

“Denn, Ich liebe dich, o Ewigkeit!” ... The Ring of Return is worn by Ariadne-Lou

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Abstract

This text links from the biographical and intimate of Nietzsche to the deepest of his thought of the eternal return, because it is the only way to understand this thought of eternal return (in the material history of each one). And for this, certain of Nietzsche's biographical milestones are discussed in the light of the work *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* and its link to Lou Salomé. We look at how Lou Salomé lies behind the mythical figure of Ariadne as the bearer of the ring of return; that is, through the feminine, Nietzsche shows us how the eternal return operates to free us from the chains of modernity.

Keywords: Nietzsche; Dionysus; Ariadne; Lou Salomé; eternal return

Resumen. «Denn, Ich liebe dich, o Ewigkeit»... *El anillo del retorno es portado por Ariadna-Lou*

Este texto enlaza desde lo biográfico e íntimo de Nietzsche hasta lo más profundo de su pensamiento del eterno retorno, porque es la única manera de entender este pensamiento del eterno retorno (en la historia material de cada uno). Y para ello se discuten algunos hitos biográficos de Nietzsche a la luz de la obra *Así habló Zaratustra* y su vinculación con Lou Salomé. Se analiza cómo Lou Salomé se encuentra detrás de la figura mítica de Ariadna como portadora del anillo del retorno; es decir, a través de lo femenino, Nietzsche nos muestra cómo el eterno retorno opera para liberarnos de las cadenas de la modernidad.

Palabras clave: Nietzsche; Dioniso; Ariadna; Lou Salomé; eterno retorno

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1. Introduction: A story that is unknown and that some “scholars” do not want to narrate

Friedrich Nietzsche was only four when his father, Pastor Carl Ludwig Nietzsche, died on 30 July 1849 at the age of just 35, most likely of some kind of dementia (and not, as Friedrich’s sister Elisabeth later suggested, by falling down the stairs). His father’s death would mark him all his life (he always looked for a father figure, had many substitutes, and finally found one in Richard Wagner). The following year, Friedrich’s younger brother, Karl Ludwig Joseph Nietzsche, died before his second birthday (perhaps of “teething”, according to his mother Francizca).

In 1879 poor health forced Nietzsche to resign from his job at the University of Basel (where he had been appointed professor in 1869, at the age of 24). As Miranda and Navarrete (2007) note, from childhood, Nietzsche suffered headaches, some of them very debilitating, with visual aura due to the phenomenon of fortification spectra. The headaches were predominantly of the right side and accompanied by vomiting, and he had to rest for some days. Nietzsche counted 118 episodes of headache in one year. In 1887 he was examined by Dr. Eiser, who diagnosed a chorioretinitis in his right eye as the cause of his visual defect, which practically caused his blindness.

After the publication of *Human, All Too Human. A Book for Free Spirits* in 1878, life became increasingly difficult for Nietzsche. Perhaps his “destiny” was to die at 35, like his father – but he wanted to force the fatality of his destiny, because Nietzsche was a “Nietzschean”. *Human, All Too Human* was his first “cursed” book, really, because *The Birth of Tragedy* had been “uncomfortable” for the Academy but “inside” it. And the Dionysus presented there had been something “Apollonian”; he wore a tie, spoke German and listened to Wagner’s *Tristan und Isolde*; and had at his side, hidden but close by, the “good” of Kant, and in a more contemporary mode, the figure of Schopenhauer. And he liked to walk, chat, eat, play the piano, read, laugh with Cosima Wagner (the first Ariadne; the weaver of intrigues and destinies) on the Island of the Blessed, the labyrinth of Tribschen (next to Lucerne in Switzerland).

With *Human, All Too Human* came the end of an “instant”, of a “nuance”. And with a lot of courage and bravery, that pain, that lament, was left behind, replaced by a life of dancing in freedom and solitude, because another music could be heard. That book was really “cursed”; and Friedrich Nietzsche, the academic philologist from Basel, simply became Nietzsche (a living legend whom everybody wanted to know). *Human, All Too Human* already linked two names: Wagner and Nietzsche. Wagner, like Kant, basically like Luther, was “human, all too human”. He was nothing more than a man: the great Dionysus was imprisoned by Cosima as a Minotaur in the labyrinth of Tribschen, and from there he emerged as a mere hero: Theseus, something like a believer in the nihilistic “sound-image” of an empty Europe which, like the present one, was Christian and capitalist; a believer who now performed the hysterical,

