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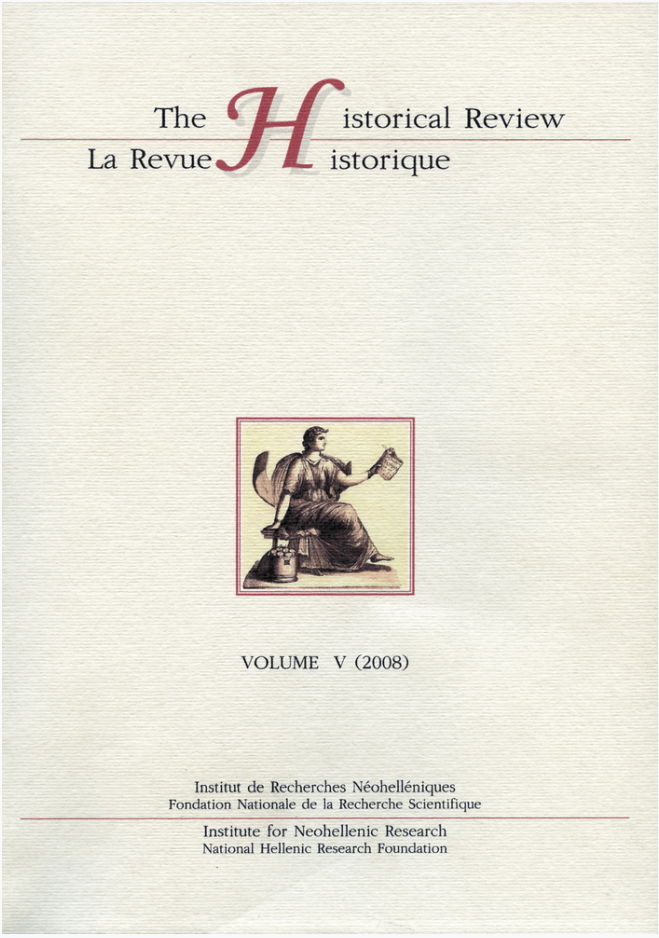

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THE FRENCH SOURCES BETWEEN THE YOUNG KAZANTZAKIS AND NIETZSCHE

Gunnar De Boel

ABSTRACT: Kazantzakis wrote in 1909 a dissertation on Nietzsche's philosophy, in view of a career at the University of Athens. He based this dissertation mainly on studies by French scholars, which provided him not only with most of its content, but also with its very structure. The description of the meaning of Greece to Nietzsche, for example, and the references to ancient Greek authors are indebted to these French commentators, rather than to a direct reading of the primary source. Even more importantly, some of the concepts that Kazantzakis attributes to Nietzsche, and which play an essential role in his own thinking, up to the period of his great post-World War II novels, appear to be based on a mistaken interpretation of Nietzsche by Lichtenberger, according to which man is a particle of the divine substance, the eternal Will. For the real Nietzsche, the mysteries of sexuality constitute the only form of eternal life.

It is generally known that Kazantzakis created a mythology around his acquaintance with Nietzsche in Paris: the French girl who was so startled by his resemblance that she showed him a photograph of Nietzsche. In fact, it is highly likely that Kazantzakis knew about Nietzsche before coming to Paris.[1] About the precise nature of his acquaintance with the body of Nietzschean theory, nothing much was known until recently. At the 2004 Rethymno conference on Kazantzakis, I was able to demonstrate that Kazantzakis, in his dissertation *Ὁ Φρειδερῖκος Νίτσε ἐν τῇ φιλοσοφίᾳ τοῦ δικαίου καὶ τῆς πολιτείας* (1909),[2] based himself primarily on the French literature on Nietzsche.[3] It has been established beyond any doubt that Kazantzakis read *La philosophie de Nietzsche*, first published in 1898,[4] *Friedrich Nietzsche. Aphorismes et*

[1] Cf. P. Bien, "Kazantzakis' Nietzscheanism", *Journal of Modern Literature* 2/2 (1972), pp. 245-266, here p. 249.

[2] N. Kazantzakis, *Ὁ Φρειδερῖκος Νίτσε ἐν τῇ φιλοσοφίᾳ τοῦ δικαίου καὶ τῆς πολιτείας* [Friedrich Nietzsche on the philosophy of right and the state], 2nd ed., Athens: Kazantzaki, 1998.

[3] Cf. G. De Boel, "Ο Καζαντζάκης 'πιστός αναγνώστης' των Γάλλων σχολιαστών του Nietzsche" [Kazantzakis, the "faithful reader" of the French commentators of Nietzsche], in C. E. Psychogios (ed.), *Νίκος Καζαντζάκης. Το έργο και η πρόσληψή του* [Nikos Kazantzakis: the work and its reception], Heraklion: Centre for Cretan Literature, 2006, pp. 215-228.

[4] I will cite this book in its 9th edition: *La philosophie de Nietzsche,* Paris: Félix Alcan,

fragments choisis, a collection of aphorisms and fragments first published in 1899, and the article "Le testament philosophique de Nietzsche", published in the periodical *La Revue de Paris*, in 1902, all by Henri Lichtenberger, and that he read also the books *Nietzsche et l'immoralisme*, by Alfred Fouillée, published in Paris in 1902, and *En lisant Nietzsche*, by Émile Faguet, published in Paris in 1903.[5] None of these works is, however, mentioned in Kazantzakis' dissertation.

