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ZARATHUSTRA AND THE GYPSY THE GYPSY FIGURE AS PARADIGM OF THE LIBERATED MAN IN NIETZSCHE

Of the seven recurrences of the term gypsy (*Zigeuner*) in Nietzsche's works, only two possess deep philosophical implications: a short statement in *RWB* and the poem *Yorick als Zigeuner*. In this article I suggest that the gypsy figure in Nietzsche should be read in close interdependence with the problem of liberation, and that it shares three features in common with the figure of the «free spirit»: (i) the nomadic condition and the absolute freedom it entails; (ii) the struggle for surviving, in which death and destruction are essential experiences man must undergo so that he may create himself and «become who he is»; (iii) laughter, the surest sign of a fully enacted Dionysian human condition that is capable to «dance on the abyss». As the analysis of *Yorick als Zigeuner* will demonstrate, the gypsy figure possesses these three features, thus it is paradigmatic of a perfectly liberated mankind.

Keywords: Nietzsche, Gypsy, Freigeist, Nomad, Music

Overall, the term gypsy (*Zigeuner*) recurs seven times in Nietzsche's works. Of all these recurrences, only two possess deep philosophical implications: a short statement in *RWB* and the poem *Yorick als Zigeuner*. In this essay I suggest that the meaning of the gypsy figure in Nietzsche should be read in close interdependence with the problem of liberation. In order to argument this I will examine the strict relation existing between the gypsy and the «free spirit». The two have three features in common: (i) the nomadic condition and the absolute freedom it entails; (ii) the struggle for survivor, in which death and destruction are essential experiences man must undergo and endure in order that he may shape itself and «become who he is»; (iii) laughter, which, as the surest sign of a fully enacted Dionysian human condition that is capable to «dance on the abyss», symbolizes full-scale liberation. As the analysis of *Yorick als Zigeuner* will demonstrate, the gypsy possesses these three features, thus it can be deemed as paradigmatic of the fully liberated human condition¹.

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¹ Abbreviations used in this paper (in order of appearance): *Nachgelassene Fragmente* = NF; *Richard Wagner in Bayreuth* = *RWB* (vol. IV/1); *Die Geburt der Tragödie* = *GdT* (vol. III/1); *Der Fall Wagner* = *DFW* (vol. VI/3); *Menschliches, allzumenschliches* = *MA* (part I: vol. IV/2; part II: vol. IV/3); *Die Fröhliche Wissenschaft* = *FW* (vol. V/2); *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* = *JGB* (vol. VI/2); *Also sprach Zarathustra* = *Z* (vol. VI/1); *Der Antichrist* = *A* (vol. VI/3). All works by Nietzsche are quoted from F. NIETZSCHE, *Werke. Kritische Studienausgabe in 15 Einzelbänden*, hrsg. von G. Colli und M. Montinari, De Gruyter,

1. *Introducing the comedian*

The first occurrence of a certain importance of the gypsy figure² in Nietzsche is found in *RWB*, in a context where the young philosopher draws a clear distinction between the seriousness of true art (literally, «the most serious artist», *der ernsteste Künstler*), which is capable to disclose the innermost truth of existence, no matter how horrible and frightening, and the dull superficiality of the modern world, so busy in concealing that very truth under the seemingly endless variations on the theme of the *divertissement* – a subject deeply analyzed on the very threshold of modernity by Étienne de la Boétie³ and, of course, Pascal. Such seriousness in art bears the name of Richard Wagner, whom a passage from *RWB* expressly links to the figure of the gypsy, where it states that «[he, Wagner] must always go back to the gypsies and the outcasts of our civilization, being one of them»⁴. The relentless ‘system’ of modern civilization, focused on the production of ever-new varieties of *divertissement*, bans real artists: for the young Nietzsche this means that modern societies are incapable of great music, since only music, being the direct objectivation of Will, has the power of rendering Dionysianism – «what really exists, the original one»⁵ from which reality gushes forth – as it is, without any sort of mediation⁶: hence music acts as the true *in se* of all

Berlin - New York 1988 ff.

² The other four references to the figure of the gypsy in Nietzsche’s works are: letter to Elisabeth Nietzsche (28th July 1862), in *Id.*, *Briefwechsel*, De Gruyter, Berlin-New York 1975 ff., vol. I/1, n. 325, pp. 219-220; letter to Carl von Gersdorff (25th May 1865), *ibi*, vol. I/2, n. 467, pp. 54-57; letter to Heinrich Köselitz (27th September 1888), *ibi*, vol. III/5, n. 1122, pp. 442-445 (here p. 444.69-74); *NF Frühjahr-Herbst 1884*, 25 [423], vol. VII/2, p. 119: « – das Vertrauen in die Weltordnung (“in Gott”) als Ausfluß nobler Gefühle – die Vertrauensseligkeit des vorigen Jahrhunderts. Ducis. Zärtlichkeit, Schwung, Delikatesse – Beethoven. – Mozart städtisch-social-höfisch –: Haydn ländlicher, vielleicht Zigeuner-Blut (schwarz) “Heide” (paganus)?».

³ Étienne de la Boétie was Montaigne’s best friend, who dedicated his *Essais* to him: see É. DE LA BOÉTIE, *Discours de la servitude volontaire*, Vrin, Paris 2014. – The young Nietzsche formulated his best critique of *divertissement* in his severe assessment of the new Attic comedy in *GdT*, 11: while he had previously recognized the importance of the comic as «the artistic vent to the disgust of the absurd (*die künstlerische Entladung vom Ekel des Absurden*)» (*ibi*, 7, p. 53), he subsequently esecrates post-Euripidean comedy as «diese weibische Flucht vor dem Ernst und dem Schrecken, diese feige Sichgenügenlassen am bequemen Genuss» (*ibi*, 11, p. 74). The comfort and serenity provided by this sort of comedy are much sought after by the *slave*, the figure that best embodies modern egalitarianism in Nietzsche’s eyes. In all these descriptions, new Attic comedy appears as the direct antecedent of the immense machinery of welfare-cum-entertainment systematically deployed by modernity, for which see for instance *JGB*, 44, pp. 56-57: «Was sie mit allen Kräften erstreben möchten, ist das allgemeine grüne Weide-Glück der Heerde, mit Sicherheit, Ungefährlichkeit, Behagen, Erleichterung des Lebens für Jedermann». This trend, according to the young Nietzsche, began with modern opera, which he accuses to degenerate music into «einer leeren und zerstreuen Ergetzlichkeitstendenz» (*GdT*, 19, p. 122).

⁴ *RWB*, 3, pp. 12-13: «Man denke ihn sich in eine Beamtung hinein – so wie Wagner das Amt eines Kapellmeisters an Stadt- und Hoftheatern zu versehen hatte; man empfinde es, wie der ernsteste Künstler mit Gewalt da den Ernst erzwingen will, wo nun einmal die modernen Einrichtungen fast mit grundsätzlicher Leichtfertigkeit aufgebaut sind und Leichtfertigkeit fordern, wie es ihm zum Theil gelingt um im Ganzen immer misslingt, wie der Ekel ihm naht und er flüchten will, wie er den Ort nicht findet, wohin er flüchten könnte und er immer wieder zu den Zigeunern und Ausgestossenen unsere Cultur als einer der Ihrigen zurückkehren muss».

⁵ *GdT*, 4, p. 38: «Das Wahrhaft-Seiende und Ur-Eine».

⁶ *Ibi*, 6, pp. 48-49: «die Musik selbst, in ihrer völligen Unumschränktheit, das Bild und der begriff nicht b r a u c h t, sondern ihn nur neben sich e r t r ä g t. [...] Der Weltsymbolik der Musik ist eben

things⁷. In the realm of human language, only myth, that is narrative power itself, may legitimately claim to be «a concentrated image of the world»⁸: and, just like music, myth too belongs to a condition that appears to be antecedent to every mediation and its related conceptual polarizations – such as narrator/narration, word/thing, and significant/signification – and not subject to it, thus acting as the sole real foundation of culture⁹. After myth tragedy follows, or rather the «tragic myth», which, like music, is issued from Dionysianism, and expresses it at the same level of intensity as music¹⁰. Therefore art, and not philosophy, is the only knowledge capable to properly render the obscure origin of reality¹¹: philosophy is seemingly excluded from this privilege, bound as it is to the double mediation of language and concepts, which prevents it to be the same pure «absolute limitless-ness» of music¹². The only possible exception is for a philosophy of a *tragic* sort, just as that of pre-Socratic thinkers was: a philosophy that follows music through the mediation of tragedy, but remains nevertheless prisoner of mediation. In conclusion, in the reflection of the young Nietzsche music seems to possess a far higher lineage than philosophy in the hierarchic series of hypostaseos in which the self-disclosure of Dionysianism unfolds itself as the origin and the meaning of reality as a whole. Here, again, music means Wagner: what music offers is the possibility of rediscovering Dionysianism as the inner essence of reality as it is, beyond the two-thousand years of history of the manyfold ‘Socratic distraction’ in the domain of philosophy (metaphysics, modern science) and art (Euripides, modern opera).

Therefore, the quoted passage from *RWB*, solidly linking music/Wagner and the gypsy figure, gives a positive interpretation of the latter, even if such positivity largely depends on its close association to Wagner. (Incidentally, it is important to note that the marriage between music and the gypsy will prove a durable one throughout Nietzsche’s

deshalb mit der Sprache auf keine Weise erschöpfend beizukommen, weil sie sich auf den Urwiderspruch und Urschmerz im Herzen des Ur-Einen symbolisch bezieht, somit eine Sphäre symbolisiert, die über alle Erscheinung und vor aller Erscheinung ist. Ihr gegenüber ist vielmehr jede Erscheinung nur Gleichniss: daher kann die Sprache, als Organ und Symbol der Erscheinungen, nie und nirgends das tiefste Innere der Musik nach Aussen kehren». See also 16, p. 104: «“Wir glauben an das ewige Leben”, so ruft die Tragödie; während die Musik die unmittelbare Idee dieses Lebens ist»; Nietzsche’s refusal of opera (§ 19; see above, note 3) is also inspired by language’s inferiority towards music.

