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Optimistic nihilism in thus Spoke Zarathustra and Rick and Morty

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Abstract--The question of existence is the latest dilemma plaguing human psyche in the 21st century. Nietzsche advocates against nihilism through the mouthpiece of Zarathustra and traces the need of surpassing naive thinking. Rick and Morty, a comic dealing with cosmic travels and scientific rupture of logic and ethics, explores the possible interpretations of the great meaning of life or the lack of it. Both texts stimulate the intellectual tendency to relate joy with the divine and post it against science. Different dichotomies of joy and sadness spin around in the helix of the comic and the adventures of Zarathustra. *Kurzgesagt*, a German-made animation and design studio founded by Philipp Dettmer, illustrates an outlook that can emulate joy or contentment in a universe devoid of meaning or purpose. Their 'optimistic nihilism' can synergise the crown of existentialism and reality of nihilism.

Keywords--existence, life, Rick, meaning, Nietzsche.

Introduction

Existentialism is defined as a tendency in nineteenth- and twentieth-century philosophy that confronts critical psychological difficulties. It is an ideology based on the examination of life and how humans discover themselves surviving in the universe. The argument is that humans exist initially and then spend a lifetime altering their identity or origin. Two visionary intellectuals, Sren Kierkegaard and Friedrich Nietzsche, were born into this environment and both realized that something was lacking, something was wrong in this beautiful new world. According to Sren Kierkegaard, life is full of absurdities, and one must create his or her own ethics in this meaningless reality. In an uncompromising attachment to something definite, one might live a worthwhile life and devote that purposeful

life to the commitment. As a result, Kierkegaard emphasised that existentialism discusses the significance and weight of decisions, as well as the necessity to live profoundly and genuinely. Friedrich Nietzsche thought the world was meaningless, and he exalted the person inventing his or her own ideals and creating the essential job with no regard for God, the state, or societal expectations. According to Jean Paul Sartre, “existence precedes essence,” which indicates that the significance of one’s life originates only after one comes into being (Sartre 13).

Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche was born on October 15, 1844, in Rocken bei Lutzen, Prussia. Carl Ludwig Nietzsche was a Lutheran evangelist who died when Nietzsche was four years old. He was heavily inspired by the teachings of thinker Arthur Schopenhauer. All through his stay in Leipzig, he formed a connection with the artist Richard Wagner, whose composition he deeply adored. Nietzsche began teaching conventional philology at the University of Basel in Switzerland in 1869. During his tenure, he wrote his first works, *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872) and *Human, All Too Human* (1873). He also sought to separate himself from conventional academia and Schopenhauer’s views, and became more interested in the ideals that underpin modern civilisation. His connection with Wagner had eroded by this point. At 1879, he withdrew from his employment in Basel due to a neurological ailment. Nietzsche spent much of the next decade in isolation, wandering from Switzerland to France to Italy when he wasn’t residing at his mother’s property in Naumburg. Nevertheless, this was also a tremendously fertile moment for him as a philosopher and author. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, one of his most major works, was published in four volumes between 1883 and 1885. He also penned *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886), *The Genealogy of Morals* (1887), and *Twilight of the Idols* (1889). Nietzsche explored the basic elements of his thought in these publications from the 1880s. One of these was his famous assertion that “God is dead,” a rejection of Christianity as a vital factor in contemporary society. Others included his support for self-perfection via imaginative zeal and a “will to power,” as well as his idea of a “superman” or “over-man” (Übermensch), a person who tries to exist beyond traditional labels of good and evil, master and slave.

Nietzsche’s philosophy is governed by the conditions of his reaction to a specific crisis in late modern European culture, notably the crisis of nihilism. Nihilism is a state in which people perceive a lack of purpose and direction in their lives. This is due to a failure to realize their values, which causes an individual to sense emptiness as a result of a lack of significance. Nietzsche described a nihilist in his book *The Will to Power*:

A nihilist is someone who believes that the reality as it is not what it should be, and that the universe as it should be does not exist independently. By this viewpoint, human being, action, sorrow, wanting, and emotion have no purpose: the pathos of “in vain” is the nihilists’ pathos - simultaneously time, as pathos, the nihilists’ paradox (Nietzsche 3).

