



Essay: Are humans really self-sufficient as Nietzsche's beasts of prey?
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1 Introduction

“You think you are pushing, and you are being pushed!” (Goethe 1808, p. 272). With these words Mephistopheles in Goethe's *Faust* describes the wild hustle and bustle of dark creatures on the way to Walpurgis Night. Just as these witches are to be understood as a symbol of the rawness inherent in human beings, Goethe takes up the question of the meaning of cause and effect in complete chaos. In his pamphlet "On the Genealogy of Morality" Nietzsche, who, as is well known, was often inspired by Goethe, dealt with a very similar question 79 years later: Do people push, or are they pushed? Or rather: In which form of existence is man really self-sufficient? Like Goethe, Nietzsche creates a contrast between the "civilized" and the "wild" man: the domesticated "pet" and the independent "predator" man. But is man really self-sufficient as Nietzsche's beast of prey, or is he also put in his place? This essay is intended to shed light on why the human being, who in GM I 11 in its original form behaves like a predator and is guided by instinct, just like the cultural agent, is restricted in his independence. First it should be explained why man as a pet is subject to the same principle as man as a predator. At the end it is explained why this principle makes humans dependent both as predators and domestic animals.

2 Main part

2.1 Instinct as the motor of the human pet

2.2.1 The culture of the pet as instinct

In GM I 11, Nietzsche makes it clear in which form of existence he sees the instinct primarily located: While the domestic animal was made obedient and tamed within the framework of man-made culture, the predatory animal leads an instinctive, irrepressible beast existence (cf. Sommer 2019, p. 173). However, Nietzsche already indicates that a strict differentiation between the predatory animal and the domesticated animal is difficult when he states that the socialized, situated people in the wild “are not much better than predatory animals let loose” (GM I 11). They would become “rejoicing monsters” (ibid.), which would “retire into the innocence of the predatory animal conscience” (ibid.). It also becomes clear why Nietzsche, in his concept of “tame man[s]” (ibid.) refers exclusively to the “pet man” who panders to culture. This differs from its archaic predecessor in that in the course of a process of enculturation it supposedly detached itself from its animal drives and subjected itself to domestication by the demands of social life (cf. Sommer 2019, p. 174). Anyone who participates in society must therefore submit to the "sovereign individuals [who] [represent]

the master morality of good and bad" (Höffe 2010, p. 69), otherwise sanctions are to be expected. Anyone who bows to these cultural constraints, it seems, separates from the primal independence of being able to follow one's instincts in the wild and behave free of social constraints.

And yet there seems to be something lurking in instinct that moves people to submit to culture. Nietzsche calls this the "tools of culture" (GM I 11). It is precisely these tools that embody culture as a driving force in the "meaning of all culture" (ibid.) tentatively adopted by Nietzsche (cf. Sommer 2019, p. 173). In this context, Nietzsche denies that the "domestication of the beast of prey" (ibid.) and thus the subordination to the tools of culture is meaningful for culture as such: "These tools of culture are a disgrace to man, and rather a suspicion, a counter-argument against 'culture' in general!" (GM I 11). What Nietzsche does not deny, however, is that the "tools [s] of culture" (ibid.) are the "[...] reactive resentment people ruling today [...]" (Sommer 2019, p. 173) and is therefore an order guided by subordination instincts. So Nietzsche captures here what drives the culturally bound to apparently turn away from the irrepressible acting out of his instincts: the instinct itself.

2.2.2 The genesis of culture through instinct

What at first seems like man's alienation from his nature is what originally drove him to develop into a social, cultural being: the instinct to increase his potential by creating a society. While Stone Age man's everyday life was characterized by a harsh struggle of life and death, modern man enjoys a certain independence in this regard, in which he can realize his increased potential. While it was only possible for the supposedly independent prehistoric man to eat meat that he killed himself, it is also possible for modern man to acquire it with money, which he can earn through various activities. After all, carving out a pound of factory farmed meat is far more enjoyable and less time-consuming than tracking and killing an entire pig. Humans have thus unfolded their potential through the skillful creation of a social system, since a large number of new, life-serving ways of shaping life have grown out of the originally strenuous struggle for survival. While hunting in packs has proven to be an innate instinctive behavior in wolves, humans secured their survival through behavior related to one another and thus through social action.

