

# RAPTURE AND DRUNKENNESS: THE FEELING OF FULLNESS. FROM LOSING THE EXTERNAL SENSES OF TERESA OF AVILA TO THE INCREASE OF THE INSTINCTS IN NIETZSCHE

Éxtasis e intoxicación: la sensación de plenitud.  
De la pérdida de los sentidos externos de Teresa de Ávila a la adición de los instintos de Nietzsche

*Adilson Felicio Feiler*

Faculdade Jesuíta de Filosofia e Teologia (FAJE)-Brasil

ABSTRACT: Teresa of Avila presents the mystical rapture, the supreme expression of ecstasy, as the absence of the exterior senses, and, with it, of all disturbance. This spiritual experience results from a clairvoyant truth, acquired beyond the understanding as a unique and singular moment. Therefore, it is the experience that takes place in an instant of fullness, in an instant that is, at the same time, full and empty. On the paths of the experience of fullness, Nietzsche expresses it as intoxications, as that moment of culmination, of instinctual increase. However, while it consists of an experience of a maximum increase of instincts, it reveals itself as an absence, like nothing, with no goal to reach. In this sense, both in the mystical rapture and the Dionysian intoxication there is a feeling of fullness that is expressed, at the same time that it gains fulfillment, an increase as well as loss, absence, and emptiness. So, to what extent is it possible to observe, in addition to distances to rapture and drunkenness, also overlaps and even identities? Is the experience of fullness something common around Teresa of Avila's rapture and Nietzsche's drunkenness?

*Keywords:* Nietzsche, Teresa of Avila, rapture, fullness

RESUMEN: Teresa de Ávila presenta el éxtasis místico, expresión suprema del éxtasis, como ausencia de sentidos externos y, con ello, de toda perturbación. Esta experiencia espiritual resulta de una verdad clarividente, adquirida más allá del intelecto como un momento único y singular. Por tanto, como esa experiencia que tiene lugar en un instante de plenitud, pero en un instante que es, al mismo tiempo, lleno y vacío. En los caminos de la experiencia de la

plenitud Nietzsche la expresa como embriagueces, como ese momento de culminación, de la acreción instintiva. Sin embargo, en la medida en que consiste en una experiencia de máximo aumento de los instintos, se revela como ausencia, como nada, sin meta a alcanzar. En este sentido, tanto en el éxtasis místico como en la embriaguez dionisiaca hay un sentimiento de plenitud que se expresa, al mismo tiempo que gana plenitud, además de pérdida, ausencia y vacío. Entonces, ¿hasta qué punto es posible verificar, además de las distancias en relación con el éxtasis y la embriaguez, también superposiciones e incluso identidades? ¿Sería la experiencia de la plenitud algo común en torno al éxtasis de Teresa de Ávila y la borrachera de Nietzsche?

*Palabras clave:* Nietzsche; Teresa de Ávila; Rapto; Plenitud

## I. INTRODUCTION

What characterizes Friedrich Nietzsche's thought is a dynamic of forces. Through tension and struggle, forces reach higher levels culminating in instants of fullness, what happens with each individual, as Walter Kaufmann presented in his reading of Nietzsche's philosophy.<sup>1</sup> Every instant in which these forces become full, life finds an opportunity to stand. Such a life is produced because of the forces that through the tension of a bow reach a *quantum* of full potency. In this stage of fullness, which is only an instant, there is no feeling of physiological obstruction anymore nor division, or polarization. The level reached surpasses any understanding of good and evil, for everything becomes perfectly integrated into a unity in which anything else is eerie and exterior, but instead interior and from the inside it turns into a force discharge form. Thus, instead of avoiding suffering, and taking refuge in an intoxicating consolation, one is elevated to stages of resilience where the whole of existence becomes recognized and taken up in its fullness, and without reserve. Therefore, it is a sentiment of being so full of oneself, whose feeling is any other than drunkenness. This sentiment points to the agonistic, typical of a tragic conception, where it is not Apollo nor Dionysius, but an overlapping of both artistic dispositions in an eternal game in search of appropriation. It consists of a state of being at the same time full but also empty, bare, coming face to face with nothingness.

However, it is a nothingness that does not produce dependence, diminution, or degeneracy but frees, empowers, and raises. It is a stage of elevation that relies nothing less than on an inner tension, a spiritual disturbance that turns on inner lights in the form of hallucinations, in the form of suggesting images, and in forms such as the "voluptuous excesses and ecstasies of sensuality (the story of Saint Theresa)." (*GM*, III, 17, KGB 5.380)<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Kaufmann 1950

<sup>2</sup> We used the German critical edition Colli & Montinari: *KSA (Sämtliche Werke: Kritische Studienausgabe)* and KGB Letters (*Sämtliche Briefe Kritische Studienausgabe*). We used the following

The mystical rapture is what best characterizes this sentiment of fullness experienced by Teresa of Avila. She experiences it as a supreme unity, for the overcoming all divisions, “which causes it gradually to lose its exterior senses so that nothing may occupy it. This we call the rapture.”<sup>3</sup> The state of fullness consists in a want of disturbance and interior quietude in which there is nothing left to be achieved, therefore a lack of purpose, as well as all prisons and interdicts propagated by moral notions of good and evil. Though Nietzsche quotes Teresa of Avila to illustrate an example he gives of the intoxicating effects of Christianity, it seems beyond his understanding how the mystical rapture can near his notion of drunkenness, so that the mystical rapture and Dionysian drunkenness join around the notion of feeling full. This feeling is the ecstasy that encompasses, in only one face, pain and pleasure, suffering and joy albeit overcoming them. It is, therefore, within the scope of ecstasy, a loss that leads to a gain, an emptiness that leads to enjoyment, overflowing, drunkenness.