Henri Lichtenberger was the son of an Alsatian family that emigrated in 1870, after the German victory in Elsasshausen, when the boy was six years old, to Paris. Later on, from the 1890s, he was a professor of foreign literature in Nancy. His book on Nietzsche developed out of a course he taught there. He was the one who made Nietzsche *salonfähig* in France. Although he felt always close to Nietzsche's sister, Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche, this does not seem to have stood in the way of his reputation as the best and most objective French Nietzsche scholar, which he held for decades afterwards.[6]

Émile Faguet is of an altogether different calibre: his presentation is much less clear than Lichtenberger's, he often repeats himself and his style is rather heavy-handed. Although he has a low opinion of Nietzsche's originality, he approves of his theory and will not allow the so-called "destructive part" of his theory to monopolize all the attention.[7] Alfred Fouillée, on the other hand, was a staunch adversary of Nietzsche's. Like Faguet, he denies him every originality, but Fouillée is a typical representative of the French academic philosophers, who, unlike the philologists, reject altogether this theory which they consider to be the work of a madman.[8] Fouillée undertakes the demolition of the theory on purely philosophical, methodological grounds.[9]

These are the authors whose texts were used by Kazantzakis to write his dissertation, which he planned to submit as a Habilitation for the University of Athens in 1909. We know that the dissertation was printed in Heraklion, in

1905. There are some additions in this edition compared to the previous ones, but none is of any consequence for our purpose.

[5] Both Faguet and Fouillée are often quoted in Palamas' critical work. I thank the anonymous reviewer of this article for this valuable comment.

[6] Cf. G. Bianquis, *Nietzsche en France. L'influence de Nietzsche sur la pensée française*, Paris: Félix Alcan, 1929, p. 15, and L. Pinto, *Les neveux de Zarathoustra,* Paris: Seuil, 1995, p. 53.

[7] Cf. Bianquis, *Nietzsche en France*, p. 28.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 25.

[9] Cf. E. H. Deudon, *Nietzsche en France. L'antichristianisme et la critique, 1891-1915*, Washington, DC: University Press of America, 1982, p. 83.

April 1909, but beyond that point all trace of its fate at the University of Athens seems to be lost; we do not even know if it was ever really submitted.[10]

We do know now that this dissertation bears a huge debt to these French Nietzsche scholars, in the sense that, apart from much of the content, its very structure is indebted to Henri Lichtenberger. Now of course it was indelicate on Kazantzakis' part to copy large portions of other people's books without acknowledging the fact. That he was little more than a student then may be considered a mitigating circumstance; and we should of course keep in mind that by nature he was not a scholar, but an author, and a great author at that. But fundamentally, the reason why I pursue this investigation is double. It is of course most interesting to discover the sources of Kazantzakis' knowledge of the theory of Nietzsche, and of the influence of this theory on his own literary work. It is also interesting to see before our very eyes the young author coming to grips with his sources. It is now possible for us to know how Kazantzakis read these sources, what he liked and what he did not like about them, what he left out and what he added, how he constructed his own understanding of Nietzsche, but also how he went about creating his own text, translating and paraphrasing into this exceptional katharevousa of his. That is why I prepared a full synoptic version of Kazantzakis' text and his sources. There is much material here that awaits further exploitation.

At the Rethymno conference, I demonstrated how Kazantzakis took from Lichtenberger the idea of organising his dissertation in a negative and a positive part, after an introduction on Nietzsche's personality.[11]

Kazantzakis found the idea that Nietzsche's philosophy is, in fact, the history of his own soul,[12] and that it is therefore necessary to study his personality in order to understand his philosophy, in both Lichtenberger and Faguet:

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[10] See also P. Stavrou's "Εισαγωγή" [Introduction], in Kazantzakis, *Ὁ Φρειδερῖκος Νίτσε*, pp. 12-13; and Roxane D. Argyropoulos, "Η πρόσληψη των ιδεών του Friederich Nietzsche" [The reception of Nietzsche's ideas], *Προσεγγίσεις της νεοελληνικής φιλοσοφίας* [Approaches to modern Greek philosophy], Thessaloniki: Vanias, 2004, pp. 238-240.

[11] Cf. De Boel, "Ο Καζαντζάκης", pp. 223-224.

[12] As a matter of fact, this idea was expressed by Nietzsche himself in *Jenseits von Gut und Böse,* §6. Kazantzakis did not know German when he wrote his dissertation. As in some cases Kazantzakis was led by his French sources to the French translations of Nietzsche's works by Henri Albert, I will quote Nietzsche in French, i.e. in the version that Kazantzakis would have read (but I will also provide the German originals); only in this way will it be possible to decide whether Kazantzakis took his Nietzsche quotations from the French commentators or directly from Nietzsche, albeit in French translation:

1. Καὶ ὄντως ἡ διδασκαλία τοῦ Νίτσε οὐδὲν ἄλλο παρίσταται ἢ ὡς ἡ ἱστορία ἡ θυελλώδης τῆς ψυχῆς αὐτοῦ, ἥτις διὰ μέσου τοσούτων καταιγίδων ἔτεινε πάντοτε πρὸς τὴν γαλήνην καὶ τὸ φῶς.
   Οὕτως εὐθὺς ἐξ ἀρχῆς, πρὶν εἰσέλθωμεν εἰς τὸ κύριον μέρος τῆς ἡμετέρας μελέτης, ἀποκαλύπτεται σαφέστατα καὶ ἀφ'ἑαυτῆς ἡ ἀνάγκη νὰ ἐξετάσωμεν προεισαγωγικῶς δύο τινά:
   α) Τὴν ΕΠΟΧΗΝ καθ'ἣν ἔζησεν ὁ Νίτσε καὶ ἥτις εἶναι καὶ ἡμετέρα ἐποχή.
   β) Τὸν ΧΑΡΑΚΤΗΡΑ καὶ τὴν ΖΩΗΝ τοῦ Νίτσε. [Kazantzakis, p. 4]

