

NIETZSCHE AND DELEUZE: ON THE OVERMAN, THE NOMAD  
AND THE ETERNAL RECURRENCE

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## ABSTRACT

Nietzsche and Deleuze: On the Overman, the Nomad  
and the Eternal Recurrence

Cari Burchat

Gilles Deleuze claims that understanding the eternal recurrence as a recurrence of the same is a misreading of Friedrich Nietzsche, yet, this assertion is not supported by Nietzsche's texts. In all instances where Nietzsche describes the eternal recurrence, he emphasizes that it is one of the same events. One's willingness to love one's fate and to will the eternal recurrence of the same represents the psychological state of the Overman and his achievement of joyousness. However, this is at odds with Deleuze and Felix Guattari's conception of the nomad.

Consequently, the nomad and the Overman are not congruous at all. Rather, the nomad is Nietzsche's lion. The eternal return of the different then describes the psychological state of the lion as a precursor to the psychological state of the Overman.

The lion cannot will the eternal recurrence of the same; he must will the eternal recurrence of the different. When the lion becomes the child, he has the psychological perspective within which to will the eternal recurrence of the same. It is in this sense that Nietzsche and Deleuze's versions of the eternal recurrence are not antithetical – they are complementary and represent a progression of psychological thought.

**Keywords:** Overman; Nomad; Nietzsche; Deleuze; Eternal Recurrence; Eternal Return; Zarathustra; Psychology of the Overman; Psychology of the Nomad; Perspectivism; On the Three Metamorphoses; Difference; Nihilism; Will to Power;

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## Table of Contents

ABSTRACT.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iii
INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER 1: On <i>Nomads</i> and <i>Overmen</i> .....	10
<i>Overmen and Nietzsche's Spirit of the Child</i> .....	11
<i>Nomads and Nietzsche's Spirit of the Lion</i> .....	17
CHAPTER 2: On Nietzsche's <i>Eternal Recurrence of the Same</i> .....	35
<i>Is the Eternal Recurrence a Metaphysical Doctrine or a Psychological Test?</i> .....	44
CHAPTER 3: On Deleuze's <i>Eternal Recurrence of the Different</i> .....	57
<i>Forces and the Will to Power</i> .....	57
<i>Nihilism</i> .....	59
<i>The Eternal Return</i> .....	61
<i>Criticisms of Deleuze's Eternal Return of the Different</i> .....	64
CHAPTER 4: <i>Perspectivism and the Eternal Recurrence</i> .....	90
<i>The Overman's Perspective on the Eternal Recurrence</i> .....	93
<i>The Nomad's Perspective on the Eternal Recurrence</i> .....	97
CONCLUSIONS.....	104
APPENDICES.....	108
Appendix A.....	108
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	109
INDEX.....	113

## INTRODUCTION

*“I have always felt that I am an empiricist, that is, a pluralist. But what does this equivalence between empiricism and pluralism mean? It derives from the two characteristics by which Whitehead defined empiricism: the abstract does not explain, but must itself be explained; and the aim is not to rediscover the eternal or the universal, but to find the conditions under which something new is produced (creativity).”<sup>1</sup>*  
 - Gilles Deleuze

Over the last few years I have devoted quite some effort to understanding Gilles Deleuze’s arguments concerning freedom and how one becomes-becoming a nomad. In my most recent work, I had concluded that the nomad must be, in some way, a balance between what I considered to be intuitive or peasant philosophy and science, as I would call them, and reasoned or royal philosophy and science, as Deleuze would call them.<sup>2</sup>

My reasoning for this was that a philosophy or science premised on intuition alone may lead to conclusions that have no basis in Deleuze’s actual world; there are no quantitative facts only infinite qualitative possibilities.<sup>3</sup> In one sense this may be freeing in that we are no longer bound by convention or structure,<sup>4</sup> but in another sense, for some, this may also be a slippery-slope towards nihilism or relativism.<sup>5</sup> As a result, we may become ignorant and under the influence of illusion. For what I take to be obvious reasons, this ignorant and illusory life is not a life lived freely nor joyously.

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<sup>1</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), p. vii.

<sup>2</sup> Cari Burchat, “Revisiting Delanda,” (TCPS 5502H Term Paper, Trent University, 2014), p. 16-19.

<sup>3</sup> Burchat, p. 12-16.

<sup>4</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Will to Power*, trans. Walter Kaufmann and RJ Hollingdale, (New York: Vintage Books, 1968), p. 544.

<sup>5</sup> Nietzsche, *Will to Power*, p. 12-18

On the other hand, philosophy and science based on reason alone may lead to conclusions devoid of qualitative reflection such that explanations are sterile<sup>6</sup> and clinical;<sup>7</sup> there are only quantitative facts and finite possibilities.<sup>8</sup> This too may lead to a different kind of ignorant and illusory life. Imagine the austere social interactions that would take place in a world with only quantitative facts. Consequently, this life is not a life lived freely either.

Of course, there are times when it might be relevant to consider one path more appropriate than the other depending on the context, but to arbitrarily choose one path and entirely exclude the other, according to my reasoning, is to only see one side of the story. It is to lose perspective. Neither of these lives to the exclusion of the other is a life lived freely nor are they joyous lives in the Nietzschean sense.<sup>9</sup>

It was this assumption that led me to conclude that I think the way to make sense of a seeming inconsistency in the definitions of multiplicity in Deleuze's *Difference and Repetition* and Deleuze and Felix Guattari's *Nomadology: The War Machine* when contrasted with Deleuze and Guattari's *What is Philosophy?*, is to understand the nomad as a balancing between intuition and reason.<sup>10</sup> That is, in Nietzschean terms, to understand the nomad as analogous to the Overman balancing between the influences of Apollo (reason) and Dionysus (intuition).

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<sup>6</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, "Thus Spoke Zarathustra: A Book For All Or None," in *The Portable Nietzsche*, by W. Kaufmann, translated by W. Kaufmann, (New York: Penguin Books, 1982), p. 232.

<sup>7</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, "The Birth of Tragedy," in *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, trans. Walter Kaufmann, (New York: Random House, Inc., 2000), p. 42-43.

<sup>8</sup> Burchat, p. 12-16.

<sup>9</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, "Ecce Homo," in *On the Genealogy of Morals and Ecce Homo*, trans. Walter Kaufmann, (New York: Random House, Inc., 1967), p. 283.

<sup>10</sup> Burchat, p. 17-19.

Similarly, although Friedrich Nietzsche may have admonished metaphysics,<sup>11</sup> I had also assumed that, since Deleuze's metaphysics is an attempt at theorizing the space of the nomad, it must also be an attempt at theorizing the space of the Overman. That is, the space of the nomad and the space of the Overman were, I thought, analogous spaces.

My inspiration for making this argument then was a fundamental assumption that Deleuze had the intention of theorizing the nomad along lines consistent with Nietzsche's Overman. That is, I had been reading Deleuze through the lens of Nietzsche. Although I do not think that this is an errant way to read Deleuze, I do think that my lens, at the time, was not focussed properly.