The Nietzschean recipe of *amor fati* corresponds to saying yes to everything, leading the statement up to its ultimate consequences. In addition to all dichotomies, it unites the divine and profane in the notion of enjoyment that is the fullness, the *ek-stase*, the state of oneself, meaning self-control and, at the same time, embedded in the abundance of drives in the sense of enjoyment.

In the manner of Nietzsche, Teresa of Avila has an iconoclastic aura, when questioning numerous institutional aspects of the Roman Catholic Christendom, which is why she was taken to the courts of the Inquisition. Teresa was accused of madness and witchcraft, against which she needed to defend herself. To a large extent, such accusations were made due to an understanding generated by the saint’s writings. It proves the extemporaneousness of these great mystics, which nears her, once again, to the German philosopher. As with Zarathustra, Teresa could very well say, “I am not the mouth for these ears.” (Z, Prologue, 5, KSA 4.18)

To follow up these mystical paths, we need to raise ourselves beyond the very determinations of memory and intellect. We need to be “suspended in such a way that it seems to be utterly beside itself. The will loves; the memory, so it seems to me, is as it were lost.”<sup>4</sup> At the same time this state of being suspension reveals an emptiness, it also does reveal a fullness in a

abbreviations for German editions: M – Morgenröte (Daybreak), Z – Also sprach Zarathustra (Thus spoke Zarathustra), GM – Zur Genealogie der Moral (On the Genealogy of Morals), GD – Götzen Dämmerung (Twilight of the Idols), AC – Der Antichrist (The Antichrist), NL – *Nachlass* (Writings from the Late Notebooks), BR – (Letters) *Briefe Kritische Studienausgabe*. Then, there is the Roman numeral of chapters, where needed, and aphorism, KSA or KGB, volume and page.

3 Avila 2004: 399

4 Avila 2004: 70

“[...] unique moment”<sup>5</sup>, a culminating moment of power<sup>6</sup>, pointing to what Nietzsche calls “God as the moment of culmination: existence an eternal deifying and un-deifying. But in that not a high point of value, but a high point of power.” (Nachlass 1887, 9[8], KSA, 12.343) The instant of overcoming, albeit it is only an instant, bears the mark of eternity, characterized by an eternal adoration and deification. In this deification, every value determination exceeds its limits to point to culminating instants of force. Being several instants, each of them is experienced as one, but, at the same time, is revealed as a tiny void, which gives space to so many other instants, and these also do to other ones, in an eternal search of this culminating moment that, at the same time it reveals as other, from outside, it is an inside, an internal and singular experience. It consists in another of oneself. This is why we need to pay attention to Nietzsche’s writings, particularly when he characterizes the concept of God in history. He says that “a people that still believes in itself, also has his or God.” (Nachlass 1888, 17[4], KSA, 13.523) From this *Posthumous Fragment*, we infer the reality of God that lies in the belief everybody has about their own so that no separation can be supposed. Teresa of Avila, in turn, characterizes the union of the soul with God as a mystical one, as we see in the Fifth Mansions, “God visits the soul in a manner which prevents its doubting, on returning to itself, that it dwelt in Him and that He was within it.”<sup>7</sup> Therefore, we cannot doubt this unity between God and the self of every individual. And the more we enter into the reality of ourselves, the deeper is our experience of the suspension state, for being full, intoxicated of that that is the other of self, but, at the same time, empty and, because of it, thirsty.

In this game of fullness and emptiness of oneself as a mystical rapture spiritual experience, the article presents a section entitled “Between loss and gain: mystical rapture.” Subsequently, it delves into the mystical suspension state through culminating points that is understood as an experience of addition and emptiness, destitution, and dispossession. The section is called “Between the increase and the emptiness: the Dionysian drunkenness.” Further up, we reflect on the experience of being full, as an experience revealing a break from interposed limits by a supposed opposition between everything and nothing. Hence, this fullness experience culminates as a fully unity experience, an experience of overcoming all dichotomies. The section is entitled “The fullness experience as a feeling of absence of limits between nothing and everything,” followed by our final considerations.

5 Avila 2004: 399

6 In many respects, Nietzsche associates power with a fulfilling sense of achievement and actualization rather than the force of violence. In fact, an impulse to hurt people is a sign of lacking power and frustration over this lack, or dissatisfaction over blocked development.