⁷ *Ibi*, 6, p. 46: «“als was erscheint die Musik im Spiegel der Bildlichkeit und der Begriffe?” Sie erscheint als Wille, das Wort im Schopenhauerischen Sinne genommen, d. h. als Gegensatz der ästhetischen, rein beschaulichen willenlosen Stimmung». – Among the imposing literature about Nietzsche and music I am particularly indebted to G. LIÉBERT, *Nietzsche et la musique*, PUF, Paris 1995.

⁸ *Ibi*, 23, p. 141: «den Mythus, das zusammengezogene Weltbild, [...] der, als, Abbeviatur der Erscheinung, das Wunder nicht entbehren kann».

⁹ *Ibidem*: «Ohne Mythos aber geht jede Cultur ihrer gesunden schöpferischen Naturkraft verlustig: erst ein mit Mythen umstelter Horizont schliesst eine ganze Culturbewegung zur Einheit ab». See also note 11 *infra*.

¹⁰ *Ibi*, 25, pp. 150-151: «Musik und tragischer Mythos sind in gleicher Weise Ausdruck der dionysischen Befähigung eines Volkes und von einander untrennbar».

¹¹ As it is clearly expressed in the «Metaphysik der Kunst» quoted *ibi*, 24, p. 148: «nur als in ästhetisches Phänomen das Dasein und die Welt gerechtfertigt erscheint [...] Die Lust, die der tragische Mythos erzeugt, hat eine gleiche Heimat, wie die lustvolle Empfindung der Dissonanz in der Musik. Das Dionysische, mit seiner selbst am Schmerz percipirten Urlust, ist der gemeinsame Geburtsschooss der Musik und des tragischen Mythos».

¹² *Ibi*, 6, p. 48: «die Musik selbst, in ihrer völligen Unumschränktheit, das Bild und der begriff nicht bracht, sondern ihn nur neben sich erträgt».

whole philosophical production, as it will be shown *infra*.) Largely yet not entirely: indeed, it is easy to see that such favorable view stems from Nietzsche's independent sympathy towards the «outcasts». In this passage, the outcast figure is evoked to defend the seriousness of the «the most serious artist» against the persecutory nature of «modern institutions» – a persecution all the more effective, since subtly disguised under the good-tempered manners of the 'right to lightness', that is to *divertissement*, which every good citizen in a modern society is entitled to. The seriousness of the true artist, on the contrary, 'necessarily' leads to a 'tragic' fate: accordingly, Wagner must appear as a tragic hero, doomed to face misunderstanding, social failure (in terms of lack of recognition, if not open hostility), and exile; his being a 'necessary' victim explains why the outcast – the gypsy – is perceived so close and akin to him. In this early phase of his philosophy Nietzsche, under the profound influence of Schopenhauer, still favours an essentially metaphysical dichotomy between 'reality' and 'illusion', bywords for 'the Greek pre-Socratic world' and 'modernity'. Such dichotomy in turn is mirrored by the titanic struggle for achieving the most authentic form of human life – the artist in general, and the musician in particular: a struggle conceived in the terms of a combat between *divertissement* and tragedy, where the former constitutes the very essence of modern art, as opposed to the real art of ancient Greeks and Wagner.

After the tremendous delusion suffered in Bayreuth, however, Nietzsche's judgement on Wagner slowly changed until it suffered a complete reversement. Wagner had been previously described as condemned to «always go back to the gypsies and the outcasts of our civilization, being part of them» because of his essential dystonia with modernity, yet it is also true that never he was fully such an outcast and a discard. Wagner should rather be considered a gypsy and an outcast *malgré soi*. As this awareness steadily emerged in time, Nietzsche operated a dramatic role-shift: Wagner eventually became the opposite of the gypsy, epitomising modernity¹³ rather than being its victim. Accordingly, in Nietzsche's eyes Wagner shifted from tragic hero to histrion¹⁴, while conversely the ban previously cast upon opera in *GdT* was lifted. Musicians of the like of Rossini¹⁵ and especially Bizet – stylistically at the opposite end of Wagner's monumentalism – were now seen as the very embodiment of music's power, and their characters were placed among the best specimens of Dionysos' cosmic dance. However, in order that this brilliant but 'lighter' – face to Wagner's – kind of music could exert such role, the features of Dionysianism itself had to be revised and enhanced, embracing not only tragic monumentality, as in *GdT*, but also reaching out to the poisonous shrewdness exalted in Nietzsche's middle works. Such lightness, with its legacy of «joke, malice, revenge (*Scherz, List und Rache*)» and symbolized by (i) laughter, should not be seen as comedy's revenge over tragedy, the comedian essentially remaining a negative figure in Nietzsche, but rather as the distinctive feature of the liberated man – the «free spirit (*Freigeist*)», in a broader sense of the term – together with his (ii) nomadic, wandering nature, and (iii) his ability as an out-

¹³ *DFW*, Vorwort, p. 4: «Aber wo fände er für das Labyrinth der modernen Seele einen eingeweihteren Führer, einen beredteren Seelenkündiger als Wagner? Durch Wagner redet die Modernität ihre i n t i m s t e Sprache: sie verbirgt weder ihr Gutes noch ihr Böses, sie hat alle Scham vor sich verlernt»; 5, p. 23: «ist Wagner die m o d e r n e K ü n s t l e r par excellence, der Cagliostro der Modernität».

¹⁴ *Ibi*, 8, p. 30.

¹⁵ On Rossini's splendid lightness of touch see *FW*, 80, p. 437.

cast to resist the many attempts vowed to ensure his destruction. Whereas nomadism and the active sense of outcast-ness can be easily associated both with the gypsy and the *Freigeist*, it is less so with laughter. Yet this is precisely what Nietzsche's poem *Yorick als Zigeuner* states clearly. In conclusion, not only the gypsy figure retained his close association with 'real' music – that is, music capable to perfectly render Dionysianism –, thus partying ways with Wagner, with whom was initially associated; but also acquired unprecedented depth thanks to the above-mentioned three main features shared with the *Freigeist*, which Nietzsche employed to characterize the gypsy figure in his poem. We will now examine two of them, notably nomadism and resilience/fight for survivor, to later show how they are reprised in Bizet's *Carmen* before finally turn to the analysis of Nietzsche's poem.

2. Nomadism and liberation

In his making of the fully liberated man Nietzsche progressively recognized the essential importance of various figures, each of them possessing some 'nomadic' features. The wayfarer gives the title to the last section of *MA*, and Nietzsche's entire philosophy has been famously described by Deleuze as a «nomadic thinking»¹⁶. Strictly speaking, however, the figure of the nomad – just as the gypsy – has not been approached straightforwardly by Nietzsche, except for a couple of very important passages underlining its close relation with knowledge and, through it, liberation – and not with freedom, despite Romanticism would easily push us to associate nomadism with it. Indeed, contrarily to modern views, which strongly associate freedom with self-determination and the culture of universal rights, Nietzsche favours liberation, seen as the outcome of the long, difficult, tears-and-blood self-shaping process undergone by all great spirits. Therefore there is not a 'free' spirit that isn't also a 'liberated' one, to the extent that nomadism and liberation always come together.

In aphorism 211 of the first part of the second volume of *MA* Nietzsche describes the negative halo surrounding the figure of the nomad, with its burden of public ignominy, as a necessary peerage for every free spirit worth this name¹⁷, thus establishing a necessary connection between the two. The condition of the *Freigeist* is but a «nomadism of the spirit»:

Wer von uns würde sich einen freien Geist zu nennen wagen, wenn er nicht auf seine Art jenen Männern, denen man diesen Namen als Schimpf anhängt, eine Huldigung darbringen möchte, indem er Etwas von jener Last der öffentlichen Missgunst und Beschimpfung auf seine Schultern ladet? Wohl aber dürften wir uns 'freizügige Geister' in allem Ernste (und ohne diesen hoch- oder grossmüthigen Trotz) nennen, weil wir den Zug zur Freiheit als stärksten Trieb unseres Geistes fühlen, und im Gegensatz zu den gebundenen und festgewurzelten Intellekten

¹⁶ See G. DELEUZE, *Pensée nomade*, in Id., *L'île déserte et autres textes. Textes et entretiens 1953-1974*, Les Éditions de Minuit, Paris 2002, pp. 351-364. Deleuze's reading will be recalled and examined at length in § 4.

¹⁷ Here and throughout this paper the locution 'free spirit' will be used in a far more general and all-embracing, less technical and determined way as it appears to possess in the fifth book of *FW*, which provides a thorough and extremely complex examination of this notion. The free spirit is actually a figure that encompasses many other avatars, of which only the *Heimatlos* will be briefly addressed here. On this rich topic see the long and detailed study by W. STEGMAIER, *Nietzsches Befreiung der Philosophie. Kontextuelle Interpretation der V. Buchs der "Fröhliche Wissenschaft"*, De Gruyter, Berlin - Boston 2012.

under Ideal fast in einem geistigen Nomadenthum sehen, – um einen bescheidenen und fast abschätzigen Ausdruck zu gebrauchen¹⁸.

Even if the wording is different from *RWB*, the outcome here is nonetheless very much the same fate of outcast-ness and exclusion suffered there by the true artist and the gypsy. Yet this time outcast-ness is not just something the *Freigeist* has to endure passively as a consequence of the persecution carried on by society as a whole against him, but is also the fruit of his own decision, as it points to the impossibility for him to fit into any imposed social model and intellectual paradigm, his duty in universal history rather being to create new – indeed, his own – values.