2. Nietzsche fait de sa personnalité même le centre de sa philosophie: il passe sa vie à se chercher et nous communique le résultat de ses investigations. Sa philosophie est donc avant tout l'histoire de son âme. C'est donc par l'examen de la personnalité de Nietzsche [...] que nous commencerons cette étude. [Lichtenberger, *La philosophie*, p. 4]

These are the very words with which Faguet begins his book:

3. Il arrive souvent, peut-être toujours, qu'en exposant ses idées un philosophe ne fait qu'analyser son caractère. [Faguet, *En lisant,* p. 1]

Kazantzakis' introduction is mainly based on the first, biographic, chapters of Lichtenberger's *La philosophie de Nietzsche*, largely complemented however by the beginning of Faguet's *En lisant Nietzsche*. The two sources diverge especially in their treatment of the discovery of ancient Greece by the young

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"Je me suis rendu compte peu à peu de ce que fut jusqu'à présent toute grande philosophie: la confession de son auteur, une sorte de *mémoires* involontaires et insensibles; et je me suis aperçu aussi que les intentions morales ou immorales formaient, dans toute philosophie, le véritable germe vital d'où chaque fois la plante entière est éclose. [...] Au contraire, chez le philosophe, il n'y a rien d'impersonnel; et particulièrement sa morale témoigne, d'une façon décisive et absolue, de *ce qu'il est*, –c'est-à-dire dans quel rapport se trouvent les instincts les plus intimes de sa nature." [*Jenseits von Gut und Böse,* §6]

The original German version is: "Allmählich hat sich mir herausgestellt, was jede grosse Philosophie bisher war: nämlich das Selbstbekenntnis ihres Urhebers und eine Art ungewollter und unvermerkter mémoires; insgleichen, dass die moralischen (oder unmoralischen) Absichten in jeder Philosophie den eigentlichen Lebenskeim ausmachten, aus dem jedesmal die ganze Pflanze gewachsen ist. [...] Umgekehrt ist an dem Philosophen ganz und gar nichts Unpersönliches; und insbesondere giebt seine Moral ein entschiedenes und entscheidendes Zeugniss dafür ab, wer er ist – das heisst, in welcher Rangordnung die innersten Triebe seiner Natur zu einander gestellt sind." [*Jenseits von Gut und Böse,* §6]

Kazantzakis' wording proves that he is translating Lichtenberger ("histoire de son âme" vs. Nietzsche's "mémoires"), and that it is therefore through Lichtenberger that he knows this idea of Nietzsche's.

Nietzsche. It was Faguet's much more sensational description which appealed to our young Greek's mind.[13] In this context, some interesting remarks may be made concerning Kazantzakis' references to ancient Greece. In the chapter about religion, ethics and law, he exclaims:

> 4. Νομίζει τις μελετῶν τὴν ἐν τῷ θέματι τούτῳ θεωρίαν τοῦ Νίτσε, ὅτι ἀκούει τὸν Καλλικλῆ ἐν τῷ "Γοργίᾳ" τοῦ Πλάτωνος, ἐκθέτοντα πρὸς τὸν Σωκράτη τὴν θεωρίαν αὐτοῦ περὶ γενέσεως καὶ ἐξελίξεως τοῦ Δικαίου. [Kazantzakis, p. 98]

He goes on citing this most telling passage from Plato:

> 5. Οἱ τιθέμενοι τοὺς νόμους οἱ ἀσθενεῖς ἄνθρωποί εἰσιν καὶ οἱ πολλοί, πρὸς αὐτοὺς οὖν καὶ τὸ αὐτοῖς συμφέρον τούς τε νόμους τίθενται καὶ τοὺς ἐπαίνους ἐπαινοῦσιν καὶ τοὺς ψόγους ψέγουσιν· ἐκφοβοῦντες τοὺς ἐρρωμενεστέρους τῶν ἀνθρώπων καὶ δυνατοὺς ὄντας πλέον ἔχειν, ἵνα μὴ αὐτῶν πλέον ἔχωσιν, λέγουσιν, ὡς αἰσχρὸν καὶ ἄδικον τὸ πλεονεκτεῖν, καὶ τοῦτό ἐστιν τὸ ἀδικεῖν, τὸ πλέον τῶν ἄλλων ζητεῖν ἔχειν· ἀγαπῶσι γὰρ οἶμαι αὐτοὶ ἂν τὸ ἴσον ἔχωσιν φαυλότεροι ὄντες. [Plato, *Gorgias* 483b-c; Kazantzakis, p. 98][14]

and on the next page he goes on with the continuation of this passage:

> 6. Καὶ ὄχι ὡς ἡμεῖς πράττομεν παραλαμβάνοντες τοὺς νέους ὥσπερ λέοντας κατεπᾴδοντές τε καὶ γοητεύοντες καταδουλούμεθα λέγοντες ὡς τὸ ἴσον χρὴ ἔχειν καὶ τοῦτό ἐστιν τὸ καλὸν καὶ τὸ δίκαιον. ἐὰν δέ γε οἶμαι φύσιν ἱκανὴν γένηται ἔχων ἀνήρ, πάντα ταῦτα ἀποσεισάμενος καὶ διαρρήξας καὶ διαφυγών, καταπατήσας τὰ ἡμέτερα γράμματα καὶ μαγγανεύματα καὶ ἐπῳδὰς καὶ νόμους τοὺς παρὰ φύσιν ἅπαντας, ἐπαναστὰς ἀνεφάνη δεσπότης ἡμέτερος ὁ δοῦλος, καὶ ἐνταῦθα ἐξέλαμψεν τὸ τῆς φύσεως δίκαιον. [Plato, *Gorgias* 484a-b; Kazantzakis, p. 99][15]

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[13] Cf. De Boel, "Ο Καζαντζάκης", p. 225.