nihilistic “sound-image” to represent the worst possible drama; that is, the drama of escaping (slipping), by means of enchantment and show, from the pain of existence by negotiating a horrifying sense of redemption with some Mephistopheles; by denying the eternal return that leaves us on the verge of opening and creating another possible world, denied by destroying what we are: the sense of the earth, for the sake of dead ideals. And the ideal, par excellence, was to repeat, over and over again, that we are what we are and we cannot be what we should become. And we are slaves of an “unknown god” who is well known and has many “heads”. “A book for free spirits” means that Nietzsche, in his lament because of the constant pain of existence and the feeling that the labyrinth of modernity is worse than the disease, takes a step forward; and Nietzsche himself, like Ariadne, transforms himself into a Maenad who now dances. Nietzsche, that other Dionysus, was locked in the labyrinth of Tribschen like a Minotaur by Cosima (and also by Franziska and by Elisabeth), just as she had locked that other Minotaur, Wagner. But Nietzsche did not emerge clutching the thread of hysteria and representation as Wagner had; he emerged with courage; that is, through reflection and criticism, with the ‘eternal return. He began to cry and so he was no longer on the outside of the labyrinth, for if he were, he would always have one of its walls as an anchor point. Nietzsche came out like Ariadne; that is, he was already dancing across the land. There is no overcoming in the labyrinth; what there is Tristen lament, and in it, leaping out of the labyrinth. And both the true world – the labyrinth – and the world of appearance – the world outside the labyrinth – dissolve. It is the eternal return, it is the dance that energises things and humans and now redeems them temporarily, either to their past or to their future. Things, humans and gods have freed themselves from fatality. *Human, All Too Human* links Wagner “and” Nietzsche. And from here on, this will already be radicalised; it will end up being Nietzsche *against* Wagner. Or to put it radically: Dionysus against the crucified. (And when Nietzsche was the “strange” philologist of 1872 with *The Birth of Tragedy*, he had indicated to us that it was Dionysus against Apollo).

2. Dionysus against Ariadne

Nietzsche could no longer even return to Basel. Everyone abandoned him, none of his students, colleagues, friends, lovers, relatives knew him; the philologist was transformed into a philosopher; the young academic, slave of the university system and of Wagner, was liberated. He was a man of another world, of another country, of a country in which he was the only inhabitant. If Nietzsche thought in his youth that the “war” was against the luminous god Apollo and later realised that it was against the “rationalist” Socrates, while living in Cosima’s (Tribschen) labyrinth he discovered that it was against Wagner. And the little great man was an expression of the death that weighed like a cross on the “good” Europeans. In truth, the “war” was again mythical, between gods; it was against “The Crucified One”. This was the new “myth”,

that with its cycle had locked us in the labyrinth of modernity; we were lost inside it and there it betrayed us, and when we thought we had come out of it, we were still more inside, being the workers and defenders of that labyrinth; just as happens today with capitalism (our most radical labyrinth).

In truth the “war” was of Dionysus against Ariadne. Of Nietzsche against Cosima and the labyrinth. Nietzsche and the labyrinth of Ariadne indicate Dionysus against Ariadne and her labyrinth. Dionysus against his beloved Ariadne. Dionysus against Ariadne. This is Nietzsche against Cosima for having destroyed Wagner. In a letter probably from the beginning of September 1888, which Nietzsche wrote to Cosima but never sent, and wrote thinking she would reply “aggressively” when she read *The Wagner Case* (the last text he published while he was more or less sane), Nietzsche is very explicit in how he sees Cosima, and is very hard on her: “You will grant me the honour of attacking me publicly on the occasion of my writing [*The Wagner Case* was published on 22 September 1888] which offers the first illustration about W[agner] – you will even make the attempt to illustrate also about me. I recognise why I am at a disadvantage: I have too much right, too much reason, too much sunshine on my side to be allowed a combat under such circumstances. Who knows me? – Madame Cosima last. Who knows Wagner? No one except me, adding in addition to Madame C[osima], who knows that I am right [*Recht*]... knows that the enemy has [reason] – from this position I concede everything to you. In such circumstances the woman loses her grace, almost her reason [*Vernunft*]... One does not do something unjust [*Unrecht*] if one keeps silent: especially if one has neither right nor reason [*Unrecht*]... (...) *Si tacuisses, Cosima mansisses*... [If you had kept silent, you would have continued to be Cosima...] [...] With the expression/of a participation in consonance/with the circumstances/You know very well how much I know the influence you have had on W[agner] – You know even better how much I despise that influence... I turned my back on you and Wagner the instant the imposture began.../If Liszt’s daughter wants to have her say on things of German culture or even religion, I have no mercy...” (Nietzsche, 2012a: 238-239).