This active feature of the nomadic condition is well expressed in aphorism 377 of *FW*, where Nietzsche introduces the figure of the «homeless (*Heimatlosen*)». While the beginning of the text mentions the «hard fate» and the «uncertain hope»¹⁹ of those who belong to this condition, it soon clearly states that by no means it is a condition of weakness. Indeed, the *Heimatlosen* are simply too strong for their contemporaries, and cannot find an abode either in the past nor in the present. They stand for values such as war and slavery – figures of difference that cannot be dialectically composed into a synthesis – and count themselves among the «conquerors (*Eroberer*)». In a curious revival of Plato's philosopher-kings, the *Heimatlosen* also «contemplate the necessity of a new system (*die Nothwendigkeit neuer Ordnungen*)»²⁰: only, to quote Deleuze's words, this system is *not* an imperial one, irradiating from a centre and built around a code of absolute signification, but dwells in the margins and favours de-codification – even if it certainly possesses an imperial nuance. These features will be further discussed in § 4: suffice for now to see how even the figure of the *Heimatlos* confirms the inherently active nature of the «nomadism of the spirit».

This aspect of the question is reprised and further examined from a gnoseological perspective in a short note dating back to the beginning of year 1882, which recalls this very «nomadism of the spirit» but this time in the form of «the gift of objectivity» that allows someone to consider every discovery he meets on his path – «every man, every object» – as his «own property»²¹. Such feature of this «nomadism of the spirit» is clearly a liberatory one, since it frees human knowledge from that essential distortion consisting in the belief in an objective nature of reality as detached from will,

¹⁸ *MA*, II, 211, p. 105. – As Giuliano Campioni points out, Nietzsche borrows the notion of spiritual nomadism from Ralph Waldo Emerson: see G. CAMPIONI “*Wohin man resin muss*”. *Über Nietzsches Aphorismus 223 in “Vermischte Meinungen und Sprüche”*, «Nietzsche-Studien», 16 (1987), pp. 207-226. In his major work, *Sulla strada di Nietzsche*, ETS, Pisa 1998, p. 131, Campioni warns (correctly, in my opinion) about interpreting Nietzsche's «nomadism» as deconstructionism. – The notion of spiritual nomadism has been investigated, also in connection with the figure of the *Freigeist*, by S. COUTINHO - G. SIGURDSSON, *Wandering Beyond the Bounds. Nomadism, Health, and Self-Undermining*, «Journal of Nietzsche Studies», 28 (2004), pp. 70-88, especially pp. 72-75, though their analysis basically focus on the figure of the «great health» and is also very skeptical – as it so often occurs in Nietzsche anglophone scholarship – about the actual chances of achieving a full-scale liberation (see for instance pp. 75-78 on the «dangers» awaiting the «spiritual nomad»).

¹⁹ *FW*, 377, p. 628.

²⁰ *Ibi*, p. 629.

²¹ See for instance *NF Frühjahr 1881-Sommer 1882*, 17 [13], vol. V/2, p. 565: «Das geistige Nomadenthum ist die Gabe der Objektivität oder die Gabe überall Augenweide zu finden. Jeder Mensch, jedes Ding ist mein Fund, mein Eigentum: die Liebe, die ihn für Alles beseelt, gl ä t t e t seine Stirn».

whereas the only possible objectivity states that the former is in fact but a product of the latter. Such liberation marks how far Nietzsche had gone from his early phase, when both Wagner was an unquestionable archetype²² and the residual metaphysical elements borrowed from the philosophy of Schopenhauer were still lingering in his thought in the form of the belief in a «world beneath this world». While in his early works Nietzsche believed in a sort of metaphysical innocence – symbolized by the «original one» – that embraced Dionysianism, music, and the figure of the real artist (or artistic genius)²³, he later rejected such faith in a «miraculous origin for all things deemed superior, which would immediately stem from the core and the essence of the thing *in se*»²⁴. Such turn had dramatic consequences. The strife to liberation could not consist anymore in regaining a pristine instinctual dimension, dogmatically seen as an inherently metaphysical *primum*. On the contrary, the very notion of a *primum* is now forced to tell its own story: how it became and it was shaped through the clashing of forces, since it is nothing else than the solidification of balancing powers»²⁵. Everything, including the great spirits, is only the outcome of a struggle: in this struggle resides the secret of their ‘creativity’ – their capability to create new values and entire new worlds – and indeed their very greatness.

3. *The Freigeist’s fighting for survivor*

If everything, including the great spirits, is but the outcome of a struggle and a «clashing of forces», this implies a fundamental shift in the nature and meaning of the *Freigeist’s* (and the gypsy’s too) outcast-ness, from a purely passive one as a ‘necessary victim’ to an engagedly active one. We have now to determine more precisely what such clashing consists of.

In the chapter of *MA* entitled *Symptoms of superior and inferior culture* Nietzsche envisages a grandiose reading of universal history, in which great spirits are the outcome of millennia of suffering and struggle against the immense majority of the individuals that constitute mankind, whom he reunites under the single hypostasis called «the fettered spirit (*gebund Geist*)». While men belonging to this second group are made extremely resilient by the unquestioned faith that animates them – and we have already seen many kinds of faith at work: faith in objectivity, in the «miraculous origin for all things deemed superior», and in the existence of a *primum* –, the great spirits, on the contrary, already very few in number by nature, are born weak, and are subsequently left to the mercy of the others. In *MA* Nietzsche puts all those who differ from the «fettered spirit» under the all-embracing definition of «free spirit», defined as follows: «He who thinks differently from how he would be expected to think

²² The relation between Nietzsche and Wagner is discussed at length by LIÉBERT, *Nietzsche et la musique*, pp. 37 ff.

²³ See for instance *NF 1875-1876*, 12 [24], vol. IV/1, p. 338: «Wer, wie Schopenhauer, in der Musik eine Welt hinter dieser Welt sieht, die noch nicht in die Form der Individuation eingegangen ist, und wer andererseits gerade den gebrechlichen tief hoffnungslosen Charakter des Lebens aus der trennenden Gewalt der Individuation ableitet, muß in der Musik die wengleich begriffs- und bildlose Conception einer besseren Welt machen, einer unschuldigen, liebevollen, heiter-tiefsinnigen».

²⁴ *MA*, I, 1, p. 19: «die höher gewertheten Dinge einen Wunder-Ursprung annahm, unmittelbar aus dem Kern und Wesen des “Dinges an sich”».

²⁵ CAMPIONI, *Sulla strada di Nietzsche*, p. 135.

according to his origin, his environment, his status and tasks, or the leading opinions of his time»²⁶; whereas «he is the exception, the fettered spirits are the rule»²⁷. The following aphorisms (nn. 226 and 227) suggest that the *Freigeist* is the same thing as the self-conscious usage of inquisitive reasoning, while the «fettered spirit» relies upon a solidified habit (*Gewöhnung*) ultimately turned into a faith, which is but «getting accustomed to unfounded principles (*Grundsätze ohne Gründe*)»²⁸: and all States and societies are the products of such faith²⁹. All this points to a never-ending strife between the two sorts of men, in which the *Freigeist* (here called «the genius», *das Genie*³⁰) must struggle for his very survival. He is born out of his «captivity, cold blood and tenacity», out of «a mutilation, a crippling, a grave deficiency of an organon, so that another one develops extraordinarily well»³¹. Such cruel limitations may be partly natural (but again, with respect to whom, if not the fettered spirit, is the *Freigeist* said to be deficient and crippled?), but partly imposed upon the *Freigeist* by the «fettered spirit», whose habits-turned-faith eventually always becomes the self-imposed general rule of civilization, against which the *Freigeist* must necessarily fight.

Therefore, unlike in *RWB*, where the artistic genius was seen as completely passive and abandoned to the capricious mercy of modern society, here the *Freigeist* begins to actively engage in a fight against society in order to survive and affirm himself. Creativity, in the deeper sense outlined before, is not simply a feature – almost an embellishment – possessed by the *Freigeist*: in his constant fight against the overwhelming force of the «fettered spirit», while enduring persecutions and even his own destruction, he literally creates and shapes himself as well as new values and worlds, so that his struggling for survivor, his creativity and his freedom are but one and the same thing. As aphorism 347 of *FW* puts it: «One could think of a lust and a force in self-determination, a freedom of the will where a spirit takes leave from every faith and every desire of certainty, accustomed as he is to stand on light ropes and light possibilities, even to dance on the abyss. Such a spirit would be the free spirit *par excellence*»³².

²⁶ *MA*, I, 5, 225, p. 193: «Man nennt Den einen Freigeist, welcher anders denkt, als man von ihm auf Grund seiner Herkunft, Umgebung, seines Standes und Amtes oder auf Grund der herrschenden Zeitan-sichten erwartet».

²⁷ *Ibidem*: «Er ist die Ausnahme, die gebundenen Geister sind die Regel».

²⁸ *Ibi*, 226, p. 190: «Der gebundene Geist nimmt seine Stellung nicht aus Gründen ein, sondern aus Gewöhnung [...] Angewöhnung geistiger Grundsätze ohne Gründe nennt man Glauben».

²⁹ *Ibi*, 227, p. 195: «Alle Staaten und Ordnungen der Gesellschaft: die Stände, die Ehe, die Erziehung, das Recht, alles diess hat seine Kraft und Dauer allein in dem Glauben der gebundenen Geister an sie, – also in der Abwesenheit der Gründe, mindestens in der Abwehr des Fragens nach Gründen».

³⁰ The *Freigeist* is a specific case of the genius: see *ibi*, 231, p. 194.

³¹ *Ibidem*.

