

**THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING HONEST:  
FREE SPIRITS AND IDIOSYNCRASY IN NIETZSCHE**

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**Abstract**

*The main argument of this paper is that the debate on whether Nietzsche is communitarian or individualist is wrongheaded, failing to distinguish the conception of community and individual Nietzsche critiques, the 'mob' and the 'Higher Man', from the conceptions Nietzsche envisions and hopes for, his 'free spirits' and – what I call, based on the critique of indivisible subjects in the Genealogy of Morality – the idiosyncrasy. I propose a reading of Nietzsche which elaborates his novel conception of a non-ascetic will to truth, based in courageous honesty and self-overcoming, rather than self-preservation, in order to conceive these individuals and communities. The coupling of Dionysus and Apollo has to be replaced with Dionysus and Ariadne because, using key terms from Deleuze's Nietzsche, the sense and value of critique is generated from a labyrinthine, Dionysian meaning as will to power and Ariadne's thread as evaluation based on the eternal recurrence, constituting the idiosyncrasy and the free spirits, respectively.*

**Keywords:** Nietzsche, Dionysus, Ariadne, ascetic, truth

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**Introduction**

Perhaps the greatest disservice to Nietzsche is reading him as though he privileges a certain previously established something over another in some suitably traditional dichotomy, rather than reading him as though he presents us with something radically new, dismantling these traditional oppositions. Take, for instance, the debate over whether Nietzsche is an individualist or a communitarian thinker (see f.ex. Young 2015; Gemes and Sykes 2015; Clarke and Wonderly 2015; Soll 2015). This debate, with each side picking out certain statements from different times of Nietzsche's life and different contexts of his work, could rage on forever, given the sheer range of Nietzsche's thought. It is difficult to see how this could produce an understanding of a thinker so critical of established values and the dichotomies which follow therefrom. By contrast, I argue in this paper

that Nietzsche offers a thinking that ought to omit both the concepts of the individual and the community as we now understand them in interpreting his works.

I argue that Nietzsche's critique of the traditional sense of the individual is the same critique he offers of the traditional sense of the community, in that both senses ground their definition of the individual and the community in the notion of self-preservation. As Zarathustra says in his prologue, the greatest thing one can experience is "the hour of the great contempt", wherein one's happiness, reason, virtue, justice, and pity are found to be "poverty", "dirt", and "a miserable ease" (Nietzsche 2003, 42-3). That is, the greatest thing one can experience is precisely the opposite of self-preservation: self-contempt as that which effects self-overcoming, as that which ushers in the way to the Overman. Nietzsche critiques the individual representing the zenith of self-preservation as the Higher Man (the Higher Man still needs to be taught the most distant as opposed to the nearest 'for one's neighbor'), and likewise critiques the community which most values self-preservation as the mob or herd. These are the ones who fix the sense of something in its previously established sense, inhibiting the creation of meaning, in the same way that they fix the evaluation of things in previously established values, precluding the reevaluation of values themselves. Therefore, it is the Higher Man and the mob, the individuals and communities which value self-preservation above all else, that are the greatest obstacles to the Overman as a new meaning and a reevaluation.

The Higher Man is the emblematic individual, yet the differences between the Higher Man and the mob are still very little compared to their similarities. In fact, the mob still rules the Higher Man, for it is the same values which preserve the mob that the Higher Man himself seeks to justify. In a sense, the Higher Man is hardly an individual, for he does not affirm his difference from the mob, but rather raises their values to the heights of unquestionability. However, as I argue, the Higher Man remains the crowned individual, because individualism itself is inseparable from the notion of responsibility which serves the values of self-preservation in a uniform making-accountable, this accountability being the greatest inhibition to a different and new way of feeling, a feeling of *irresponsibility* which belongs to the Overman.

As opposed to the Higher Man and the mob, the individual and community of self-preservation, Nietzsche proposes beings of self-overcoming or veritable becomings, a community of free spirits and an individual which could hardly be

called such, an individual capable of seeing themselves not as subject, but as force or a series of forces. I believe this latter concept of a subjectless force is best referred to as *idiosyncrasy*, a tendency rather than a stasis, and an assemblage as opposed to something indivisible. Furthermore, the term *idiosyncrasy* refers to all in their particularity, as opposed to the term *individual*, which refers at best to the empty form of a person particular to no one. It is this empty form which defines uniform responsibility, denies difference, and confuses the value of life with its mere preservation, which precludes the honesty and courage so necessary to understand Nietzsche's thought.