7 Avila 2004: 491

## II. BETWEEN LOSS AND GAIN: MYSTICAL RAPTURE

Teresa of Avila's spiritual path is woven of different losses. The losses are related to different kinds of preoccupation and determination. According to her, they are determinations concerning the "exterior senses."<sup>8</sup> In the stage in which we occupy ourselves with exterior things, there is a distraction and displacement of the self to the outside of self. In the spiritual dynamic of Teresa of Avila, it is necessary to avoid being occupied with things, a nothing pointing to everything, that is, an inversion of occupations of the nothingness of exterior things, so that the entirety of interiority, as it is in the interior where all the things lie furthering the cultivation of the self and that, for the same cultivation, a rapture is advanced, that is a self-belonging beyond any exterior determination. Therefore, this self-belonging takes place not through the understanding operating in its record of what divides, but through the imagination that gathers, in the unity, all faculties around a "unique moment"<sup>9</sup>, that is a potential instant of clairvoyance. The instant of clairvoyance can be read as a state of "pathologies of moralized hysteria and neurosis induced by priestly power and repression."<sup>10</sup> Following Nietzsche's third essay in *Genealogy of Morality*, where the philosopher criticizes the priestly asceticism, Urpeth verifies the effects of this asceticism in Teresa of Avila, of neurosis and pathologic hysteria. These effects further degeneracy and sickness instead of force. However, in addition to the pathology proclaimed by Nietzsche, in Teresa it would be impossible to find force and appropriation, symptoms that add to the very words of the philosopher, an account in which the apparent pathology is understood as fullness.

In an immediate instant, we obtain a view of the whole that presents itself via images leading to the loss of exterior determinations toward the gain of interior appropriation, and dissolution of the outer self for the creation of the self. The meaning represented by the cultivation of the self is thematized by Nietzsche via "Belief in inebriation – those men who have moments of sublime ecstasy, who come to consider such moments as the true manifestation of their real selves, of their 'ego,' and their misery and dejection as the effect of the 'non-ego.'" (*M*, I, 50, KSA 3.54) If there is a faith for the German philosopher, it is the one deposited in the immensity of the culminating instants of power, that is the drunkenness characterized, in its sweeping sublimity, as the most authentic movement of self-cultivation and free will.

It is in this sense that the German philosopher rises up: "We want to have a reason for feeling that we're in *such and such a state* – a bad state

8 Avila 2004: 399

9 Avila 2004: 399

10 Hurlpeth 2016: 17

or a good state. It's never enough for us just to determine the mere fact that we find ourselves in such and such a state." (*GD*, The Four Great Errors, 4, KSA 6.92) As the rational understanding operates, coming across a certain fact makes it appear artificial, preventing it from enjoying all its richness, which leads to asserting it as it is. On the contrary, our rational faculty, in its boldness of explaining facts, disqualifies their fact-quality, taken in its entirety. From this viewpoint, it is possible to accept, assert, and love the fact: *amor fati*, the maximum manifestation of the mystical unity, drunkenness, and overflowing mystique, experienced by the so-called "beings of sublime instants." (*M*, I, 50, KSA 3.54) Such beings are the ones living the facts, so that they experience them in their factual reality, without masking them through reason that separates and falsifies, but asserting and loving them. Hence, a fact, no matter how heavy, hard, and challenging it is, leads to a mystical state of overflowing and drunkenness. These beings are raised to states of sublime mystical rapture, "This intoxication appears to them as their true life, their actual ego; and everywhere else they see only those who strive to oppose and prevent this drunkenness, whether of an intellectual, moral, religious, or artistic nature." (*M*, I, 50, KSA 3.54) The fullness and overflowing state characterize the drunkenness mystique, and the latter points to the assertion of the self, the authentic, the one in which there is not the slightest chance of division or separation, typical of the causal rational logic. The drunkenness mystique implies a rapture, resilience beyond the reach, and determination of all moral, intellectual, religious, and artistic order. It implies oppositions, and Nietzsche's opposition is indeed very important in order to understand his philosophy. The contraposition of Nietzsche, in particular of the concepts of earth and world, is crucial for the interpretations Shapiro presents.<sup>11</sup> Thus, to live the mystique of drunkenness is to assert the logic of appropriation. Consequently, we are masters of ourselves as we evade what determines us to enter what suspends; it is a momentary suspension state and, because of it, it is impossible of being determined, that is, a drunkenness mystique in suspension states.