³² *FW*, 347, p. 265: «Umgekehrt wäre eine Lust und Kraft der Selbstbestimmung, eine F r e i h e i t des Willens denkbar, bei der ein Geist jedem Glauben, jedem Wunsch nach Gewissheit den Abschied giebt, geübt, wie er ist, auf leichten Seilen und Möglichkeiten sich halten zu können und selbst an Abgründen noch zu tanzen. Ein solcher Geist wäre der f r e i e G e i s t par excellence». – In Jacob Golomb's interpretation of the *Freigeist* (see J. GOLOMB, *Can One Really Become a "Free Spirit Par Excellence" or a Übermensch?*, «Journal of Nietzsche Studies», 32 [2006], pp. 22-40), beside the claim that the *Freigeist* differs from the Overman (the relation between the two is indeed a very interesting topic, which cannot be addressed here), it is also affirmed the deep difference between the «we free spirits», a category to which Nietzsche himself would have claimed to belong, and the 'real' *Freigeist*, i.e. the «free spirit *par excellence*». As for this latter distinction, Golomb's argument rests entirely upon this theoretical claim: «Even

After examining the features of nomadism and struggling for survivor, commonly shared by the free spirit and the gypsy, we must now turn to the gypsy figure itself, to see these features at work in shaping its role and meaning in Nietzsche's philosophy. The third feature – laughter – will be discussed later.

4. *A brief digression on the value of nomadism in Nietzsche*

Before introducing the figure of the gypsy as the natural prosecution and even the fulfilment of the characteristics of the nomad, we must briefly assess whether it is legitimate or not to ascribe to Nietzsche's views such great importance and fully positive value to nomadism as it is emerging in the present analysis. According to Giuliano Campioni, the role and therefore the value of the nomadic figure in Nietzsche is merely instrumental. Otherwise said, the «nomadism of the spirit» is evoked – ironically enough, for such an enemy of Euripides – as a sort of *deus ex machina* every time society solidifies in crystallized structures that eventually come to block and oppose the free flowing of creative destruction, which constitutes the distinctive mark of reality. Campioni quotes the case of the *chandala*, the outcasts (literally enough, since they belong to no caste) of Hindu society³³, which is interesting because that society is entirely the product of an aristocracy, making it completely different from one built upon the sanctification of the «instincts of the flock» of the fettered spirit. Nietzsche praises Hindu society at length in *A*³⁴, yet even in this case he is aware of the possible danger of a progressive and seemingly unstoppable ossification that eventually besots the ruling class. Codified aristocratic rules must be obeyed at all costs, but this implies that the millennia-long *experiment* that has made such aristocratic society possible is no longer feasible for anyone³⁵.

if Nietzsche did his utmost to overcome his cultural-philosophical heritage, he needed it as the obstacle for his overcomings. Thus, he was dialectically dependent on this very heritage» (*ibi*, p. 24). Such supposedly flawed Nietzschean dialectics is not difficult to dismantle, since it would imply the *logical-historical necessity* of such heritage in order to be dialectically, i.e. *necessarily*, overcome, whereas for Nietzsche the millennia of human history are pure chaos, folly, irrationality, or, to put it more 'scientifically', a *fact* and the outcome of *hazard*. In fact, there is not such a distinction between the «we free spirits» and the *Freigeist*, as aphorism n. 44 in *JGB* clearly binds them together as the «Philosophen der Zukunft». Furthermore, to state that Nietzsche envisaged for himself the rather modest role of one among the «we free spirits» completely overlooks that the immense overcoming recounted in *Z* (*Von Gesicht und Räthsel*) is entirely enacted by Zarathustra himself (see *infra*, § 6). Finally, Golomb's other important argument – the «inherent flaw in Nietzsche's existential philosophy: namely, the nonviability of its most sublime ideals» (*ibi*, p. 1) in the actual sphere of society and politics – could be rebutted as such. First, the overturning of all values, which is a necessary consequence (or antecedent) of the achieved overhuman condition, actually is a political manifesto in itself, and a political action as well (the same intermixture of these characteristics may be witnessed in the «Law against Christianity» decreed at the end of *A*, p. 252). Furthermore, the 'politics of the overhuman' cannot take place within the pre-overhuman political context, nor it can be enacted through pre-overhuman means. Therefore, Nietzsche's ideals are definitely nonviable in the *present*, pre-overhuman situation – pretty much just like *any* ideal is in the time it is born – but this does not mean they are nonviable in an absolute sense.

³³ See CAMPIONI, *Sulla strada di Nietzsche*, pp. 148-150.

³⁴ See for instance Nietzsche's comparison of the Law of Manu to the Bible in *A*, 56, p. 238.

³⁵ *Ibi*, 57, p. 239: «Ein solches Gesetzbuch wie das des Manu entsteht, wie jedes gute Gesetzbuch: es resümiert die Erfahrung, Klugheit und Experimental-Moral von langen Jahrhunderten, es schliesst ab, es schafft Nichts mehr. [...] An einem gewissen Punkte der Entwicklung eines Volks erklärt die umsichtigste, das heisst zurück- und hinausblickendste Schicht desselben, die Erfahrung, nach der gelebt werden soll – das

More than any enforcement, then, it is the two «pious lies (*heilige Lügen*)» of revelation (*Offenbarung*) and tradition (*Tradition*) that actively turn out as the stabilizing forces that eventually lead this society to its crystallized and final form, never to be changed³⁶. (This is why Nietzsche draws the conclusion that «the *arian influence* corrupted the whole world», to the extent that it constituted the model for the subsequent ‘semitism’ of the sacerdotal deceit³⁷.) It is precisely the outcast, the *chandala*, who then must assume on himself the task of modifying society *by virtue of his nomadism*, i.e. his freedom of experiencing in a social context that, perfectly aristocratic (and hence ‘positive’, in Nietzsche’s eyes) as it may be, still invariably falls prey of a seemingly unescapable fossilizing trend. If, on the one hand, Nietzsche highly appreciates the perfect structuration of a machinal society where instincts have reached an almost supreme level of automatism³⁸, on the other hand he also wants to prevent the degeneration of such machinism into the general besotting brought about by the «pious lies» of revelation and tradition. Therefore, in *A*, beside the praise of Hindu society built upon the law of Manu, we can also read that the ‘new philosophers’, the «free spirits» that time and again set history free anew, are precisely the *chandala*, whom Nietzsche identifies with the «man of science»: «As a man of science, he belonged to the Chandala»³⁹. Overall this drives Campioni to state that «there isn’t in Nietzsche (despite what has been said many times) an absolute valorization of the marginal and the bizarre: the *chandala* is of some interest only in that stiffening condition»⁴⁰.

Campioni’s opinion about marginality *in se* as something of merely instrumental interest for Nietzsche openly conflicts with the reading of Gilles Deleuze, who on the contrary sees a necessary relation between the imperial logic of signification, or code-building, and the outcasts’ logic of de-signification, or de-coding⁴¹. Such relation is not a dialectic one, but it is rather a two-movements rhythm similar (if not identic) to the inspiration/expiration polarity that makes breathing possible. Nietzsche’s nomadism is, for Deleuze, strictly bound to the notion of «intensity», declinable in a plural way: «intensities (*les intensités*)» are «lived states (*états vécu*: experienced, *erlebnisse*)» that are not codified into representations – i.e. significations as representations of things and significant as representations of words – but rather freely experienced as «flows (*flux*)»⁴². Intensities are just «first names (*noms propres*)», either individu-

heisst k a n n [...] Was folglich vor allem jetzt zu verhüten ist, das ist das Noch-Fort-Experimentiren, die Fortdauer des flüssigen Zustands der Werthe, das Prüfen, Wählen, Kritik-Üben der Werthe in infinitum».

³⁶ *Ibi*, pp. 239-240. See also *NF Anfang 1888 bis Anfang Januar 1889*, 14 [213], pp. 182-183, which displays nearly the same text with the interesting addition of the «pious lies»: «Beides [Offenbarung und Tradition] sind h e i l i g e L ü g e n: der intelligente Stand der sie erfindet, versteht sie so gut als Plato sie verstand» (p. 182.23-25).

³⁷ *Ibi*, 15 [45], p. 234: «Wir haben das klassische Muster als spezifisch a r i s c h: wir dürfen also die bestausgestattete und besonnenste Art Mensch verantwortlich machen für die grundsätzlichsste Lüge, die je gemacht worden ist... Man hat das nachgemacht, überall beinahe: der a r i s c h e E i n f l u ß hat alle Welt verdorbern».

³⁸ *A*, 57, p. 240: «so dass der vollkommen Automatismus des Instinkts erreicht wird».

³⁹ *A*, 13, p. 179: «Als wissenschaftlicher Charakter war man Tschandala... Wir haben das ganze Pathos der Menschheit gegen uns gehabt».

⁴⁰ CAMPIONI, *Sulla strada di Nietzsche*, p. 150.

⁴¹ DELEUZE, *Pensée nomade*, pp. 353-354.