### 1. The Art of Individualism and the Emptiness of Meaning

Nietzsche's first endeavor to redefine the relationship between the individual and the community is carried out in *The Birth of Tragedy*. In it is described the Apollonian and the Dionysian, the former proposed as "the glorious divine image of the *principium individuationis*", while in the latter "subjectivity becomes a complete forgetting of the self" (Nietzsche 1993, 16-7). It ought to be kept in mind that the concepts of the Apollonian and the Dionysian are not sociological in nature, but are rather posited for "the science of aesthetics" (Nietzsche 1993, 14). Given the primacy of these concepts, however, it would seem these aesthetic tendencies are prior to a potential sociology, or that these aesthetic tendencies form sociology itself. It is indeed characteristic of Nietzsche's thought to analyze psychological or sociological problems in terms of aesthetics, as opposed to morality, as this privileging of aesthetics over morality is derived from a certain reevaluation of the value of truth, as well as a creation of a new sense for truth, which will be elaborated further on.

Nietzsche remains consistent in this privileging of aesthetics as a method of analyzing sociological questions in his *On the Genealogy of Morality*. In part two of this work, as Nietzsche is searching for the origin of the sovereign individual, as he defines it - as the one capable of making promises, a capability effected by means of having one's memory trained through cruelty - he finds at this origin, as the cruel memory-trainers, "the most involuntary, unconscious artists there are" (Nietzsche 1998, 36, 58). Those who planted the seeds which eventually grew to fruit sovereign individuals are, by Nietzsche's estimation, artists, specifically *unconscious* artists. Nietzsche goes on:

[W]here they appear, in a short time something new stands there, a ruling structure that *lives*, in which parts and functions are delimited and related to one another, in which nothing at all finds a place which has not first placed into it a 'meaning' with respect to the whole" (Nietzsche 1998, 58).

Taking this whole as the community the unconscious artists are creating, and its parts as individuals, it follows that in the origin of individuals *qua* individuals, individuality itself has no meaning without respect to the community, as the whole of which they are parts. This seems paradoxical, however, given that when Nietzsche earlier introduces the sovereign individual as an end, he accordingly calls society "only the means" (1998, 36). Could the individual only have meaning with respect to the community, while the community itself is also only the means to the end of producing the individual?

In attempting to answer this question, it is paramount to take into account the unconscious nature of these artists. For, one must suppose that if these unconscious artists are indeed acting unconsciously, they do not have ends in mind. Rather, the means that is society, as something yet to have its functions consciously delimited, appears to these unconscious artists simply as meaning itself, as that from which the meaning of its parts is derived. Indeed, as a meaning, and not a means, with no end in mind, the product of these unconscious artists truly is art, for art is, aptly considered, the production of a meaning *qua* meaning, as that with no particular end, and this is posited as the origin of individuals and communities alike. Retrospectively, the community is seen as a means to the end that is the sovereign individual, but from the perspective of the unconscious artists, the community is itself the meaning produced by a compulsive and instinctive evaluation, a valuing of the instinct to exercise power.

This unconscious instinct to exercise power, this "*instinct for freedom*" which inhibits precisely this same instinct in those whom it acts upon in forming the tyranny that is the oldest state, is the will to power (Nietzsche 1998, 59). This tyrannical state is the meaning these unconscious artists are creating through their will to power, subjecting individuals as parts of a whole to a meaning subsumed under this meaning of the whole, completely instinctually or completely unconsciously. It is only in looking back that one sees this tyrannical state, this community, as a means to the end of producing the sovereign individual, after "the longest part of the duration of the human race" (Nietzsche 1998, 36). The question needs to be raised, however, in what sense Nietzsche himself considers this sovereign individual as an end.

