

A note on True detective, 1st season

Detective Rust Cohle has lost his young daughter as a result of an accident. His marriage breaks up, and after killing a child murderer, he is used for undercover narcotics operations over a long period of time. He is wounded in a gunfight, but requests a second chance in homicide, to work on a series of extreme murders. Many years later, he and his former partner are, independently, interviewed on what happened during that time. In the course of the interview Cohle explains eternal recurrence of the same.

To begin with: it is unnecessary to interpret the philosophical aspects of the series. Nobody *understands* eternal recurrence. Only a person in extraordinary circumstances, and one reacting accordingly, might have something to say about it. He won't be interested in how his listeners respond. The meaning of conventional words and images, as enable man to communicate, has gone. Not only God is dead. Those relying on Him are perishing in various ways. Those denying Him, are perishing too. Everything depending on the father – children, women, priests – goes down.

The country itself is immersed in decay. The air tastes like ash and aluminum. Water and storms threaten the mainland. Trees look menacing. Language is reduced to broken strings of worn out sounds. Ruinancy seems almost complete. That's also what it looks like inside Cohle's head. He has no illusions left, can no longer allow for any. The sole reality to him is his daughter, who passed away. The only time Cohle shows something resembling a smile, is when he realizes that she has known no pain, that she was too young to be corrupted. "She went right into the blackness of a coma, then, somewhere in that blackness, she slipped off into another, deeper kind."

Damaged permanently by drugs and alcohol, yes, but Cohle knows who he is. He is one, who wanders between madness and genius. "Most of the time I was convinced I'd lost it. There were other times I thought I was mainlining the secret truth of the universe." It is being *in-between* what makes out freedom. Real freedom is close to necessity, embraces it. (*amor fati*)

Now, this is what can be witnessed: a man, complete stranger, speaks of eternal recurrence, the impossibility of any beginning or end. He is not so much to be understood as ... detected. He not merely explains the crumbling of the concept 'person', but actually cuts tiny figures out of his beer cans, showing the de-construction of 'persons'. Those watching and listening, however hard they try to understand, cannot but fail to. As a result, the actions of this man only become more compelling. Here is someone who knows that persuasion has become futile, but given the chance to talk, he speaks out. His words are not communications, they are acts. The devastating effect of nihilism is caught in one violent gesture: he crushes a beer can into a flat circle. He does what a philosopher

with the hammer does. Space, according to Nietzsche, is accidental, dependent on a perspective. Time, on the contrary, is very real. Without beginnings or ends, without boundaries distinguishing one from the other – boundaries already irretrievably lost – , everything becomes indiscriminate, 'equal'. Time itself becomes something in-finite, super-human (literally), menacing everything all-too-human. It flattens everything and everyone, or rather, it brings out emptiness without mercy.

"See, everything outside our dimension—that's eternity. Eternity looking down on us. Now, to us, it's a sphere. But to them, it's a circle."

In the face of eternity, everything moves circularly. But for eternity, to be there itself, as itself, a thought is needed, the moment of a thought. There is a triumph in this moment through which everything comes and goes. Here is the margin for someone like Cohle. But it is a consuming fire, it bleaches the edges of the eyes looking into it.

Far from crumbling down himself, Cohle takes it upon himself to fight the inevitable, that which has already been decided: he is going to represent, imprint justice. Dissect poisonous 'truths' and their mixers, protect the innocence of life.

After he was butchered, Cohle went down into the dark as well. And beneath that darkness there was another kind, friendly this time, and warm. Here he was together, he knew, with his daughter and father. "Darkness, yeah."