The medieval world’s founding philosophers spent a considerable time debating the position of humans in the cosmos and the purpose of existence. Many notable historical luminaries have addressed the dilemma of what, if anything, makes life worthwhile. Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle were Greek intellectuals who were notably preoccupied with how a person should exist. The challenge was moral

and metaphysical for them. In contemplating the purpose of life, Socrates stressed the source of truth. He believed a noble deed to be good not because God says so, but because it helps humans in their quest to be healthier and happier. Plato defined justice as the rightful structuring of the soul and contrasted the philosopher to a doctor whose task it is to care for the soul's health and well-being. When one seeks the purpose of life, he or she is attempting to attain the ultimate level of knowledge, which is the concept or form of the Good, from which all just and noble things get purpose and merit. Plato's pupil Aristotle is notable for rejecting Plato's Theory of Form. Aristotle also attempted to define the good life and how it could be accomplished. His greatest solution to the question of what life is all about is the notion of eudaemonia, or the discipline of living righteously.

The medieval social order witnessed drastic upheaval in a relatively short time as the industrial and scientific revolutions unfolded in the nineteenth century, and culture became substantially secularized. The information revealed by contemporary science has essentially changed humanity's connection with the natural world. People began to feel strongly detached from the religion that had served them make meaning of the world and their lives throughout this time period. Religion provoked passionate reactions and criticism. In this timeframe, what people called god was no longer Omnipotent Being. Humans no longer required God since things in the cosmos could be controlled without the guidance of God. As a result, all of these images led to the disappearance of God as the national spirit. The presence of God is rarely debated; also, the predominant focus is on various critiques targeted against faiths. Such disputes and factions demonstrate that humans were still seeking the meaning of life through God. This depicts the fact that one part has yet to provide an explanation while experiencing the life. There will always be different or newer methods to pursue a meaningful existence. Additionally, the kerfuffle of new religions or contemporary religious cults, such as 'Gafatar', deals with this subject. Embracing a religion does not provide true faith and fulfillment for each human being in seeking the true meaning of life. Besides that, all the conflicts within and beyond religion that have raised questions about the meaning of existence have contributed in drastic alterations and emotions; one of these outbursts is about meaning-making as a personal, individual-driven activity in which each man and woman generates the meaning of their life and it is not ascertained by a supernatural god or a metaphysical deity; this perspective was later referred to as 'Existentialism'.

According to one understanding of sentient history, an all-powerful creator rule over everything. No one can emerge without the all-powerful supreme god's knowledge and consent. In a significantly more contemporary form, we live in an incomprehensibly complex virtual environment. Everything, including one's self, was built here by a team of very skilled engineers. The first possibility provides comfort to millions of people, whereas the second may only provide comfort to a few of cult-like Silicon Valley techno-futurists. Nevertheless, in either scenario, the question inevitably stems: how is it feasible that ultimate freedom persists? For at least a few thousand years, philosophers have been troubled by the notion that choice is an illusion. Owing to the existential, the fundamental danger is not that mankind has too little power. But, humans have so much power that they have complete freedom. existence of sentient creatures who emerged uninvitedly and by chance in the cosmos and can only select for themselves what type and

orientation their life will assume. This was Jean-Paul Sartre's early viewpoint. "We are alone, without excuse," he famously stated in his 1946 article *Existentialism is a Humanism*, "and that's what I mean when I say that man is condemned to be free" (5). Without any gods, demons, or software programmers to blame for his conduct, or any preset way to proceed one may follow, each man bears the whole burden of accountability for his lives and judgments.

When the need for meaning meets the lack of meaning, it is difficult for life to have a meaning; this is what it would feel like if a Nihilist meets an Existentialist. For the purpose of the current study, a new branch is proposed in the current paper. For this scenario, Kurzgesagt, a renowned YouTube channel proposes an antidote: "Optimistic Nihilism," an ethos that supposes true freedom in the cusp of, and strictly aided by, the abject meaninglessness of reality:

Our lives are the only experiences we get to lead. It is then the only thing that counts. There are no standards in the natural world. The one and only concepts that matter are the ones we choose. If the cosmos has no function, we get to decide what it should be (Kurzgesagt 00:50-01:25).