The sovereign individual is simultaneously a means to an end, the means to the end of what one has promised, and an end in oneself, one who has a feeling of "the completion of man himself" (Nietzsche 1998, 36). The sovereign individual has completed the process of a passive memory becoming active, a reversal of the sense of memory, which is also a reversal of its value. Deleuze refers to this reversibility of sense and value in Nietzsche as their ambivalence, an ambivalence which is determined by the forces with which a certain will to power has affinity (Deleuze 1983, 65-8). Memory is a sickness which has become healthy, a sickness which has resulted in making humanity more interesting and less base, a humanity with a complex interior, a labyrinth. The instinct for freedom which was inhibited in the sufferer of pain and cruelty as mnemo-technique flourishes again in the form of one's "own independent long will" (Nietzsche 1998, 36).

However, the sovereign individual is still, perhaps parodically, utilitarian and Kantian. The sovereign individual is utilitarian because one remains a means to an end, and Kantian because, as the completion of man himself, one accordingly treats oneself as an end. Utilitarianism is the ethics of the mob, which values the self-preservation of the greatest number, while Kantianism is the ethics of the Higher Man, providing a deontological foundation for these very same values. In both of these ethics, sense and value is fixed, the sense and value of a thing cannot even be questioned, and a reevaluation is accordingly precluded. Perhaps even more ironically, however, the sovereign individual has a greater meaning and value precisely as a means and not as an end. "What is great in man is that he is a bridge and not a goal" (Nietzsche 2003, 44), a bridge or a means to the Overman, but, still so, not as an end which would have value in itself. Rather, the Overman is posited as "the meaning of the earth" (42), a meaning which is itself a reevaluation, a reevaluation of the value of the human, all too human.

Even the sovereign individual is all too human, and this is because of the very nature of individualism. Individualism remains a slave morality, regardless of its reversal of the sense of memory from a becoming-reactive to a becoming-active, for *activity* is not yet an *affirmation*. Rather, the activity of the sovereign individual, like slave morality, is defined by their saying "no" to an outside, to a 'different, to a 'not-self'" (Nietzsche 1998, 19). The sovereign individual's activity remains a negation, as their freedom remains a negative freedom, a freedom *from* as opposed to a freedom *for* (Nietzsche 2003, 89). A freedom from conditioning,

as a freedom from fate, a freedom from being determined, remains as a Kantianism in the sovereign individual, as a responsibility and as a conscience defined by this responsibility, a negative conscience and responsibility which does not know what it in its particularity is for.

The sovereign individual is not the Overman, but the Higher Man. "You Higher Men, the worst about you is: none of you has learned to dance as a man ought to dance – to dance beyond yourselves! What does it matter that you are failures!" (Nietzsche 2003, 306). This dancing beyond oneself is the overcoming of individualism in the becoming idiosyncratic, as this lightheartedness towards one's failures is the going beyond of responsibility into a conscience, if it can still be considered such, of irresponsibility. This conscience of irresponsibility follows from Nietzsche's critique of the notion of a subject which would be free to act otherwise than it does, as a separate entity or an indivisible substrate. "There is no such substratum; there is no 'being' behind the doing, effecting, becoming; 'the doer' is simply fabricated into the doing—the doing is everything" (Nietzsche 1998, 25). The sovereign individual acts in such a way so as to negate the species, society or the community as that which conditions the individual, the same community which was the meaning through which the unconscious artists acted, but this negation remains empty, with no new meaning or species through which this empty space can be filled.

## **2. An Empty What-For and the Ascetic Ideal**

Individualism as a slave-morality is also defined by its asceticism, an ascetic ideal which expresses the fact that the human will would rather "will *nothingness* than *not* will" (Nietzsche 1998, 67). This willing of nothingness in individualism has two aspects. The first, as has been stated, is the negation of the species which has conditioned the sovereign individual, the negation of the fate which has itself produced this individual. Second, the ascetic ideal provides a meaning in this willing of nothingness in positing a beyond, a not-world, a true world as an unconditioned world. "Precisely this is what the ascetic ideal means: that something was lacking, that an enormous void surrounded man—he did not know how to justify, to explain, to affirm himself; he suffered from the problem of his meaning" (Nietzsche 1998, 117). In the ascetic ideal providing the meaning of suffering as the very error in the heart of the apparent world of conditioning as

opposed to the unconditioned, true world which we cannot access, there remains a negation in every activity. Schopenhauer's denial of the will to live is the very epitome of this negation, a summation and final consequence of all negations of every priest or philosopher which posits a true world beyond this one. What Schopenhauer does not see, however, is that the very negation of the will to live is *still a will*, and a will which, moreso, is defined by its own self-preservation.