– Antigone, trespassing against the sacred laws of the city, invokes the unwritten laws, which stem from the underground, where, she knows, she will always be with her next of kin. –

The darkness, into which one can disappear anywhere and any moment, is all-too-real. That a deeper darkness, benevolent, would emerge, is hard to accept, and Cohle can only do, what he wouldn't have done anywhere ever: he cries. He has been keeping all talk of fulfillment far from him; now its substance itself has touched him. "If one does not hope, one will not find the un hoped-for, since there is no trail leading to it and no path." (Heraclitus)

After Eminem and Dexter, – also Castaneda comes to mind again – , True detective is one more surprise from the New World. Heidegger, near the end of WWII, wrote: America has returned to destroy its origin. True, but one should counter, just like he did himself soon afterwards, objecting to Rilke's aversion to American products invading Europe: was its origin not already lost by Europe a long time before?

America, or: americanism – no noun is to be trusted – , is exponent of an unlimited and unlimiting power, which annihilates everything exceptional, original. It is already a long time ago that the world

was a home for Menschen, meanwhile it has turned into a habitat for humans – man's 'planet earth'. Zarathustra and Rust Cohle don't surrender, don't avert their eyes: they are the forespeakers of eternity and a new type of man facing it.

He is the man that he is, because he bears meaning- and hopelessness. So, what is to be seen at first is the man. What cannot be seen, is recurrence of the same, it must be thought to be seen.

Heidegger, sixty years ago: These days overman, *der Übermensch*, walks in the streets. – And now he is here, on a screen, sitting at a table. The question is: who is addressed? Is one watching a crime series, or is one touched by something decisive? No one remains unmoved, many notice, but only a few carry it on. Nietzsche warned that, to the world, to the last man, overman must look like a devil, "Caesar with the soul of Christ".

Dionysos is not some god out of the catalogue. He – it – is much nearer, is only nearness. Brings us for a moment into an outside of ourselves. The only nearness I found, was silence, the preacher complains. *Only* silence? Nearness, silence, blindness – they are not human registrations, they are of the earth; an earth which has become invisible itself, and which remains thoroughly silent, while the planet is in turmoil. This absence is not merely negative. Earth cannot be silenced by man, let alone destroyed, but retreats into her own. As a last resort she remains capable to stir up questions.

Earth, is it not this that you want: to rise
invisibly in us? – Is that not your dream,
to be invisible, one day? – Earth! Invisible!
What is your urgent command if not transformation?
Earth, beloved, I will.

(Rilke: 9th Duino Elegy)

In Cohle's room, there is, on one wall, a mirror, in which it is hard to figure oneself. On another is a cross, for meditation. Reaching for the vicinity of Christ, Dionysos and Herakles, as does this series, means that there is no way back to this 'meat', to the algorithmic terror of a death, creating time to get feed, Christian or Carcosian. One begs to differ.

It is good to admire heroes, but take a look at the tragic virtues. There are the two sides: exposure to decay, to 'the age of the gross' on one hand, and on the other: resistance by one revealing, regretting what is going on in the going down. Coldness is the lack of warmth. Lack is very real, it can grow and become intolerable in ways unknown to the present at hand. To face and live lack, loss, absence, is not very attractive in itself. On top of that, the one revealing, lifting the weight (for all), becomes the suspect, the other as such, for which no room is left. It cannot be otherwise.

Nietzsche called for tragedies against the plague. I've never thought something Dionysian like this would be possible, and I have to admit that we over here are just 'old Europe'. The question can be asked: is *more* possible?* In another short piece, "Nietzsche – Zarathustra", I am out for the "bigger picture", into which Nietzsche belongs. It is in German, for a reason.

All three: Eminem, Dexter, Cohle, have an exceptional vocality. Eminem's many voices, Dexter's intimate voice-over, and Cohle's 'rusty' and 'coaly' voice, each has its own mesmerizing force. They are persons in the original sense of personae, masks of drama. Per-sonat: through which the sound of breath personates. – Once this united peoples.

The impact they've had, the necessity for more, are hopeful. In these days the inception of tragedy is a surprising and untimely phenomenon.

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*What if Nic Pizzolatto and Matthew McConaughey would adapt Ernst Jünger's novel 'Eumeswil', from 1977, for screen? The idea of the individual as 'anarch', which goes back to Max Stirner, follows on from the position of a Cohle.

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