The increase of potential through social action thus appears historically useful and logical, but binds the actor to certain social norms: "If a subordinate member of a wolf pack violates the hierarchy, he is punished by biting. As long as the hierarchy endures, this is an effective procedure in which neither freedom nor responsibility has to be spoken of and in

which one can of course also neglect the feelings of the animals.” (Stegmaier 2010, p. 88). Even at a time when there were no textbooks on meaningful conduct, people had to be guided by an indwelling force to unite with other people. This power is instinct, or in other words, “[the] tools of culture” (GM I 11). In order to guarantee people’s comfort in the long term, it became necessary to submit to certain norms - for example, the acceptance of sanctions for theft and of money as a means of payment. This resulted in the very institutions that can be described as “[...] the reactive resentment people ruling today [...]” (Sommer 2019, p. 173). It is no longer the instincts alone that people use for orientation, but the domesticated pets through which the instincts are exercised in an institutionalized manner (cf. Höffe 2010, p. 77). The institutional character of culture is fulfilled in the bondage of its adherents to their overpowering masters. This dependency, which according to Nietzsche resulted from socially consolidated power relations, resentment, continues to be inherent in people as “slave morality” (cf. Sommer 2019, p. 24). The “[...] worm looks at itself smugly, Person‘ [...]’ (GM I 11) now as the ‘meaning of history’ (ibid.) and prevents itself from being independent. This also explains the formulation “These bearers of the [...] instincts [...] - they represent the decline of mankind!” (GM I 11). If the domestic animal makes itself dependent on instinct institutions as part of its domestication, and the predatory animal is subject to the instincts, it remains to be clarified whether the instinct as a driving force for action can promise independence to the human being as a predatory animal.

2.2 The dependence of the instinctive predator man

Through the in GM I 11 “[...] tentatively adopted the meaning of culture [...]” (Sommer 2019, p. 173), which would only arise through the taming of the predator, it becomes apparent that the power of the Instinct produces dependency that is consistently manifested in man. This becomes clearer when one considers again that cultural and therefore social action is also instinctual behavior, since one always subordinates oneself to the call of the group, as wolves tend to do in their hierarchical community. The concept of social action originally comes from sociology and means “action [...] that is related to the behavior of others according to the meaning intended by the person or persons acting and is oriented towards it in its course” (Weber 1985, p. 542). Something like “social behavior” does not exist in sociology, since it is assumed that a connection between society and behavior is always accompanied by a subjective sense for the actor and can therefore be described as action. Anyone who acts in relation to other actors makes himself dependent on their arbitrariness. Nietzsche’s view posits that there are no rules in wild nature that would limit the

development of human potential. According to Nietzsche, the self-importance of man resulting from this wildness of nature could protect him from submission to a social order. However, the laws governing nature are more binding and effective than any social construct of rules. The wolf, which subordinates itself to its leader, practices a form of self-abandonment - mind you, without having been domesticated by a culture. In this pre-cultural period, when predators established a hierarchy through instinctive behavior, they were already guided by their instincts and thus were not independent. Culture does not replace these instincts, but hides them behind a man-made facade of the supposed new independence that the predator man has created for himself by deriving his interrelated behavior from the instincts. However, the appearance of independence is deceptive, because the human being, guided by a natural control process, is always dependent on his basic instincts, regardless of where he thinks his impulse to act comes from.

The depiction of humans as instinctual beings in GM I 11 makes it clear how deeply the urge for independence and autonomy is anchored in human existence. Self-importance in the sense of the irrepressible behavior of the "'solitarian predatory animal species man' [...]" which has not yet submitted to any order, but in which all are "born 'masters'" (Gerhardt 2010, p. 151). However, not having any freedom because you are guided solely by your instincts. The tiger, which roams hungry in the vastness of the savannah, has no choice but to hunt and kill the well-fed wild cattle when he sees them. And even for the supposedly civilized soldier, who has been starving in a cave for weeks, the wounded teammate looks more and more palatable over time. Even if the starving person decides to resist the bubbling beast within him for the sake of salvation, through the "correlating" of behavior and learned habitus, he also enters into a dependency - only much more subtly. This seemingly circular conclusion ultimately leads to the conclusion that the pet according to Nietzsche - viewed as an individual - does not endure. Even if there were a form of culture that could separate people from all their instincts, it would only be accessible to people if they gave up their supposed autonomy, since in Nietzsche culture basically affects the individual from the outside, but not an independent one, intrinsic drive.

3 Summary and outlook

A "liberation from the independence" of the predator is neither possible nor logical either through the directly instinct-driven predator or through existence in a culture shaped by dependencies. As Nietzsche already stated, the domesticated man is in a state of dependency. However, it could be shown that the origin of man's self-disempowerment through culture

and thus through the - even instinct-controlled - tamers of culture is due to instinct. Thus, neither the "primal predator man" is self-sufficient, nor the further developed, domesticated man. Although instinctual behavior makes humans appear as unfree beings, the pursuit of instinct has proven itself in evolutionary terms and is therefore inseparably linked to human existence. The question of how to circumvent the instinct is therefore less one of how to deal with it - but this would have led too far for this essay. In this context, it would have been exciting to look at Nietzsche's longed-for union of an "Apollinian" way of life, forgotten by others, and a "Dionysian", self-forgotten way of life through Greek tragedy in relation to the distinction between Nietzsche's autocratic predator and its domesticated counterpart. Perhaps it is in the interest of this tragic human existence to develop a concept of freedom that ranges between instinctual behavior and human cultural action.

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