

The Spectrum of Faith: Meaning in the Fog of Uncertainty

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A healthy society I presuppose is one which is able to develop as effectively and efficiently as the citizens within it are capable. A sick society is unable to meet this criteria because of unnecessary internal *sickness* standing in conflict with the society's developmental capabilities. Whether a society may be deemed healthy can be deduced to correspond with the general existential health of the citizens within it. If the citizens are unnecessarily existentially sick, then their cognitive state conflicts with their developmental capabilities.¹ The greater the health of the citizens, the greater their own developmental capabilities. The greater the developmental capabilities of the citizens, the greater the developmental capabilities of the society. So, the pursuit of obtaining the condition of a healthy society is the pursuit of obtaining the health of the citizens within it. In this essay, I will argue that the healthiest society is the one in which the greatest number of people are self-satisfied by the subjective belief that their lives are meaningful and authentic. However, in couching objective uncertainty regarding meaning, for the individual to acquire a firm belief of self-satisfaction requires a *leap of faith*. Because of objective uncertainty, acquiring self-satisfaction through faith is subjective to the cognition of the individual. The vast spectrum of cognitive capabilities thus calls for an equally vast spectrum of faiths with corresponding "lengths" to which one must leap.

The Danish Christian-existentialist, Soren Kierkegaard (1813–1855), and the German Secular-existentialist, Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900), both held the existential imperative: become who *you* are—to not become who one is, is existential *sickness*. The theism of Kierkegaard and the atheism of Nietzsche will represent the opposing postmarks on the spectrum-of-faith. Moreover, the philosophers held opposing ontological beliefs regarding the

¹ This conflict between a negative cognitive state and one's "developmental capabilities" is simply a reference to a cognitive-state which hinders one's potential to become the best person they are capable of—which hinders the society from becoming the best society it is capable of.

nature of who one is. These causally relate to their differing methodologies for becoming one's authentic-self. Both philosophers came to the realization that there is no epistemically-objective certainty to existential meaning; all that one can be epistemically certain of regarding existential meaning is that it is absolutely subjective. The problem, then, arises in how to find any "true" meaning in one's own life. For Kierkegaard, a truly authentic-self can only be actualized through rejecting societal norms, and, consciously understanding and actively living the synthesis of the spiritual (eternal) and the natural (temporal), through continuous actions self-determined through a devout faith in God. This is one's duty in living one's subjective life within the incomprehensible objective function given by God to the universe. For Nietzsche, the truly authentic self is manifested through rejecting societal norms, including religion, and realizing the *earthly* nature of oneself. Then the agent must have faith in herself as her only affirmer of meaning. All that *is*, are material objects perceived through the senses. To continue to affirm what one perceives then gives the individual a meaning-framework while living in the reality of objective-meaninglessness.

Kierkegaard and Nietzsche were both ultimately concerned with the meaning of existence, inquiring into how to apply a subjective meaning to an objectively incomprehensible universe in striving to create one's authentic-self. Though, their opposing ontological beliefs lead to their distinct methodologies for self-becoming, both philosophers held to the supposition that the inaugural component for existential meaning is faith. Couching objective uncertainty, these two subjective philosophies of faith can stand as opposing postmarks, generally in accordance with juxtaposed normative systems of faith in Western society: atheism and theism. According to both of their distinct conceptions of existential sickness, they would both deem the other to be sick. Neither were concerned with the overall health of society; their primary focus was on the

health of the individual, as most existentialists are. However, when pursuing the overall existential health of a society, couching objective uncertainty, the teleological meta-narrative of a Kierkegaardian faith is the healthiest form for most, and the perspectivism of a Nietzschean faith is the healthiest form for the rest of society.²

Soren Kierkegaard's metaphysical conception of self is a duality between the physical and the spiritual. The task of becoming oneself is not only to realize this duality but to actualize it. The teleological narrative to self-actuality is plagued with *sickness*. He viewed existential sickness as despairing, a condition *a priori* to life as a human. We have, in his work, three forms of despair. First, inauthentic despair: being unconscious of being in despair of oneself. Second, two forms of authentic despair (conscious of self): the self wanting, or willing, to be oneself; and the self wanting, or willing, to be rid of oneself. In the first sense, it is a weakness of preventing oneself from becoming who one is even when conscious of it. For instance, the weak could be conscious of their being but be too weak to abandon societal norms to become their authentic-self. The second form is a denial of who one is even when conscious of it. For instance, the denier could be conscious of their being but reject the divine element.³ To deny or to not will one's true-self, Kierkegaard prescribes "is the formula for all despair".⁴ The level of consciousness of oneself and the intensity of despair have a reciprocating relationship so that an "increase in the degree of consciousness, and in proportion to that increase, the intensity of despair increases."⁵ The more an individual is conscious of their dual-self the more they realize

² This does not mean to imply a false dichotomy regarding faith but intends to take the two primary forms of faith in the West as the opposing post-marks of this society.