[14] "The reason, as I conceive, is that the makers of laws are the majority who are weak; and they make laws and distribute praises and censures with a view to themselves and to their own interests; and they terrify the stronger sort of men, and those who are able to get the better of them in order that they may not get the better of them; and they say, that dishonesty is shameful and unjust; meaning, by the word injustice, the desire of a man to have more than his neighbours; for knowing their own inferiority, I suspect that they are too glad of equality." [transl. B. Jowett]

[15] "[...] [not, perhaps, according to that artificial law, which we invent and impose upon our fellows, of whom we take the best and strongest from their youth upwards,] and tame them like young lions, – charming them with the sound of the voice, and saying to them, that with equality they must be content, and that the equal is the honourable and the just. But if there were a man who had sufficient force, he would shake off and break through, and

The resemblance with Nietzsche's theory is indeed striking, but unfortunately, the discovery of this fine passage is not Kazantzakis' own merit. Fouillée, the professional philosopher, had noticed the decidedly Nietzschean ring of Callicles' words: he quotes in French the second of the passages cited by Kazantzakis, preceded by the following words, only the perspective of which is changed in Kazantzakis' translation:

7. Platon n'a-t-il pas mis dans la bouche de Calliclès ces paroles connues, qu'on croirait de Nietzsche lui-même. [Fouillée, *Nietzsche*, p. 187]

Kazantzakis changes Fouillée's "one seems to be hearing Nietzsche himself" into "one seems to be hearing Callicles", and he quotes the passage more fully, to bring out more clearly the link between "the laws" and "the weak" that is so central to Nietzschean thinking. Now, the continuation of this passage by Plato, which is cited by neither Fouillée nor Kazantzakis, must nevertheless have lingered in Kazantzakis' mind:

8. δοκεῖ δέ μοι καὶ Πίνδαρος ἅπερ ἐγὼ λέγω ἐνδείκνυσθαι ἐν τῷ ᾄσματι
ἐν ᾧ λέγει ὅτι
νόμος ὁ πάντων βασιλεὺς
θνατῶν δὲ καὶ ἀθανάτων. [Plato, *Gorgias* 484b][16]

for, when later he picks up, from Fouillée, another ancient Greek reference:

9. De la lutte même, de ce combat qu'Héraclite proclamait le père de toutes choses [...]. [Fouillée, *Nietzche,* p. 111]

which in this case stems directly from Nietzsche himself:

10. Der Krieg ist der Vater aller guten Dinge, der Krieg ist auch der Vater der guten Prosa! [*Fröhliche Wissenschaft,* §92]

he attributes this saying, not to the rightful author, Heraclitus, duly identified by Fouillée, but to Pindar:

11. Ὁ πόλεμος διὰ τὸν Νίτσε, ὅπως καὶ διὰ τὸν Πίνδαρον, εἶναι "πάντων πατήρ", τὸ ἰσχυρότατον ὄργανον τῆς προόδου καὶ τῆς ἐπιλογῆς. [Kazantzakis, p. 111]

Clearly, Kazantzakis still had in mind Plato's Pindaric "νόμος ὁ πάντων βασιλεύς" when he wrote this. But, one might object, Nietzsche himself did not identify the

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escape from all this; he would trample under foot all our formulas and spells and charms, and all our laws which are against nature: the slave would rise in rebellion and be lord over us, and the light of natural justice would shine forth." [transl. B. Jowett]

16 "And this I take to be the sentiment of Pindar, when he says in his poem, that 'Law is the king of all, of mortals as well as of immortals'." [transl. B. Jowett]

author of the citation, so might not Kazantzakis have taken his reference directly from Nietzsche, and not from Fouillée? This is highly unlikely, for two reasons. In the translation of *Fröhliche Wissenschaft* by Henri Albert, who translated the whole Nietzsche œuvre into French, this passage is translated as:

> 12. La guerre est **la mère** de toutes les bonnes choses, la guerre est aussi la mère de toute bonne prose! [*Fröhliche Wissenschaft,* §92]

Henri Albert may have been a good Germanist, but he manifestly was not a classical scholar, for otherwise he would not have let the grammatical gender of the French word for "war", **la** guerre, overrule the exact wording of the ancient Greek citation, and thereby make nonsense of it. It will be noticed that Fouillée, in his own rendering (quotation 13, *infra*) sticks to Heraclitus' and Nietzsche's wording (*le père*), but is careful to introduce a grammatically masculine word, *le combat*, after the feminine word *la lutte*.