It was after returning to a study of Nietzsche in the summer of 2014, that I began to have serious suspicions about these assumptions. After reading "On the Three Metamorphoses," in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, my suspicions were confirmed. Here, according to Nietzsche, there are three kinds of human spirit: the spirit of the camel; the spirit of the lion; and the spirit of the child<sup>12</sup>.

With this in mind, the goal of this thesis is to show that Deleuze's philosophical understanding of the nomad and the eternal return of the different does not "invert" or supplant Nietzsche's understanding of the Overman and the eternal recurrence of the same, but rather provides a more robust understanding of Nietzsche's lion and master.

To do this, given reasons that I will discuss more fully in Chapter 1, I will argue that Nietzsche's Overman and Deleuze's nomad are not in fact analogous. One reason being that, for Nietzsche, the Overman possesses the spirit of the YES-saying child.<sup>13</sup> It

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<sup>11</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human*, trans. RJ Hollingdale, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 15-16.

<sup>12</sup> Nietzsche, *Zarathustra*, p. 137.

<sup>13</sup> Nietzsche, *Zarathustra*, p. 137.



appears then that if the Overman is the balance between Apollonian (reason) and Dionysian (intuition) influences and possesses the spirit of the YES-saying child,<sup>14</sup> then the nomad is Nietzsche's earlier conception of Dionysus who possesses the NO-saying spirit of the lion.<sup>15</sup> This is evidenced by the lion-like qualities of those Deleuze acknowledges as being nomads – Indra for example.<sup>16</sup>

After all, as Deleuze indicates in the quote at the beginning of this introduction, his project was "...to find the conditions under which something new is produced (creativity)." <sup>17</sup> That is, Deleuze maintains that his philosophy is an attempt at discovering how one might overcome the production of sameness to produce the different. According to Nietzsche, the lion is the creator of the conditions needed to produce the different.<sup>18</sup>

At this point, it seems important to note that Nietzsche's concept of Dionysus evolves throughout the course of his writing. Initially, Nietzsche borrows his concept of Dionysus from Greek tragedy. That is, in Nietzsche's earlier work, the spirit of Dionysus represents an unbridled spirit of excess<sup>19</sup> - he is passionate and chaotic. On the other hand, the spirit of Apollo represents the spirit of restraint and discipline.

In his later works, however, Nietzsche begins to argue that the spirit of Dionysus is the optimal balance between Apollonian and Dionysian influences. According to

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<sup>14</sup> Nietzsche, Zarathustra, p. 139.

<sup>15</sup> Nietzsche, Zarathustra, p. 138-139.

<sup>16</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Nomadology: The War Machine*, trans. Brian Massumi, (Seattle: Wormwood Distribution, 2010), p. 4.

<sup>17</sup> Deleuze, Gilles and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues*, p. vii.

<sup>18</sup> Nietzsche, Zarathustra, p. 139.

<sup>19</sup> Peter Gay, introduction to *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, trans. Walter Kaufmann, (New York: Random House, Inc., 2000), p. 29.

Nietzsche's later work then, Dionysus is the name given to the spirit of discerning creation.<sup>20</sup>

For clarity sake, I will not use Nietzsche's incorporated form of Dionysus and instead maintain his distinction between Dionysus and Apollo. Therefore, where Nietzsche refers to a rational and restrained spirit, I will refer to this as the spirit of Apollo; where he refers to an unbridled, passionate and chaotic spirit, I will refer to this as the spirit of Dionysus; and where he refers to the Dionysian spirit in his later work, I will refer to this as the optimal balancing of Apollo and Dionysus. Consequently, the one who possesses a spirit that is the optimal balance of Apollo and Dionysus will be referred to as the discerning creator.

In this regard, in Chapter 2, I will discuss Nietzsche's development of Dionysus and explain how this differs from Deleuze's conception of the same concept as it relates to the lion and the nomad. I will also show that Deleuze, in so far as he refers to the Dionysian spirit of the nomad, means something more akin to Nietzsche's earlier Dionysus in *Zarathustra* and *The Birth of Tragedy* than the Dionysus (balancing of Apollo and Dionysus) that appears later in *Beyond Good and Evil*. To show this, I will compare the characteristics of Deleuze's nomad (nomadic art in particular) to the characteristics of both of Nietzsche's conceptions of Dionysus. Consequently, I will argue, the Dionysian spirit of the nomad, as exemplified in art, is the unrestrained Dionysus of Nietzsche's earlier work rather than the discerning creator that appears in Nietzsche's later work.

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<sup>20</sup> Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1966), p. 233-236.

Further, I will show that the fundamental aspect of the Overman's being – the ability to say “yes” to everything in life<sup>21</sup> – reaches its optimum level when he *wills* the eternal recurrence of the same.<sup>22</sup> I will argue that one of the concerns underlying most of Nietzsche's work is how to live a joyous life of your own creation. This requires creating our own values<sup>23</sup> through balancing the influences of Dionysus and Apollo<sup>24</sup> such that we are able to free ourselves from our habit forming notions of resentment, bad conscience and the aesthetic ideal.<sup>25</sup>

Therefore, I will argue that *willing* the eternal recurrence of the same is a sort of psychological test of how joyous our lives are in actuality.<sup>26</sup> It is also an indication of how well disposed we are to ourselves and whether or not we love our fate. If one would will the eternal return of the same, then one is free and is living a joyous life. To will the different would be to express some sort of dissatisfaction with life; meaning that one is not free in some sense and is not living joyously.

However, that is not to say that Deleuze's move to the eternal recurrence of the different is necessarily in conflict with Nietzsche. That is, although it appears that Deleuze and Nietzsche are in conflict when considering the eternal recurrence, it may be possible to understand both versions as complementary but, as Nietzsche might argue, different in perspective. I will argue that although Deleuze thought that Nietzsche saw

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<sup>21</sup> Nietzsche, *Zarathustra*, p. 139.

<sup>22</sup> Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, p. 258.

<sup>23</sup> Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, p. 545-546.

<sup>24</sup> Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, p. 539-540.

<sup>25</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, “On the Genealogy of Morals,” in *On the Genealogy of Morals and Ecce Homo*, trans. Walter Kaufmann, (New York: Random House, Inc., 1967), p. 95-96.

<sup>26</sup> John Nolt, “Why Nietzsche embraced eternal recurrence,” *History of European Ideas* 34, no. 2 (2008): 321-322.

his own interpretation of the eternal recurrence of the same as problematic,<sup>27</sup> it may actually be Deleuze's interpretation of Nietzsche that is problematic.