This is essentially a paraphrasing of Sartre's statements in his *Atheistic Existentialism*, but with the additional strength of his "doctrine" that "there is no reality except in action... Man is nothing else but what he purposes, he exists only in so far as he realizes himself" (13). Humans not only get to decide their meaning, as he stated, they have to do so or otherwise one cannot claim to exist to begin with. The movement of existential philosophy has had a great influence on the world of art, especially from its unprecedented roots in the nineteenth century. To commence, there was the novel, followed by the silver screen. Several existential philosophers have proposed that literature is uniquely equipped to communicate the contents of their rationale. Few writers have received as much acclaim as Fyodor Dostoyevsky, who dramatises his existential views in the figure of Ivan Karamazov, which constitute the backbone of the Grand Inquisitor scenario in *The Brothers Karamazov*. Franz Kafka's works have long been associated with twentieth-century nihilism as well as existential crisis. Kafka's *The Bucket Rider* is almost surrealistic in its intricacies, and almost existentialist in its depiction of a frozen world in which human volition plays little or no role. Albert Camus' work *The Stranger* is the apex of modern existentialist literature. The drama *Waiting for Godot* by Samuel Beckett is also associated with existentialism and nihilism. Shakespeare worked more than 200 years prior to the actual existentialists, yet there isn't a unitary concept that hasn't got at least a transitory appearance in his work. His literary works include *Hamlet* and *King Lear*, which foreshadow key existential notions.

Rick and Morty is a graphic novel series created by Zac Gorman and distributed by Oni Press on April 1, 2015. *Rick and Morty* demonstrate the existential pain of cosmic nightmare, philosophical concerns heightened in existential crises. Not to mention the devastated politics founded in the utter dismal multi-universes, as well as the urge to scoff at humanity's misery. Every issue has both a primary storyline (generally untitled) and a back-up comic. The initial two volumes of the comic book feature Rick and Morty from a different dimension than their television counterparts (Dimension C-132), in order to alleviate concerns about consistency with the original show and offer the creators greater flexibility. From

the third book on, the series shifted its focus to depicting the off-screen explorations of the television series' Rick and Morty, with the incidents of specific episodes being explicitly cited and the activities of comic arc "A Tale of Two Jerries" being linked in *Tales From the Citadel* with a connection to Doofus Jerry. The comic series came to an end on March 25, 2020, with the publication of the 60th issue.

The graphic adult comic covers a variety of sociocultural, psychological, intellectual, and political themes in astonishing, insightful, and profound methods through bizarre narratives, along with countless crude humour and other fairly ludicrous clichés. The series depicts Rick, an egotistical genius and alcoholic scientist who asserts, "I invent, transform, create, and destroy for a living, and when I don't like something about the world, I change it," and his emotionally stunted grandson Morty, who functions as Rick's companion since, as per Rick, "the best way to hide from an enemy's radar is to stand near someone with complementary brainwaves that make ours invisible – because, Morty, you're as dumb as I am smart!" (Starks et al. 54). Ergo, the partnership of the protagonists doesn't even come close to describing any classical heroism, while most of their adventures are purposefully undertaken to evoke neither elevated lessons nor characters' plot points. Instead, the entire collection is meant to be unabashedly dark and comic, insightful and irrational. To play in absurd ways with such dilemmas, which are meant to portray the varied character of human existence, is the core of *Rick and Morty*.

Nietzsche's philosophical-literary masterwork *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* is chosen in conjunction with *Rick and Morty* and discussed in the second chapter. With this book, Nietzsche reaches the pinnacle of his aspirations to conduct logic as artwork, to produce an "artistic-Socrates," as he had stated previously in *The Birth of Tragedy* (41). Nietzsche explores his most essential concepts in this literature, though he does it by immersing them in a fictitious narrative. Thus, readers have the most vivid embodiment of his notion of expressing philosophy as fiction in this work. Nietzsche names the principal figure after the founding father of Zoroastrianism, a historic Persian religion. Nietzsche traces the vanity of Western civilization back to the Persian messiah. He was the first to portray the entire cosmos as a battle between right and wrong spirits. There is also the first appearance of a final judgment day at the culmination of culture, when the good will be rewarded with eternal salvation. Nietzsche summons Zarathustra to atone for his mistakes by delivering a new instruction. The majority of Nietzsche's manuscript's meaning is derived from Zoroastrianism. The representations of the judgement day are extremely noteworthy. At the end of the days, all people must traverse a small bridge across a great pit. Those who pursue the wicked, God casts them into the chasm, whilst those who embrace the perfect holiness cross over and live forever. Nietzsche uses the image of a risky trip across an abyss throughout the tale, but it serves an entirely different function. Three key, extensively debated, and sometimes misunderstood Nietzschean concepts are revealed while the drama *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* progresses. Zarathustra's first instruction is the concept of the overman or superman ('*ubermensch*'). Often misidentified as a superhero, Nietzsche's '*ubermensch*' is concerned with the sustained growth of humanity.