⁴² *Ibi*, p. 358.

al or collective (Deleuze quotes the Judes, the Antichrist, Cesare Borgia, Zarathustra among the others), and these names are essentially «designations of intensity over a body (*des désignations d'intensité, sur un corps*)», something Deleuze also calls «masks»⁴³. Never the ever-changing phenomenical appearances of an «original one» that stands as universal essence, these masks or «intensities designated by the *noms propres*» are ever-clashing forces caught in a perennial movement of co-penetration, and it is precisely such clash that Deleuze calls «nomadism»: «There is a kind of nomadism, of perennial delocation (*déplacement*) of the intensities designated by the first names (*noms propres*), which penetrate each other as they are actually lived on a whole body (*corps plein*)»⁴⁴. Nothing escapes from intensity, in the sense that everything is intensity. Therefore there cannot be an opposition between, say, the 'lie' of metaphysics and the 'truth' of Dionysianism, the world of the «fettered spirit» and that of the *Freigeist*: there are simply 'high' and 'low' intensities, and this is the origin of «the differential element that makes values valuable», as shown in the opening lines of *Nietzsche et la philosophie*⁴⁵. The clash between 'high' and 'low' intensities is a *game*, «the game of the scales of intensity» where they continuously influence and determine each other, to the extent that a 'low' intensity can end up being as high as a 'high' one: a game of irony and pure joy, characterized by *laughter (rire)*⁴⁶. This is why the nomadic condition, even if it is not imperial in itself and actually fights the imperial ideal of code-building, possesses imperial features too. Otherwise said, the «nomadism of the spirit» is itself an expression of *power* (in Deleuze's words, is a «nomadic [philosophical] war machine»). Only, while philosophy has always built codes of signification founded on the primacy of the Intrinsic and irradiating from a centre, as it must happen in a logic of imperial sovereignty⁴⁷, Nietzsche's nomadic counter-philosophy favours a perennial de-codification founded on the primacy of the 'purely Extrinsic', and dwelles in the periphery or the margins⁴⁸. Just as the imperial logic of philosophy tries to integrate in itself the splendid mobility of the

⁴³ *Ibi*, pp. 358-359. On the subject of the mask in Nietzsche and its strict ties with the problem of liberation see the classical essay by G. VATTIMO, *Il soggetto e la maschera. Nietzsche e il problema della liberazione*, Bompiani, Milano 1994. Vattimo comes very close to Deleuze when he poses the question in terms of an overcoming enacted by Nietzsche (on himself in the first place), which led him to supplant his earlier notion of the mask as the «liberation from Dionysianism» with a notion of the mask as the «liberation of Dionysianism»: «Il problema, che Nietzsche pone inizialmente, della liberazione dal dionisiaco, della fuga dal caos nel mondo delle apparenze ordinate e definite, tende a trasformarsi in quello della liberazione del dionisiaco, cioè del libero esercizio [...] di una vitalità inventiva originaria» (*ibi*, p. 29).

⁴⁴ DELEUZE, *Pensée nomade*, pp. 358-359: «Il y a une espèce de nomadisme, de déplacement perpétuel des intensités désignées par des noms propres, et qui pénètrent les unes dans les autres en même temps qu'elles sont vécues sur un corps plein».

⁴⁵ *Id.*, *Nietzsche et la philosophie*, PUF, Paris 2003, p. 2: «Voilà l'essentiel: *le haut et le bas, le noble et le vil* ne sont pas des valeurs, mais représentent l'élément différentiel dont dérive la valeur des valeurs elles-mêmes».

⁴⁶ *Id.*, *Pensée nomade*, p. 360: «la manière dont il y a un jeu des intensités basses et des intensités hautes, les unes dans les autres où une intensité basse peut miner la plus haute et même être aussi haute que la plus haute, et inversement. C'est ce jeu des échelles intensives qui commande les montées de l'ironie et les descentes de l'humour chez Nietzsche, et qui se développe comme consistance ou qualité du vécu dans son rapport avec l'extérieur. Un aphorisme est une manière pure de rire et joie».

⁴⁷ *Ibi*, p. 361.

⁴⁸ *Ibi*, pp. 361-362.

«nomadism of the spirit», the «nomadic war machine» is faced with the task to invent a way to cope with the «administration of the conquered empire»⁴⁹: a logic Nietzsche had already perfectly exposed when describing the *Heimatlosen* as «conquerors» and *nomothétai* (see above, § 2).

Given that Deleuze envisages this non-dialectical (because it does not produces as its outcome a synthesis in the shape of a final signification, but favours a perennial ambivalence of possible significations) relation between intensities both high and low as a rhythm alternation between an imperial ‘centre’ and a nomadic ‘periphery’, it seems that his reading is more adherent to Nietzsche’s intentions. It is from the *chandala*, who epitomizes the ‘low’ intensity and everything that is low, and not from the aristocratic character that the *Freigeist* eventually arises, bringing with him that code-breaking attitude from which life may gush forth again. Therefore, if it seems too far-fetched to state that Nietzsche accorded great importance to the element of the bizarre in the strict sense of the term, nevertheless marginality – at least as it is embodied in the figures of the outcast, the nomad and the gypsy – cannot be dismissed as something that plays a merely instrumental role in his philosophy. Indeed, such instrumentality could even surreptitiously suggest a dialectical reading of Nietzsche, with marginality being used as a tool of the *Wille zur Macht* instead of Hegel’s universal reason displayed in, and as, history. Therefore, marginality is *in se*, and not only *per se*, something valuable in an absolute sense, being one of the poles that constitute the universal rhythmic of the perennial clashing of forces that is reality. There cannot be a philosophy of the future and a liberated mankind without the *Freigeist*, and there cannot be a *Freigeist* without marginality, which is an attribute that must be necessarily predicated of him. Marginality, bringing with it a fate of outcast-ness, exclusion, and open persecution, is essential if the *Freigeist* has to ascend to his necessary peerage, as Nietzsche had stated in *MA*⁵⁰, by being able to survive *in primis*, while, at the same time, developing his creativity by shaping himself in his struggle to survive.

5. Introducing the gypsy

In 1881, while Nietzsche was working on the last books of *M* and *FW* was not yet in the pipeline, the philosopher experienced his *coup de foudre* for Bizet’s *Carmen*⁵¹, which marked the comeback of the figure of the gypsy five years after it had been first mentioned in *RWB*. To start with, *Carmen* – unlike Wagner – is an *actual* gypsy, and not *malgré soi*: this makes any reference to her ethnic identity as something purely metaphoric or symbolical absolutely impossible. Her gypsy-ness, on the contrary, seems intrinsically bound to the condition of absolute freedom, which the opera libretto presents as her most splendid endowment. See, for example, the duet n. 17 (act

⁴⁹ *Ibi*, p. 361: «Le nomade avec sa machine de guerre s’oppose au despote avec sa machine administrative; l’unité nomadique extrinsèque s’oppose à l’unité administrative intrinsèque. Et pourtant ils sont tellement corrélatifs ou compénétrés que le problème du despote sera d’intégrer, d’intérioriser la machine de guerre nomade, et celui du nomade d’inventer une administration de l’empire conquis. Ils ne cessent pas de s’opposer au point même où ils se confondent».

⁵⁰ See note 18 *supra*.

⁵¹ Nietzsche first attended *Carmen* on 28th November 1881, that is during the composition of *FW*, whose manuscript was finished on 3rd July 1882.

II, scene 5) between Carmen and Don José, where the gypsy exposes a sort of complete manifesto on the subject of the liberated human being:

Le ciel ouvert, la vie errante,
pour pays tout l'univers, et pour loi ta volonté!
Et surtout la chose enivrante:
la liberté! la liberté!

The world, freed from that 'bad' (or badly played) game that is metaphysics⁵², becomes anew a boundless space, the ideal playground for the 'good' game played by Nietzsche's and Heraclitus' child-god⁵³ («la liberté!»). Reality here re-verts to its authentic condition as an *uni-verse*, which is the opposite of the *di-vertissement* so peculiar of modern society. Indeed, only superficially the movement inscribed within the notion of *di-vertere* may be deemed a perpetual change: it is rather a perennial 'going astray' – an endless diversion – but definitely not the free, natural flux of the coming-to-be and passing-away of the infinite metamorphosis undergone by reality («la vie errante»). While, by all means, the movement of *di-vertere* actually spins around in circles, the movement of *uni-vertere* appears as the maximum possible concentration of the cosmic metamorphic movement in itself, with no other scope than its own endless creation-cum-destruction. Here the universe is but a byword for the condition of pure, absolute freedom of infinite creativity, the very ecstatic drunken-ness («enivrante») laying at the foundations of reality, the dancing dimension of Dionysianism as the feverish and magmatic essence of universal existence.

Of great importance are also the words spoken by Carmen in the final duet of the opera (act III, scene 2, n. 27):

Jamais Carmen ne cédera!
Libre elle est née et libre elle mourra!

Just like Yorick the gypsy, as we will see, Carmen is not afraid of death, so that she dares to openly challenge the overwhelming power of the established social structures, the world built, inhabited and ruled by the «fettered spirit»⁵⁴: yet her gesture is far more than a romantic rebellion marked by a nocturne taste for *la belle mort* in the name of high-minded 'ideals'. What is important here is not the fact that she is not going to surrender («ne cédera») but the solid ground, upon which she builds

⁵² See M. LORENZ, *Die Metaphysik-Kritik in Nietzsches Carmen-Rezeption*, Königshausen & Neumann, Würzburg 2005.

⁵³ See HERACLITUS, fragment 52 DK. On Nietzsche's identification with Heraclitus, and for an interpretation of Zarathustra's role based on such identification, see G. WOHLFART, *Wer ist Nietzsches Zarathustra?*, «Nietzsche-Studien», 26 (1997), pp. 319-330. This study also presents Nietzsche's child-god (see Z, p. 27: «Unschuld ist das Kind und Vergessen, ein Neubeginnen, ein Spiel, ein aus sich rollendes Rad, eine erste Bewegung, ein heiliges Ja-sagen») as strictly modeled around Heraclitus'.

⁵⁴ Such power is epitomized by the figures of Zugueta and José, both sergeants of the guard. They well represent both sides of the Law (I am here referring to the reflections by Slavoj Žižek, for which see note 59 *infra*), i.e. Law as the established 'system' and as perversion respectively. José, who betrays the Law several times (by betraying his mother's wish for him to lead an ordinary life, by letting Carmen go, and even by becoming an outcast himself), perfectly embodies and openly reveals the inner essence of Law – to which he eventually reverts – as (in Žižek's words) the greatest, and the source, of all perversions.

such firmness: the freedom of her nomadic condition. Not coincidentally, then, such freedom asserts itself by binding together in the same statement – as well as in itself – birth and death, just as it makes them coincide in a sort of circularity that perfectly mirrors the circle of universal life, here represented by «the open sky» and «the whole universe» («le ciel ouvert» and «tout l'univers»). Such absolute freedom becomes the only possible homecountry for fully liberated humans.