Using the work of Ashley Woodward, Paolo D'Iorio and John Nolt, I will argue that Nietzsche is not necessarily committed to the eternal recurrence in the metaphysical sense. Although, given that the fact of the eternal return of human suffering is unquestionable, he may have been justified in thinking of the eternal return this way, but, more importantly, Nietzsche seemed to envision the thought of the eternal recurrence of the same as something more akin to a psychological test of one's values or joyousness in one's life.<sup>28</sup> As Nolt argues, there is a distinction to be made between embracing an idea and believing an idea to be true.<sup>29</sup>

Consequently, I will argue that even if the eternal return has a metaphysical meaning for Nietzsche, it's importance lies in bolstering the need to recognize that the psychological aspect of the eternal recurrence is of higher value to Nietzsche since it is the solution to the problem of overcoming the eternal return of human suffering.

As well, I will suggest that the conflict between Nietzsche's eternal recurrence of the same and Deleuze's eternal recurrence of the different only exists if the nomad and the Overman are seen as analogous. Understanding the nomad as Nietzsche's lion and understanding the thought of the eternal recurrence as a psychological test while taking into account that the three metamorphoses in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* are the development of the drives through a psychological progression allows for the existence of two complementary, but distinct, variations of the eternal recurrence that depend on

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<sup>27</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche & Philosophy*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), p. xi.

<sup>28</sup> Nolt, p. 313.

<sup>29</sup> Nolt, p. 313.

perspective. In other words, the variation of the eternal return that one embraces depends on whether there are Apollonian or Dionysian influences – or both – at play; that is whether one possesses the spirit of the camel, the lion or the child.

I will argue that Deleuze's emphasis on the eternal return of the different is as a result of the lion's fondness for saying "no." That is, Deleuze's attempt to "...to find the conditions under which something new is produced (creativity),"<sup>30</sup> is successful in that the nomad asserts his right to establish something new. These conditions that allow for the creation of the new are the very conditions created by the lion – namely, the freedom to become something new.<sup>31</sup> In creating these conditions, the lion, like the nomad, must defy everything that wills it to remain a camel and thus thwarts its freedom.<sup>32</sup>

Finally, I will argue that the nomad embraces the eternal recurrence of the different precisely because he is trying to free himself from the sameness that habituation and normalization produce. That is, the nomad's concern with his present sameness is not analogous to the Overman's concern with his future sameness.

From the perspective of Deleuze's nomad then, an eternal recurrence of the same is undesirable. Having been Nietzsche's camel enslaved by programs of sameness, the nomad seeks to oppose that sameness with difference. He seeks the different because he is not living joyously and wills the eternal recurrence of the different because he **cannot** will the eternal recurrence of the same. That is, his lion spirit prevents him from willing the eternal recurrence of the same because this would mean willing an endless future of dissatisfaction with life. That is, from the nomad's perspective, he is so dissatisfied with his present that willing an eternity of the same events does not represent a joyous eternity.

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<sup>30</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, p. vii.

<sup>31</sup> Nietzsche, Zarathustra, p. 139.

<sup>32</sup> Nietzsche, Zarathustra, p. 139.

Only when the nomad's lion spirit transforms into the spirit of the child will he be able to will the eternal recurrence of the same. It is in this sense that perhaps we are able to bring Deleuze's work on nomads back into accord with Nietzsche.

As I will argue, Deleuze's work on Nietzsche and his work on nomads leads ultimately to a much more robust understanding of the precursor to the Overman. That is, perhaps Deleuze's work, in so far as it relates to Nietzsche's project, is a further fleshing out of the psychological state that many of us (those who consider themselves rebels) find ourselves situated in and perhaps it can provide us with an understanding of how we might begin the metamorphosis to the Overman.

If I am correct that this is the case, then it seems to me that we might no longer understand Deleuze's version of the eternal return of the same as an inversion of Nietzsche. Rather, what we might now say is that Deleuze has strengthened Nietzsche's project by more fully fleshing out the psychological processes that occur during the stages of metamorphosis as well as the role that the lion plays in all of this.

## CHAPTER 1: On *Nomads* and *Overmen*

In this chapter, I will explain the three spirits that Nietzsche claims are the basis of human development – the spirits of the camel, the lion and the child. I will also show how Nietzsche conceives of these spirits as an evolution of the human spirit to something he considers to be the highest exemplification of humanity; something beyond humanity – the Overman.<sup>33</sup>

According to Nietzsche then, the Overman is the highest level of human development that can be achieved.<sup>34</sup> The one who is the Overman is the one who possesses the spirit of the child;<sup>35</sup> the spirit that affirms all that life has to offer through an affirmation of the self. The Overman is the affirmer *par excellence*. He is the discerning creator who wills his own will and possesses a spirit under the optimally balanced influences of Apollo (reason) and Dionysus (intuition). He is what Zarathustra aims to become in the beginning of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*.

Given then that Deleuze is interested in discovering the conditions under which creation can take place, it could be argued that he has theorized the nomad along the lines of Nietzsche's Overman. That is, perhaps Deleuze conceives of the nomad as the discerning creator.

However, as I will argue in what follows, the nomad cannot be the discerning creator as the nomad is the one that defies everything that attempts to ensure that he

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<sup>33</sup> Nietzsche, *Zarathustra*, p. 124.

<sup>34</sup> Nietzsche, *Zarathustra*, p. 124.

<sup>35</sup> Nietzsche, *Zarathustra*, p. 139.

remain a camel.<sup>36</sup> He is Nietzsche's lion. He is Zarathustra becoming, but not yet, the Overman.

I will also argue that the nomad defies so that he may have the freedom to be-becoming his highest being, but as of yet, he is not that highest being.<sup>37</sup> He possesses the spirit of the lion and is influenced by Dionysus (intuition), but has yet to incorporate Apollonian influences (reason) into his thinking and being.

As I will argue, the nomad resists these Apollonian influences because, at the moment, they are the influences that have led to his being treated as a camel and are perceived as the source of his dissatisfaction with life and the world around him. He has overcome his camel nature to become a lion like Zarathustra in the first three parts of Nietzsche's work, but has yet to become the Overman. Although he is not yet the creator as such he does open up the space where discerning creation may take place – and in this sense, he is the creator of the conditions of creation.

### ***Overmen and Nietzsche's Spirit of the Child***

In the first of Zarathustra's speeches, "On the Three Metamorphoses," Nietzsche argues that the spiritual evolution of human beings will progress from possessing a camel nature to possessing a lion nature to possessing the nature of a child.<sup>38</sup> According to Nietzsche, this development is the progression from a reverent obedience to imposed values to an illusory will that resists these imposed values so that it may one day have the freedom to create new values of its own design.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Nomadology*, p. 99.

<sup>37</sup> Nietzsche, *Zarathustra*, p. 139.

<sup>38</sup> Nietzsche, *Zarathustra*, p. 137.

<sup>39</sup> Nietzsche, *Zarathustra*, p. 139.



