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## Il gioco dei limiti. L'idea di esistenza in Nietzsche. by Furia Semerari

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Semerari's essay—but this is true of all the others—is mainly concerned with the issue of freedom and destiny, and thus with what today, in the era of technology and danger theorized by Heidegger, still can and must be thought. By way of confronting Heidegger on the ground of his confrontations with other thinkers of the Western tradition, the whole volume becomes an important source of critical orientations for the future of thinking, as well as a serious reflection on themes whose problematics have not yet been exhausted.

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***Il gioco dei limiti. L'idea di  
esistenza in Nietzsche.***

*Furio Semerari.*

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For the past forty years, Nietzsche has been a major interlocutor in contemporary Italian critical thought. He been subjected, in nearly chronological succession, to compelling interpretations by existentialists, structuralists, Marxists, thinkers of the negative and of difference, and hermeneuticians. Some readings, in particular, have become witness to and icons of specific intellectual-cultural moods, and here we can briefly recall the influential monographs by Gianni Vattimo, Antonio Penzo, Giangiorgio Pasqualotto, Giuseppe Masini, Massimo Cacciari, Giorgio Colli. In each case, Nietzsche's peculiar textuality was made to support

the thesis that his Overman was a model for liberation and emancipation, or that he was systematically misrepresented for the early part of the century, especially in Germany. On another front, Nietzsche's notion of difference manifested significantly disparate traits to the Italians than it did to the French; thus he was read as the ultimate hermeneutician of endless interpretation or, on yet another reading, as the last expression of an utterly fragmented subject(ivity) of metaphysical thought, the announcer of achieved nihilism. Of course, artists and writers also have dug inside the endlessly configurable *Nachlass*, especially in the seventies and through the eighties. One aspect which recurs often is the elusive rapport between body and meaning, life and art, the dynamic of the creative impulse, life itself as constantly changing positions; "gaming", as we might say with Lyotard.

Fulvio Semerari's book intends to re-read the Colli-Montinari corpus in terms of a problematic concept which is perhaps not sufficiently thematized by Nietzsche himself, at least explicitly, but which can serve as the background web or linkage among a constellation of other assertions and divagations only apparently contradictory or unrelated. This is the concept of *limit*, which according to Semerari takes on several meanings and on the basis of which we can further penetrate and pay homage to the thinker who refuses to be, who cannot be, categorized, and seems destined to spur and produce ever-different interpretations. Beginning with Karl Löwith's observation that Nietzsche's "travailled thinking is

more like an experimenting along the way than a leading up to knowledge," Semerari claims that existence itself becomes a play of limits, an incessant gaming with boundaries, an endless, on-going testing of parameters and possibilities for a viable existence, and for its sense. Nietzsche had highlighted this dynamic already in *The Birth of Tragedy*, where the Apollonian measure gives value and form to the untrammelled manifestation of Dionisian impulses. Unchecked freedom is not really liberating, means nothing in and by itself, much like the state of inebriation, which could paradoxically turn into a negation of life. For Nietzsche it is always a question of limit, for the subject is always positioned, with a given perspective, within a given set of relations. The virtue of superior intellects, of post-metaphysical humans will consist precisely in the attitude and the manner one deals with inescapable de-limitation. And this can be foregrounded through the measure of reason. From this perspective, Semerari can place Nietzsche squarely in the tradition of Kant, insofar as the First Critique was written precisely to save reason from "obscurity" by keeping it "within the limits of experience" and having it recognize moreover the limits of its possibility (8). On the other hand, it is precisely his acute awareness of how limits can be, once they take concrete shape in rules, disciplines, grammars, extremely constrictive, homogenizing, depersonalizing. Historically, and in its pejorative or repressive symbolic concretion, the notion of limit has set in motion the codes of moralism and practiced the channels

of dogmatism. Nietzsche observed how the body, how experience itself, inevitably must and will vanish. In this sense, by having to philosophize with a hammer, Nietzsche lands squarely on the cusp between late-modernity and an amorphous post-modernity, but surely beyond anything Kant ever imagined. Yet Semerari insists that the destruction of limits is only one phase in an idea or form of thinking which must of necessity also be constructive, committed as it is to continued self-overcoming, accepting of the shaping of what's in the present, unafraid of a predisposition toward what may come. In short, take Life as experiment, as experience of endless limitations, and finally also as movable barrier, an interplay of possibilities, pure play. But here is the twist: not, of course, the pure play of signifiers of Francophilic memory, but rather, the play of referents and symbolic systems, pointing to the resources of one's own life and culture, the value of living consisting precisely in the way through whatever the circumstances may turn out to be for Semerari's Nietzsche. In short, living is not so much against but in relation to the limits one may unexpectedly encounter, *vita natural durante*. It is a hermeneutically enticing position, deserving further development on the part of the author and critics alike. It certainly places Furio Semerari authoritatively in the rich archipelago of Italian Nietzscheans.

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