In this devastating letter from Nietzsche to Cosima, which he never sent (and which she never read), he makes it clear that he accuses Cosima of being the lady of the labyrinth, who radically damaged Wagner; as “Liszt’s Daughter” she is a devout Christian obsessive who tamed Wagner’s Dionysian element and turned it into a weak representation and copy of itself. (Wagner devoured his own representation, his own parody of himself). And she is an essential part of the representational drama of Wagner’s hysteresis (and Nietzsche said this before Freud’s hysteria studies) and of an epoch; only Nietzsche and Cosima knew Wagner, but she did not know Nietzsche. And the philosopher was leaving in complete solitude, with the pain of leaving all that world behind, but those ruins of labyrinth vanish in “*Anfang August 1881 in Sils-Maria, 6000 Fuss über dem Meere und viel höher über allen menschlichen Dingen!*” [Early August 1881 in Sils-Maria, 6000 feet above sea level and much

higher above all human things].¹ Dionysus touched him and he knew what he would have to do.

In an intimate letter at the end of August 1882, after the “amorous” stay in Tautenburg, Nietzsche writes to Lou Salomé, who was now in Stibbe with Rée: “Finally, my dear Lou, the ancient, deep and heartfelt plea: Become what you are!² At first we find it hard to emancipate ourselves from our chains [to leave the labyrinth and remain outside it], and in the end we also have to emancipate ourselves from this emancipation [dissolve the labyrinth]! Each of us, though in different ways, has to work out this sickness of chains, also after having broken them [...] Sincerely to your/devoted fate – for/in you I love/my hopes [...] F. N.” (Nietzsche, 2012b: 254).

Nietzsche in love with Lou, carrying *The Gay Science* in one hand and the beginning of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* in the other, two of his greatest works; painfully leaving Tribschen and destroying the labyrinth from within himself, at first standing at the side of the ruins, abandoning that Ariadne. Nietzsche with the pain of Sorrento, and in that lament, like another Ariadne, gives his hand to Lou, to the Maenad-Ariadne in Rome, on Monte Sacro, at the Lago di Orta, in Lucerne, in Tautenburg, etc. And the explicit dance of the eternal return begins, “inspired” in Sils Maria in August 1881, but coming from Tribschen, from Basel, from Leipzig, from Bonn, from Pforta, from Naumburg, from Rocken... from Thebes (one of the homelands of Dionysus).

3. Another letter to Lou

On 16 September 1882 he writes another letter to Lou: “Yesterday afternoon I felt happy; the sky was blue, the air was warm and pure, I was at the Rosenthal, where I had been drawn by Carmen’s music. There I sat for three hours, drank the second cognac of the year, in memory of the first (oh, how bad it was!), and reflected, with complete innocence and malice, on whether I have not some predisposition to madness. In the end I said: No. Then Carmen’s music began, and for half an hour I broke down in tears and heart palpitations – But when you read these lines, at the end you will say: Yes, and you will add a feature to the ‘Characterisation of myself’. [...] Come very, very soon to Leipzig! Why not before October 2nd? [...] Adieu, my dear Lou! [...] Your F. N.” (Nietzsche, 2012b: 264).

In the years of his transit through the twilight, his lament and, especially, in the decisive year of Lou in his life, whom he twice asked to marry (where Lucerne was tremendous for him, along with the Memorial of Leon, the Swiss soldiers, the Löwendenkmal; he remembered it even in madness), while remembering his first cognac with her, Nietzsche has again listened to the

1. Fragment by Nietzsche from early August 1881 in Sils Maria, collected in the Digital Critical Edition of Nietzsche’s Works and Letters (eKGWB): M III I, retrieved from <[http://www.nietzschesource.org/#eKGWB/NF-1881,11\[141\]](http://www.nietzschesource.org/#eKGWB/NF-1881,11[141])>.
2. Pindar’s phrase “How one becomes what one is” accompanied Nietzsche from a very young age, and is the subtitle of *Ecce homo*.

opera *Carmen* and cried. His new music, before he writes his *Zarathustra* (which will be the decisive new music), tells him that he thinks with “innocence and malice” about himself; and he wonders if he will have a “disposition to madness” (something we would now call a genetic disposition). Nietzsche seductively and very slyly tells himself that his answer is no! His father and four of his mother’s siblings had serious dementia problems; some “disposition” existed. But Nietzsche is so happy in the dance of return with his Ariadne; and now that his *Zarathustra* begins, everything may be different (even his “predisposition to madness”), and it is possible that reality will be transfigured and the labyrinth will dissolve for ever. And in a certain way it did. Nietzsche postponed the end of his life for ten years, and in those ten years he left us his *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1883-1884), his masterly prequel *The Gay Science* (1882), the *Dionysian-Dithyrambs* (early January 1889), and that other masterly work, in which he again formally surpassed the philosophical and literary template (it is his contemporary work, his work of the 20th century), the *Ecce homo* (in mid-December 1888).