The spirit of the camel, as Nietzsche understands it, is somewhat akin to a Protestant work ethic. The camel is a beast of burden that prides itself on being able to bear the heaviest load and consequently derives all of its strength from the size of load that it can bear.<sup>40</sup> It has been given this station in life and has a duty to bear whatever it is asked to bear.<sup>41</sup>

Moreover, the camel must venerate the opportunity to bear these loads victoriously.<sup>42</sup> The camel will even insist on bearing a heavier load.<sup>43</sup> After all, the more difficult the load to bear, the better one is as a camel. Thus, not only are the camel's merit and worth determined by the gratitude they have for the opportunity to bear this load but further, the camel insists that it is their duty to bear it happily. Valuing this duty to bear and exemplifying reverence for obedience are the highest of achievements for the camel. Duty and obedience are therefore of the highest value to the camel.

According to Nietzsche, one day the camel may come to recognize that these values are empty.<sup>44</sup> He will become dissatisfied with being a camel and will resist his camel spirit by transforming it into that of the defiant lion.<sup>45</sup> The camel wants one day to live according to his own will and not the will of the master, therefore he needs the spirit of the lion to overcome his subservience.<sup>46</sup> Nietzsche argues:

“ My brothers, why is there a need in the spirit for the lion? Why is not the beast of burden, which renounces and is reverent, enough? To create new values – that even the lion cannot do; but the creation of freedom for oneself for new creation – that is within the power of the lion. The creation of freedom for oneself and a sacred “No” even to duty – for that, my brothers, the lion is needed. To assume a right to

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<sup>40</sup> Nietzsche, Zarathustra, p. 138.

<sup>41</sup> Nietzsche, Zarathustra, p. 138.

<sup>42</sup> Nietzsche, Zarathustra, p. 137.

<sup>43</sup> Nietzsche, Zarathustra, p. 137.

<sup>44</sup> Nietzsche, Zarathustra, p. 138.

<sup>45</sup> Nietzsche, Zarathustra, p. 138.

<sup>46</sup> Nietzsche, Zarathustra, p. 139.

new values – that is the most terrifying assumption for a reverent spirit that would bear much . . . He once loved “thou shalt” as most sacred . . . that freedom from his love may become his prey: the lion is needed...”<sup>47</sup>

What Nietzsche is emphasizing here is the need for a defiant spirit to facilitate the camel’s overcoming of all of the things that have imposed a will of subservience upon it. It is the destruction of a belief in the laws of society and religious morality and their associated values.

Since the camel, up until this point, has been absolutely obedient to the demands of their station, the strength to overcome these must come from a shift in perspective. The camel must adopt the perspective of the lion that hunts down and kills so that it is able to survive in the world. This hunting down and killing is the destruction of the camel’s values. The destruction of these values creates the freedom the lion needs to ascend to the spiritual heights of the child – to create new values.

As Nietzsche argues, the spirit of the child is needed to create new values because of the innocence with which the child approaches life. Because of this innocence, the child is the one who is able to will according to their own will and to say ‘Yes’ to all that life has to offer. According to Nietzsche:

“...what can the child do that even the lion could not do? Why must the preying lion still become a child? The child is innocence and forgetting, a new beginning, a game, a self-propelled wheel, a first movement, a sacred ‘Yes.’ For the game of creation, my brothers, a sacred ‘Yes’ is needed: the spirit now wills his own will, and he who had been lost to the world now conquers his own world.”<sup>48</sup>

The child is no longer corrupted and influenced by the rabble and thus possesses a mind and will of their own. They are able to forget the values that have been created for them

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<sup>47</sup> Nietzsche, Zarathustra, p. 139.

<sup>48</sup> Nietzsche, Zarathustra, p. 139.

and imposed upon them such that any values the child upholds are those that they have willed for themselves. They are the affirmer *par excellence*. The child has an innocent and unbounded curiosity and is able to live for the moment rather than focus on their past and future. According to Nietzsche, it is the Overman who possesses the spirit of the child.

It is important to note that although Nietzsche's conception of the progression from camel spirit to child spirit could, on face value, lead to the affirmation of values that are contrary to the flourishing of a human being and hence could give rise to the traps of nihilism, given Nietzsche's conception of strength, this cannot be the case. That is, the creator of new values possesses a strength that assures us that the values that are created will be ones that respect the value of life. As a result, given the fact that suffering will always exist, possessing the spirit of the child may not be self-defeating in that the Overman possesses a strength that prevents the affirmation of values that are contrary to the flourishing of a human being. That is, becoming the child frees one from the traps of nihilism.

Furthermore, the Overman does not value his own life over and above the lives of others. Although it is true that some misinterpretations of Nietzsche seem to refute this claim, as evidenced by the perversion of Nietzsche's texts by his sister in an attempt to gain favor in Nazi Germany,<sup>49</sup> as I will discuss below, I think that Nietzsche intended his definition of strength to curb this possibility as well.

If not for the strength of the Overman, it could also be argued that when the camel spirit begins to question authority and the lion spirit begins to reject authority, the

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<sup>49</sup> Walter Kaufmann, introduction to *Will to Power*, trans. Walter Kaufman and RJ Hollingdale, (New York: Vintage Books, 1968), p. xiii – xiv.

human who possesses these spirits and is under these influences may be overcome with *ressentiment* and despair leading to their ruin. Although this may be a concern for some readers of Nietzsche, I am not sure that Nietzsche was as concerned with this issue where the Overman is concerned. For Nietzsche, Zarathustra's path to the Overman is a path for only the strongest to follow. That is, Nietzsche's target audience was not humanity in general, but rather the strongest individuals within humanity.

According to Nietzsche, strength is neither the imposition of one's will on another nor an avenue to despair – it is the courage to love and forget. In *On the Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche writes:

“To be incapable of taking one's enemies, one's accidents, even one's misdeeds seriously for very long – that is the sign of strong full natures in who there is an excess of the power to form, to mold, to recuperate and to forget (a good example of this in modern times is Mirabeau, who had no memory for insults and vile actions done him and was unable to forgive simply because he – forgot). Such a man shakes off with a *single* shrug many vermin that eat deep into others; here alone genuine 'love of one's enemies' is possible – supposing it to be possible at all on earth. How much reverence has a noble man for his enemies! – and such reverence is a bridge to love.”<sup>50</sup>

According to this line of thinking then, strength consists of one's ability to let go of all trivial matters (and all matters other than becoming the Overman are trivial) such that we forget all perceived slights against us. This is only possible, as I will argue, if we are strong enough to love everything including our fate (*amor fati*).

According to Nietzsche's concept of strength, values that lead to hideous and atrocious acts in the name of free spirit would not be created by the Overman. The creation of these kinds of values would indicate that one is too weak to forget slights against themselves. Those who forget slights do not seek revenge because they would not

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<sup>50</sup> Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, p. 39.

remember why they were seeking retribution. Retribution then becomes an empty concept and a waste of one's life. This is not a joyous existence. Contrary to the objections raised above then, overcoming the urge for revenge and retribution demonstrates one's commitment to a flourishing life that respects the value of all life.