As Nietzsche says, the ascetic ideal "*springs from the protective and healing instincts of a degenerating life*", which results in the terrible contradiction of life against life, a life preserving itself, preserving its sense and value, by means of depreciating the whole of life itself, as opposed to the beyond (Nietzsche 1998, 86). The ascetic ideal is an ingredient of individualism as it is defined by self-preservation in this sense, for even in the case of Schopenhauer, "he does *not* negate existence, rather affirms *his* existence and *only* his existence" (Nietzsche 1998, 75). It is clear from this that the sovereign individual, despite their activity and pseudo-affirmation, remains negative through and through, an end in themselves as a good in themselves incapable of self-overcoming, a justification of the suffering of existence through their unconditional autonomy which can only negate difference as not-self, from a Kantian to a Schopenhauerian.

Nietzsche's criticism of Kantian and Schopenhauerian aesthetics in the beginning of the third part of the *Genealogy* is not without relevance in this regard. An aesthetic theory from the perspective of the spectator like Kant's or Schopenhauer's, one which sees the experience of beauty as that of disinterest, an anesthetized will as opposed to a stimulated will, is a valuing of the very same freedom-from which defines sovereign individualism as opposed to the freedom-for which would be a freedom for creating new values and new meanings. The freedom-from of the Kantian or Schopenhauerian spectator is a freedom from one's own willing, but this very freedom from one's own willing is nevertheless a preservation of the individual, because the individual suffers from the problem of their meaning, the what-for of their suffering. Only the sovereign individual, as the one without meaning, can suffer in this way. The very will of these spectators is a sickness because it is the formula of a terrible contradiction, an earthly will which has voided the earth of meaning, which can no longer in good conscience will the earthly.

The true opposition to the ascetic ideal is art, but an art which has not been corrupted by the ascetic ideal, such as in the case of Wagner corrupted by Schopenhauer. For the core of the ascetic ideal, as Nietzsche says, is the will to truth, the very will to truth which negates interest, affect, willing itself, the will to truth which preserves the individual suffering from their willing as from a sickness, in the positing of a beyond (Nietzsche 1998, 116). On the other hand, art, as the deification of the senses, as a stimulant to life itself, is that "in which *the will to deception* has good conscience on its side" (Nietzsche 1998, 111). Though this opposition of the will to truth as the core of the ascetic ideal and the will to deception as art is convenient for explanatory purposes, this very opposition only exists from the negative point of view, insofar as one does indeed posit a true world beyond the conditioned world supposed as false.

Nietzsche's affirmative view of truth is, by contrast, much more complex and very specific. The affirmative view of truth is posited in opposition to two primary targets: the Kantian view of truth as an end in itself, a *summum bonum*, a noumenon which is unknowable but is nevertheless the highest duty, and the utilitarian view of truth as a means to the end of the greatest good of the greatest number. These are, as stated above, the views of the Higher Man and the mob, those which value self-preservation above all else, and thereby constitute the idea of a truth which is itself self-preserving, supposedly unquestionable, and unable to admit that it arose precisely from a lie - a noble lie perhaps, but a lie which has since lost all claim to nobility. The greatest good for the greatest number is as untruthful as the noumenal realm, for the levelling of life, as the outright rejection of the truth in life, remain merely negative views of truth from the perspective of life itself.

As life itself says to Zarathustra, life's "will to power walks with the feet of your will to truth", as this will to power is that "*which must overcome itself again and again*" (Nietzsche 2003, 138). This is what Nietzsche calls "the law of life... the law of *necessary* 'self-overcoming' in the essence of life", which is perhaps the very core of Nietzsche's thought (Nietzsche 1998, 117). If this necessary self-overcoming, this will to power, walks with the feet of the will to truth, truth, for Nietzsche, is the very opposite of a self-preservation, the opposite of an un-touchable truth, a dogmatic truth, a truth for the greatest number, or a truth of established values. Rather, truth is itself will to power as self-overcoming, finds



its very origin to be a lie, devalues its previously established values, or is reevaluation itself. Truth, like art and life alike, is a creation, and a creation precisely of new meanings, as overcoming is itself only effected by creation. Values cannot be reevaluated through previously established values, but rather can only be reevaluated through the aesthetic perspective of life, that is, the very creation of new values.