According to Nietzsche, society is currently confronting an extraordinary crisis that will need a metamorphosis or transformation of species. Nietzsche envisions intellectual rather than physical growth. It will necessitate a rethinking of the whole Western intellectual heritage, as well as an entirely new outlook on life. The drive to power is the second Nietzschean concept expressed in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. This immensely difficult topic is commonly misconstrued as a desire for dominance. According to Nietzsche, the drive to power is not something that one gets to select not to have more, but rather a property of everything that lives. The question is whether or not or if one should have a thirst for self-preservation, but rather what kind or degree of desire for power one possesses. Humankind's progress will include a shift from will to power, which will be explored in chapter three, culminating in the solution of "optimistic nihilism."

The third concept introduced by Zarathustra is the idea of eternal recurrence. The concept is so peculiar that some Nietzsche interpreters dismiss it entirely, but the major drama of what Nietzsche considered his most significant book revolves around Zarathustra's attempt to summon this terrible thought from the depths. The notion is introduced in the penultimate section (341) of book four of *The Gay Science*. The last section (342) of book four of *The Gay Science* is the starting point of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*; book five of *The Gay Science* was authored after Zarathustra. The centrality of this notion in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* is suggested by the positioning of this crucial section explaining the idea of eternal recurrence immediately before the commencement of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. Suffixed as a headline to aphorism 342 of *The Gay Science* are the words "Incipit tragoedia" ("the tragedy begins"). This would appear to imply that Nietzsche thought *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* to be a tragedy. The novel lacks the framework of a typical Greek tragedy. However, it may hope to secure what Nietzsche considered to be the highest purpose of tragedy, viewer transmutation. The book's central theme, as described in Zarathustra's first public speech after descending from his hillside grotto, is humanity's mutation or constant progress. The text's plot also includes Zarathustra's personal struggle and transformation. This transition in the text's audience is the text's intention, and what renders it a tragedy for Nietzsche. The nodal plane of peaceful existence is proved in the final chapter, to conclude the research with an altruistic intention.

Nihilism and Existentialism in Rick and Morty

Rick and Morty, the vastly lucrative, adult illustrated comic series on the Oni Press publisher, puts an emphasis on the trauma of existence despite being a comedy. The show revolves around Rick, a scientist who possesses the advanced technologies for interdimensional transit and is regularly alluded to as "the smartest man in the universe." Upon having abandoned his daughter for twenty years, Rick comes back just to drag Morty, his teenage grandson, forward along his interplanetary and interdimensional expeditions. Rick disciplines his grandson to a slew of stressful circumstances, hampered by his addictive disorders to alcohol, drugs, and sex; battling depression, PTSD, and suicidal thoughts; and incorporating a defiant, blatant disregard for Morty's well-being. Although why Rick did not visit his family for two decades is unclear in the beginning, his sudden appearance through portal gun can be alluded to the Zarathustra climbing down his (literal and metaphorical) mountain:

Behold, I am weary of my wisdom, like a bee that has gathered too much honey; I need hands outstretched to receive it. I would give away and distribute, until the wise among men find joy once again in their folly, and the poor in their riches. For that I must descend to the depths, as you do in the evening when you go behind the sea and still bring light to the underworld, you overrich star (the Sun) (Nietzsche 8).

Clearly, both Zarathustra and Nietzsche's times have long gone by, hence their pale counterpart Rick descends to his home to impart cosmic knowledge to his people. Meanwhile, young Morty strives hard to maintain his sanity and cope psychologically with his circumstances, which alternate frantically between his awful travels with Rick and the mundane routines of home and schoolwork. Morty's family, which contains his mother Beth, father Jerry, and sister Summer, becomes increasingly involved in Rick's adventures, leading in a near-constant struggle in a family with an extremely strained interpersonal chemistry.