³ Nietzsche is a primary example of what Kierkegaard would consider a denier of their true self. Nietzsche denies the duality of being but is conscious of what Nietzsche refers to as his conscience.

⁴ Kierkegaard, Soren. *Sickness Unto Death*. pg. 19

⁵ I.e.d. pg. 65

the contradiction between the content of their eternal spirit and the content of their temporal existence.

The consciousness of self is a self-relation. The self is relating itself to itself, as both subject and object. Because an individual's consciousness can act as subject viewing itself, consciousness, as object; greater consciousness is thus something that can be reached for. Consciousness of the synthesis of self is a necessary attribute of becoming an authentic-self, he posits, "the more consciousness, the more self; the more consciousness, the more will, the more will the more self".⁶ This sort of self-relation derives personal-responsibility and self-accountability, motivated by the supposition that only the individual with God's help is capable of realizing and willing into actuality *who they are*. The realization is the role of consciousness, the more one realizes who she is the more one is herself. The greater the realization, the greater the will to become their self. The strength of the will leads to the strength of the self. If devout in faith and strong in will, the despair of life will be healed through living with God.

The more conscious someone is the more she despairs, but, is also closer to becoming *who they are*. This teleological "meta-narrative" of an increase in despairing, or suffering, leading to a preferred state of being mirrors traditional dualist presuppositions of purpose. To see the universe, and correspondingly oneself, as all part of a teleological universe gives one's suffering meaning; this is the ultimate belief that in the end a reward of eternal bliss will be granted if one wills it. Just as the believer wills a faith in God as the possible salvation from eternal suffering, Kierkegaard also believed that willing a faith in God is the only possible salvation from temporal suffering. He believes this because without God all can only be

⁶ Sickness unto Death, p. 76

perceived as essential, to only see necessity, and to be inherently sick, means freedom from this sickness doesn't exist in possibility. Kierkegaard speaks of the healing power of a faith in God in

Sickness Unto Death:

salvation (from despair) is humanly speaking the most impossible thing of all; but for God all things are possible! This is the fight of *faith*, which fights madly (if one would so express it) for possibility. For possibility is the only power to save.⁷

To live one's life only in accordance with what is rational is to live in permanent despair. One must strive to accept possibility in all of its absurdities to be within the reality of living as a creation of a divine omnipotent creator.

This devout faith is a trust in the omnipotence of God as redeemer. This belief in an omnipotent being, Kierkegaard established is the only solution to the existential problem of despair. Kierkegaard emphasizes, "despair is the disrelationship in the (self-)relation."⁸ What the physical self must relate to is their divine self. This comes through the strength of one's faith, which is the strength in their relationship with the divine: God. Without a relationship with God through faith, there is no self the individual can actualize because they are living outside of the reality of their self. If one cannot strive for who one is, one can never live outside of the realm of despair. This is what Kierkegaard says is "the Christian advantage over the natural man; to be healed of this sickness is the Christian's bliss."⁹ Only through a faith in possibility is any comfort given to a conscious temporal existence.

⁷ Kierkegaard, *Sickness Unto Death*, p. 59. Kierkegaard wrote the work under the pseudonym Anti-Climacus

⁸ Kierkegaard, *Sickness Unto Death*, p. 19

⁹ *Sickness Unto Death*, p. 72

Human's by nature may be necessarily born to despair, but a faith in God produces the possibility of being free from despair: *hope*. Hope for a Kierkegaardian faith follows the teleological optimism that a current condition of despair in an earthly-life will lead, in virtue of this faith, to a perfect eternal afterlife. This makes the suffering of the second form of authentic despair, wanting/willing to be oneself, meaningful because it will be redeemed upon physical death. Humans are necessarily sick with despair unto physical death, but faith gives the optimism of hope for a blissful eternal-condition in the afterlife.