Therefore, the two distinctive features of the *Freigeist* examined above – nomadism/liberation and the outcast's active, creative resistance – are definitely well represented in the complex figure of the gypsy Carmen, who stands out, as we are going to see, as the direct antecedent of Yorick, Nietzsche's own gypsy fictitious character, both at poetic and conceptual level – something perhaps the Nietzschean poem implicitly hints to in its reference to Spain⁵⁵. Only laughter, perhaps the most decisive of these features, is missing: with it, the philosophical characterization of the gypsy figure will be finally complete.

6. *The jester, the dwarf, the gypsy, and his laughter*

During the autumn of 1884 Nietzsche wrote a series of short poems featuring Yorick as main character. Of these, two in particular – *Yorick als Zigeuner* and *Yorick als Columbus* – deserve attention. In this paper I will focus on the former, because only here Yorick is clearly identified with the figure of the gypsy, conceived as paradigmatic of the condition of the fully liberated man⁵⁶:

Dort der Galgen, hier die Stricke
 Und des Henkers rother Bart,
 Volk herum und gift'ge Blicke –
 Nichts ist neu dran meiner Art!
 Kenne dies aus hundert Gängen,
 Schrei's euch lachend in's Gesicht:
 Unnütz, unnütz, mich zu hängen!
 Sterben? Sterben kann ich nicht!

Bettler ihr! Denn euch zum Neide,
 ward mir, was ihr – nie erwerbt:
 Zwar ich leide, zwar ich leide –
 Aber iher – ihr sterbt, ihr sterbt!
 Auch nach hundert Todesgängen
 Bin ich Athem, Dunst und Licht –
 Unnütz, unnütz, mich zu hängen!
 Sterben? Sterben kann ich nicht!

Einst erkläng, in Spaniens Ferne
 Mir d a s Lied zum Klapperblech,
 Trübe blikte die Laterne,

⁵⁵ F. NIETZSCHE, *Yorick als Zigeuner* (see next note), p. 36.1: «Einst erkläng, in Spaniens Ferne»

⁵⁶ Nietzsche wrote four poems on the figure of Yorick. The one I am considering in this essay, whose title is precisely *Yorick als Zigeuner*, is found in *NF Herbst 1884-Herbst 1885* (vol. VII/3), autumn 1884, 28 [62], pp. 35.10-36.8. There are also the already mentioned *Yorick als Columbus* (*ibi*, 28 [63], p. 36), as well as a couple of fragmentary, more composite works (*ibi*, 28 [66], p. 39, and 28 [67], pp. 39-40). They share a good deal of the same material, resumed, with changes and variations, on the basis of the first version.

Hell der Sanger, froh und frech.
 Froh gedacht 'ich meiner bosen
 Feinde da mit sel'gem Hohn:
 Kann ein Fluch euch nicht erlosen,
 Thut's ein heller Freuden-Ton.

The scene shows a man, sentenced to death by hanging, scoffing at the roaring crowd who seethes for his execution. He seemingly shows no respect for the established power either, here represented by the hangman – a most peculiar custodian of sovereignty, just as Carmen's antagonist was a sergeant; both crowd and hangman could well be avatars of the fettered spirit. A strongly self-assured sense of superiority exudes from the man's words: indeed, two strophes out of three end assertively stating the absolute non-sense of the hanging ceremony, because the prisoner cannot really die («Sterben? Sterben kann ich nicht!»).

It is this strange and obscure character that Nietzsche links, in the title of the poem, with Yorick and the figure of the gypsy. The first question to ask, then, is: why Yorick? In Shakespeare's *Hamlet* no further details are given about this famous character, except that he was the court jester, «a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy»⁵⁷. As one would expect from a jester, his sharp tongue definitely matches the behaviour of the eponymous character in Nietzsche's poem. Yet this identification alone is not sufficient: in fact in the tragedy Yorick is long dead – the episode of Hamlet lifting his skull is the very embodiment of the idea of *vanitas* – whereas this modern-day Yorick claims to be immortal (hence his scoffing at the crowd and the 'system').

This is not the only difference between Nietzsche's Yorick and the Shakesperian one: perhaps even more important is the two characters' relation to laughter in general, as well as the nature of their own laughing. As a matter of fact, a jester's duty is not to laugh, but rather to make people laugh, and he achieves that by means of irony, by cruelly pointing to individual weaknesses and human misery in general. It's again a matter of activity versus passivity, since it looks as if the jester is able to make other people laugh only because he is basically dispossessed of his own ability of laughing. His wit may be shrewd and foreseeing, operating as an agent of change by disclosing those truths that most people would prefer to hide or not to admit (witness, to remain within the world of Shakespeare, *King Lear*'s fool), still his laugh – provided there is any – is a bitter one. The laughing he induces in other people may well be liberatory, but such liberation seems not set for him, perpetually stuck in his condition as he is. Nor he is personally associated with laughter, but rather with a chuckle more akin to the disillusioned and wicked grumbling of the «half dwarf, half mole» character who embodies the «spirit of gravity»⁵⁸. Though from the brief description given in *Hamlet* we cannot draw any conclusion about Yorick's physical appearance, the fact that jesters were historically marked by some sort of physical deformity points at them as the *obscene double* of

⁵⁷ W. SHAKESPEARE, *Hamlet*, act 5, scene 1, 222-223. – It is worth noting that Jules Laforgue, in his interpretation-cum-rewriting of *Hamlet*, imagines Yorick as the prince's stepbrother from the side of his mother, who, tellingly enough, he describes as such (J. LAFORGUE, *Moralites legendaires*, ditions de la Banderole, Paris 1922, p. 25): «La mere tait bien la plus diaboliquement belle gypsie que [...] on ait jamais vue».

⁵⁸ Z, p. 194: «Halb Zwerg, halb Maulwurf».

kingly figures – hence their privileged relation with the latter. On the one hand, the jester as the king's obscene double defines royal prerogatives as well as the monarch's otherwise unlimited power, while, on the other, the condition of obscenity, to which he is submitted, guarantees that such defining role remains always confined in the shadow⁵⁹. Therefore, just as the jester defines the king through mutual opposition and negation, so the dwarf defines Zarathustra. Not only is the former someone who, in his evolution, has definitely failed, falling well beneath humanity, let alone the level of the prophet heralding the liberation of man; but also his wisdom, his «infinite jest» and «most excellent fancy» notwithstanding, is nothing in itself but the triumph of a resignation that marks the impossibility that the «es war» may become the «so wollte Ich es», which is Zarathustra's main goal⁶⁰. It is also worth noting that the jester's prerogatives, such as his creativity and hilarity, are double-edged: they disclose the unwelcomed truths of existence but are in fact driven by that same force of the *divertissement* which, as we have seen before, lays at the heart of modernity and its 'system'⁶¹.

The Yorick in Nietzsche's poem, however, is definitely neither a jester nor a dwarf. On the contrary, the sense of superiority exuding from his challenging words makes him a fully aristocratic figure, a paradigm of the liberated man and an avatar of the *Freigeist* fully opposed to the fettered one. In order to prove that, we need to track within the poem and his main character the three features of the *Freigeist* mentioned before: a) nomadism/liberation, b) struggle for surviving/creative destruction, and c) laughter as the distinctive mark of a Dionysianism meant, and lived, as a «dance on the abyss».

Yorick definitely possesses an infinite freedom: he is a gypsy and an outcast, therefore he is not constrained within the system of modern or any other society; he definitely does not belong to the «flock», nor he is subdued to its laws: he has nothing to do either with the hangman or the crowd. Such freedom comes at the price of being a living contradiction: he does not deny his suffering («Zwar ich leide, zwar ich leide»), but his joy,

⁵⁹ I am here indebted to Slavoj Žižek's reflections about the «turnaround of [the] relation between law and its transgression. [...] One can say that law divides itself necessarily into an "appeasing" law and a "mad" law: the opposition between the law and its transgressions repeats itself inside [...] the law itself» (see S. ŽIŽEK, *For They Know Not What They Do. Enjoyment as a Political Factor*, Verso, London - New York 2002, pp. 29-30). That is why law acts as the common source of, say, the detective and the gangster, marriage and adultery, the king and the jester. The figure of the obscene double as an essential feature of the Law or power – in Žižek's words, «its [= of the Law] obscene secret supplement», «the dirty obscene underside of Power» – is characteristic of Žižek: see ID., *Welcome to the Desert of Real! Five Essays on 9-11 and Related Dates*, Verso, London - New York 2002, pp. 29-30.

⁶⁰ Z, pp. 175-176.