Even more convincing is the fact that some forty pages earlier, Kazantzakis had translated – as always, without acknowledgement – the entire paragraph by Fouillée:

> 13. De la lutte même, de ce combat qu'Héraclite proclamait le père de toutes choses, on fait une simple lutte pour l'*existence*, alors que les êtres luttent, en vérité, pour la puissance, pour la supériorité, pour la domination, non pas pour l'être, pas même pour le mieux-être, mais pour le plus-être, pour *être tout* et *avons* [sic] *tout* ! Pas plus dans la nature que dans l'humanité le véritable idéal n'est démocratie, il est aristocratie, il est même monarchie, il est tyrannie. [Fouillée, *Nietzsche*, p. 111]

In Kazantzakis' rendering this becomes:

> 14. Ἐκ τοῦ ἀγῶνος τούτου ἐξήγαγον τὸν ἀγῶνα περὶ ὑπάρξεως, ἐνῷ πρόκειται περὶ ἀγῶνος ἐπικρατήσεως πηγάζοντος ἐκ τοῦ φυσικοῦ νόμου τῆς ἀνισότητος, τοῦ ὠθοῦντος ἕκαστον ὀργανισμὸν νὰ ὑπερβῇ τὸν ἕτερον. Ὁ ἀγὼν δὲν εἶναι ἁπλῶς πῶς νὰ ζήσῃ τις, πῶς νὰ φυτοζωήσῃ, ἀλλὰ πῶς νὰ ζήσῃ καλύτερον, εὐρύτερον, μεθ'ὅσον τὸ δυνατὸν μεγίστης ἐντάσεως. Ὅπως ἐν τῇ φύσει, οὕτω καὶ ἐν τῇ κοινωνίᾳ τῶν ἀνθρώπων, τὸ ἀληθὲς ἰδεῶδες δὲν εἶναι ἡ δημοκρατία, ἀλλὰ ἡ ἀριστοκρατία· ἔτι πλεόν: ἡ μοναρχία καὶ ἡ τυραννία. [Kazantzakis, pp. 68-69]

The only thing that Kazantzakis left out of his very literal translation is precisely this reference to Heraclitus, perhaps because he intended to use it later. At any rate, these examples prove that his references to ancient Greece are not his own independent contributions to the discussion, but that they also stem from his French predecessors.

I will now take a closer look at some particular points that have to do with the way Kazantzakis integrated Nietzschean conceptions in his own world view. A striking feature in this respect is Kazantzakis' omission of Nietzsche's idea of the eternal return. At the end of his chapter on Nietzsche's biography, Kazantzakis translates a paragraph from Lichtenberger, which refers to Nietzsche's recovery, in 1882, from the long illness that had made him resign from his professorship in Basel. Nietzsche writes about this wonderful feeling of hope, of healing, in the first paragraph of his *Fröhliche Wissenschaft*, of 1882:[17]

> 15. [...] ce qu'il y a d'aventure personnelle dans ce livre. Il semble être écrit dans le langage d'un vent de dégel: on y trouve de la pétulance, de l'inquiétude, des contradictions et un temps d'**avril**, ce qui fait songer sans cesse au voisinage de l'hiver, tout autant qu'à la victoire sur l'hiver [...]. "Gai Savoir": qu'est-ce sinon les saturnales d'un esprit qui a résisté patiemment à une terrible et longue pression patiemment, sévèrement, froidement, sans se soumettre, mais sans espoir, –et qui maintenant, tout à coup, est assailli par l'espoir, par l'espoir de guérison, par l'ivresse de la guérison? [*Fröhliche Wissenschaft*, §1]

Lichtenberger writes:

> 16. Il sentait maintenant en lui la joyeuse griserie de la santé reconquise; il avait l'impression d'un **printemps** radieux succédant à l'hiver glacial. [...] Et dans la pensée de Nietzsche s'élève alors une nouvelle vision d'avenir: son imagination d'artiste enfante la rayonnante figure du prophète Zarathustra, qui après avoir passé dix ans au désert "à jouir de sa pensée et de sa solitude", descend parmi les hommes pour leur annoncer la religion du "Surhomme" et la doctrine du "Retour éternel". [Lichtenberger, *La philosophie*, p. 95]

Kazantzakis proposes a very close rendering of Lichtenberger's passage, in which he combines, just like Lichtenberger, Nietzsche's preface to *Fröhliche Wissenschaft* with the creation of the figure Zarathustra:

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[17] "[...] ob Jemand, ohne etwas Ähnliches erlebt zu haben, dem Erlebnisse dieses Buchs durch Vorreden näher gebracht werden kann. Es scheint in der Sprache des Thauwinds geschrieben: es ist Übermuth, Unruhe, Widerspruch, Aprilwetter darin, so dass man beständig ebenso an die Nähe des Winters als an den Sieg über den Winter gemahnt wird, der kommt, kommen muss, vielleicht schon gekommen ist ... [...] 'Fröhliche Wissenschaft': das bedeutet die Saturnalien eines Geistes, der einem furchtbaren langen Drucke geduldig widerstanden hat – geduldig, streng, kalt, ohne sich zu unterwerfen, aber ohne Hoffnung –, und der jetzt mit Einem Male von der Hoffnung angefallen wird, von der Hoffnung auf Gesundheit, von der Trunkenheit der Genesung." [*Fröhliche Wissenschaft*, §1]

17. Ἡσθάνετο τὴν γλυκεῖαν μέθην τῆς ἀναρρώσεως, αἴσθημά τι χαρᾶς καὶ ἐλπίδος ὅμοιον **τῇ ἀνοίξει**, ἔπειτα ἀπὸ μακροχρόνιον χειμῶνα. Καὶ ὑψοῦται τότε ἐν τῇ σκέψει τοῦ Νίτσε ἡ ἀστραπηβόλος μορφὴ τοῦ Ζαρατούστρα, ὅστις, ἀφοῦ ἐπὶ δέκα ἔτη ἀπέλαυσε τὴν σκέψιν αὐτοῦ καὶ τὴν μόνωσιν ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ, κατεβαίνει πρὸς τοὺς ἀνθρώπους, ἀναγγέλλων αὐτοῖς τὴν θρησκείαν τοῦ Ὑπερανθρώπου. [Kazantzakis, p. 40]