### 3. Characteristic Honesty of Free Spirits

Nietzsche's novel conception of truth is characterized by a certain people, a community which he simultaneously invents and prophecies, as those who are willing to conceive this novel, non-ascetic truth. "Zarathustra seeks fellow-creators, fellow-harvesters, and fellow-rejoicers: what has he to do with herds and herdsman and corpses!" (Nietzsche 2003, 52). These fellow creators are those who are willing to create beyond themselves, who are willing to be overcome, as opposed to the herd which most values self-preservation, whose virtues and truths are always their neighbors' virtues and truths, previously established truths which are almost instinctively agreed upon, as those who agree upon them are almost instinctively agreeable. Against the community of the herd, Nietzsche invents his creators, his free spirits, and along with these free spirits a will to truth belonging to them, against a dogmatism which even Kant (and perhaps especially Kant) falls to: "It must offend their pride, and also their taste, if their truth is supposed to be a truth for everyman, which has hitherto been the secret desire and hidden sense of all dogmatic endeavors" (Nietzsche 1990, 71).

This undogmatic truth specific to oneself or one's own partiality is a concept of truth which follows from Nietzsche's perspectivism. Nietzsche forwards this truth of perspectivism most sustainedly in his critique of a Kantian disinterested contemplation in part three of the *Genealogy*:

To see differently... *to want* to see differently, is no small discipline and preparation of the intellect for its future "objectivity"... as the capacity to have one's pro and contra *in one's power*, and to shift them in and out: so that one knows how to make precisely the *difference* in perspectives and affective interpretations useful for knowledge. (Nietzsche 1998, 85)

It is least of all through the denial of one's will that one attains knowledge, nor through the denial of difference, as those negations which constitute the sense of

self-preservation, but rather through the multitude of perspectives, affects or drives which belong to one's will that knowledge is attained. That is, knowledge is an idiosyncrasy which is constituted by the plurality of one's affects and the values inherent to them, or knowledge is precisely the will to power as self-overcoming. This is Nietzsche's non-ascetic will to truth.

Having one's pro and contra in one's power, knowing how to play or dance with one's own for and against, is knowing how to exercise one's will to power as an instinct for freedom which does not presume freedom as unconditional, but rather conditions freedom itself, a freedom particular to the free spirits, a freedom-for as opposed to a freedom-from. This freedom-for is characteristic of free spirits precisely because, as Nietzsche says, "they know how to distinguish between 'true' and 'false' in their own case" (1998, 100). It must offend their pride for their true and false to be that of their neighbors. Rather is their true and false that of the most distant, that of the Overman, a freedom-for the Overman. This distinguishing between true and false in one's own case is the honesty characteristic of free spirits, an honesty which is itself an evaluation, as a freedom-for is always an evaluation.

Zarathustra counts "nothing more valuable and rare today than honesty", but what is honesty if "he who cannot lie does not know what truth is" (Nietzsche 2003, 300-1)? Nietzsche distinguishes the honest lie from the dishonest lie, the former told by one who knows that they are lying, while the latter is told by one who lies innocently, who lies without knowing that they are lying (Nietzsche 1998, 99-100). The latter is told by the Higher Man and the herd, those who believe in the value of previously established values as a given, those who cannot question these values, who see in these values a means to an end or an end in themselves, who see these values as facts. The former is told by the free spirits or the idiosyncrasy, as those who disregard facts in favor of their interpretations, or who realize facts themselves to be interpretations, such as the error of a given indivisible subject. Rather than the truth of the mob as a means to an end or the truth of the Higher Man as an end in itself, the honesty of the free spirits or the idiosyncrasy expresses the meaning of an evaluation.