The *hope* found in a faith in God is the faith in an answer to the existential question of meaning, a question the individual cannot solve epistemically through personal inquiry or experience. It is this faith that gives life meaning in the face of objective uncertainty. Kierkegaard diagnoses the problem, and a potential solution, of objective uncertainty in his own life in one of his earliest statements of existentialist thought at the age of 22 in a journal entry, which reads, "what I really lack is to be clear in my mind what I am to do, not what I must know... What matters is to find a purpose... to find a truth that is true for me, to find the idea for which I am willing to live and die..." (Kierkegaard, Journal 1A).¹⁰ Fundamentally what he finds to be the "purpose" is to become one's authentic-self, the issue is in *meaning*: the affirmation of *life*. The subjectivity of the issue of meaning leads to the subjectivity of the solution—meaning is only found in a personal and devout faith. The only person responsible for coming and actively holding to a faith is oneself, in every thought and every action. One's own faith is thus not just a part of who they are but becomes who they are. It is their meaning in *life*.

¹⁰ https://philosophy.berkeley.edu/file/958/Søren_Kierkegaard_Journal_entry.pdf

Faith cannot be found by following another, it can only be found by the individual who renounces the norms of society to truly come to a self-realization. If one accepts the normative meaning found in society as truth, they are not actively pursuing their authentic-self. The only objective “ought” in Kierkegaard’s prescription of authenticity, is that one ought to have faith in the absolute possibility of God if they want to be oneself. He is aware of the risk involved in such a leap over objective uncertainty. However, he believes that this risk is a necessary one. As he explains in the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*:

Without risk, there is no faith. Faith is precisely the contradiction between the infinite passion of the individual’s inwardness and the objective uncertainty. If I am capable of grasping God’s objectivity, I do not believe. If I wish to preserve myself in faith I must constantly be intent upon holding fast the objective uncertainty. (CUP)

The infinite passion of the individual’s inwardness is to find a *true* meaning for which they are willing to live and die. The objective uncertainty of the universe necessitates a *leap of faith* to land on solid meaningful ground. The individual who has synthesized their dual nature of spirit and body, who maintains a fully conscious *faith* even in the fog of uncertainty, and actively wills effortlessly according to their faith has rid oneself of despair by becoming an authentic-self.

Friedrich Nietzsche, held the ontological belief that there is no duality to nature and corresponding teleological meta-narrative. Thus, the issue is not that as humans we are incapable of comprehending the objective underlying essence of reality. The problem for Nietzsche is there is no such essence within existence. Everything just *is* what it is physically. He believed faith in the divine-life-meaning is a symptom of *sickness*. This sort of faith is an existential “cop-out” that only masks the reality of the objective meaninglessness of life. Nevertheless, the existential

problem of meaning must be resolved in order to live a healthy existence. In, *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche recognizes, “for one thing is needful: that human beings *attain* satisfaction with themselves.”¹¹ To attain satisfaction with oneself requires meaning. If there is no meaningful pursuit in one’s life, there is nothing to genuinely satisfy beyond primal necessities. For Nietzsche this is an *earthly* self which must be satisfied, and in a much deeper way than primal necessities. The primitive self of lusting-desire lacks conscience as a premise in decision making; the *earthly* self refers to one’s physical self which includes the conscience. To attain satisfaction with the self, for Nietzsche, requires introspective listening for personal guidance. What one listens to instead of their spirit, in the dualist sense, is their earthly-conscience. Nietzsche asks himself, “What does your conscience say?”, and his conscience replies, “You shall become who you are.”¹² When who one *is* has not been predetermined by God, to become who one is they must take a different leap of faith for meaning. A leap which begins with a complete rejection of all normativity.

To realize one’s authentic-self for Nietzsche means first rejecting all that is valued in society, including a belief in God. Once an agent rejects the values of society, she is to formulate what she believes is a correct conception of the meaning of *life* based on her own self—giving a subjective meaning to existence. As Nietzsche suggests in part-one of his four-part book, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, “remain faithful to the earth”, when one is formulating an authentic value-framework.¹³ Nietzsche believes that without projecting a subjective value onto the universe life is destined for Nihilism—a complete absence of value. However, for Nietzsche, to escape Nihilism by giving the universe a divine nature is a *sickness* of masking reality.

