

Abstract

The purpose of the present research is to offer an approach to Nietzsche's philosophy from the point of view of the notion of "belief" (*der Glaube*). In our view, the concept of belief plays a relevant role in the development Nietzsche's principal thesis, such as the announcement of the "European nihilism", the critique of the Christianity, the dismantling of the metaphysical categories, and doctrines such as the "will to power", the "eternal recurrence", and "saying-yes" to life. The notion of belief, and its multiple expressions, is constantly present in the development of these theories.

The starting point of our analysis is the general question about the sense of belief in Nietzsche. The following definition serves as a working hypothesis: belief is the act of saying-yes, of "holding-for-true" (*das für-wahr-halten*). According to one's way of comprehending the truth such a statement may conduce to nihilism and represent the "negation of life" (*die Verneinung des Lebens*) or may overcome nihilism and signify the "affirmation of life" (*das Leben-Bejahen*). The first part of our research is an overview of the general sense of belief, which follows the chronological evolution of the Nietzschean reflection. Our purpose is to explain some common aspects shared by every belief.

In the second part we analyze the specific sense of a series of individualized believes, distinguishing between those believes which promote nihilism those which try to surmount it. The first section is dedicated to nihilist, life-denying believes and their different expressions related with the moral, religious, and metaphysical sphere. The second section is dedicated to life-affirming believes which represent a means of defeating nihilism, i.e. the concept of "will to power", "eternal recurrence", and "saying yes" to life, together with other key-notions such as "body", "overman" and "Dionysus".

The genealogical, hermeneutic analysis of the Nietzschean texts allows us to gain insight in those ideas of the author which may shed light on the question of the sense of belief. The purpose of this scrutiny of belief and its double sense is to offer a fresh view of this concept, which may serve as a guiding line and may open new perspectives for the study of Nietzsche's work.