But in that same year of 1882 everything with Lou also ends radically. She herself in her memoirs, written when she was older, remembers with sadness and nostalgia her meeting with Nietzsche, and all that was wrong with that end. She spurned Nietzsche, and did not know or did not want to know what was going on (she was only 21 years old). She wanted to be with Rée in Paris and then Berlin, and did not want any love with him or anyone else, just friendship, knowledge, freedom and dancing. But Nietzsche had told her everything (she was his source of inspiration and confidence): from his thought of the eternal return at the Lake of Orta to the beginning of his *Zarathustra*. Nietzsche had read to her parts of *The Gay Science*, which has texts inspired by Lou, such as 339: *Vita femina*, one of the final paragraphs in the first edition. (For the second edition, published in 1886, he added Part Five). There Nietzsche dedicates his Ariadne to Lou, this formidable text from “Vita femina” which, along with the remaining three paragraphs, articulates the eternal return and Dionysus: “But perhaps this is the strongest charm of life: there is over it a gold-embroidered veil of beautiful possibilities, promising, resilient, modest, mocking, compassionate, seductive. Yes, life is a woman!” (Nietzsche, 2016: 856). But Lou wanted to be alone and with friends, to be happy and study psychology, she did not understand this strange and lonely man who wanted to find a new religion, because she no longer believed in the god of her parents. This is how she saw him: “For Nietzsche, [...] his own situation, the depth of his need. It became the crucible where his will to know was heated red hot, to become form, [...] poetry is more essential [in Nietzsche’s work] than its truths, [...] until he arrived at the prophecy of *Zarathustra*, of the superman and of the eternal return, where he divides himself into the one who suffers all and the one who dominates all – the god. Until arriving at that, which it can be said he produced ‘in truth and poetry’; because there the investigator fixed his limit in him, there he renounced himself, he drew before him the curtain. [...] And for me, among the others, this difference between

Nietzsche and us became one of the most beneficial things that surrounded me in this circle: here was the healthy climate, of course, towards which I tended, and which also made Paul Rée a spiritual comrade” (Andreas-Salomé, 2018: 97-98). Lou had not understood Nietzsche at all, neither when she was 21 years old nor when she is about 70 years old when she wrote this nostalgic account. And so she explains why she went with Rée. She wanted science, not poetry; she wanted truth-objectivity and not metaphor-perspective; she wanted the labyrinth of modernity and not dancing in the eternal return. She even understood Nietzsche’s thought as the new religion of an atheist who went mad because he stepped out of rational sanity. She wanted sane and clear weather, and listening to Nietzsche she only saw him as a madman, an insane man, an obscure man, a prophet, a poet, a lover of “style” but not of objectivity. Lou was not Ariadne either, she was not the Maenad of the Ball; deep down she feared Nietzsche, although I think she loved him somewhat, but it was not enough. And that is why she was willing to be with him and try to get to know him in Tautenburg, but always from the clear, “healthy” and “psychological” hand of Rée and of that scientific psychology so typical of the 19th century which would emerge with Freud and psychoanalysis.

4. Nietzsche’s unique analysis

It is interesting that Freud’s friend, the physiological scientist Joseph Paneth (a kind of early psychoanalyst) got to know Nietzsche well in Nice in 1884. And, moreover, he had read his *Zarathustra* (parts I-III) with great enthusiasm (he even wanted to help Nietzsche). In a letter to his fiancée he describes the impression Nietzsche made on him: “He was extremely kind, there is no trace of false pathos or prophetism in him, as I had feared after his last work; rather he behaves very calmly and naturally. [...] Then he told me, but without the slightest affectation or self-consciousness, that he has always felt himself the bearer of a task and that now, as far as his eyes allow him, he wants to develop what is in him. [...] You too would probably be as surprised by his outward appearance as I am, there is nothing extravagant or fancy about it. He has an extraordinarily large, uncluttered forehead, straight brown hair, veiled, sunken eyes as befits his half-blindness, thick eyebrows, a rather full face and a powerful moustache, and otherwise completely clean-shaven.” (Translated from Janz, 1985: 205). He is like the only therapist Nietzsche ever had (Freud met Nietzsche through Paneth, and recalls this on 11 May 1934 in a letter to Arnold Zweig). Unlike Lou, he did not see him as a prophet, and found him quite normal. And with a very neat appearance, nothing of the extravagance that is expected of a “crazy” writer. And always with that trait of blindness, which caused him so many problems and which everyone remembers about Nietzsche. Everyone noticed that and remembered it. As long as he could still see, Nietzsche wanted to write about the consequences of the eternal return. His task was to try to show what the experience of the eternal return implies, in times of the labyrinth of modernity, at the hand of the gods Ariadne and