When talking about mystique, it is immediately linked to ascetical practices, of which all sorts of privations regarding bodily instincts are demanded. Nonetheless, the mystique is situated in a wider field than the one of asceticism, which allows us to say that asceticism is one of the mystique's dimensions, but not necessarily. Mystique is linked to a way of life. That is why Nietzsche praises Christianity, seen as such. "Only the Christian way

<sup>11</sup> Shapiro's keeps repeating this contraposition several times. He also explores four other "contrasting pairs of terms": "states and nomads, masses and multitude, *kairos* and *chronos*, Christ and Antichrist" (Shapiro 2016:5).

of life, the life lived by him who died on the cross, is Christian.” (*AC*, 39, KSA 6.211) It is precisely this authentic Christianity, taken as a practice, that reflects a mystique, a mystique of authenticity. It is so authentic that it reflects the deepest of the one who experiences it, making it impossible to manifest through words. The incomprehensibility is attributed to the Wagnerian genre, as Nietzsche writes in a letter to Heinrich Köselitz: “A Wagnerian sensibility genre is, if not in poetry, found with any form (Baudelaire is a libertine, mystical, ‘satanic,’ but, above all, Wagnerian).” (Letter to Heinrich Köselitz, February 26, 1888, 1000, KGB 8.263) The absence of form reflects an impossibility of being understood, which put it closer to the field of the mystique. This is the reason why Teresa of Avila, when addressing her sisters at the convent, states: “I cannot tell why I have said this, sisters, nor what made me do so; indeed I never intended it. You must know that these effects are bound to follow from such trances or ecstasies: they are not transient, but permanent desires; when an opportunity occurs of acting on them, they prove genuine.”<sup>12</sup>

Teresa of Avila admits that, when experiencing mystical suspensions and ecstasies, she remains unable of self-understanding, as if she did not stay in herself anymore. However, if we pay attention to her words, these mystical experiences consist mainly of desires, voluptuousness linked to sensuality, that every time they are manifested, they end up permanent and firm, a permanence, a fullness of the instant. This instant of fullness until can inspire a new type of aristocracy.<sup>13</sup> So, these desires reveal, albeit a mystery, an authenticity dimension, and that is why they are the deepest appropriation and assertion of oneself. Mystique is not subservience and resigned passivity, but a commitment of all potentialities in favor of self-overcoming. The more we climb the degrees of self-overcoming, the mountain<sup>14</sup>, the stronger we experience authenticity, what one is.

Paradoxically, the mystique of drunkenness consists in the appropriation of oneself, beyond intoxication of those that, through a rational understanding, suppose self-knowledge, self-control, and awareness of self as a whole. “Humanity owes no small part of its evils to these fantastic enthusiasts; for they are insatiable sowers of the weed of discontent with one’s self and one’s neighbor, of contempt for the world and the age, and, above all, of world-lassitude.” (*M*, I, 50, KSA 3.55) Reason generates a bad image of

<sup>12</sup> Avila 2004: 537

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Knoll 2010: 35–67, 58–62

<sup>14</sup> Nietzsche offers the analogy of a mountain and its surrounding landscape to elucidate the importance of this ‘distance’. The mountain “makes the landscape it dominates charming and significant”, but “we climb the mountain and are disappointed”; both “have lost their magic” (*GC*, 15). A potential question here concerns the extent that one can reconcile this distance with such an intimate experience as suffering.



these things so that everything is dissatisfied as if the world had nothing more to offer, for being already exhausted in its strength, that is, want of perspectives. In the scope of the mystique, everything that is considered lost from the viewpoint of reason, such as all sorts of causal explanations of phenomena, turns out to be a gain. Instead of breaking down the fact in question, it is welcomed jubilantly. It is more than some gain; it is considered an authentic addition of forces, as they are not chosen nor made up, not even the facts are falsified, but we accept what they present as their most original, with all kinds of challenges we can infer. In this sense, as the facts amount, by causing a rise of forces in their acceptance and assertion, they also empty in the sense of being devoid of all sorts of goals that a rational logic tries to reach. To what extent the game between increase and emptiness can contribute to a mystique of drunkenness?

### III. BETWEEN INCREASE AND EMPTINESS: THE DIONYSIAN DRUNKENNESS

the experience of fullness points to the mystique of being more, immensity, the mystique of being insistently trying to reach ever more culminating instants of potential power. Nonetheless, every instant we live reveals its ephemerality, giving space to an emptiness, seen as the absence of goals to be achieved, for every instant we live is full in itself and is lived as the only instant possible, as this is the single way it is welcomed in its entirety. At the same moment when we experience such an immensity of power, we also long for an increase of it, revealing the feeling of being intoxicated. In the drunkenness mystical experience, we feel an absence of control, merged into fantasy, bordering insanity, “as are brought about by that ‘noble’ little community of unbridled, fantastic, half-mad people – of geniuses, too – who cannot control themselves, or experience any inward joy, until they have lost themselves completely.” (*M*, I 50, KSA 3.55) Losing oneself to the extent of overtaking all the limits interposed by morality enter the scope of fantasies, revealed as singular. It reminds the situation mentioned by Urpeth, “Nietzsche’s distinction between ‘healthy’ and ‘sick’ forms of religious sensibility.”<sup>15</sup>

The only thing we can manifest is the feeling of being full, surrounded by happiness so big to the extent of recurring to the enjoyment, not only with ourselves but communicating it to others. “This may sound nonsense but it really happens. So excessive is its jubilee that the soul will not enjoy it alone but speaks of it to all around.”<sup>16</sup> Teresa of Avila experiences every consequence of not being understood, to the point of being considered mad, which leads her

<sup>15</sup> Urpeth, 2011: 15

<sup>16</sup> Avila 2004: 539



to the Inquisition. The immensity of what she gets through regarding mystical spiritual enjoyment goes beyond the limits of the explicable and sayable.