⁶¹ I am aware that the figure of the jester possesses a *positive* meaning too in Nietzsche: witness for instance the «*Nur Narr! Nur Dichter!*» of Z, p. 474. Scholars usually refer to this positive side of the jester (see C. GENTILI, *Il "giullare" nella forma della scienza*, Introduction to *La gaia scienza*, Einaudi, Torino 2015, p. XXXIII note 94: «si può dire che sia, per sé, una figura della "gaya scienza"») as the bearer of a science that goes *against* the deadly seriousness inaugurated by Socrates (see STEGMAIER, *Nietzsches Befreiung*, p. 43). In this sense, the jester is on the same level – or is the same thing altogether – as the poet, the *troubadour*, and the gypsy himself, a *Freigeist* who doesn't need any absolute truth and actively refuses it. However, in my opinion also the negative reading of the jester is possible, which concerns the *actual* jester, not the one 'transfigured' by Nietzsche, but the one that may *not* be identified with the previously mentioned figures, and whose laughter may *not* be considered a *gay* laughter nor a liberated one, for the reasons I tried to expose. For the importance of the *troubadours* see GENTILI, *Il "giullare" nella forma della scienza*, pp. XXVII-XXXI.

like the world's in *Das andere Tanzlied*, ends up being deeper than his suffering and grief⁶²: his look is «clear, gay and naughty» («Hell der Sänger, froh und frech»), and he laughs loudly. Such condition of being a living contradiction defines the *Freigeist* too. Just like the gypsy, the *Freigeist* has to fight against the overwhelming power of the «fettered spirit»: he is persecuted, killed, outcast; he must suffer the pains of the parturient in order that he may give birth to himself, but this does not prevent him to be capable to «dance on the abyss». On the contrary, never the lightness of such dance could exist, had the previous pain not been fully experienced: therefore, if the ability to «dance on the abyss» marks the zenith of Dionysianism, we should not be surprised to find that being a living contradiction is an essential feature of it. Indeed the «artist-God (*Künstler-Gott*)» Nietzsche mentions in a key passage of the preface to the second edition of the *GdT* is described as a process of infinite 'creative destruction', much like the cosmic game played by the child who embodies the third and final metamorphosis of the spirit in *Z*⁶³. This 'creative destruction' process transforms this «artist-God» into a contradiction *in se*, or rather, it makes him 'become who he is': the essential contradiction that lays at the heart of the real, albeit one of a non-dialectic sort (*Überwindung* being not an *Aufhebung*, here the negative is not 'resolved [*aufgehobene*]', as in Hegel, but accepted, and remains as something actually existent). Nietzsche expresses all this in terms of a coincidence of the opposites, notably the inextricable intermixture of infinite grief and infinite joy that is at the same time cause and consequence of the titanic effort suffered by the god in order to liberate «himself as the world at each given instant»⁶⁴. Therefore, the absolute freedom of the nomadic condition – the «nomadism of the spirit» pushed at its most extreme – coincides with the creative-destructive process of the essential contradiction laying at the heart of reality.

With this, we come to the possible interpretation of Yorick's immortality. Indeed, the contrast between death and immortality seems to lie at the heart of the poem. This marks a difference between Yorick and Carmen, since in the opera libretto immortality is not explicitly stated. In the imminence of his death, Yorick defyingly addresses the crowd: «Auch nach hundert Todesgängen / Bin ich Athem, Dunst und Licht». Would it be too far-fetched to interpret these «thousand deaths» as the same «gravity» that, symbolized by the serpent that chokes the shepherd's throat in *Vom Gesicht und Räthsel*⁶⁵, always comes back in «eternal return» precisely as a symbol of *death*, so that it must always be accepted-and-overcome forever and ever in order that the «great “yes” to life» may eventually be pronounced, thus bringing about the coming of the *Übermensch*?

Even if Yorick's behaviour seems possible only on the grounds of a complete victory against the «spirit of gravity», here I would limit myself to propose such analogy.

⁶² *Z*, 3, pp. 282: «Die Welt ist tief, / Und tiefer als der Tag gedacht. / Tief ist ihr Weh –, / Lust – tiefer noch als Herzeleid».

⁶³ Who is in turn clearly modelled on Heraclitus' child-god: see note 53 *supra*.

⁶⁴ *GdT*, *Versuch einer Selbstkritik*, 5, p. 11: «Die Welt, in jedem Augenblicke die e r r e i c h t e Erlösung Gottes, als die ewig wechselnde, ewig neue Vision des Leidendsten, Gegensätzlichsten, Widerspruchreichsten, der nur im S c h e i n e sich zu erlösen weiss». Cfr. the truth spoken by Sylenus recalled in *GdT*, 3, p. 31, and 4, p. 37: «Das U e b e r m a s s enthüllte sich als Wahrheit, der Widerspruch, die aus Schmerzen geborene Wonne sprach von sich aus dem Herzen der Natur heraus».

⁶⁵ This subject will be discussed *infra*, towards the end of this paragraph.

Nevertheless, it is my conviction that the case for it is further strengthened by the presence of the element of laughter, to which we must finally come.

Overall, laughter in Nietzsche is a subject that definitely deserves a closer scrutiny. In an interesting article, Mark Weeks correctly draws a distinction between proper laughter and play (or joy), which today seem, on the contrary, inextricably bound together as the same reality⁶⁶. Though Weeks' main thesis – according to which laughter essentially is a sudden fall of tension that achieves «subversion not *by*, but *of*, desire»⁶⁷ – does not concern the scope of the present study, it is true that in Nietzsche only play (or joy), not laughter, seemingly coincides with a divine state: witness, for that, the Heraclitean image of the child-god playing, or the tragic, i.e. creative-destructive joy that constitutes the inner self of the world. Laughter, however, seems to possess a double function in Nietzsche. On the one hand, it acts as the celebration and outward manifestation of the actual achievement of a fully liberated human condition. When laughter is employed by Nietzsche in this sense, it exudes an over-aristocratic lordliness: such is, for instance, the case of aphorism n. 294 in *JGB* (with its thinly disguised analogy between the philosophers who are «capable of golden laughter (*goldnen Gelächters*)» and the gods⁶⁸), and especially of § 18 in *Vom höheren Menschen*, where Zarathustra's self-sanctification of his laughter clearly proceeds from his already achieved liberated condition to symbolically mark and celebrate it, and perfectly mirrors his Napoleon-style (as well as immensely lonely) self-coronation with a crown of roses⁶⁹. Therefore laughter, in this first sense, comes as the outcome of liberation; but in another sense it is so embodied with the very event of liberation that it becomes one with it, as it happens in the grandiose conclusion of *Vom Gesicht und Räthsel*.

Here again the main character – the shepherd – is definitely a wandering figure, if not a truly nomadic one, just like the gypsy and the *Freigeist*. Moreover, he also seems to be Zarathustra's double – only this time a positive and not an obscene one. There is indeed an interesting shift between the prophet's two different recounts of the ecstatic experience narrated in *Vom Gesicht und Räthsel*. In the first, which takes place in this very chapter, this 'vision' is said to have been something Zarathustra experienced as a witness⁷⁰, a statement further clarified by the remark, added at the end of the chapter, that it was something he had seen *per parabolam (im Gleichnisse)*⁷¹. But in the chapter entitled *Der Genesende*, while recounting that same experience to his «beasts», because they have already started to turn the terrible self-disclosure of his enigma into «an accordion song», Zarathustra claims that he was *himself* on the verge of being choked, and reacted by biting the snake-head off⁷².

⁶⁶ M. WEEKS, *Beyond a Joke: Nietzsche and the Birth of the Super-Laughter*, «Journal of Nietzsche Studies», 17 (2004), pp. 1-17.

⁶⁷ *Ibi*, p. 3.

⁶⁸ *JGB*, 294, p. 246.

⁶⁹ *Z*, p. 362: «Diese Krone des Lachenden, diese Rosenkranz-Krone: ich selber setzte mir diese Krone auf, ich selber sprach heilig mein Gelächter. Keinen Anderen fand ich heute stark genug dazu».

⁷⁰ *Z*, p. 193: «euch [den kühnen Suchern, Versuchern (...) den Räthsel-Trunkenen, den Zwielficht-Frohen] allein erzähle ich das Räthsel, das ich s a h».

⁷¹ *Ibidem*.

⁷² *Z*, p. 269: «Oh ihr Schalks-Narren und Drehorgeln! antwortete Zarathustra und lächelte wieder, wie gut wisst iht, was sich in sieben Tagen erfüllen musste: – / – und wie jenes Unthier mir in den Schlund

Apart from the question of the overall meaning of the episode⁷³ and other possible implications, such as Zarathustra's possible identification with the *Übermensch*⁷⁴, this only apparently puzzling role-shift can be solved by admitting that Zarathustra and the shepherd might be the same person⁷⁵, even if for now I limit myself to highlight the fact that the liberation process is undergone by both the prophet and the shepherd. Indeed in the tale Zarathustra at first seems to play a very passive, even failing, part: horrified by the scene of the young shepherd choked by the thick black snake creeping into his throat, he tries to help him by pulling the beast out, to no avail. Then he cries, but not (or not simply) out of despair, because it is a cry that heralds a sort of ecstatic experience: «all mein Gutes und Schlimmes schrie mit Einem Schrei aus mir – »⁷⁶. The cry leaves to the shepherd no option but to bite, leading to his full-scale liberation: not only he is relieved, almost instantaneously, from the deadly physical threat posed by the serpent, but he also becomes «ein Verwandelter, ein Umleuchteter, welcher l a c h t e!»⁷⁷. Not only is his individual humanity changed forever, but his laughter splits universal history in two between a 'before' and an 'after'. Yet Zarathustra's role does not become decisive until the

kroch und mich würgte! Aber ich biss ihm den Kopf ab und spie ihn weg von mir».

⁷³ See for instance P.S. LOEB, *The Dwarf, the Dragon, and the Ring of Eternal recurrence: A Wagnerian Key to the Riddle of Nietzsche's Zarathustra*, «Nietzsche-Studien», 31 (2002), pp. 91-113. The author arguments convincingly about the inspiring similarities existing between Wagner's *Tetralogie* and the episodes from *Zarathustra* analyzed in the present essay; for a list of (anglophone) traditional analysis and interpretations of *Zarathustra's* riddle, see *ibi*, p. 95 notes 16 and 18.

⁷⁴ If the shepherd is «der einst noch kommen muss» (Z, p. 198), this could actually pave the way for such identification. Indeed, here and there *the* text hints, in a rather elusive way, to Zarathustra's transformation-cum-overcoming. For instance, LOEB, *The Dwarf, the Dragon*, pp. 108-109, highlights the symbolical nature of the two lambs that the prophet finds at his feet after regaining consciousness (Z, p. 267) as the sign that he has undergone himself a metamorphosis into an eagle, a bird of prey Nietzsche strictly associates with the overhuman aristocratic nature (see for instance *GM*, I, 13, p. 293). Zarathustra's overcoming represents the *Überwindung* of the sheepish dimension of the «instinct of the flock», while in *Das andere Tanzlied*, I, as a sign of his newly acquired predatory dimension as a full-scale aristocratic nature, he portrays himself as a hunter and Life as his hound (Z, p. 279). Still, the most powerful sign of Zarathustra's enacted overcoming of the human remains, in my opinion, his *laughter*.