The research focuses on the comic's core philosophical theme: the cosmic challenges of nihilism. This epochal convergence leads the paper to a significant compositional contrast that runs throughout the show: Rick's nihilistic attitude versus Jerry's (Morty's father) life and demeanour. This exemplifies what Erich Fromm illustrated in his *Escape from Freedom*: "automatons who live under the illusion of being self-willing individuals" (3). While Jerry resembles the prevalent disillusioned and downtrodden working-class individual, Rick represents the existential nihilist who, having realised the system's inherent weaknesses, chooses to espouse the meaninglessness of life. Free market economics benefits in some ways from both, though to varying degrees and in different ways, and optimism is more revered despite the obviousness of existential crises. Rick's opinion about popular institutions of the society shows this side of the comic:

Rick: School is a waste of time – a bunch of people running around, bumping into each other. Guy up front says, "two plus two." The people in the back say, "four." Then the bell rings, and they give you a carton of milk and a piece of paper that says you can go take a dump or something. I mean, it's not a place for smart people, Jerry, and I know that's not a popular opinion, but it's my two cents on the issue (Starks 24).

Morty Smith, an outwardly dim-witted high schooler, and his maternal grandpa Rick Sanchez, a remarkable physicist and troubled alcoholic, are the text's title protagonists. Rick's incessant creations potentially make him into what Sigmund Freud once described as a "bionic deity" (Freud 50). He can even resurrect after being killed (Starks 202). Rick arises dangerously close to confirming himself a divine being. During a scuffle with the president of the United States, a representative of the White House staff advises the president to remain firm because Rick is "not a god." "You don't know what I am, and you don't know what I can do," Rick responds (Starks 121). Morty emphasises the point even further, declaring Rick to be "like a demon or a super messed-up god" (122). Morty's breakthroughs and sporadic actions bear striking resemblance to Nietzsche's Zarathustra.

Zarathustra relinquishes his mountain abode to return to the human world. He incites a prophecy to quicken the arrival of something akin to a new "attempt" on the part of humanity (Nietzsche 4). Zarathustra's "overman" or "Übermensch" zest is the same objective that Rick bears in mind; the solution of ascending mundane human existence is sought throughout *Rick and Morty*. One such project would

be devoid of the psychosocial components that have contributed to the plight of the rest of humanity. Existential dread is exacerbated when man fails to recognise that a problem has happened or that any fresh initiative is required. Morty is often shown as oblivious to the pointlessness or nihilism of existence. Rick as an educator, though not exactly as Zarathustra operates. He is not enlightened but is somewhere closer to *Übermensch*.

The transformation of the overman is an evolutionary process; the ideal man emerges as part of the historical progression of one species to the next. Rick wants Morty to cure the cosmic existential horror by counterbalancing his nihilism with the latter's ignorant optimism. In this light, Morty can be considered as a subject of evolution. As per Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, "...evolution is not a gradual development from one species to another, but takes place in steps. If the conditions within one species are such that an evolutionary step can take place, various couples at the same time give birth to members of a new species" (147). The individuals who bore the overhuman must have characteristics that Nietzsche would associate with bigger humanity. These 'greater humans' are still mortal, but they have some particular abilities that an overhuman may also have. Overmen are derived from superior men, human species champions with particular skills that extend beyond the natural bounds of humanity. In contrast, a superior man is not an overman. Even if some of the higher man's talents are greater to those of regular humans, his power does not differ greatly than that of individual people. Furthermore, the superior man is still struggling to overcome himself. Whilst overman marks the pinnacle of man's development, the higher man is simply a step on the path.

Friedrich Nietzsche reflects on the qualities of a true "educator" in his essay *Schopenhauer as Educator* – one who is truthful and effective in his project of developing his students into inventive independent thinkers. Although there are numerous quotable passages in the text the following paragraph best summarises his ideas on mainstream academic education. It is significant to mention that Nietzsche supposes that the "true educator" is interchangeable with the "true philosopher" (41):

It is of course clear why our academic thinkers are not dangerous; for their thoughts grow as peacefully out of tradition as any tree ever bore its apples; they cause no alarm; they remove nothing from its hinges; and of all their art and aims there could be said what Diogenes said when someone praised a philosopher in his presence: 'How can he be considered great, since he has been a philosopher for so long and has never disturbed anyone?' That, indeed, ought to be the epitaph of university philosophy: 'It has disturbed nobody' (Nietzsche 4).