The honest lie expressing the meaning of an evaluation is always told in the form of a riddle. One must upon hearing it interpret the meaning as a finding of the values which lie behind it, precisely as values which are not given, which are not facts. There is always a certain love in evaluation, a certain madness in

evaluation, which must necessarily disregard certain facts as the expression of the meaning of values which one does not value. 'This, and not that' is always the meaning of the riddle, a yes and a no, an affirmation and a negation, is always the meaning of the riddle. This is why the riddle *par excellence* is the riddle of the eternal recurrence. A yes and a no, to be at some time "deeply delighted" and at another "deeply wounded" by each of Zarathustra's words - these are the ways of interpreting the riddle, as tendencies of the idiosyncrasy or will to power that one is in a given moment (Nietzsche 1998, 6).

The dwarf, however, upon hearing the riddle of the eternal recurrence, does not answer with a yes or a no, but rather treats it as something he has heard before, an expression of a previously established value, a moral platitude and a fact that time is a circle (Nietzsche 2003, 178). The moral nature of the dwarf's answer is an expression of the highest belief in responsibility, that responsibility has a power over time itself, that one will always have a chance at making right whatever it is one regrets, that one will always have the chance of being more responsible next time. The dwarf does not understand the essentially irresponsible nature of Zarathustra's meaning, that the past is chained, that one is as irresponsible now as one was then, that one is an idiosyncratic tendency which acts as it does necessarily in every moment. This is the negative interpretation of the riddle, the interpretation which deeply wounds the one who interprets as one suffering from a tragic fate.

The positive interpretation of the riddle of the eternal recurrence is given in *The Gay Science*. Here Nietzsche finds the condition for affirming the eternal recurrence in having experienced a "tremendous moment" which would in recurring deify one's life, which would have one answer "never have I heard anything more divine" (Nietzsche 1974, 273). This is the moment that teaches one to distinguish the true and the false in one's own case, the moment which teaches one to become what one is. This is Nietzsche's pedagogical method of becoming honest, of becoming a free spirit, of facing one's tragic no in order to convert it into a joyful yes, and in turn having one's joyful yes teach one their true and their false. The negative interpretation of the eternal recurrence is reevaluation itself, beginning with the reevaluation of freedom as responsibility, as a freedom-from, whereas the affirmative interpretation is evaluation proper, the fulfillment of one's freedom-for as a creation and an overcoming, the overcoming of oneself as the greatest weight.

#### 4. Dionysus and Ariadne

The Higher Man and the mob cannot overcome themselves because they have not yet experienced the great contempt, have not yet heard the riddle of the eternal recurrence as the greatest weight, as the weight of their own responsibility revealed as the weight of an infinite causal chain. Dionysus asks Ariadne "don't we have to hate ourselves before we can love ourselves?", which is to say must we not reevaluate all values in order to evaluate honestly, or must we not face what is terrible in the eternal recurrence before we can affirm it in spite of this, or even because of this (Nietzsche 2021, 367)? Must we not hate man as a bridge from the animal in order to love man as the bridge to the Overman? To no longer see man as a goal, to no longer see man as an end with value in itself which must be preserved, must we not experience the great contempt in order to go over the bridge?

The concept of the Dionysian in Nietzsche's thought remains consistent from its inception in *The Birth of Tragedy*. Dionysus is self-forgetting, self-overcoming, or the will to power as an unlearning of previously established values, the destruction of previously established values to the extent that one can no longer negate the different as not-self, as in the slave morality of individualism, but rather affirms and embodies this difference as an idiosyncrasy. It is only in *Ecce Homo*, however, where Nietzsche elaborates his experience of the Dionysian, of the idiosyncratic - that is, his experience of *inspiration*:

You hear; you do not seek; you take, you do not ask who gives; like lightning, a thought lights up, inescapable, unhesitating as to its form — I never had a choice. A rapture whose immense tension occasionally erupts in a flood of tears, while your step involuntarily races then slackens; you feel completely outside yourself, with the most distinct consciousness of countless faint shivers and tingles right down to your toes; you have a feeling of deep bliss where what is most painful and upsetting does not have a contradictory effect but instead acts as conditioned, demanded, as a *necessary* color within such a superfluity of light; an instinct for rhythmic connections that spans forms of vast extent — the length, the requirement for a *wide-spanned* rhythm is almost the measure for the power of inspiration, a sort of compensation for its pressure and tension [...]. All this takes place completely involuntarily, but as though in a tumult of feeling free, of being unrestricted, of power and divinity [...]. (Nietzsche 2021, 382)

This divine rapture of immense power, this rhythm, this affirmation of what is painful and this feeling completely outside oneself is characteristic of Dionysian ecstasy. It is clear from this passage what utilitarian means to ends, Kantian ends in themselves, and deontological foundations for these ends are to be superseded by: Dionysian inspiration, Dionysian meaning, Dionysus as meaning itself, as a freedom for creation.