Moreover, strength, according to Nietzsche, involves a recuperation; a becoming healthy. Those whom we would claim have a healthy mind are those who do not commit hideous acts. Those who possess the strength of recuperation with a single shrug are the healthiest humans, for Nietzsche, so this kind of strength rules out the creation of values that lead to hideous and atrocious acts from the outset as the strength of recuperation requires that one value their own life as well as the lives of others.

That is, this strength implies that the Overman has compassion for those who would slight them. It also implies that the Overman is able to see the value of these slights in his own development and hence may regard these slights not as an opportunity to seek revenge, but rather as an opportunity to overcome the self. In other words, contrary to the above objections, this is yet another way in which the Overman demonstrates his commitment to a flourishing life and his creation of values that promote the value of life. As a result, through his strength, the Overman is able to overcome resentment, bad conscience and any other traps that nihilism may present and as such possessing the spirit of the child is not self-defeating. It is, rather, self-promoting.

In summary then, according to Nietzsche, the camel reveres his duty to bear. When he begins to question his obedience to the master and seeks a new kind of life, the spirit of the defiant lion is needed. However, since the lion's role is to destroy old values, another transition of spirit is needed to create new values. The creation of new values requires the innocence and strength of the child.

However, if the nomad is the child, then we would expect that he would exhibit the kind of strength Nietzsche defines. As well, he should be the creator of new values rather than the destroyer of the old ones.

### ***Nomads and Nietzsche's Spirit of the Lion***

In *Nomadology: The War Machine*, there are several ways in which Deleuze and Guattari describe the nomad. According to their reasoning in *Nomadology*, the nomad is the warrior as opposed to the state soldier,<sup>51</sup> a Go piece,<sup>52</sup> nomadic peoples (such as the Mongols),<sup>53</sup> and the private thinker as opposed to the public professor.<sup>54</sup>

When describing the warrior Indra, they tell us that the nomad is the one who is opposed to order (Mitra) and law (Varuna).<sup>55</sup> Although Indra is the leader of Varuna and Mitra and thus has a relationship to these two he is neither of these himself and yet he is not clearly a separate entity. According to Deleuze and Guattari, "He can no more be reduced to one or the other than he can constitute a third of their kind. Rather, he is...an [e]ruption of the ephemeral and the power of metamorphosis."<sup>56</sup> What this suggests is that Indra (the nomad) is a temporary (ephemeral) and violent (eruption) opposition to order (Mitra) and law (Varuna) that demonstrates one's power to change (metamorphosis). What this does not suggest is that the nomad (Indra in this case) is the final product of a process of metamorphosis; he is rather still engaged in this process of change. He is becoming Nietzsche's Overman, but as of yet, is not the Overman.

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<sup>51</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Nomadology*, p. 4.

<sup>52</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Nomadology*, p. 4.

<sup>53</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Nomadology*, p. 97.

<sup>54</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Nomadology*, p. 38.

<sup>55</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Nomadology*, p. 4.

<sup>56</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Nomadology*, p. 4.

As far as Indra is considered then, the nomad, as will become clearer with further discussion, is Nietzsche's lion. It is, after all, the spirit of the lion that urges those possessed by it to use opposition as the tool against order and law<sup>57</sup> to create the space for change and the necessary conditions for the metamorphosis into possessing the spirit of the child (the Overman).

This interpretation seems even more viable when we consider not only what a nomad *is* but also what they *do* when compared to a Go piece. Here Deleuze and Guattari tell us that the Go piece "...deterritorialize[s] the enemy by shattering his territory from within; [and] deterritorialize[s] oneself by renouncing, by going elsewhere..."<sup>58</sup> This is the process that the nomad uses to oppose law and order.

Here the nomad still has a relationship to the territory of the enemy, but creates a space for his becoming (going elsewhere) by opposing (renouncing) this enemy from within the structures that have previously limited its being. He is not yet free, but is becoming free. He is not yet the creator, but has produced a space within which creation is possible by "going elsewhere." In this way, the nomad does not create new values, but rather, destroys the old ones.

Yet, this is still a temporary phase rooted in opposition. It is saying No to everything (renouncing) such that one creates enough room (goes elsewhere) to begin becoming something else. It is a pushing back against the enemy when what the Overman demands is dancing with the enemy.<sup>59</sup> Like Indra then, this pushing back and deterritorialization is the project of Nietzsche's lion.

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<sup>57</sup> Nietzsche, Zarathustra, p. 138-139.

<sup>58</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Nomadology*, p. 5-6.

<sup>59</sup> Nietzsche, Zarathustra, p. 152-153 and p. 219-221.

Likewise, “going elsewhere,” is the prerogative of the lion. The camel lives in the desert, but the lion creates the “loneliest desert”<sup>60</sup> in his spirit (a desert within the desert) so that he may oppose both his master and his own thinking. This desert within the desert is the deterritorialization of the enemy and the self that creates the space and freedom to “go elsewhere.”

If this is the case, then Deleuze and Guattari’s reference to the Mongolian people is not surprising since, for many, the term nomad conjures up images of the wanderer in the desert. Like Indra and the Go piece, the nomad rejects civilization and settlement because he wishes to create Deleuze and Guattari’s deterritorialization and Nietzsche’s desert within the desert. In this respect, Deleuze and Guattari argue that:

“Genghis Khan and his followers were able to hold out for a long time by partially integrating themselves into the conquered empires, while at the same time maintaining a smooth space on the steppes to which the imperial centers were subordinated. That was their genius, the **Pax Mongolica**. It remains the case that the integration of the nomads into the conquered empires was one of the most powerful factors of appropriation of the war machine by the State apparatus”<sup>61</sup>

What this implies is that a deterritorialization from within may help to create a space for freedom of revaluation for some time, but it is not the creation of the eternal freedom of revaluation of the Overman. Consequently, the nomad’s spirit is insufficient for the creation of freedom through the creation of new values – for that the Overman is required. Perhaps, this is what Nietzsche means when he tells us:

“One who was sublime I saw today, one who was solemn, an ascetic of the spirit; oh, how my soul laughed at his ugliness! With a swelled chest and like one who holds in his breath, he stood there, the sublime one, silent, decked out with ugly truths, the spoil of his hunting, and rich in torn garments; many thorns too adorned him – yet I saw no rose.

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<sup>60</sup> Nietzsche, *Zarathustra*, p. 138.

<sup>61</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Nomadology*, p. 97.



As yet he has not learned laughter or beauty. Gloomy, this hunter returned from the woods of knowledge. He came home from a fight with savage beasts; but out of his seriousness there also peers a savage beast – one not overcome. He still stands there like a tiger who wants to leap; but, I do not like these tense souls, and my taste does not favor all these who withdraw.”<sup>62</sup>

According to Nietzsche then, the lion, although admirable for the battles he has endured, is not yet one to be admired since he takes these battles too seriously and is threatened by the prospect of the enemy’s return. In other words, the lion may win the battle, but the war is still looming in his mind so he is ever prepared to continue fighting. To become the Overman, he needs to possess neither the spirit of the lion that “wants to leap,” nor the spirit of the lion that “withdraws” by creating a desert within the desert.