There is no pretence of internal consistency or even scientific verisimilitude in the show. Some events of the comic openly feature supernatural beings. The fourth and first comic issues feature dragons and the devil respectively. Nonetheless, the show does not fit into the fantasy genre. Both of the previously stated incidences portray Rick as a scientist against the supernatural, and science instantly demonstrates to be more powerful than magic. This can allude to Zarathustra's claim of "God is dead" (Nietzsche 24). Furthermore, the show frequently makes references to physics. The portal gun used by the characters to explore alternate

universes is based on the “many worlds” exegesis of quantum mechanics (Starks 5).

Rick is indeed successful in upsetting Morty in the traditional sense. In the episode “Morty’s Mind Blowers,” we see a medley of numerous past events in which Rick critically bothers Morty – to the juncture where Morty’s brain must be wiped clean (Gilfor and Swim 2). This, however, is not the type of ‘disturbed’ that Nietzsche praises in teaching. After all, tension and trauma are not conducive to good learning. The remainder of the other segments in the story arc Rick succeeding in ‘unnerving’ Morty in the manner that we desire. This not only pushes Morty beyond his personal bubble, but also provides him with opportunities for progress. In the pilot episode, Rick openly mentions that this is his aim as a possible conclusion of all their missions:

Morty: Oh, man, Rick. I’m looking around this place, and I’m starting to work up some anxiety about this whole thing. Rick: All right, all right, calm down. Listen to me, Morty. I know that new situations can be intimidating. You’re looking around, and it’s all scary and different, but, you know, meeting them head on, charging right into them like a bull that’s how we grow as people. I’m no newcomer to frightening circumstances. I’m always dealing with them. Now, Morty, if you just stay with me, we’ll probably be fine... (Starks 5).

Existentialism has always attempted to find meaning in a disheartened universe. Some modern scholars now refer to themselves as “neuro-existentialists” (Flanagan and Caruso 1). These philosophers are concerned with the threat to life’s meaning posed by science, particularly neurobiology. The more we learn about our brains and how our mental lives are encrypted in them, the more we appear to be confusing animals. We begin to see ourselves as biological robots rather than the free, laudable and prudent beings we once believed we were. As Rick evocatively says, “Listen, Morty, I hate to break it to you, but what people call ‘love’ is just a chemical reaction that compels animals to breed. It hits hard, Morty, then it slowly fades, leaving you stranded in a failing marriage” (Starks 141). From an exclusively scientific standpoint, there appears to be no position for value systems and meaning that go far above the necessities of a life form.

Nietzsche believes that in order for an instructor to do their job effectively, they must have a high moral fibre, understanding of human nature, an absence of fanaticism and nationalism, no reliance on scholarly or state agencies, and no private interests in anything other than the truth – or, as Nietzsche puts it in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, “in short, freedom and again freedom” (182). Rick is certainly free of physical and social constraints. Using his ‘portal gun,’ he can freely traverse interstellar space. This allows him to violate tradition or even disobey the law without repercussions. He is not dogmatic nor patriotic, even if he does smash the President of the United States in the graphic issue “The Rickchurian Mortydate” (Starks 311). He is not reliant on any establishment, academic or otherwise, because of his ethically dubious sources of revenue.

Nietzsche obviously requires the types of external freedom mentioned above for educators. However, there appears to be a greater emphasis on inward freedom. Psychological hang-ups or distress cannot exist in educators; unresolved problems prevent the educator from verbalising their thoughts and formulating,

sensible choices about how to function. They must be an epitome, as Nietzsche says it: “how can your life, the individual life, receive the highest value, the deepest significance? How can it be least squandered? Certainly, only by your living for the good of the rarest and most valuable exemplars” (p. 162). Rick, alas, has a multitude of troubles. For every attractive trait, he possesses a number of character defects that express in self-destructive attitude. However, as the series goes, Rick would most likely come into his own as an authentic educator. Rick addresses his deepest fears and berates his emotional problems with various degrees of success (e.g., “Auto Erotic Assimilation,” “Big Trouble in Little Sanchez,” “Pickle Rick,” “Rest and Ricklaxation”) (Gilfor and Swim 12, 50, 100 and 213). The fact stands that Rick is more effective at enlightening Morty than traditional academic formal schooling because of his competency to ‘disturb’ Morty in the way that Nietzsche values.