¹¹ Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The Gay Science*. P. 145

¹² *The Gay Science*, p. 142

¹³ *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, p. 27

If we are to place value onto the universe we must be faithful to what he believes created existence: Nature. In remaining faithful to the Earth, one remains faithful to Nature. However, this faithfulness presents the issue of determinism that stands as a grand hurdle for Nietzsche's efforts in evading Nihilism. The hypothesis that meaning must then be found in the *laws* of science is rationally manifested out of a disbelief in the transcendence of the divine. However just as a faith in the divine for him is sick with Nihilism, so is an objective trust in the "values" of science. Each form of sickness attempts to apply an objective truth where there is none. Science is only able to portray how things physically are. If a realist were to say science *gives* meaning, the claim would be a misunderstanding—they are who prescribes the meaning, not science. Nietzsche warns his reader, "beware of believing that the universe is a machine; it is certainly not constructed for any purpose, and with the word machine we give it far too great an honor,"¹⁴ Where a machine is produced with an intended purpose, an existence without a creator can have no purpose. With no purpose to the universe and a trust in science all that has been and will be is determined, and, can be understood rationally through laws of cause and effect. What much of *The Gay Science* is intended to provoke in the reader can be paraphrased by asking the question: how boring would that be? Life is to be lived with excitement and joy, qualities which cannot be found in pure rationalism. So, the hurdle over the Nihilism of rationality demands of the atheist a leap of faith away from pure science and into herself.

Nietzsche finds making this leap of faith away from rationality as almost comically necessary for a meaningful life. If someone realizes the absence of objective meaning and views the world with the melancholic seriousness of being purely rational, they are sick and absent from *life*. The stoic fails to recognize the freedom of objective uncertainty while the *creator*

¹⁴ *The Gay Science*, p. 133

laughs joyfully at their seriousness. As Nietzsche says in *The Gay Science*, “when the ultimate liberation and irresponsibility is accessible to everyone at every time, maybe laughter will then have allied itself to wisdom.”¹⁵ The wisdom to see life as full of beauty and joy liberates the individual from the normatively negative presuppositions of society. The wisdom to see science as gay gives the rational a meaning. It is a freedom to see a rainbow not just as a meteorological phenomenon of light refraction and reflection through a water source,¹⁶ but instead, a magnificent stream of color ending the dim nature of precipitation. To laugh in wisdom is easily explained in the relationship between child and parent. If a child perceives something, such as the spilling of milk, as immensely important and wails out in tears, the parent in her wisdom can laugh at how unimportant of an event it was, along with the seriousness attributed to it by the child. The wisdom of objective meaninglessness provides a shield to negative mental conditions. If we realize the world is meaningless and that it is only ourselves who are projecting meaning, we turn events others perceive as metaphorical mountains into laughable molehills.

When an agent is faithful to the creator as Nature and accepts that it is now on their sole shoulders to *give* meaning, meaning has a freedom in Nietzsche’s ontology which is not present in Kierkegaard’s dependent meaning. For Kierkegaard what exists necessarily in the negative could only exist possibly in the positive in virtue of God. For Nietzsche, what exists necessarily could be given any possible value because it is us, humans, that affirm all meaning. Here Nietzsche gives subjective meaning the independence it seems to already connote. Faith in oneself as the creator of a value-framework to mirror who they are allows for becoming oneself to be possible. Therefore, all that exists in the universe exists in the realm of the possible in terms

¹⁵ *The Gay Science*. p. 129

¹⁶ <https://www.britannica.com/science/rainbow-atmospheric-phenomenon>

of value. Then it is the agent's choice; what would you choose to see in necessity, the ugly or the beautiful? The question if answered thoughtfully will always be *the beautiful*.¹⁷ Nietzsche writes what I take to be the most powerful component of his philosophy in *The Gay Science*:

I want to learn more and more to see as beautiful what is necessary in things—in this way I will be one of those who makes things beautiful. *Amor fati* [love of fate]: let that be my love from now on! I do not want to wage any war against what is ugly. I do not want to accuse; I do not want to accuse the accusers. Let *looking away* be my only negation! And all in all, to sum it up: someday I want to be only a Yes-sayer!¹⁸

For love of the necessary to be accepted as possible in virtue of a faith in oneself as affirmer is to have power over one's own life. This is the power to affirm one's own existence constantly, because of the power to affirm the existence of all else. This is a will to power over oneself, more directly, the will to power over willing unnecessary negativity often manifested intuitively. When intuitive thoughts apply immediate value judgements humans by our own mental nature are capable of affirming what our intuition deems negative: a will over the will.