The Dionysian destruction of previously established values as a precondition for creation requires courage, for "courage is the best destroyer", but this courage is absent in the herd and the Higher Man (Nietzsche 2003, 177). Yet, just as the riddle of the eternal recurrence is itself an honest lie which summons an honest answer, the negative interpretation of the eternal recurrence is a discouragement which summons a courageous answer. Nietzsche sees the preconditions for honesty and courage lacking, he sees the values of self-preservation reigning over the values of self-overcoming, and creates the preconditions for courage and honesty in the riddle of the eternal recurrence, as that which one must necessarily pass through in order to become oneself, to become oneself in overcoming oneself, spanning the many forms of oneself, from individual to idiosyncrasy.

The tremendous moment through which one answers the eternal recurrence with a resounding yes, the moment which itself teaches one their yes and their no, is a moment which provides an inexhaustible magnitude of meaning and an incomparable perspective to evaluate. In uncoupling Dionysus and Apollo, Nietzsche instead couples the Dionysian pure affirmation of meaning or meaning itself as pure affirmation, inspiration, with Ariadne, Ariadne's perspective, a perspective through evaluation. For the Dionysian labyrinth of meaning, the immense power of self-forgetting and self-overcoming, can have no perspective without a guiding thread of evaluation. The guiding thread of evaluation allows one to see as though one is outside while within the labyrinth, to see below as from above, as Ariadne herself is both mortal and deified, earthly and constellatory, singular and plural.

Dionysus feels how the coming philosophers of the future, the free spirits, will feel, but Ariadne sees how they will see, for pure affirmation still needs a yes and a no, a this way and not that way, a pro and a contra which one can shift in and out as though weaving a thread, as the perspective of an evaluation.

Ariadne's evaluation provides the center of gravity for the freedom-for of Dionysian meaning, a center of gravity constituted by the differing perspectives of the free spirits, as members of the constellation. Zarathustra tosses his laughter's crown to the Higher Man with his imperative to become the free spirit, the "free storm-spirit that dances upon swamps and afflictions as upon meadows", as Dionysus gives his crown-constellation to Ariadne after she is abandoned by Theseus, himself a Higher Man, a king who is apportioned previously established values and who slays the Minotaur of the labyrinth as the suffering inherent to all meaning (Nietzsche 203, 306). This is Zarathustra's teaching of the most distant as opposed to the for-one's-neighbor, as well as Dionysus's teaching to hate ourselves in order to love ourselves, as a world void of suffering-for is a world void of meaning.

Unlike Theseus, Dionysus knows how to affirm suffering in self-overcoming, rather than trying to eliminate suffering as the mob and the Higher Man do in valuing self-preservation above all else. Ariadne asks for a heart of glowing coal and tells Dionysus that he is pressuring her (*drückst mich*) as Nietzsche himself is pressured in Dionysian inspiration, spanning forms of vast extent from the Higher Man to the free spirit (Nietzsche 2021, 361, 363). It is in this Dionysian inspiration, in this spanning of forms that Nietzsche writes "oh, you humans, a shape is sleeping in the stone, the shape of all shapes! Alas, that it has to be sleeping in the hardest, ugliest stone of all!", followed by the Dionysian imperative to "become hard" in order to become a creator (2021, 290). The hardness of the ugliest stone, coal, is not the hardness of the creator, diamond<sup>1</sup>, though they are "close relatives", for the hardness of the coal "does not want to flash and cut and shred", does not want to be a destiny, does not want to destroy and affirm destruction in order to create (Nietzsche 2021, 132).