Dionysus. It was the war against the labyrinth, but it was no longer the dance with the Maenad; all that was finished. Lou did not learn from what Nietzsche had explained to her at Lake Orta, or in Tautenburg, or in his letters, etc.; she fled from the sick, mad, blind man who believed himself to be a prophet and wanted to find a new religion with poetic and mythical nonsense far removed from the sanity of science and psychology. That's why the 70-year-old Lou still sees Nietzsche that way (even though she knew first-hand that Elisabeth, Franzisca and Cosima were labyrinthine and spidery; and they had caused her a lot of harm): "In Nietzsche it was already possible to sense what was to take him beyond his collections of aphorisms and towards *Zarathustra*: the profound movement of Nietzsche the god-seeker, coming from religion and going towards the prophecy of religion" (Andreas-Salomé, 2018: 91). But if the Lou of the 1930s thought this in retrospect, had she thought the same thing when she had been with him in 1882, at the age of 21? Was Nietzsche so wrong about her? Lou was the religious one, and projected her emptiness onto him; she could not see what the eternal return was about, nor Dionysus, nor herself as Ariadne. Did Lou not realise, when reading *Zarathustra* – if she read it at all – that, for example, "The Other Dance Song" itself is the key to the whole passage? For the text articulates in literary form (and with a mythical-philosophical connection) Nietzsche's own experience with Lou in Orta, Lucerne, Tautenburg and so on; and in it, what is appropriate to the eternal return, namely, to be "nuance", "instant", movement and creative temporalisation of matter. It is the "style" of the eternal return in its operation, which indicates that passage between Dionysus and Ariadne (Nietzsche and Lou); and that has nothing to do with the religious, but with life in its naked materiality, without any sense, which frees you from pain when it is affirmed.

Nietzsche writes to Rée and Lou on December 20, 1882, when he learns of the deception of his "friends". Namely, she does not love him and has left with Rée, his "friends" had been plotting together and he never found out (Nietzsche had everything ready to go to live with Lou in Paris); moreover, Elisabeth kept telling Nietzsche that Lou was the worst, and a disgrace to the family. Rée and Lou were united by a true friendship (although he too fell in love with her); and they were linked by science, psychology, the joy of having a good time in Berlin, of being free; in short, of doing what they wanted beyond what was imposed by the values of the rigid society in which they lived. Lou was part of that explicit beginning of feminism that now sought in an essentialist way (and with the paradox of being in itself patriarchal) to command with the whip and reverse the typical patriarchy. Nietzsche's devastating letter to his "friends" says: "I find myself, speaking in the manner of a free spirit, in the school of the affections, that is, the affections devour me. A horrible compassion, a horrible disillusionment, a horrible sense of wounded pride – how can I go on resisting? Is not compassion a feeling out of hell? What am I to do? Every morning I doubt whether I can make it to the end of the day. I no longer sleep: what's the use of walking for eight hours! Where do these troubles of mine come from? Ah, a little refreshment! But where is there

even a little refreshment for me! Tonight I shall take so much opium as to lose my reason: where is there a person still worth revering! But you, I know you all thoroughly [...] Don't worry too much about my fits of megalomania or wounded vanity: and even if some day, through the aforesaid affections, it should happen that I should take my life, there would not be too much cause for sorrow. What do you, I mean you and Lou, care about my fancies! For you both think that I am, after all, a semi-insane person afflicted with headaches, whose head has been completely upset by loneliness – I arrive at this assessment of the situation, which I consider reasonable, after having taken an enormous dose of opium out of desperation. But instead of thereby losing my wits, it seems to be coming to me at last.” (Nietzsche, 2012a: 302-303). Nietzsche, under the influence of opium, “knows” how his “friends” see him, that is, a semi-alienated person, afflicted by migraines, driven mad by loneliness, etc. They have mocked Nietzsche, caricatured him, undervalued him, etc. The same as always, the “human, all too human” that comes back and repeats itself and destroys each one of us. Nietzsche cannot understand that Lou was not Ariadne either (maybe no one is). Ariadne was never Cosima, but neither was Lou; she had neither the elegance nor the stature to be the Lady of Tribschen. Lou possessed joy, quick intelligence, dance, seduction, vital and existential pains, a way of playing in courtship like no one else, a way of inspiring like few others, but she did not represent “the other dance song”; although she was the bearer of the “ring of return”.

5. Ariadne's truth

But in 1882, Lou had a “personal” epistolary diary, something unusual, because she narrated everything that had happened in Tautenburg with Nietzsche (during this private vacation of three weeks) to Rée; it was “personal”, but belonging to the “two of them” (it was like a certain form of control that Rée had over the young Lou; for he was very jealous of Nietzsche). The philosopher never found out about this. He would have “committed suicide” if he had known (that whatever he told Lou, she told Rée). She was strongly emotionally involved with Rée, but at the same time genuinely interested in Nietzsche. And Rée was also evidently jealous of Nietzsche (which Nietzsche never realised). She was in a triangle with the two of them, with the difference that one of them, Nietzsche, knew nothing of this triangle. In that diary entry for 18 August, at the age of 21, Lou narrates privately something she sees in Nietzsche – she loves him, but, deep down, she moves away because she is afraid of him: “Are we, then, very similar? No, in spite of everything, no. It is a kind of shadow of those ideas about my feelings, which only a few weeks ago made Nietzsche happy, that separates us, that stands between us. And in some hidden depth of our being we are boundlessly estranged from each other. Nietzsche has in his being, like an old castle, dark dungeons and hidden cellars which do not appear when one knows him only superficially and which, nevertheless, may constitute what is most like him. Curious, recently the idea