It is for his will to love fate that Nietzsche does not accuse Christianity itself of being ugly.¹⁹ He instead *chooses* to see the beauty in Christianity rather than the ugly. He could see the sickness he perceived and accuse Christianity of being evil, causing himself to hate the very idea.

¹⁷ An objection that seeing the ugly is necessary for a proper development of any kind is not applicable for Nietzsche. In the proceeding quote from *The Gay Science*, looking away being the only negation is to push out of the realm of perception the ugly to allow for only the good. In focusing only on the beautiful, the beautiful will be developed. If one only see's the beautiful they will always be in a positive mindset. It is for the reason of being in a preferred state of mind and the unnecessary of negative attitudes that anyone would thoughtfully answer that they only want to see what is beautiful.

¹⁸ *The Gay Science*. p. 143

¹⁹ He believed people who follow the faith like a herd of sheep are existentially *sick*. The clear distinction is between the necessary existence of Christianity and the possibility with lies in existential sickness.

However, to cause himself to feel the negative emotion of “hate” would be doing an injustice to himself because it is unnecessary. Instead, he believed that without Christianity the Enlightenment—a societal move away from all forms of divine thinking towards rational thinking—wouldn’t have occurred when it did. So, Christianity is beautiful in that it had a hand in bringing about a greater, *earthlier*, condition to the world. To put it in layman’s terms, being a “yes-sayer” means finding the silver-lining in *all*. Even though he may disagree with the content of its teachings, the fact is that Christianity necessarily happened. Because it necessarily happened, the freedom to see it as good or bad is up to the affirmer and no external power. It is not a debate over fact, it is the affirmation of those *facts* while remaining faithful to the earth.

For Friedrich Nietzsche, the meaning of life is manifested through the faith in one’s ability to affirm all that *is*. To affirm all as beautiful is not to say all is objectively beautiful, the content of what makes something beautiful is purely subjective. The subjectivity of affirmation is in virtue of the differences in inherent qualities and life experiences. Because inherent qualities are unchangeable, it is through life experiences and the content of their affirmation that we are to come to self-understanding. Nietzsche thus emphasizes, “the secret to reaping the greatest fruitfulness and the greatest enjoyment from existence is *to live dangerously!*”²⁰ It is only through living dangerously out of one’s comfort-zone that they are to grow the most comprehensive value-framework which can be projected both internally and externally. Through Nietzsche’s value-framework one can then set personal goals to reach for what one believes would be most valuable to who they are. It is through striving for what is most valuable to

²⁰ The Gay Science. P. 143

oneself, for the sole purpose of having faith that they are one's *truth*²¹, leads an individual *to become who they are*.

Both Kierkegaard and Nietzsche realized the necessity of subjective meaning in what is rationally meaningless through a leap of faith. Though, the opposing content of their ontological beliefs cause vastly different conceptions of what a *healthy* faith is to be. Nonetheless, in both instances it is through a healthy faith and a strong relationship with one's *true* self that one can become who they *are*. Proceeding from these two forms of faith and their methods for self-becoming, an internal dialectic that subjectively evaluates which form would generally bring about the healthiest existence is now pursuable.

The Kierkegaardian faith in God gives the safety of self-satisfaction in meaning and authenticity. In believing there is a qualitatively predestined essential-self, or spirit within one's body, produced by an anthropomorphic God, an unbreakable by external-forces relationship is formed. Whether this relationship is real or imagined makes no qualitative difference in subjective satisfaction if the faith is believed to be real. If an individual believes in a relationship between herself as creation, and God as creator, her life began with a meaning she must now actualize actively through will. This faith in a creator purposefully forming one's subjective essence as the creation of the absolute gives the believer the sense of authentic *purpose*.

To come into existence with a purpose in a Kierkegaardian faith is illustrated in an intelligibly simple form by William Paley's teleological argument for God, through his metaphor of the universe being a watch, and God being the watchmaker.²² The individual is placed into the

²¹ "one's truth" is the personal affirmation of one's entire existence. It is saying "yes" to all they have been and will be.