As for the case of the private thinker, here Deleuze and Guattari suggest that it is the nomad (as private thinker) who opposes serious thought.<sup>63</sup> They do warn however that in this regard, “ ‘Private thinker’ ...is not a satisfactory expression, because it exaggerates interiority, when it is a question of **outside thought**. To place thought in an immediate relation with the outside, with the forces of the outside, in short to make thought a war machine, is a strange undertaking whose precise procedures can be studied in Nietzsche.”<sup>64</sup> If the nomad is the Overman, then we would expect that the Overman would be the one whose thoughts are exterior to the self.

However, in Zarathustra’s speech “On The Spirit of Gravity,” Nietzsche himself seems to refute the claim of the Overman’s exteriority of thought when he writes:

“Of that I could well sing a song – and *will* sing it although I am alone in an empty house and must sing it to my own ears. There are other singers, of course whose throats are made mellow, whose hands are

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<sup>62</sup> Nietzsche, Zarathustra, p. 228-229.

<sup>63</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Nomadology*, p. 37-38.

<sup>64</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Nomadology*, p. 38.

made talkative, whose eyes are made expressive, whose hearts are awakened, only by a packed house. But I am not like those.

He who will one day teach men to fly will have moved all boundary stones; the boundary stones themselves will fly up into the air before him, and he will rebaptize the earth – “the light one.” The ostrich runs faster than the fastest horse, but even he buries his head gravely in the grave earth; even so, the man who has not yet learned to fly. Earth and Life seem grave to him; and thus the spirit of gravity wants it. But whoever would become light and a bird must love himself: thus *I* teach.

Not, to be sure, with the love of the wilting and wasting: for among those even self love stinks. One must learn to love oneself – thus I teach – with a wholesome and healthy love, so that one can bear to be with oneself and need not roam.”<sup>65</sup>

Although Nietzsche is not directly addressing the interiority of thought here, he is addressing the way to live one’s life as the Overman. He tells us that life should not be perceived as a burden, but rather we need to learn to love ourselves so that we are able to see life as a joyous creation of our own making.

What we can infer from this is that Nietzsche sees the interiority of thought as integral to self-love in that self-love can only come about when we have learned to not only understand our inner most thoughts, but to affirm them. Those who cannot do this will run from themselves and be forever in need of an audience to determine their value.

This is not to suggest that there is no exteriority of thought, and as far as this is concerned, Nietzsche the philosopher exhibits this exteriority of thought in his writing, however, this is not the primary concern for the development of the Overman. For Nietzsche’s Overman, the thought of one’s own thought is of the utmost importance.

As I will further discuss in Chapter Four, Nietzsche’s perspectivism and the perspective of the Overman suggests that thought (whether interior or exterior) is only reliable (I hesitate to use ‘objective’ here) when we understand where our perspectives come from and how these perspectives ‘colour’ our thought.

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<sup>65</sup> Nietzsche, Zarathustra, p. 304-305.

Moreover, because of this perspectivism, all ‘truth’ for the Overman is laughable. That is, since, for Nietzsche, dancing, laughing and playing are the outcome of one’s victory over resentment and guilt, all thoughts and actions must not be taken too seriously, especially his own.

It seems then, on the face of it, that the Overman and the nomad are not analogous concepts. The nomad, like the lion, requires that thought be external to the self since he is opposing the thought of those outside himself who would will that he remain a camel. His present internal thought is that of the camel and is the result of the influence of external thought forced upon him. Therefore, the external thought of the master must be opposed by the external thought of the lion to create the freedom to ‘over-write’ his internal thought as the Overman.

It might be argued here that the lion’s ‘no,’ as Deleuze sees it, is the act of creation and affirmation that Nietzsche ascribes to the Overman. That is, for Deleuze, the nomad’s act of saying no is the creative and affirmative act of the Overman. He writes:

“Zarathustra stands for affirmation, the spirit of affirmation as the power which turns the negative into a mode and man into an active being who wants to be overcome (not “jumped over”). Zarathustra’s sign is the sign of the lion: the first book of Zarathustra opens with the lion and the last closes with it. But the lion is precisely the “holy no” become creative and affirmative...”<sup>66</sup>

However, this cannot be the case since, for Nietzsche, it is only the Overman who is capable of the highest affirmation and hence creation.<sup>67</sup> Further, Deleuze is correct in his assertion that the lion opens and closes *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* and is a sign for Zarathustra, but what he seems to have missed here is that the entirety of Nietzsche’s *Zarathustra* is the process of Zarathustra’s metamorphosis from lion to child. That is,

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<sup>66</sup> Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 192.

<sup>67</sup> Nietzsche, *Zarathustra*, p. 139.

just because the lion enables Zarathustra to utter the “holy no” and although the lion both opens and closes the book, this does not mean that Nietzsche sees the lion as the affirmer and creator.

In the first book, the lion does make his presence known, but it is through the character of Zarathustra. That is, in the first book, Zarathustra is the one who possesses the lion’s spirit. However, at the close of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, the lion that makes its appearance is not Zarathustra himself. The sign of the lion that Zarathustra sees is the sign that marks his transition from lion to child. It is at the end of *Zarathustra* when Zarathustra has learned the art of laughter that he sees the lion as something separate from himself. That is, the moment that Zarathustra has achieved the level of the Overman, he is no longer the lion. Nietzsche writes:

“ ‘What is happening to me?’ thought Zarathustra in his surprised heart, and slowly he sat down on the big stone that lay near the exit of his cave. But as he reached out with his hands around and over and under himself warding off the affectionate birds, behold, something stranger yet happened to him: for unwittingly he reached into a thick warm mane; and at the same time he heard a roar in front of him – a soft, long lion roar...a mighty yellow animal lay at his feet and pressed its head against his knees and out of love did not want to let go of him, and acted like a dog that finds its old master again.”<sup>68</sup>

From the above, it seems clear that Zarathustra has achieved the transformation from lion to child. Although Deleuze seems to equate this importance of the lion (the opening and closing of *Zarathustra*) with the ability to create and affirm, the fact that the lion opens and closes *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* does not support the claim that the lion’s (or the nomad’s) “holy no” is creative and affirmative.

Rather, what this shows is that the “holy no” leads to affirmation and creation by enabling Zarathustra to become the Overman. That is, the lion and the nomad are

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<sup>68</sup> Nietzsche, *Zarathustra*, p. 437-438.

precursors to the Overman's ability to create and affirm in the highest sense. The lion is "higher" and "nobler" than the camel, but it is not the highest or noblest creator and affirmer – for this the child is needed.