suddenly occurred to me that we might even find ourselves facing each other sometime as enemies. [...] We will live yet how he constitutes himself the preacher of a new religion, and it will be one that recruits heroes as disciples.” (Translated from Janz, 1985: 119). Here is everything Lou feels for Nietzsche and said, with clarity, at the age of 21. And it is written at the very moment she is with him. She saw him as a dangerous preacher of a new religion recruiting other madmen like himself. In this, I cannot fail to see Gillot’s imprint on the young Lou. In St. Petersburg, aged 17, she had already had a horrifying but seductive relationship with the acclaimed (but married) preacher-thinker, Hendrik Gillot. It was he who called her simply ‘Lou’; he had even wanted to divorce his wife to marry her. (Their relationship was a scandal; among other things, it is why Lou left Russia for Switzerland to study). Nietzsche and Lou are infinitely separated, abysmally separated (but united), because Nietzsche in his complexity is not free at all and is not transparent like Rée. Nietzsche is like Howl, Miyazaki’s character from the 2004 animation *Howl’s Moving Castle*. He is a magician, a Zarathustra, an *Altazor*, a Zorba, a Falstaff, a Dionysus: that is, a free spirit (but really, not in the sense of Lou: “I do what I want.”). What was most characteristic about him was what radically separated them. It was like an old castle with cellars and dungeons that would not allow themselves to be fully opened, let alone illuminated. Here is the problem: Lou is radically afraid of Nietzsche, for she cannot tame him, cannot subjugate him; even if she hurts him, causes him pain, or punishes him, she cannot handle him. Nietzsche is Lou’s “*bête noire*”. (She is like the Real for Lacan). And, on the other hand, she does not want “dirty old” cellars, let alone dungeons where she is locked up, in a dilapidated castle: she does not want to be structured by him, even though she needs him. (This will be seen later in everything that happens to Lou with the older Freud, and in her own work of 1912: *Narzissmus als Doppelrichtung* [English translation: *The Dual Orientation of Narcissism*], Andreas-Salomé, 1982). She does not want to be with Nietzsche, she has to let him go and she elopes with Rée. In those three weeks of “containment” in Tautenburg, she discovered that her life was not with Nietzsche, but with Rée or with another man who would appear to her in the future, and that her life would go on for that kind of “dance” with men, but not for the dance of “The Other Dance Song” of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. Also, Lou realised that they would be “enemies” from that friendship-love they had had, for it could not be otherwise.

And from there comes the end of this impossible text about Ariadne, about Lou, about Nietzsche; about the dances in a crumbling world where Nietzsche does not want any more labyrinths. Nietzsche “invented Ariadne” (*Erfindung*; following Montinari, in Nietzsche’s original manuscript), but before that, had he invented Lou as a character in his *Zarathustra*? Is Lou an invention of Nietzsche? But even in enmity friendship somehow happens. Everything that happened with Lou (and Rée) outside the labyrinth, but which locked them in a false eternal return, a last man, a magician, etc., is

expressed in the figures of *Zarathustra* part IV (of 1885, a text written a year after *Zarathustra* part III, which is the true end of the book Nietzsche imagined). That book for the few, which is outside the *Zarathustra* cycle, apparently also tells us about this: how Lou, being an Ariadne, was also a false image of the image of the Maenad of the Dance. She wanted to dance in the labyrinth of the security of scientific objectivity belonging to the new science, psychoanalysis; and she ended up being Freud's friend, one of the few women close to the patriarchal psychoanalytic doctor, doing therapy in Göttingen, until she died in 1937. But although she had something of Ariadne and something of the labyrinthine enclosure, she was also, in part, an Ariadne of the Ball. And with an incredible intelligence which Nietzsche had already noticed when they met in Rome. (The same thing happened to Peter Gast, and to all those who got to know her).

And Nietzsche, in the face of Lou's abandonment, did not commit suicide, or could not quite kill himself. Nietzsche had a mission: to write the book of the eternal return and the expressions of how it frees us from each of the seven seals of modernity; and that is what he did until January 1883; but this new pain was no longer the pain of Tribschen and the Wagners; it was not that lament. It was a pain of a man scorned, a lament because Lou left him in this new Naxos and they could have allied themselves and dismantled the labyrinth of modernity, because it takes two to do that. The myth of Ariadne and Dionysus is always double: if there is only one, it is only wisdom of life-death (Dionysian wisdom); but with two, that wisdom happens and is realised and transforms us. And Nietzsche “nevertheless” (*trotzdem*) saw the greatness of Lou, and recognises it, explicitly and publicly, in *Ecce homo* in 1888, and even left *The Gay Science* written in 1882 as it was intended for her. (In its second edition he adds another book, but he did not change what was already written). And in the same way, Lou, even in enmity, gave him the strength to dance and create *Zarathustra*, which she herself did not understand and did not see herself reflected in.