²² William Pacey's metaphor of the watchmaker in *Natural Theology* is intended as a proof for the existence of God through the teleological argument first coined by St. Thomas Aquinas. The argument is that the perceived

teleological meta-narrative of the “watch” that is the universe. Oneself is a soulful and physical cog with a subjective purpose to fulfill—their personal role as a “tool” in the objective function of the watch. No role the same, the individual must discover their given purpose in the universe. The choices willed by an individual represent the movement of their cog. The cog could be beneficial, neutral, or negative to the objective function of the watch. However, the individual cog cannot truly perceive or comprehend the objective function of the watch; for actions to be consistently beneficial is dependent on a relationship to the watchmaker—God. Viewing the actions of the surrounding cogs gives no insight into how the individual ought to act. In the simplest form of the metaphor, if another cog is perceived as spinning clockwise it does not mean that it ought to be; if it ought to be, it does not mean that the perceiver ought to be spinning clockwise. This perceptual ethical-skepticism is thus applicable to all perceived cogs. The only affirmation the soulful cog finds in her actions is through the strength in its relationship with the omnipotent creator. To act solely out of this relational faith, both as the physical cog and as a tool in the teleological meta-narrative, is to act meaningfully and authentically. However, this relationship with the creator is ambiguous and hence requires leap of faith.

Applying the metaphor to Kierkegaard’s forms of despair, the authentic despair of *denial* would consist in the cog being conscious of its subjective “coggity” but willing to be a sole piece of metal. The authentic despair of *weakness* would consist in the cog being conscious of its coggity but, be too weak in will to rely solely on its relationship with the watchmaker. Instead one follows, at least partially, the actions of perceived cogs. The inauthentic despair is simply the cog not being conscious of its coggity and willing without *purpose*. The greater the level of

intricacies of a watch and its function imply a watchmaker. The perceived intricacies of the universe and its “function” Pacey deduces must imply a universe-maker.

consciousness of one's coggity—one's necessary existence as physical cog and essential tool in the teleological meta-narrative—will cause a greater level of despair with its soulful self. This is due to the ambiguity in the relationship with what transcends the watch, along with the seeming authoritative perception of what is internal to the watch (within the universe). The ambiguity in the creator/creation relationship and the skepticism applicable to the meaning of the actions perceived of other cogs, causes the individual to suffer in life necessarily as a cog in uncertainty.

The watchmaker metaphor however does not fully encompass the motivating factor the believer has in having a complete Kierkegaardian faith in God. Even if the cog is conscious of being both a physical cog and a tool in the teleological meta-narrative, there is little support for why the cog should strive at all, let alone passionately, for being more conscious of its coggity. If an increased consciousness of coggity has a reciprocating relationship with despair, the cog seems to now have greater reason to will less consciousness of self. However, the authentic despairer that wanted/willed to be oneself is given the ultimate eternal finale upon death: heaven. This gives suffering, and an increase of it, meaning in the teleological meta-narrative of life.

To live one's life in suffering, in all forms of severity, with the comfort that endurance in faith through the trials of suffering is meaningful rests on the eternal finale. To have faith that one was created as an individual tool with a purpose in the intricate teleological meta-narrative of the universe, the feeling of self-satisfaction in terms of authenticity is *essential*. To live passionately through faith and actively be the very best authentic tool one can be, makes one feel the self-satisfaction that their life is meaningful. So, a Kierkegaardian leap of faith by its own nature brings about a level of solace to the existential problem of meaning. If the cog was rotating counter-clockwise for its entire existence when it ought to have been rotating clockwise, with a devout Kierkegaardian faith it will believe for its entire existence its life was meaningful.

To have even a minimal faith one has been authentically created as a tool in the teleological meta-narrative of the universe, and to spend one's life willing in accordance with their internally-perceived relationship of divine and physical, makes the self-satisfaction of perceiving one's life as meaningful and authentic *a posteriori*. Because self-satisfaction is necessarily achievable through a Kierkegaardian leap of faith, even if only a small leap, this is a generally achievable solution to the existential problem.