Furthermore, because the lion is still being affected by old values, insofar as he defies them, he cannot be the creator and affirmer. To create new values at this stage would be to run the risk of retaining the shadows of the very morality that is under attack. Nor is the artist, as Deleuze claims, the highest and noblest creator – the Overman. The artist too is a lion, according to Nietzsche.

At the end of "From *Ressentiment* to the Bad Conscience," in *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, Deleuze produces a chart that summarizes his philosophical interpretation of the types of psychological, biological, sociological, historical and political dispositions of man. This is meant as a way to organize his systematic interpretation of Nietzsche's master/slave dichotomy and the development of the Overman from camel to lion to child. However, notice that the Overman is not represented in Deleuze's summary chart<sup>69</sup> (Table of Dispositions – see Appendix A) unless one equates the Overman with the artist.

It might be argued that Deleuze sees the artist (nomad) as the Overman,<sup>70</sup> but this cannot be the case where Nietzsche is concerned as Nietzsche considers the Overman to be a type all his own. Although it is true that the Overman is characterized by Nietzsche as the optimal balance of Apollo and Dionysus and hence under the influence of both dreams and intoxication,<sup>71</sup> the Overman is neither Master (as Deleuze argues) nor Slave, but something beyond these. He is like an artist, but he is beyond the artist.

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<sup>69</sup> Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 146.

<sup>70</sup> Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 103.

<sup>71</sup> Nietzsche, *Birth of Tragedy*, p. 54-58.

It is true that in *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche does seem to emphasize the artist's ability to overcome himself and his art. However, in "An Attempt at Self-Criticism," a later preface to *The Birth of Tragedy*, written 16 years after the first publication of this work, he tells us that the artist's metaphysics (in the context of representational art) that permeates this work replaces God with an art-deity;<sup>72</sup> this kind of art is not the art of the Overman. Rather, in the context of the Overman, real art is laughter, not the lies and deceptions inherent in representational art and the metaphysics of the artist.<sup>73</sup> Moreover, the masterpiece is the self that laughs eternally.

Further, in the few instances in *Zarathustra* where Nietzsche mentions artists, he seems to suggest that the Overman is something beyond the artist. In "On Human Prudence," he writes:

"Alas, I have wearied of these highest and best men: from their "height" I longed to get up, out and away to the overman. A shudder came over me when I saw these best ones naked; then I grew wings to soar off into distant futures. Into more distant futures, into more southern souths than any artist ever dreamed of – where gods are ashamed of all clothes."<sup>74</sup>

Here Nietzsche suggests that the vanity and pride that result from a reverence for appearances are not characteristics of the Overman. Similar to "An Attempt at Self-Criticism," he seems to relegate appearances and those who invest themselves in them to a level somewhere below the level of the Overman. It may be true that Nietzsche sees the artist as a "higher" man, perhaps even a "noble" man, but this does not mean that these "higher" and "nobler" men are actually Overmen. If they were, they too would be able to

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<sup>72</sup> Nietzsche, *Birth of Tragedy*, p. 45-46.

<sup>73</sup> Nietzsche, *Birth of Tragedy*, p. 50.

<sup>74</sup> Nietzsche, *Zarathustra*, p. 256.

dream of the “distant futures” and “more southern souths” that Zarathustra (Nietzsche) envisions.

Additionally, in “On Old and New Tablets,” Zarathustra reiterates this point regarding the ability of the Overman to see beyond the sight of the artist. Here he tells us:

“My wise longing cried and laughed thus out of me – born in the mountains, verily, a wild wisdom – my great broad-winged longing! And often it swept me away and up and far, in the middle of my laughter; and I flew, quivering, an arrow, through sun-drunken delight, away into distant futures which no dream had yet seen, into hotter souths than artists ever dreamed of, where gods in their dances are ashamed of all clothes – to speak in parables and to limp and stammer like poets; and verily, I am ashamed that I must still be a poet.”<sup>75</sup>

Again, Nietzsche suggests that the Overman is able to see things that the artist is unable to see. As well, he repeats his claim that those who invest themselves in appearances should be shamed rather than revered. Even the “great artist” that Nietzsche describes in the *The Birth of Tragedy*,<sup>76</sup> is not the Overman that Deleuze claims it is in *Nietzsche and Philosophy*.

Moreover, in his notes from 1888, Nietzsche states explicitly that artists are not what he considers to be the Overman. Here he tells us that artists are inflicted by vanity and pride and hence cannot be the Overman. He writes:

“Artists are *not* the men of *great* passion, whatever they may try to tell us and themselves. And that for two reasons: they have no shame before themselves (they observe themselves *while they live*; they lie in wait for themselves, they are too curious), and they also have no shame before great passion (they exploit it artistically). Secondly, their vampire – their talent – generally begrudges them any such squandering of energy as is involved in passion. With a talent, one is also the victim of that talent: one lives under the vampirism of one’s talent.

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<sup>75</sup> Nietzsche, Zarathustra, p. 309.

<sup>76</sup> Nietzsche, Birth of Tragedy, p. 42-44, 48-49 and footnote 5 on p. 51.

One is not finished with one's passion because one represents it: rather one is finished with it *when* one represents it. (Goethe teaches it differently, but it seems that here he wished to misunderstand himself – out of *delicatezza*).<sup>77</sup> [Italics in original]

According to Nietzsche then, although artists may consider themselves to be Dionysian, they are not (in the Nietzschean optimal balance sense), due to their pride and vanity. The artist waits for himself to not only be recognized as an artist, but to be esteemed as an artist as well. They make themselves victims of themselves and seek approval from without rather than from within. The artist takes himself too seriously and this is why the artist is unable to express his art as true art – this is why he is unable to laugh. He is only finished with his passion when he, himself, becomes the work of art.

In so far then as Deleuze sees the nomad as artist, neither the nomad nor the artist that is nomad can be considered to be an Overman. This is not to say that there are no artists who are also Overmen, but rather that being an artist is not sufficient grounds on which to claim that one is an Overman. What is really at issue here is that Deleuze has placed the category of the Overman within the type of the Master. However, for Nietzsche, the Overman is not a Master; he is beyond the Master/Slave dichotomy.