To Rée and Lou in that harsh and sad letter of 20 December 1882, Nietzsche already points out the mimetic beginning of the *Zarathustra*: “Beg Lou to forgive me everything – she too will offer me a chance to forgive her. For up to now I have not yet forgiven her anything. It is much more difficult to forgive friends than enemies” (Nietzsche, 2012b: 303). Nietzsche knew that one must honour in the friend, sometimes, the enemy. In Lou this was the case. Nietzsche asks Lou something she sensed in her diary, that somehow they would remain united through enmity: “Be at least my enemy! Thus speaks true respect, which dares not ask for friendship [...] In one's own friend we must honour even the enemy [...] In our friend we must have our best enemy. With your heart you must be closest to him when he puts up resistance.” (Nietzsche, 2012b: 96-97). Nietzsche asked her for “enmity” in order to stay together; it was a love that constituted the thinker even in his madness. And always, let us not forget, Lou's verses from his *Hymn to Life* resound. Even suffering is given as an affirmation of life, as “The Other Dance Song” (which

paraphrases Lou's text) reminds us: the verse of nuance par excellence, the verse of eternal return. Lou carried the "ring of return" although she did not know or realise she did.

And if we look at the *Posthumous Fragments* of this time of pain, writing, love, dancing, spite, friendship, enmity, forgiveness, opium, rage, creation, Nietzsche is very clear: "Before one can forgive, one must have lived through what has been done to one – and in profound persons, all experiences are extended in time [...] It is easier to forgive an enemy than a friend [...] What should I forgive? But if I do not reproach you for what you reproach: how could I, therefore, forgive? [...] It has grieved me not that you have deceived me, but that I no longer believe you." (Nietzsche, 2010: 167). The problem of deception is the one that Nietzsche expresses: that is, not to trust the other, then how to forgive the friend who became an enemy? Perhaps one forgives them as an enemy, because in this way I return with them and we affirm life together, and this is dynamized over things and humans and gods.

These *Fragments*, relating to Lou, are incredibly beautiful and sad. They are not like those relating to Cosima. She is another Ariadne. Love can destroy. And Nietzsche feels destroyed; how to trust in love again "Man is too imperfect a thing. Love for a human being would destroy me." (Nietzsche, 2010: 38). Perhaps it is necessary to overcome man, to despise him, so that he can give of himself something great and be able to love. Perhaps it was Lou herself who taught him the superman in himself and, at the same time, the "human, all too human". Nietzsche puts it this way: "What one must love, why must one also hate? Is not love the greatest of all torments? That is why man must be overcome." (Nietzsche, 2010: 73). Apparently, Ovid returns, Catullus returns, the lament returns and we must hate ourselves, despise ourselves, in order to love ourselves (the texts so dear to Nietzsche on the myth of Ariadne and Dionysus reappear at this stage of his life). Lou as enemy is necessary so that he can love Lou again; it is necessary that we hate the human in each one of us so that we can love the human who is to come; the one who wants to dance and no longer live in labyrinths and in lamentations.

6. Conclusion: "For I love you, O Eternity"

To the same Lou, Nietzsche sends another letter, probably in mid-December 1882, in Berlin, in which he shows his sorrow for so long a time of deception: "For how can I forgive you, if I do not first discover in you that nature thanks to which you can above all be forgiven? No, m[y] d[ear] L., we are still far from 'forgiving'. I cannot pull forgiveness out of my sleeve, now that the offence has had four months of time to get inside me." (Nietzsche, 2012b: 298). Lou, on the one hand, got inside Nietzsche and forever remained living in him; she, on the other hand, got inside that "old castle," and fled in terror like a child, for she realised that she could not master him. She met him, loved him, and then fled. Lou could not handle Nietzsche and his creative freedom. And Nietzsche could not handle Lou; he had to love her in enmity so that she

would thus return and thus save him from that pain, from his apparent need of resentment for being scorned.