A Nietzschean faith in one's own ability to affirm one's own existence as creator and creation, breaks down the boundaries of the watch for the freedom of absolute possibility in terms of meaning. To hold onto the watch metaphor, the individual cog is free to say "yes" to all that is necessary and free to will how it deems correct. The individual does not have to will how it *feels* it ought to because of a transcendent creator. There is no teleological meta-narrative, all that is has come to be because of particles in motion colliding forming physical-beings. There is no watch that has been built, so the individual has not been placed inside of it. All one is, is a heap of particles in motion that form one's being, surrounded by other particles in motion heaped together to form other beings. What can now be predicated of events or substances in a Nietzschean faith has been set free to the affirmer's discretion.

When faced with the epistemic reality of objective uncertainty, Nietzsche established the absolute lack of any objective truth, most notably a divine truth. This rejection of what transcends the physical and what cannot be perceived is the rejection of the teleological meta-narrative of the Kierkegaardian faith. There are no anthropomorphic qualities which can be attributed to what is external to man; in the sense of an omnipotent creator possessing a will which intended a purpose for the universe. The concepts of "purpose" and "meaning" are creations of man, and not predispositions of reality. So, the universe is inherently meaningless.

However, in a world without meaning, humans still require it. Nietzsche's imperative to attain satisfaction with oneself requires a purpose, or a meaning to one's life. To attain satisfaction is to reach a point which one deems to have qualified as sufficient. This requires a sense of meaning, for without meaning one would not be able to perceive whether they have themselves qualified as sufficiently authentic and meaningful. This human need then requires that man be the creator of meaning, and by living a meaningful life the creator lives also as creation. This makes the level to which one is able to feel a sense of self-satisfaction greater—the level of authenticity and meaning in one's life is fully independent. However, even if one takes a leap of faith to herself as affirmer, if for a lack of cognitive capability, she is unable to take a full leap of faith to herself as affirmer, the possibility of sensing self-dissatisfaction is a risk which is not present in Kierkegaard's.

Taking away an external creator, the Nietzschean leap of faith in oneself as *the* affirmer of existence, and accepting the dual roles as creator and creation, makes one fully responsible for her own state of being. Just as the meaning one perceives is affirmed subjectively, the meaning one aims to create for "who they are" is derived subjectively. With absolute responsibility, the amount of self-satisfaction one feels from an action is two-fold. If one senses they are self-satisfied, one also receives the intuitive satisfaction of being solely responsible for her condition. However, the reciprocal is true. If one feels self-dissatisfied, they also receive the intuitive dissatisfaction of being solely responsible for her condition. What is possible of authenticity and meaning in life through Nietzsche's faith knows no maximum or minimum boundaries.

To come into a meaningless existence is like coming into existence with a blank canvas. The genetic attributes they inherit are the supplies they have at their disposal. What one creates with the supplies is absolutely her responsibility, but the supplies one is given are her only

inherent dependencies. However, one's canvas can be stretched as far as the artist is willing to take it, for as long as they are able to illustrate it. The art of creating one's meaning, and in doing so one's authenticity, is like living as the personified illustration of one's highest affirmed perceptions. Through living life, the artist perceives their inspiration for creating their own work of art. The more danger and passion, the greater the range and degree of inspiration. To live inspired is to live actively affirming. The less the affirmer perceives and gives subjective meaning to, the less meaning and authenticity she is able to give to her own life.

To take the full leap of Nietzschean faith, one must accept full responsibility for their *truth*. One's truth is everything they have been and everything they will be. To say "yes" to every action by affirming its meaning is like seeing each brushstroke as a meaningful and deliberate act in the creation of a work of art. Some brushstrokes are more meaningful and deliberate than others. The brushstrokes within the face of a portrait are often done more deliberately and with more meaning than the brushstrokes of the background; but, each stroke can be given a meaning in the overall conception of the piece.

If the life-artist is too weak in Nietzschean-faith or cognitive ability, they will be dissatisfied with a brushstroke and in-turn dissatisfied with their self for creating it. They will fall into a negative mental-state. If they cannot break this state, they will live with less passion and less danger. They will have less inspiration from affirmation. They limit their own possibilities for creation, which causes more self-dissatisfaction, leading the cycle to continue until an act of will can break it. To avoid this growing condition of negativity depends on the ability to accept life as objectively meaningless. To be consumed by negativity means to will nothingness. This is the risk of a Nietzschean faith. Taking a leap of faith in oneself to create one's own meaningful and authentic life is to take absolute responsibility for one's life. This responsibility has the

power to take someone to the highest state of self-satisfaction—but also to the lowest depths of self-dissatisfaction.