The dispute between the scholarly image and the perceived image is explored in two ways in *Rick and Morty*. Rick can be attributed to pessimistic nihilism whereas Morty aligns himself with optimistic existentialism. While challenged with the known universe’s inherent nihilism, neuro-existentialism contends that we must seek our own meaning in life. Like Camus, neuro-absurdism accepts that there is no meaning to be had. Rick’s search for Szechuan sauce exemplifies the absurdist strain. It’s completely absurd to go through all of this trouble for a pack of chicken nugget sauce. It reminds the reader of Sisyphus, who rolls his boulder up a hill day after day only to see it tumble down. And yet, if the existentialist philosophy is valid, the world and life are both irrational. The existentialist force is most visible in storylines where Rick endorses his family and sees intrinsic worth with them, where he appears to ultimately value something as meaningful.

The statement is from “Rixty Minutes,” the eleventh comic issue story. Summer Smith, Morty’s sister, is packing to go after discovering that she was a “mistake” by her parents; her mother considered aborting her. Morty attempts to talk her out of leaving by revealing a dramatic secret: he isn’t essentially her biological brother. He’s apparently a Morty from one of the infinite multiverses. Rick and Morty accidentally unleashed an apocalypse that destroyed their world, and because Rick and Morty in the newly travelled version of the planet perished in an accident, they merely took their places. Morty gives the quote at this point. His words align with Zarathustra’s take on how humanity view the sick and dead: “They come upon a sick person, an elderly person, or a corpse and immediately proclaim, “Life is disproved!” But only they and their sight, which perceive just one face of life, are contradicted” (Nietzsche 57).

Morty is terrified if not concerned of his origin or the existential root and about his ‘real’ parents (who are doomed to exist in a post-apocalyptic world): “Morty: ‘But what about the reality we’ve left behind?’ Rick: ‘The answer is, “Don’t think about it”” (Gilfor and Swim 9). The traumatic events themselves do not harm existence but their memory does. Life may be traumatic, which is why humans always seek purpose in their lives. People want to feel important in the great scheme of things, and they want their existence to mean something. Unfortunately, people don’t truly consider if the world, or existence in general, is designed to be meaningful. Humans yearn for importance in a cosmos that, in the

end, doesn't bother if humanity exist or not. The fact remains that we're alive is bound to offer meaning to our existence due to the obvious fact that we are already here. We would like to make the most of our lives, but perhaps the greatest way to do so is to just embrace them. Looking up at the sky and praying even with the empirical awareness that science has proven that nobody is there, if not deafening darkness ridiculing the concept of 'up and down', is treated by Zarathustra as: "Dead are all gods: now we want the overman to live' – on that great noon, let this be our last will. Thus spoke Zarathustra" (Nietzsche 105).

Conclusion

Rick and Morty showcase an optimistic approach to existence and purpose that is quite similar to Nietzsche's and other existentialists' critique of the cosmology of presence. We can't make an unequivocal, certain choice about which of the character's counterparts is the 'original ones.' At the pinnacle of optimistic nihilism, the concept of a singular origin becomes meaningless, because everything may be duplicated, reduced, recreated, or deleted ad infinitum. And yet, Rick and Morty offers a ray of hope for humanity, demonstrating that the search for meaning and purpose may continue, albeit in manners we have yet to invent or adapt. We began our study by introducing the primary characters and story elements of the series before moving on to demonstrate specific topics that Rick and Morty brought to light. We classified unique challenges regarding individuality, repetition, replaceability, the relationship between humans, aliens, humanoids, and machines, and the struggle for purpose and identity in an age of technology using writings on the philosophy of nihilism and cosmic existence.

We mostly referred to material that was skeptical of the optimistic nihilistic attitude during our discourse. The present research coincided with what the show was essentially angling for. Rick and Morty portrays science and scientific nullification of human feelings as a source of liberation, progression, and progress, as well as a source of risk, meaning loss, failure, and danger. More research and scrutiny are required to create a case for or against the growing impact of automation in everyday life. We sought to demonstrate that Rick and Morty represents distinct stages of man as depicted in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* by using numerous instances from different comic issues of the story. Zarathustra's announcement of the death of God has an inherent functional value for anybody who perceives it as a reality and then proceeds to articulate his doctrine. When God's death is acknowledged and cherished, all emphasis shifts away from life and reason. In Rick's case, he insists Morty to choose science over family and feelings. In neither substance nor form, logic can depict a pyramid extending from the depths to the One, or a transcendental sphere of truth. If logic can be refocused in the aftermath of God's death, it must be on a planetary level, an objective of natural excellence that does not demand supernature. And, since the true essence of meaning cannot be stated to be contained in a single individual, then a complete philosophy in architectural form is ruled out on concept. Even Zarathustra's overman concept must be a minuscule truth under a tremendous dome of ignorance.