But at the same time Teresa of Avila experiences such a rapture, she feels a need to communicate it to others, as if she was about to drown in herself. Her mystical drunkenness reminds the experiences by Zarathustra, when he lived ten years in solitude: "Behold! I am weary of my wisdom, like a bee that has gathered too much honey. I need hands that reach out. I want to bestow and distribute until the wise among human beings have once again enjoyed their folly, and the poor once again their wealth." (Z, Prologue, 1, KSA 4.11) After ten silent years, Zarathustra feels compelled to address others offering them those things with which he is overflowing. There is a need of accepting Zarathustra in his wisdom to get others intoxicated by it. This disposition is only possible as those considering themselves wise recognize how foolish it is their wisdom, that is, everything once considered knowledge and wisdom is nothing but a mistake, lie, and foolishness. The acknowledgment, however, must be followed not by a sentiment of dissatisfaction, sadness, and discouragement, but by the noblest happiness. And likewise, we must recognize in poverty the greatest richness, that is, a want of determination of all sides, moral, rational, and legal. In this feeling of happy emptiness, we will be able to accept all the richness and wisdom the fact, in its most genuine disposition, offers to us. This disposition reveals in itself the grandeur of those active psychological types. Those capable of overcoming themselves reach a stage of fullness, revealed as a state of perfection, praised by Teresa of Avila. "Remember I consider it quite certain that those who attain perfection do not ask the Lord to deliver them from trials, temptations, persecutions, and conflicts."<sup>17</sup>

Teresa recognizes that the feeling of being full, overflowing, which gets an affirmative psychological typology, asserts and accepts everything presented to it as *fatum*, no matter how heavy, hard, and, apparently, impossible of being overcome. The sentiment of perfection leads us to accept the fact that bears all kinds of sufferings, temptations, persecutions, and struggles. It does not resign at all, even if one is said as mad, unfaithful, and fool. Teresa recognizes that this state of fullness and perfection demands starting a path marked by all sorts of barriers, ups and downs, steep climbs, and cliffs. Nietzsche/Zarathustra, in turn, also starts a journey making him known as "This wanderer is no stranger to me: many years ago he passed by here. Zarathustra he was called." (Z, Prologue, 2, KSA 4.12)

A mystical experience takes place through permanent walking. But it is a walking that does not aim to achieve a predetermined point, an end, an objective to be achieved. The ones who walk on the path of the mystical allows

17 Avila 2004: 415

themselves to live a changing experience, an experience of self-conversion. The German philosopher's wanderings turned him into a wanderer that recognizes himself and is recognized by others as someone changed. Such a change refers to his psychological typology dispositions to turn everything that once was considered suffering and privation into jubilation and joy. After all, he then sees the facts in a different way. Instead of avoiding all that represents suffering, he starts to accepting himself and, in doing so, to love: *amor fati*.

Thereby, based on the emptiness that can come from suffering, by the welcoming disposition, we experience it a growth, fullness, and even drunkenness. In contrast, a fugitive attitude discloses the fragility, frankness, and submission with which anything we can build. As much as the Teresa of Avila's mystique unfolds an experience of surrender, piety, and sublimation of instinctive desires, there is also an affirmative disposition disclosed by her genuineness and wholeness, which leads her to overcome divisions and oppositions threatening human integrity. That is why everything shown in Teresa regarding courage, authenticity, affirmative disposition, acknowledgment, and clairvoyance about oneself points to her nobility of soul. It is a nobility revealed by the "voluptuous excesses and ecstasies of sensuality." (*GM*, III, 17, KGB 5.380).

Teresa of Avila deals with all things considered sinful as if we should with all the strength avoid them, as something elevating, ennobling, and that is accepted jubilantly in full. Thus, voluptuousness and sensuality become something that reaches the level of overflowing and ecstasy. Therefore, instead of considering such feelings as trash, loss, and void, they are considered, through an affirmative disposition, gain and accretion, which ultimately discloses a life perspective asserted until its last consequences.<sup>18</sup> Life is affirmed, even where we have thought of as sinful, vile, and shameful.

Here, therefore, we find the face of an integral anthropological vision to which Teresa of Avila's mystique points, a drunkenness mystique. That is why, following Richard Frank Krummel's reflections on mystical manifestations and heroism among the Spanish people, "Nietzsche is against condemning Christianity. The Spaniards are not only invertors of bad manners but also tragic manners as in Saint Teresa of Avila."<sup>19</sup> Well, to feel intoxicated is to feel full and, at the same time, willing to assert all that is presented, without exception, as "a struggle for life fullness tragedy seeks to gain." With all consequences demanded by this struggle, everything is welcomed and anything is avoided.