In each faith, the sense of self-satisfaction is attainable. However, the freedom of absolute control over meaning comes with the risk of self-dissatisfaction. The freedom of complete control over meaning, and the human need for meaning, present a task for the Nietzschean life-artist which will only be beneficial to those with high cognitive capabilities and a will to create passionately. The freedom of control in the Nietzschean faith is only beneficial for the innovators of a society. This will present those capable with the perception of seeing the world as a blank canvas where for oneself all things are possible, these are the qualities of what will produce the greatest innovative thinking. To see the temporal world as the only world, then also motivates a higher degree of innovation. To believe that this is only a temporary and lesser existence may diminish the innovators will to develop this world into the best possible world it can be. The degree of motivation for the innovator has a parallel correlation to the passion and creativity they will innovate with. To diminish the developmental capabilities of the innovator is to diminish the developmental capabilities of society. If a healthy society is one able to develop as effectively and efficiently as possible, the innovators should fall into the Nietzschean side of the faith spectrum. However, no innovation occurs without those able to produce and maintain the innovation. The non-innovative²³ laborers of society serve a necessary purpose in the overall developmental capabilities of society.

²³ “Non-innovative” doesn’t mean to say they are incapable of any innovative thought. It means that constant innovation is not cognitively available to them; and/or a weakness of will hinders their actualizing what is necessary for innovation. Such as, a plumber may be cognitively capable of innovative thought regarding an ethic, however never will what is necessary to truly innovate existence beyond a normative structure.

The non-innovative of society, those who don't cognitively match their innovative counterparts, ought to remain in an existentially healthy condition. These individuals may be capable of making a mediocre leap of faith to their self as affirmer, but the self-satisfaction they would receive from making such a leap doesn't make up for the unnecessary risk of self-dissatisfaction. If a society is going to be as healthy as it can be through having the greatest number of citizens existentially healthy, those who are not innovators ought to have a faith in the teleological meta-narrative of the universe and essential authenticity. If a Kierkegaardian faith is held by the physical constructors of the ideas mentally constructed by the innovators, the believers will live self-satisfied at some degree, because of any degree of this sort of faith. They believe their lives to be meaningful in that they are a tool benefiting the teleological meta-narrative of existence.

In believing a Kierkegaardian faith, a trust in the existence in a blissful afterlife extinguishes the remaining ember of the existential problem of meaning. In believing that one's purpose in life is dependent on their creator and through willing to actualize this purpose that they will be rewarded by heaven, the non-innovator remains motivated. If the suffering that's derived from the passionate-willing to be a tool for God's purpose wasn't given an absolute reward, the believer wouldn't possess the divine motivation to act. The cause would lack a preferable effect in the sense of becoming more conscious and willing accordingly would only grow to be an increase in earthly suffering. To cause an increase in suffering without a belief that its effect is a genuine reward would be a less-preferable circumstance than simply not willing a greater consciousness, and, thus not willing a more intense condition of suffering.

Thus, the healthiest society that can develop as effectively and efficiently as possible relies on the existence of an accepted spectrum of faith. The epistemic reality of objective-

uncertainty causing a lack of justification for a firm ontological stance regarding existence has allowed for a spectrum of faith to already exist. However, those on either end of the spectrum, theist or atheist, should not condemn or scorn the beliefs of the other if they wish to have a truly healthy society. The reality that the individuals within a society possess varying levels of cognitive ability, implies the existence of varying levels of being able to believe or create *meaning* and *purpose*. For those who will be self-dissatisfied with a Nietzschean leap-of-faith, they deserve to find solace in a Kierkegaardian leap-of-faith because they are living sentient being.²⁴ On the other hand, those whose fruitfulness will be diminished by normative structures deserve the freedom to be free-creators. To hold an ontological belief comes with the negation of all others. However, if we pursue a healthy society the negation of an opposing belief should not be cause for projecting a value on those with the opposing belief. The spectrum of faith is to be celebrated as a tool to facilitate the health of society—*the One*—and not be cause for the constant mentality of *us versus them*—the true *sickness* which plagues the development of society.

²⁴ The idea “living sentient being(s)”, “*deserve*” to be self-satisfied is an ethical presupposition that I believe needs no justification. The argument for such an ethic does not fall into the parameters of this paper.