And Nietzsche begins his *Zarathustra*. He writes it at full speed, very quickly, between January and February 1883, in Rapallo (where he had written those letters full of pain in December 1882). He finishes it on 13 February, and all his experience was being redeemed by the eternal return in the text itself: “Man for me is a thing too imperfect. Love of man would kill me.” And: “Zarathustra replied: ‘What did I say love! What I bring to men is a gift.’” (Nietzsche, 2003: 35). The gift, Nietzsche himself had given to Lou at Lake Orta. It was the thought of the eternal return, which he remembers with bitterness in December 1882 in Rapallo, but which Lou did not know about. He gave it to her, and that gift allowed him to write *Zarathustra* and for her to make her own way, beyond Nietzsche himself. And the thinker reminds Lou of this in mid-December 1882, and with great sadness: “That time in Orta I had decided to make known to you, the first, all my ph[ilosophy]. Ah, you cannot imagine what a decision that was: I believed that no one could be given a greater gift. A very far-reaching task (a long work of construction and edification).” (Nietzsche, 2012b: 292). Lou was the first person to whom Nietzsche expressed the eternal return: she heard it directly from him, because Nietzsche trusted her: he saw in her an equal. And I repeat: it doesn’t matter that she didn’t know any of this, and was even afraid of it and fled with her friend Rée, whom she could control and thus feel safe. The gesture, the nuance, the instant is what matters, because that is what later frees Lou from Nietzsche and Nietzsche from Lou.

Finally, Nietzsche wrote many texts for Lou (too many and several implicitly), but it is known that the following three are explicitly for her, because Nietzsche, when he was furious with Lou, treated her as a “cat” (a proud feline): “The dog pays benevolence with submission. The cat, with benevolence, enjoys himself and experiences a voluptuous feeling of strength. He gives nothing in return.” (Nietzsche, 2010: 31). And this next text by Nietzsche is very explicit and playful: “Beware of cats: they never give, let alone reciprocate – they only retort and purr (beg).” (Nietzsche, 2010: 148). And this third text is very clear, and associates Lou with the very animality that does not want any state: “Women, always less civilized than men: at the bottom of the soul, savages; they live in the state like cats at home, always ready to jump towards the door or the window and return to their element.” (Nietzsche, 2010: 470).

And when did Nietzsche treat Lou as a cat, a kind of manipulative, furious, arrogant, deceiving creature, but pretending, and representing herself to the public as tender and domestic at home? In a letter of mid-December 1882 Nietzsche puts it very explicitly: “... character of the cat – the predator that takes the attitude of a domestic animal.” (Nietzsche, 2012b: 296). Was that really Lou? Was she a cat? Well, no. She wasn’t!

Thank you Lou for being there in 1882 beside Nietzsche; you gave him life so that he could live, be happy, be able to love, and write out of the laby-

rinth and dance for several years (even in anger) and gave us, thanks to you, *The Gay Science* and the portentous and unique *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (and let's not forget *Ecce homo*, his last brilliant work). And let us remember Dionysus, when he says to Ariadne, at the end of "The Great Longing": "He sent you to sing, and now speak, say: which of us has to now – give thanks? – or rather: sing for me, O my soul! And let me be the one to give thanks!" (Nietzsche, 2003: 313). The god thanks the mortal and Nietzsche thanks Lou, for she is the bearer of the "ring of return." Only with her has he been able to love; only with her has he wanted to be married; only with her has he wanted to have children; only with her has he danced; only with her eternity is actualised day by day in the very materiality of the meaninglessness of life. And the pain is affirmed and continues to advance. Only with her the sexual act as eternal return articulates the differentials in a unit of coupling, and only in this way is it lived and created and followed; and the material socio-historical fabric is affirmed and constitutes *pólis*.

Nietzsche remembered Lou always. It is the basis of the Poem "Only mad! Only poet!" from *Dionysian-Dithyramb*s (January 1889). This text was a poem that came out in "The Song of Melancholy" (written in 1884), and which was also sung by the magician, the same one who sings the lament, in *Zarathustra* IV (1885). For Nietzsche, Lou – the beast, the cat, a Maenad, but a second-rate one, although, in a way, Maenad and Ariadne – always saw him just as a madman and a poet, and therefore preferred Réé and the sciences and psychology. In the *Dionysian-Dithyramb*s he says: "Only madman! Only poet!/ Only a multi-coloured chattering,/excusing himself from multi-coloured masks of madman,/climbing over fallacious bridges of words,/over rainbows of lies/between false skies/wandering, wandering –/Only madman! Only poet! [...]" (Nietzsche, 2016: 877). Thus Nietzsche knows very well how Lou – the cat – saw him in 1882 and abandoned him. And Nietzsche remembered it until the curtain of sanity came down on 3 January 1889.

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Ricardo Espinoza Lolas is a Chilean academic, writer, critical theorist and philosopher. His work articulates the thought of G.W.F. Hegel with the current Critical Theory intertwined with the phenomenology of X. Zubiri and the creative aesthetic thought of F. Nietzsche. And with this matrix, his thought aims to provide answers to the culture of these times and, at the same time, seeks to show new creative logics that allow an alternative to the prevailing global capitalism.

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