⁷⁵ Another key – indeed probably the main one, though it is not possible to further analyze it here – to this role-shift lies in the actual meaning of the main theoretical figure of *transfiguration*, which, according to Tracy B. Strong, «is one own's experience, to which, however, one is a witness»: see T.B. STRONG, *Philosophy of the Morning. Nietzsche and the Politics of Transfiguration*, «Journal of Nietzsche Studies», 39 (2010), pp. 51-65, here p. 53. Zarathustra's ecstatic doubling is *similar* to the one experienced by the ancient Greek spectator looking at a tragedy. However, similar does not mean identical: not only he finds himself transfigured, but he also overcomes humanity – his own, and that of mankind as a whole. (On this universal dimension of Zarathustra's mission and achievements, see M. MECKELL, *Der Weg Zarathustras als der Weg des Menschen. Zur Anthropologie Nietzsches im Kontext des Rede von Gott in Zarathustra*, «Nietzsche-Studien», 9 [1980], pp. 174-208). Here, in my opinion, may be found the inherent limit of Strong's thesis, because transfiguration is *not* the same thing as overcoming.

⁷⁶ Z, pp. 195-196: «Meine Hand riss die Schlange und riss: – umsonst! sie riss die Schlange nicht aus dem Schlunde. Da schrie es aus mir: "Beiss zu! Beiss zu! / Den Kopf ab! Beiss zu!" – so schrie es aus mir, mein Grauen, mein Hass, mein Ekel, mein Erbarmen, all mein Gutes und Schlimmes schrie mit Einem Schrei aus mir».

⁷⁷ *Ibi*, p. 198: «Nicht mehr Hirt, nicht mehr Mensch, – ein Verwandelter, ein Umleuchteter, welcher l a c h t e! Niemals noch auf Erden lachte ja ein Mensch, wie e r lachte! Oh meine Brüder, ich hörte ein Lachen, das keines Menschen Lachen war».

prophet experiences too, almost ecstatically, a sort of perfect and instantaneous unity both within himself and with universal life. Before the cry occurs, Zarathustra appears as a dispersed and fragmented multiplicity, which only the ecstatic cry is capable to re-unite and transcend. Such impression is enhanced by the repeated usage of the impersonal structure of the tense: the text does not say «I cried», but, literally, «It was cried out of me», just as a possession of some divine power, of the sort commonly experienced in ancient Greece, had occurred. Only when Zarathustra becomes ‘one’, the shepherd is in turn awakened by the upsetting cry raised by the prophet to form a similar absolute unity: as a consequence, he kills the beast immediately afterwards, thus enacting his *Selbst-überwindung*. Moreover, in this key episode we can also see at work the passivity/activity and destruction/creation (here appearing in terms of death/life) polarities we already met before: in both cases the first term is transformed into the second by liberation meant as the actualization of the overhuman potential of mankind. In the end, both Zarathustra and the shepherd experience a total overcoming of their individualities, and this probes that the text here describes a single experience lived by one and the same person, just as it is stated in the chapter *Der Genesende*.

One final word about the figure of the shepherd. The change he undergoes is a complete metamorphosis: indeed, he leaves the human condition entirely behind him, since after his glorious laughter he is «no more a man, no more a shepherd». It is difficult, then, not to associate the shepherd with the «instinct of the flock», that is the sheepish condition so typical of the «fettered spirit» – a reading that in turn is consistent with the general interpretation of the killing of the serpent as the necessity of overcoming the eternal return of the «little man».

From all that has been said, laughter – the mark of perfect Dionysianism and a fully achieved human liberation – appears to be closely associated with two important avatars of the nomadic figure in Nietzsche, the shepherd and the gypsy. In the poem, Yorick’s laughter occurs at the end of the first strophe, when he rebuts the inexorable logic of the world of the fettered spirit (of which he, as a gypsy, embodies the very denial). Such laughter is strongly bound to the gypsy’s perfect awareness concerning his immortality. Yorick cannot die, but this does not mean he ever shunned death, or even tried to. On the contrary, he underwent death «a hundred times», and «the halter», «the hangman», the hate of the crowd with its «poisoned looks» are nothing new to him⁷⁸, accustomed to be opposed against «the entire *pathos* of mankind»⁷⁹. As said before, the ‘death’ Yorick has overcome could be the «spirit of gravity», the same unavoidable initiation endured by the young shepherd in *Z*. There is also another sign in the poem that the gypsy figure acts there as a real paradigm of human liberation, and it can be found right at the end, when Yorick performs a perfect sample of the «giving virtue» preached by Zarathustra. Though Yorick is by no means affected by the sickness of compassion – indeed he shows little mercy, if any, towards the crowd, onto whom he constantly pours scorn – still the closing lines speak of his joy as the only possible redemption left for mankind. Such joy is expressed differently: shown

⁷⁸ *Yorick als Zigeuner*, p. 35.13: «Nichts ist neu dran meiner Art».

⁷⁹ See note 39 *supra*.

as the laughter-burst in the first strophe, it manifests itself in terms of an unexhausted vitality in the second. In both cases joy comes together with an abysmal grief, as it is required by the essence of Dionysianism⁸⁰. We have already seen how grief occurs in the first strophe: now, in the second, he remembers his «hundred deaths», from which nevertheless his deeper joy has always emerged unscathed – «Auch nach hundert Todesgängen / Bin ich Athem, Dunst und Licht» –, thus reminding us of the nocturne dimension binding together the world's «deep grief» with its «even deeper joy»⁸¹.

In conclusion of this paragraph, we can therefore properly assess the meaning of laughter, the third, and perhaps the most important, among the gypsy's and the *Freigeist's* features: it marks a status of achieved liberation, a Dionysos-like creative destruction that may be reached only through experiencing the absolute negativity of 'death' (i. e., gravity). Therefore, laughter summarizes and reunites the two other features – nomadism and struggle/resistance – even if it wouldn't possibly exist without having previously passed through them.

7. Conclusion

Carmen not only enabled Nietzsche to recover from the immense delusion he had suffered in Bayreuth: it also confirmed him he had been abysmally wrong in identifying Wagner with the figure of the gypsy, as he had done in his youth, for the gypsy is a figure that stands for both the perfectly liberated man and Dionysianism. Not coincidentally, then, from the very first pages of *DFW* Nietzsche quoted precisely Bizet's masterpiece to signal his fulfilled personal liberation (he literally speaks of «redemption», *Erlösung*) from the cumbersome shadow of his former friend⁸². Even less coincidental is the fact that *Carmen* is also intrinsically 'nomadic' from the musical point of view, its levity being situated at the very opposite of Wagner's dramatic monumentality.

Therefore, Nietzsche fêted a triple liberation: the liberation of the real gypsy as the prototype of the fully liberated man from the gypsy *malgré soi*, his own liberation from Wagner, and philosophy's liberation from its subalternity to music. Zarathustra is not only someone who conceives and celebrates the liberated man, nor he simply acts as the necessary midwife to him in the most effective and decisive way: he also is – or rather, he has become – the liberated man himself, just as the gypsies Yorick and Carmen are⁸³.

The young Nietzsche denied philosophy the capability of fully rendering and embodying Dionysianism. In his eyes, it was entangled in the insurmountable mediations of language, so that even in the case it were conducted in earnest (as it was in the

⁸⁰ See note 64 *supra*.

⁸¹ See note 62 *supra*.

⁸² *DFW*, 2, p. 9: «Auch dies Werl erlöst; nicht Wagner allein ist ein "Erlöser". Mit ihm nimmt man Abschied vom f e u c h t e n Norden, von allem Wasserdampf des Wagnerischen Ideals. Schon die Handlung erlöst davon. Sie hat von Mérimée noch die Logik in der Passion, die kürzeste Linie, die h a r t e Nothwendigkeit». On *Carmen* as the mirror of Nietzsche's recovery from his personal submission to Wagner see A. SCHEIB, *Nietzsches Carmen. Anmerkungen zu einer Verirrung*, «Nietzsche-Studien», 38 (2008), pp. 249-254; on Bizet and Wagner, as well as Nietzsche's judgments about German music in general, see B.E. BENSON, *Nietzsche's Musical Askesis for Resisting Decadence*, «Journal of Nietzsche Studies», 34 (2007), pp. 28-45, especially pp. 39-41.

⁸³ It is worth to highlight this felicitous double symbolism, masculine and feminine, that perfectly renders – or does it even *restitute*...? – liberated mankind as a whole.

case of Nietzsche himself, or the Presocratics) it couldn't claim the privilege of perfectly embodying Dionysianism, a lineage that, strictly speaking, was accorded solely to music and, within the linguistic dimension, to myth. On the contrary, the mature Nietzsche, having likely become himself a nomad of the sort of the 'immortal gypsy' Yorick, not only envisaged for philosophy such possibility, but thought of it as philosophy's very *destiny*, at least for Zarathustra, and very likely also for himself⁸⁴. Indeed Nietzsche begins DFW with a rethorical question: «Dass man um so mehr Philosoph wird, je mehr man Musiker wird?»⁸⁵. Music, here, is still granted an essential role, but it has now become that 'gypsy' music that is the only possible soundtrack for the free spirit's «dancing on the abyss» and the adventures of the «nomadism of the spirit» at its highest level – adventures that of course both Yorick and Carmen undergo. Music and philosophy now share au pair the seat of Dionysos, from where each of them may legitimately claim to be his most perfect mask.

⁸⁴ On Nietzsche *als Schicksal* in *Ecce Homo* see W. STEGMAIER, *Schicksal Nietzsche? Zu Nietzsches Selbsteinschätzung als Schicksal der Philosophie und Menschheit (Ecce Homo, Warum ich ein Schicksal bin, I)*, «Nietzsche-Studien», 38 (2008), pp. 62-115.

⁸⁵ DFW, 1, p. 8.