18 In Greek, voting was associated with the word *diapher*, to differ or go against; *diaphoros*/ on meant distinctive, making a difference, disagreement. Naturally the presumption against decisive truth, which underwrites the call for open competition, can be linked to Nietzsche's critique of objective truth in favor of perspectivism. (Cf. Hatab 1995: 6).

19 Krummel, 1998: 510

Facing such a mystical experience, we experience some feeling of absence. This feeling is none other than the feeling of limits to accept the facts, be it fortune, or misfortune. To what extent the drunkenness mystical experience, taken as fullness experience, can open up to nothingness without incurring decrease and nihilism?

#### IV. THE EXPERIENCE OF FULLNESS AS A FEELING OF ABSENCE OF LIMITS BETWEEN NOTHING AND EVERYTHING

The drunkenness mystical experience consists of an unmeasured experience and disproportionate and extravagant overcoming of limits interposed by every conception that puts goals and determinations ahead. Well, if everything is already predetermined, there is no room for the advent of the fact that continuously gifts the new. On the contrary, living a mystical life requires an openness to the fact, that intoxicates with the new. This openness demands an unconditional acceptance of the fact, be it light, happy, serene, be it heavy, poor, or sour. It is the development of openness, without rejection attitudes or any kind of choice and selection; it is simply welcomed. Even when a fact presents itself as dark and heavy, it does not represent a decrease in forces. In contrast, it ends up stimulating an unusual potential capacity, hidden and found by a need to not succumb. This is why the experience opening up to everything and nothing demands that active psychological disposition, that is indifferent and affirmative, willing to the whole of life, which extrapolate every limit between this and that, between this one and the other. "With it, we can enter the field of idle fancy,"<sup>20</sup> which, away from being reduced to visions, constitute genuine realities moving existence.

That is also why James Martin Charlton says that "this is not entirely removed from St Teresa of Avila's ecstatic proclamation."<sup>21</sup> In other words, no matter how strong the experience of ecstasy may be, it still retains its hold on itself, in a sense of reality. The immensity of the imaginary field produces a feeling of fullness that, even when all seems dark and heavy, discloses itself as happy and serene.

Thus, with the cultivation of this disposition of acceptance, anything could mean a decrease, but only an increase in forces. Everything depends on the psychological disposition one has to face the fact. The noble desire to overflow in terms of images and fantasies allows us to enjoy a power field reduced to the realm of the false, disdainful, and impudent. It is precisely this extravagant unmeasured field of imagination that every voluptuousness and

20 Avila 2004: 558

21 Charlton 2015: 9-12

sensuality charge manifest at deconstructing the limits of conceptions based on an intellective logic held to a goal – when there is no goal to be reached, for, if there were any, it would already be reached, and reached in one million times. However, the extravagant and unmeasured mystical drunkenness experience is “always on my way, but without a goal.” (Z, IV, The Shadow, KSA, 4.339) The act of waking, at the same time it takes place, also fulfills its goal. So, it is its actualization in the very instant it is experienced, understood in “one moment”.<sup>22</sup> The mystical drunkenness itinerary consists of a path that actualizes itself in the very and one instant in which it is experienced. In it, beyond any goal, fullness is reached. This fullness dimension reminds what Marc Chatenieu said when reflecting on Teresa’s mystique, through elements of a possible psychological interpretation: “Teresa of Avila: 1515-1582; Christian nun of Jewish background, that, in her mystique dreaming of an angel’s arrow, would run through and feel a surrender happiness to Jesus; a possible interpretation of sexual psychology.”<sup>23</sup>

The mystical heroism of Saint Teresa originates from a life impulse linked to a feeling of power, the power of spirituality. “In this respect, one has only to think of Saint Theresa, surrounded by the heroic instincts of her brothers: Christianity appears in those circumstances as a dissipation of the will, as strength of will, as a will that is Quixotic.” (NL 1887 10[188] KSA 12.569) This state of fullness consists in the mystical rapture as will and excess, that state of suspension in which there is nothing to look for, because heroically it is already achieved in a singular moment, a pathos of distance, all that we thought we were looking for during our entire life, as a new aristocracy of spirit.<sup>24</sup> This mystical drunkenness instant is so full and, at the same time, singular that it is experienced as singular and we would want to experience it an endless series of times.

By the eternal recurrence of the same, we have the highest form of affirmation of the fact, be it large or small. The biggest challenge surrounding this idea of the eternal return lies in accepting an eternal repetition arising from certain events, such as the one on the “death of God”. Nietzsche tells us not only about knowing and accepting the facts, no matter how hard they present to us, but, overall, to love it and long for it: “Oh how then could I not lust for eternity and for the nuptial ring of rings – the ring of recurrence!” (Z, III,

<sup>22</sup> Avila 2004: 399

<sup>23</sup> Chatenieu 2013: 217

<sup>24</sup> The *Nachlass* passages with respect to the new aristocracy are highly contentious. See especially 2[76]12.96f.; 9[174] 12.439; 35[47] 11.533; 26[173] 11.195; 7[21] 10.244; 9[153] 12.424; 37[8] 11.580; 25[134]11.49; 2[57] 12.87; 2[13] 12.71. Nietzsche cites the recently attained ascendancy of the scientific mind over the religious mind that invents gods. For further discussion of these premises, see (Abel 1984; Moles 1990; Whitlock 1996: 200–20; Small 2002).