The striking thing is of course that he cuts off at the mention of the religion of the Übermensch, thus deleting the doctrine of the eternal return. That this is not an accidental omission is proved by the fact that nowhere in the dissertation is any mention made of Nietzsche's idea of an eternal return. Probably, he left it out because it was not congenial to himself. It is obvious, when we read his *Ἀσκητική* [*The saviours of God*], that world history to his mind is a linear process, a progress, and that he has no use for circularity.[18]

His second chapter is called "Nihilism". It is based on the apocryphal work *Wille zur Macht*, which was published posthumously by Nietzsche's sister, in 1901, i.e. after the first publication of Lichtenberger's *La philosophie de Nietzsche* in 1898. Although there were many re-editions of this work after 1901, Lichtenberger never expanded it to take into account this new book. He wrote however an extensive review of it in 1902, in the *Revue de Paris*. Kazantzakis follows closely, i.e. page per page, this review; usually he sticks to the text he finds there (and, more generally, in the French commentators), even when it diverges from Nietzsche's own text, in the translation by Albert. Occasionally, however, Kazantzakis' wording is closer to Albert's translation of *Wille zur Macht* of 1903 than to Lichtenberger's own rendering: this means that from time to time Kazantzakis was led by the French commentators to take a look at the primary source, Nietzsche's own text, in the French translation by Albert. In some rare cases, in this way he quotes passages that are not found in any of the French sources, at least not in the ones I have discovered thus far. Unfortunately, more often than not these original quotations are from *Wille zur Macht*, the unauthorised work with its distortions of Nietzschean thought.

Now, let's try and trace one of these passages in Kazantzakis via Lichtenberger back to what Nietzsche (or at least the editor of *Wille zur Macht*) says:

18. Βασιζόμενος ὁ σημερινὸς ἄνθρωπος ἐπὶ τοῦ ἰσχύοντος πίνακος, πιστεύει εἰς τὴν ὕπαρξιν Θεοῦ, εἰς τὴν κατεύθυνσιν πρὸς ὡρισμένον

[18] The eternal return is explicitly an eternal circular movement, cf. *Wille zur Macht,* §476. It is of course puzzling that in Kazantzakis' works that are inspired by Buddhist thinking the situation seems to be reversed, for the notions of linearity and circularity are contradictory.

> σκοπὸν τοῦ τε ἀνθρώπου καὶ τοῦ σύμπαντος· θεωρεῖ ἑαυτὸν κέντρον καὶ ἥρωα τραγικὸν τῆς ζωῆς, μόριον πολύτιμον τῆς θείας ὑποστάσεως, μικρόκοσμον, ὅν τι μεσάζον μεταξὺ Θεοῦ καὶ ὕλης. [Kazantzakis, p. 44]

Lichtenberger, in his review article, sums up the causes that lead to nihilism. Nihilism arises when man finds that there is no God, that life does not have any meaning and that the universe has no unity in which he plays his part. Until this discovery, man thought he was a particle of an infinite substance, the substance of divine unity:

> 19. Longtemps l'homme a cru qu'une **autorité surnaturelle, surhumaine, imposait à l'humanité et à l'univers une loi, une fin suprême vers laquelle ils devaient tendre**, et il s'est estimé dans la mesure où il se sentait le collaborateur de Dieu. [...] Autre cause du nihilisme: notre besoin de croire que l'univers forme un tout lié dans ses parties, un vaste organisme, que l'homme tient sa place et joue son rôle dans l'ordre universel, qu'il est **une parcelle de la substance infinie, de la divinité**. [...] Or, nous découvrons un beau jour qu'il n'y pas d'unité dans l'univers, et que le Devenir n'est pas logique. Et aussitôt nous nous sentons déchus à nos propres yeux: nous nous méprisons de n'être que nous-mêmes et non **un mode de Dieu**. [Lichtenberger, "Le testament", pp. 782-783]

Kazantzakis' text is manifestly a shortened translation of this text.[19] But how does this text relate to its ultimate source, Nietzsche? Lichtenberger assembles passages that are separated in *Wille zur Macht*. In §3 Nietzsche says:

> 20. La question du nihilisme "*à quoi bon?*" part de l'usage qui fut courant jusqu'ici, grâce auquel le but semblait fixé, donné, exigé du dehors –c'est-à-dire par une quelconque ***autorité supra-humaine***. [*Wille zur Macht,* §3][20]

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[19] The only element that is not common with Lichtenberger is "θεωρεῖ ἑαυτὸν κέντρον καὶ ἥρωα τραγικὸν τῆς ζωῆς", which Kazantzakis seems to have taken straight from *Wille zur Macht*: "Le signe le plus général des temps modernes: l'homme a perdu, à ses propres yeux, infiniment de *dignité*. Il a longtemps été le centre et le héros tragique de l'existence, en général; puis il s'est efforcé d'affirmer du moins sa parenté avec la portion décisive de l'existence qui possédait sa valeur par elle-même –comme font tous les métaphysiciens qui veulent maintenir la *dignité de l'homme*, avec leur croyance que les valeurs morales sont des valeurs cardinales." [*Wille zur Macht,* §4] It may be noticed that in this fragment, the enigmatic "sa parenté avec la portion décisive de l'existence qui possédait sa valeur par elle-même" may have been taken by Lichtenberger to mean the same thing as his "parcelle de la substance infinie, de la divinité".