Rather is the hardness of the ugliest stone which is the Higher Man and the mob a hardness in its pliability, its difficulty to form, a yielding in taking on responsibility as a freedom-from, a freedom from suffering as that which conditioned their very sovereignty, a suffering from the Minotaur (the unconscious artists) which cannot be affirmed by the Higher Man and the mob, forcing them to stop at uniform responsibility. That is, a responsibility uniform in its very formlessness, its lack of freedom-for, its lack of destiny. The difference

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<sup>1</sup> Diamond creates itself through its pressure and tension - that is, through its suffering.

between a destiny and a utilitarian or Kantian end is precisely the idea of responsibility or freedom-from in the latter as opposed to the compulsion or freedom-for of the former, a compulsion of inspiration which is itself formed by an evaluation, as Dionysus himself is compelled by his love for Ariadne.

Ariadne grieves Theseus as Zarathustra pities the Higher Man, but they find Dionysian inspiration in their evaluation of the most distant, in creating the diamond encrusted crown which is the constellation of free spirits to come. Dionysus and Ariadne constitute Zarathustra's "ladder on which he ascends and descends", ascends to the most distant evaluation as a destiny, and descends into the labyrinth of unknown inspiration in the face of suffering (Nietzsche 2021, 285). This unknown inspiration is the very law of life as self-overcoming, as will to power, as the capacity to affirm suffering, as this most distant evaluation is the very thread of destiny as eternal recurrence, which is why Nietzsche calls Ariadne herself a riddle (Nietzsche 2021, 289). What one wills, one wills eternally, as what one values, one values eternally: only the most distant, only the hardest, only that which can withstand the most meaningful suffering, can pass such a test.

### Concluding Remarks

The destiny which one wills upon heeding the riddle of the eternal recurrence, the evaluation which one is compelled by, as well as the meaning through which one acts, bestowing sense upon one's actions themselves, is not an end as much as it is a new beginning, and a new beginning, which can itself always be overcome and renewed. This is how the will to power and the eternal recurrence are consummated, as Dionysus marries Ariadne, and as Zarathustra marries eternity (Nietzsche 2003, 244-247). The point of the consummation, therefore, is the sense and value which it has, as the children which it produces, new beginnings of new beginnings *ad infinitum*. This is why Nietzsche's writing of his pregnancies is hardly symbolic: "the great poets draw on their reality *alone* — to the point where they cannot stand the work afterwards [...]. Whenever I have had a peep at my *Zarathustra*, I walk up and down the room for half an hour, unable to master an unbearable spasm of sobbing" (Nietzsche 2021, 237).

Nietzsche suffers from his pregnancies as from a sickness, a sickness of an excess of meaning, an invaluable value, the kind of sickness which is a pre-condition of great health. To feel and to care for something far beyond one's own self-preservation is precisely what Nietzsche means by great health, a great health which one could never expect to find in the Higher Man or in the mob, as the very meaning of the words we still use when we speak of individuals and communities, and which of the two Nietzsche may be more partial towards. By contrast, Nietzsche sees the necessity of his free spirits and of his Overman through the very necessity which compels him to create them. They are as real as the reality he draws upon to create them, and not without consequence. To see oneself as an idiosyncrasy is truly a new beginning, an unburdening of the responsibility and guilt which has defined our suffering as an anxiety between the individual and the community - concepts which, from the perspective of life, are non-concepts, a will to preserve that which in the deepest sense does not want to be preserved, but rather overcome.

In the same way is Nietzsche's community of free spirits not without consequence. The free spirits are not just a destiny created through an evaluation, but are evaluators themselves, not just a creation, but are creators themselves. What defines the free spirit is their honesty and courage, their asking after perhaps the most courageously honest question, "cannot all values be overturned?" (Nietzsche 1994, 7). It is this question which defines their truth, as it is this truth which defines themselves. They are philosophers of the future not just in the sense that they are philosophers of times to come, but also in the sense that they understand how "it is the future which gives the rule to our present" (Nietzsche 1994, 10). As their truth is an honesty and their freedom a compulsion, their philosophy is a philosophy which is most in accord with its object, life, as that which demands a will to deception, but a will to deception as a will to *make* true, a will to creation, a will to art.

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