The Seven Seals, KSA 4.387) Interestingly it is that the mystical drunkenness experience is so big that, when experiencing it, at the same time we enjoy the ecstasy that wants to repeat it an infinite series of times, even if it is nothing. Thus, it becomes nothing experienced as everything, because it is experienced fully, if an interposition of limits ends up coming to set choices based on determinations of reason and understanding.

There is, then, a very evident aspect of asceticism. But does not Nietzsche pose himself against asceticism, which science is the latest manifestation of this ideal?<sup>25</sup> The issue is that asceticism ended up being misrepresented by morality, which lead it to lose its aspect of innocence. Instead of asceticism for the cultivation of ideas devoted to the appropriation, achieving ever more culminating points of power, it is determined by ideas pointing to a goal whose itinerary is marked by moral dictates of good and evil, right and wrong. For cultivating mystical and unmeasured drunkenness, morality ends up operating a malaise sentiment, the feeling of being guilty on the belief that one is making something that contradicts the values of order and balance. Yet, according to a more primary understanding, asceticism implies elevation, enrapture, beyond any account of good and evil, revaluation of all values<sup>26</sup>, keeping in a state of ecstasy, and spiritual love, which “does not eliminate thoroughly the too human dimension [...] that is, the bodily is evident in the mystical love [...] such as the experiential moments of Saint Teresa of Avila.”<sup>27</sup>

With the mystical love experience, which is the experience of maximum unity, “a clear perception of the truth, which comprehends in one moment,”<sup>28</sup> we can enjoy the fullness of the instant; we wish this instant returns eternally. Though many things do not see Him “by bodily eyes, He has many ways of revealing Himself to the soul through deep inward emotions and by various other means [...] as the hour after Communion.”<sup>29</sup> Enjoying these instants of fullness points to the scope of the unity in which any kind of separation or division is thought, as via such a unity experienced as an instant of fullness we experience drunkenness.<sup>30</sup> “In a word, you want intoxication and excess,

25 This development reading, for example, is the crux of Clark argument in *Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy* (Clark 1990: 103-4 and Leiter 2002: 15-16).

26 For a discussion of translating ‘Umwertung’ into English, ‘Revaluation’ might be a better rendering of the term because it emphasizes valuing anew, rather than across as with ‘transvaluation.’ ‘Revaluation of all Values’ is primarily directed at revaluing Christian values or, indeed, reversing the original revaluation of “noble” values by Christian “slave” morality.

27 Bamony, 2014: 322

28 Avila. 2004: 399

29 Avila 2004: 405

30 This suggests again that the elevation of man, for Nietzsche, is not the work of the aristocratic class. Recall that the noble mode of valuation has its origin not in suffering, but in the aristocrats’ pleasurable feeling of abundance.

and this morality which you despise takes up a stand against intoxication and excess – no wonder it causes you some displeasure” (*M*, IV, 215, KSA 3.192) Morality is the big cause of all this malaise, for every big event that is actualized one feels as if were sinning, error when, in fact, what morality does is causing mistakes, lies, faking life reality that is innocence. In life comprehended in this way, everything makes sense, from the big things to the small things, from the abundance to the absence. Teresa of Avila sees this state of innocence as a state of perfection and “those who attain perfection do not ask the Lord to deliver them from trials, temptations, persecutions, and conflicts.”<sup>31</sup> We must surrender with an affirmative disposition, to the whole of life, in what it shows as the heaviest and most despicable, so that it can simply accept loving the fact of life, always a discovery, unusual, *amor fati*. In the life of mystic, there can be no pacification, but a constant struggle, after all “for contemplatives [...] have to bear heavy trials.”<sup>32</sup> From these sufferings, resulting of inner struggles, an ever-greater *quantum* of strength emerges, from which life can be affirmed.

A break from all sentiment of pacification depends on the affirmation of life. It tends to impose limits to the appropriation thirst aiming to reach ever more culminating points of power. The reach of these points is an experience of a fullness instant, both by the mystical unmeasured drunkenness and the absence of limits between everything and nothing.

## V. CONCLUSION

The itinerary we have traveled allows us to understand the identity between the culminating power instant in Nietzsche and the mystical rapture in Teresa of Avila. Both experiences consist of a sentiment of fullness, of being so full to the point of outpouring, overflowing in yearnings of eternity. But it is an eternity experienced in the very instant in which we live. It bears the marks of the fact, whatever it is. That is why in this instant we simply welcome it as an affirmative psychological disposition; it is an acceptance of this instant as a whole, with no exclusions. The affirmation in this psychological state reaches its highest manifestation similarly to that one St Teresa called perfection.