[20] "Die Frage des Nihilismus 'wozu?' geht von der bisherigen Gewöhnung aus, vermöge deren das Ziel von Aussen her gestellt, gegeben, gefordert schien – nämlich durch irgend eine übermenschliche Autorität." [*Wille zur Macht,* §3]

We recognise the "goal" and the "superhuman authority" of Lichtenberger's version. In §5 he elaborates this explanation:

> 21. [...] l'homme n'apparaît plus comme **le collaborateur**, et, moins encore, comme le centre du devenir. [...] Une façon d'unité, une forme quelconque du "monisme": et, par suite de cette croyance, l'homme dans un sentiment de profonde connexion et de profonde dépendance vis-à-vis d'un *tout* qui lui est infiniment supérieur, **un mode de la divinité** ... [*Wille zur Macht,* §5][21]

What is common among Kazantzakis, Lichtenberger and Nietzsche are the main points: the belief in a goal, fixed by a superhuman authority, the belief that there is a unity in the universe, of which man is a part, even a collaborator, which "ὅν τι μεσάζον μεταξὺ Θεοῦ καὶ ὕλης" may be taken to mean.

The notion that man used to consider himself as a "mode of the deity" is common only to Lichtenberger and Nietzsche. On the other hand, the idea that man is a particle of the divine substance is common only to Kazantzakis and Lichtenberger: compare "μόριον πολύτιμον τῆς θείας ὑποστάσεως" with "une parcelle de la substance infinie, de la divinité". In *Wille zur Macht*, I found only one passage that could have led Lichtenberger to use these terms. In this passage, Nietzsche speaks about rare human beings, like Goethe, who reach the summits of human joy:

> 22. [...] ils sentent sur eux-mêmes une sorte de divinisation du corps et sont très éloignés de la philosophie ascétique du "Dieu est esprit": d'où il ressort clairement que l'ascète est l'homme "mal venu" qui n'approuve **qu'une parcelle de lui-même**, et justement cette parcelle qui juge et condamne et **qu'il appelle "Dieu"**. [*Wille zur Macht,* §482][22]

So, what the ascetic calls God is the tiny particle within himself that judges and condemns precisely those corporeal joys. Let's note first that Nietzsche's *Etwas* ("something") acquires a much greater density in the French translation *parcelle* ("a particle"). Furthermore, Nietzsche is rejecting here the dualistic, gnostic theory of the divine spark within man. But in the way this Nietzsche

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[21] "(der Mensch nicht mehr **Mitarbeiter**, geschweige der Mittelpunkt des Werdens). [...] Eine Art Einheit, irgend eine Form des 'Monismus': und in Folge dieses Glaubens der Mensch in tiefem Zusammenhangs- und Abhängigkeitsgefühl von einem ihm unendlich überlegenen Ganzen, **ein *modus* der Gottheit** ... [*Wille zur Macht,* §5]

[22] "[...] sie empfinden an sich eine Art Vergöttlichung des Leibes und sind am entferntesten von der Asketen-Philosophie des Satzes 'Gott ist ein Geist': wobei sich klar herausstellt, dass der Asket der 'missrathene Mensch' ist, welcher nur ein Etwas an sich, und gerade das richtende und verurtheilende Etwas, gut heisst – und 'Gott' heisst." [*Wille zur Macht,* §482]

passage is quoted by Lichtenberger, and ultimately by Kazantzakis, it does not carry those dualistic overtones (nor the rejection!). In fact, Lichtenberger had already used the notion of "particle of the divine" in his introduction to his book of aphorisms, published in 1899, two years before the publication of the *Wille zur Macht.* In this book, strangely enough, Lichtenberger ascribes the conception of man being a particle of the eternal and infinite will to the positive, Dionysian part of Nietzsche's teaching, not to the crumbling system of fictive values that must be smashed:

> 23. [...] l'homme n'est pas seulement un individu éphémère et borné, il est aussi une **parcelle de la volonté éternelle et infinie**, et, en cette qualité, il est, lui aussi, éternel et indestructible. Or, dans l'état d'extase ou d'ivresse, l'homme prend conscience de son identité essentielle avec tous les êtres, de son union avec la nature entière. C'est là ce que Nietzsche appelle l'illusion *dionysienne*: par elle, l'homme, en présence du spectacle terrifiant de la souffrance, de la destruction, de la mort, échappe au pessimisme, parce qu'il perçoit l'éternité de la volonté sous le flux perpétuel des phénomènes, et dit à la Vie: "Je te veux, car tu es la **vie éternelle**." [Lichtenberger, *Aphorismes*, p. IX]

No doubt, Lichtenberger is alluding here to *Götzen-Dämmerung*, where Nietzsche speaks about the Dionysian mysteries by which the ancient Greeks sought to obtain eternal life, which for them meant the eternal return of life by the mysteries of sexuality:

> 24. Qu'est-ce que l'Hellène se garantissait par ces mystères? La **vie éternelle**, l'éternel retour de la vie; l'avenir promis et sanctifié dans le passé; l'affirmation triomphante de la vie au-dessus de la mort et du changement; la vie véritable comme prolongement collectif par la procréation, par les mystères de la sexualité. [*Götzen-Dämmerung, Was ich den Alten verdanke,* §4][23]

There is no implication here of man being a particle of eternal Will, and I strongly suspect Lichtenberger of *Hineininterpretierung.*[24] Moreover, this is the only passage in Nietzsche, as far as I know, where the notion of "eternal life" is

