreted and sophisticated in the horizon of the symbolic culture, but for him this does not give the *bios* (the culture and the symbolic) an ontological status higher than that of *zoé*. Human life is not pure *bios* that has eliminated *zoé*, or absorbed it into his field of meaning. More close to Nietzsche's approach, it's fair to think human life as a permanent tension and conflict between these two element that, in this way, turns out to be inseparable.

How to understand this conflict? First and foremost, we must beware of resolving it by making prevail one principle over the other. Neither the human life is *bios* that has 'overcome' *zoé* (as in a Hegelian reading of Nietzsche), nor it prevails the instincts of the *zoé* even if they are now deployed (sublimated) in the symbolic constructions of *bios* (such as a certain Freudian reading could suggest). What is peculiar to the human species is the coexistence of *zoé* and *bios*, that is, the fact that, within her, the interpretativity of life is not only performed in a preconscious way or simply intuitive, but also through the creative exercise of a symbolic interpretative reason. This peculiarity derives in the instability and tension that mark steadily any form of human existence. It is the conflict that, on the one hand, holds back, with the stabilizing inertia of *zoé*, the impulses of the *bios*, and at the same time, constantly undermines this gained stability with the restlessness of a symbolic pulse that does not run out. We say this never-resolved conflict defines the peculiarity of the human existence, as opposed to the stillness of other animal species. It is the conflict between an inertial tendency to crystallize and strengthen the horizons of symbolically configured human action, and an interpretative force that is always renewing and competing again and again to open new directions of sense in the framework of the established.

It is important to insist that the conceptual couple here proposed of *zoé* and *bios*, cannot be understand as a form of metaphysical dualism that postulate, in human nature, two principles equally essential, although opposites whit each other. With the conflict between *zoé* and *bios* there is no reference to the traditional metaphysical opposition between body and soul, or instincts and reason. Firstly because we are not dealing here with two substantial and unconditioned principles that, either accidentally or externally, enters into a conflict correlation. On the contrary, none of these two elements lives outside of this relationship. For humans there is no pure animal impulses that have not been refracted already in the field of language and reason, and, at the same time, the symbolic reason is no never in a purely spiritual horizon, but is always incarnated or 'incorporated' into organic instinctive arrangements. At first is, then, the correlation and the conflict, so that, inside

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the human species, the *zoé* is no longer the mere immediate impetus of the animal and the *bíos* is not pure culture and rational configuration. In the middle of the more complex instincts of the conscious life, the impulses of *zoé* that tend to fix and crystallize the sense, 'rationalize' in more complex and 'spiritual' forms like the impetus for the *truth* that in its various forms of expression (metaphysics, science, religion, etc.) do not represent but the tendency to solidify a particular interpretation of reality; and, at the same time, the creative and symbolic powers of the *bíos* never get uprooted from the animal, instinctive or corporal background, that is rather the source that propel them, as is evident in the production of *art* itself.

But in addition to the foregoing, the essentially non-dualistic character of our distinction *zoé-bíos* is clear, in a second instance, if we remember that with these terms, we don't designate absolute principles but forms of realization of the interpretative life. More than a self sufficient 'primary instincts', they point out possible process and paths of the movement of life, a movement to which Nietzsche will call by the technical term of *will to power*, but that in its essence coincides with the becoming of the basic interpretability of reality. Will to power is not, thus, but another name for life that is always interpretative, either in the most basic organic forms of animality, or in the praxis of the interpretative symbolic animal that is the man. And this practice, as we have seen, takes place in a way always conflictual, tensioned between *zoé* and *bíos*, between the keeping and the disrupting of the sense. Is to this conflict that the philosophy of Nietzsche, in its different production phases and conceptual records, does not get tired of thinking: as a fight between Apollo and Dionysus, as a tension between memory and oblivion, reactive and active, truth and art<sup>22</sup>.

With these clarifications I would like to draw up, with a quick outline and to conclude, what, in my opinion, is Nietzsche's third way of interpretative realization and, at the same time, the highest realization of life. To counter the reactive impulse that wants to make of every open world a close environment and postulate, above all movement of interpretation, the absolute idea of an eternal truth, Nietzsche would have wanted to promote a higher life. This is a third station in the becoming of life. It is now the moment for the *life of knowledge*, above the mere immediate and instinctive interpretation of life that is only animal, above the exercise of meaning of the thought and the language proper to human life. The life of knowledge is the life that not only performs the symbolic display of *bíos*, but the one who makes it powerful up to its maximum gradient. The conflict between *bíos* and *zoé* means that interpretation, as the deployment of the symbolic, is always counterattacked by a soothed inertia. The higher life of knowledge knows about this opposition and is aware against the lethargic effect that seeks to suspend the interpretation and graze the life. That is why the kind of knowledge that here is looking for, consists in the multiplication of the incessant perspectives, in the constant opening of senses<sup>23</sup>. In the life of

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<sup>22</sup> Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy* was metaphysical because he postulates Apollo and Dionysus as two absolute principles of nature, without advising the movement of life and the interpretation that, within these two, are sunken.

<sup>23</sup> Schacht spoke in this sense that Nietzsche distinguishes knowledge from mere perspectival and interpretive existence. This knowledge, Schacht recognizes, remains an interpretation, but one he calls 'interpretation with difference' located in a 'meta-level' above other perspectives. It would be useful to compare the three categories of 'truths' that Schacht identifies (*ibid.*, 18s) with our ways of performing the interpretative life. I presume that what is missing in his analysis is the identification of the interpretative process as an essential movement of life that gives continuity to the several forms of interpretation and to the various categories of truth. The way he puts it, it

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knowledge *zoé* is not extinguished and the search and formulation of the truth is not abandoned, but it is well-known that any fixation of truth is only a partial match of the becoming of life, only a reason to keep on renewing the unstoppable interpretative configuration of the world. The interpretation of *zoé* wants to simplify and profile the chaos; the interpretation of *bíos* wants to give sense and meaning and open a world; the interpretation of the life of knowledge is an interpretation that simply wants more interpretation and, therefore, more questions and enigmas, more unrest and unease, but also more playful and colorful, and more lighter and joyful<sup>24</sup>. - And these three realizations of the interpretation define three forms of life: the merely animal life that is satisfied with the configuration of its environment; the tense and troubled human life that do not know of this basic split that dominates his existence, that is hidden when interpretation becomes the truth and appearance the being; and finally, the life of the philosopher and the superior men of the future, the life of the knowledge that is first and foremost life in tension and upheaval, relentless renewal of its play with chaos, the recognition of the conflict between *zoé* and *bíos* and the willingness to keep it.

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seems that the three categories of truth belong to the three rhetorical uses or the three different notions that Nietzsche uses in his peculiar style.

<sup>24</sup> To this superior form of interpretation belongs a higher form of 'incorporation', one that would be proper of the super-man. In line with our analysis, Ansell-Pearson defends this perspective: "The new incorporation of the truth and knowledge requires to go beyond what is prescribed in the evolutions, and it is for this reason, at least in part, that Nietzsche is obliged to invite us to become *supermen*" (Ansell-Pearson 2006, 153).

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