The mystical rapture, an elevated state of suspension, materializes perfection so that he who experiences it longs for its eternal return, the reason why any goal to be achieved is worthless, as it is actualized in the very instant in which one experiences rapture. With due regard for the differences and distances between the Nietzschean state of potential culmination and the

31 Avila 2004: 415

32 Avila 2004: 411

ecstasy of St Teresa, as she is a nun and lives under a rule of life, as well as puts her faith in the institution of which she is a part with all the moral burden coming from this state, we can bet on approximations referring to these two movements of the spirit. Nietzsche, although averse to all this, a declared atheist, through an experience carried out in iconoclastic words and attitudes, recognizes, in an aspect of Teresa de Avila's life, elements that corroborate his own experience and thought: the experience of life as an experience of fullness, where everything is accepted in an instant that, albeit fleeting, summarizes all the richness of feelings of increased strength.

The mystical drunkenness is characterized as the affirmative disposition for welcoming jubilantly the entirety of life, as the feeling that, when we experience it and when we are taken by it to such an extent that we end up intoxicated, we lose reason as the factor limiting what is allowed and prohibited. Everything is accepted; the overflowing voluptuousness and the ecstasy of sensuality, too. It is experienced by St Teresa of Avila, the reason why she ends up being persecuted for madness and witchcraft accusations. The saint is accused of daring to break with the institutional moral limits that proved mindless.

It is precisely the third essay of *Genealogy of Morality* where Nietzsche deals with the issue of asceticism, referring to Teresa of Avila, to illustrate one example of those mystics considered spiritually problematic. The German philosopher uses the criticism carried out inside the institution, made by mystics such as Teresa, to manifest a counter-criticism, that the mystical experience breaks the limits of reason and morality that separate, exclude, and demonize. It is a spiritual experience enjoyed at the height of voluptuousness and the ecstasy of sensuality, put beyond any intention of explanation by the understanding. As in Nietzsche, Teresa of Avila recognizes the understanding's inability to decipher mystical raptures.

The ones who experience the mystical rapture put themselves beyond the scope of losing and gaining. One is always rich and poor at the same time. No matter how the richness of those experiencing the mystical rapture is presented as overflowing and fullness, its poverty is presented by an absence of goals to be achieved. All goal one can achieve is already actualized in the very instant in which one experiences a mystical rapture. It is an experience where we do not belong anymore; we are taken, meaning we achieve the most sublime levels of the mystique.

The enrapture level is so high that St Teresa feels she loses her exterior senses, thus an emptiness, but at the same time one experiences an increase of strength, which Nietzsche understands as instincts. In St Teresa, such instincts are related to voluptuousness and sensuality, experienced beyond the instinctual, though, reaching the spiritual scope. Yet, it still is an elevating sentiment, both the one experienced in the instinctual level and the one seen



in the spiritual scope. Given these distances and differences, the identity assumed regards the degree of elevation such intoxications further, feelings that contribute to an integral anthropological understanding, where anything is excluded; everything is taken up as jubilant affirmation.

The only absence we feel out of this experience of fullness, lived both in the scope of voluptuousness and spiritual sensuality and the scope of the instinctual potential culmination, is the one inscribed in the sphere of limits between everything and nothing. The one experiencing mystical drunkenness, both in the spiritual sphere and the instinctive sphere, wishes one thing only, that it returns endless times. Every instant experienced is compared to a whole overflowing existence. We wish to stay in it. In it, we experience eternity, the instant eternity. Experiencing the instant, we long for the eternal return. That is the most perfect manifestation to the point of turning it eternal, as a fact accepted, for it is loved with all strength of possible convictions. Love the fact is the same as not recognizing limits. In it all is accepted, even its nothing, that is, what is inferred as burden and negation. Mystical drunkenness teaches us to say yes to the fact, loving it: *amor fati*.

With it, we can say that between rapture and drunkenness, except for the differences, some identities and a preponderant factor remain: the vitalist dynamics of the fullness of life. When experienced in the dimension of fullness, life starts to be welcomed as a whole, both in what is pleasant and what is burden and disgust. That is why no limits are separating one thing and the other, as does the rational understanding; all are welcomed with a desire, an unlimited yearning, as what is wanted is the greatest appropriation forever, in a disquieting jump to achieve ever more culminating power points. In this yearning for being more, we open ourselves up to the mystery, thus we enter the real of the mystique, and there every attempt of explanation stops in the unspeakable of the ecstasy and rapture. Even if the mystical rapture state constitutes the fullest state of the meaning of life, to the point of longing for its endless return, it bears also a burden, an emptiness, a nothingness, in the face of which is disposed of an attitude of jubilant welcoming.

Therefore, longing for the eternity of the instant is, at the same time, breaking with every will of pacification. The mystical field is disclosed as a soul field, full of forces fighting all the time, and from such a fight we have an increase of strength. It is, then, only possible to talk of a mystical feeling of fullness when the forces do not find limits for action, in a desire to reach ever more culminating points of force, a force that causes at the same time delight, voluptuousness, and sensuality, but also disgust, pish, and nothingness. The tension, caused by forces always in opposition, creates a noble feeling of fullness that intoxicates, in front of which the affirmative yes is not expected.

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