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[23] "Was verbürgte sich der Hellene mit diesen Mysterien? Das ewige Leben, die ewige Wiederkehr des Lebens; die Zukunft in der Vergangenheit verheissen und geweiht; das triumphirende Ja zum Leben über Tod und Wandel hinaus; das wahre Leben als das Gesammt-Fortleben durch die Zeugung, durch die Mysterien der Geschlechtlichkeit." [*Götzen-Dämmerung, Was ich den Alten verdanke,* §4]

[24] Of course, this interpretation of Nietzsche by Lichtenberger made it possible for Kazantzakis to establish contact between (the way he, following Lichtenberger, understood) Nietzsche's theory and Bergson's.

not used to jeer at Christendom.[25] But, undoubtedly through Lichtenberger's book of aphorisms, which Kazantzakis is sure to have read, the notion of "eternal life" used with a positive meaning made its way into his dissertation:

> 25. Τὸ νέον τοῦτο ἰδανικὸν τοῦ Νίτσε εἶναι πανόμοιον πρὸς ἰδανικόν, ὅπερ, κατὰ τὸν Νίτσε, ἐπραγματοποιήθη ὑπὸ τῶν Ἑλλήνων τῶν προσωκρατικῶν χρόνων: ἡ ἡρωϊκὴ τουτέστιν ἀποδοχὴ τῆς ζωῆς μεθ' ὅλων τῶν ἡδονῶν καὶ τῶν πόνων της, ἡ ἀπαισιοδοξία ὑποδουλουμένη τῇ αἰσιοδοξίᾳ καὶ χρησιμεύουσα ὡς κέντρον πρὸς βαθυτέραν ἀπόλαυσιν τῆς αἰωνίας ζωῆς. [Kazantzakis, p. 40]

in a passage that is otherwise a paraphrase of Faguet:

> 26. Nietzsche sent bien qu'il croit à quelque chose et qu'il y a une foi profonde. Il croit aux Grecs d'avant Socrate. [Faguet, *En lisant*, p. 154]
> [...] il accepte vaillamment le monde avec ses beautés et avec ses laideurs, avec ses bonheurs et avec ses souffrances, avec ses joies et avec ses rigueurs. [Faguet, *En lisant*, pp. 153-154]
> [...] un art et une race qui faisaient servir le pessimisme à l'optimisme et qui [...] rencontraient la vie [...] dans toute sa plénitude [...] [Faguet, *En lisant*, pp. 20-21]
> [...] les Grecs, au sein même de leur optimisme, admettent un pessimisme d'art qui ne sert qu'à stimuler et aiguillonner leur optimisme fondamental. [Faguet, *En lisant*, p. 27]

Evidently, Kazantzakis must have liked the notion of a divine particle (or at least a divine spark) within every human being, for he incorporated it later within his own philosophical framework, in *Ἀσκητική*, where it appears in the following passage:

> 27. Ἡ στερνή, ἡ πιὸ ἱερὴ μορφὴ τῆς θεωρίας εἶναι ἡ πράξη. Ὄχι νὰ βλέπεις πῶς πηδάει ἡ σπίθα ἀπὸ μιὰ γενεὰ στὴν ἄλλη, παρὰ νὰ πηδᾶς, νὰ καίγεσαι μαζί της. [*Ἀσκητική*, p. 61]

Finally, in *The Last Temptation of Christ*, Kazantzakis returns to the opposition between the Dionysian, sexual conception of eternal life, as advocated by the real Nietzsche, and the spiritual conception of the divine spark within every human being, that was attributed by Lichtenberger to Nietzsche, and decides clearly against materialism, i.e. against the real Nietzsche:

> 28. –Πῶς μπορεῖς, εἶπε ὁ ἑκατόνταρχος, καὶ μιλᾶς σὲ αὐτὸ τὸ σκυλολόι;

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[25] Cf. e.g. *Also sprach Zarathustra*, I: "Von den Predigern des Todes"; *Zur Genealogie der Moral,* §15; *Der Antichrist,* §15, §29.

> Ὁ Ἰησοῦς κοκκίνισε:
> – Δὲν εἶναι σκύλοι, εἶπε· εἶναι ψυχές, σπίθες τοῦ Θεοῦ· πυρκαγιὰ ’ναι ὁ Θεός, ἑκατόνταρχε, κάθε ψυχὴ καὶ σπίθα, νὰ τὴ σέβεσαι.
> – Εἶμαι Ρωμαῖος, ἀπικρίθηκε ὁ Ροῦφος, Ρωμαῖος κι ὁ θεός μου· ἀνοίγει δρόμους, χτίζει καζέρνες, φέρνει τὸ νερὸ / στὶς πολιτεῖες, ἁρματώνεται τὸν προῦντζο καὶ βγαίνει σὲ πόλεμο· αὐτὸς μπροστὰ κι ἐμεῖς πίσω· κι ἡ ψυχὴ ποὺ λὲς καὶ τὸ κορμί μας εἶναι σ’ ἐμᾶς ἕνα, κι ἀπάνω τους ἡ βούλα τῆς Ρώμης. Κι ὅταν πεθάνουμε, πεθαίνουν καὶ τὰ δυὸ μαζὶ κι ἀπομένουν οἱ γιοί μας· αὐτὸ γιὰ μᾶς θὰ πεῖ ἀθανασία. Κι αὐτὸ ποὺ λές γιὰ βασιλεῖες τῶν οὐρανῶν, μᾶς φαίνουνται παραμύθια, καὶ νὰ μᾶς συμπαθᾶς. [*Ὁ τελευταῖος πειρασμὸς τοῦ Χριστοῦ*, pp. 395-396]

Did he know that the conception which the centurion expresses here is fully congruent with Nietzsche’s world view?

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