As a result, Rick's experimental knowledge is inherently objective but also substantially impersonal, eliminating the scientist from the picture in a bid to

hunt for the ever-elusive solution in order to confirm or reject their theory in the most reasonable way conceivable. Rick is a genuine scientist, but he is susceptible to assessing all principles to be unjustified through the lens of moral nihilism and thus will rationalise and purport away anything he possibly can. This includes things beyond jurisdiction of science, moving closer to overcome conservative values such as axioms and emotions to approach the ultimate reality in his typical cynical and aggrieved manner. Take, for example, William Faulkner's contention that the most primal and powerful of human urges, love itself, is achieved not because of but rather despite our flaws. Rick's argument that emotions are chemical reactions is true and this suggests the nihilistic bleak reality of life. Regardless, Zarathustra and bouts of affectionate behaviour from Rick's part reveal the necessity of human ethos and empathy.

The comic's existentialism is heightened by the mix of technology and nihilistic decisions of Rick. In demonstrating the idea of existentialism, Justin Roiland and Dan Harmon the creators of the comic, has a special and distinct style in which they use absurdist law defying narratives and heaps of comic relief embellished with a profound truth about existence. The absurdity and uncertainties are mirrored in the characters judgements at most points; their adventures value the present more than anything. The comic is also an excellent study about the evolution of American society. Besides the existential struggle for identity and the purpose of life, the comic delves into a wide range of contemporary social and cultural topics. The state of consumerism culture is a crucial component in demonstrating the notion of existentialism in the narrative, as each individual faces the obstacles and issues imposed by their culture and society. Rick's escapades give meaning to the show which channels on the ironical lack of meaning.

Based on the overall analysis, *Rick and Morty* is based on the existential premise that an individual must seek or, if feasible, create meaning in an illogical reality. These concerns raise the question of whether or not we should conform to cultural, societal and physical standards. And it will also inspire us to be more conscientious in interpreting our own existence and the essence of our lives. Optimistic nihilism proposes that the lack of meaning of life means something divine – that of superman attribute: one gets to make a meaning. Those who sulks in the lack of meaning become part of Zarathustra's last men and fail to reach their full potential. Man, always has a choice to be good or evil; make a choice or yield to fate, like countless evil versions of Rick and Morty or persons like Simple Rick.

The comic builds a world that is both familiar and alien to us, instilling feelings of familiarity and uncertainty about various situations. In any case, the story provides evidence to the remarkable shift that has occurred in the previous century. Existence is pain if one obsesses over the meaning of it or the lack of meaning. Because life has no objective meaning, individuals may give it any interpretation they wish. Life is essentially a massive white palette, and individuals are the artist. Although an individual is not allowed pick how they want to sketch it – to select where, why, what, or when of existence – they can choose how they lives, like Rick did. In short, existence becomes a choice if one wills it.

Furthermore, the appeal of such nihilistic beliefs reveals a dissatisfied and pessimistic audience. As in the Romantic era, audiences embrace such post-modern, gloomy, and bizarre drama to escape from an unsatisfying world. The programme depicts a chaotic reality in which the world is full of useless and unreasonable problems, such as those depicted and satirised in the series: war, governmental issues, inequality, the educational system, and the list just goes on for ever. Readers can laugh along with Rick at the folly of xenophobia, as seen in the previously mentioned episodes, or at the incessant mockery of the United States government in a reality in which nothing truly matters. When the agony of existence reaches its apex, facing reality, that nothing matters, can truly save man. Once someone has crossed the dreadful boundary of accepting this, every destination becomes the centre of the universe, every hour becomes the most historic stage, and everything constitutes the meaning of life. To be sure, this is a topic for another day. But, in the meanwhile, it seems appropriate to end with some sage advice from the book itself. Rick answers to Morty's question about the meaning of life: "Don't think about it."

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