It may be argued that Deleuze does not see nomadic art as art that represents lies, deception and appearances, but rather it is art that attempts to move beyond these representations by creating the abstract in smooth spaces. This may be what Deleuze and Guattari are attempting to persuade us, but if we reflect on the “The Aesthetic Model: Nomad Art,” in *A Thousand Plateaus*, it becomes apparent that nomadic art is the art of

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<sup>77</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, “Notes (1888),” in *The Portable Nietzsche*, by Walter Kaufmann, translated by Walter Kaufmann, (New York: Penguin Books, 1982), p. 458.



the lion as it is still rooted in an opposition to Apollonian art and values the absolute.<sup>78</sup>

To be sure, Deleuze and Guattari do argue that nomadic art is more about the experience of life rather than the representation of life,<sup>79</sup> nevertheless, it seems that their dependence on the conceptualization of nomadic art as inhabiting smooth space lends itself more to lion-art than child-art. That is, it is too Dionysian to be considered the art of the Overman. They write:

“Consequently, we do not understand the aesthetic motivation for the abstract line in the same way, or its identity with the beginning of art. Whereas the rectilinear (or "regularly" rounded) Egyptian line is negatively motivated by anxiety in the face of all that passes, flows, or varies, and erects the constancy and eternity of an In-Itself, the nomad line is abstract in an entirely different sense, precisely because it has a multiple orientation and passes *between* points, figures, and contours: it is positively motivated by the smooth space it draws, not by any striation it might perform to ward off anxiety and subordinate the smooth. The abstract line is the affect of smooth spaces, not a feeling of anxiety that calls forth striation.”<sup>80</sup>

According to Deleuze and Guattari then, nomadic art is that which inspires us to experience rather than explain. In so far as nomadic art is creation within smooth space, that is it is unlimited and unbounded in its creation, it is an intoxication. It inhabits smooth space (the space of the master) because it does not inhabit striated space (the space of the slave). It is an experience but not an explanation. It is a Dionysian response to Apollonian art.

However, for Nietzsche, the art of the child (Overman) is laughter. It is not a response to either Dionysian art nor Apollonian art, but rather a symbiotic expression of the two. As Nietzsche explains in his later preface to *Birth of Tragedy*:

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<sup>78</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi, (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 1987), p. 494.

<sup>79</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 499.

<sup>80</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 496-497.

“Indeed, meanwhile I have learned to consider this “German spirit” [romanticism] with a sufficient lack of hope or mercy; also, contemporary German music, which is romanticism through and through and most un-Greek of all possible art forms—moreover, a first-rate poison for the nerves, doubly dangerous among a people who love drink and who honor lack of clarity as a virtue, for it has the double quality of a narcotic that both intoxicates and spreads a fog.”<sup>81</sup>

Here Nietzsche warns us of the danger of seeing things and expressing ourselves as pure Dionysian beings. He has come to see that purely Dionysian spirits, experiences and art are as dangerously nihilistic as Apollonian spirits, experiences and art may be.<sup>82</sup>

While Nietzsche is not opposed to Dionysian experience per se, it is worth mentioning that the concept of Dionysus that Nietzsche seems to be most supportive of is the restrained Dionysus. This is the concept of Dionysus that can overcome nihilism.<sup>83</sup> He is, the symbiotic Apollo/Dionysus – the discerning creator. He is a creator in the Dionysian experiential sense, but is also discerning in that he is restrained (but not crushed) in the Apollonian explanatory sense.

Although it is true that, at the time of the first publication of *Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche seemed to support the idea of freedom through a purely Dionysian experience, by the time of his later work, Nietzsche had realized that a life lived through pure Dionysian experience can become a form of nihilism itself and hence may thwart the freedom that one was trying to achieve.<sup>84</sup>

In other words, a life of pure excess, intoxication and intuitive thinking does not create a stable foundation for joyful existence. There is no groundedness and no earthliness that survives the purely Dionysian life; that is, there is no Ariadne’s thread to

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<sup>81</sup> Nietzsche, *Birth of Tragedy*, p. 48.

<sup>82</sup> Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human*, p. 6-9.

<sup>83</sup> Nietzsche, *Birth of Tragedy*, footnote 5 on pg. 51.

<sup>84</sup> Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human*, p. 6-7.

help one from getting lost in the labyrinth of life. One only need consider the case of the party animal turned alcoholic to make this point evident.

Moreover, there seems to be a vital distinction between the artist that Deleuze theorizes and the one that Nietzsche has in mind. For Nietzsche, the artist *par excellence* is the one who makes himself his own masterpiece – he himself is the canvas on and in which he creates.<sup>85</sup>

Deleuze, on the other hand, seems to see the artist as the creator of something outside himself. That is, since it is the eternal return that creates, for Deleuze, the virtual world is the site of his creation – it is his canvas. What this signifies then is a fundamental distinction between the kinds of art that can be created through the affirmation of the eternal return. Moreover, this further supports my claim that the artist that Nietzsche sees as the Overman is not the same kind of artist that Deleuze has envisioned as his nomad.

Having said this, and to be fair to Deleuze, it may be that the artist that Deleuze sees as the highest form of Master is the artist of the future such that “...we have not yet understood what the life of the artist means...”<sup>86</sup> Furthermore, and to his credit, Deleuze has recognized this optimal balance of Dionysus and Apollo in his summary chart, but what he has failed to recognize is that, for Nietzsche, possessing this optimal balance makes one not a Master, nor a Slave, but rather the Overman. That is, the Overman is something beyond the Master/Slave dichotomy<sup>87</sup> as both Master and Slave are “human, all too human.”<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, p. 232-233.

<sup>86</sup> Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 102.

<sup>87</sup> Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human*, p. 9.

<sup>88</sup> Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human*, p. 144.

In yet another way, we could say that the Master and the Slave see the world according to each other while the Overman sees the world according to himself. Consequently, although the balance of Apollo and Dionysus can be found in Nietzsche, hence its inclusion in Deleuze's chart, this balance, to the best of my knowledge, cannot be found in Deleuze's work on Nietzsche.

By inference then, it seems that for Nietzsche, the art of the Overman is living a life of discerning creation which is beyond any creation that the Master may conceive. The Dionysian allows the creator to not take their art (life) too seriously while the Apollonian allows the creator to take their art (life) seriously enough such that the conjunction of both influences allows one to escape the trap of nihilism.

The Overman laughs, dances and finds joy in his being because he has found an experience (eternal recurrence of the same) and an explanation (*amor fati*) that allows him to escape nihilism without relying on an external authority. The nomad may then be a Master, as Deleuze might argue, but he is not the Overman as the Overman is beyond the Master.

It also occurs to me that the ways in which Deleuze has described the nomad seems to be more analogous to Nietzsche's "Preparatory Human Beings" in Aphorism 283 of *The Gay Science*. The preparatory human being, for Nietzsche, is the man who possesses the perspective that must exist before the transition to the Overman is possible.<sup>89</sup> Of the preparatory human being, Nietzsche writes:

"I welcome all signs that a more virile, warlike age is about to begin, which will restore honor to courage above all. For this age shall prepare the way for one yet higher, and it shall gather the strength that this higher age will require some day-the age that will carry heroism into the

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<sup>89</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science: with a prelude in rhymes and an appendix of songs*, trans. Walter Kaufmann, (New York: Random House, 1974), p. 228-229.

search for knowledge and that will *wage wars* for the sake of ideas and their consequences. To this end we now need many preparatory courageous human beings who cannot very well leap out of nothing, any more than out of the sand and slime of present-day civilization and metropolitanism – human beings who know how to be silent, lonely, resolute, and content and constant in invisible activities; human beings who are bent on seeking in all things for what in them must be *overcome*... Live at war with your peers and yourselves! Be robbers and conquerors as long as you cannot be rulers and possessors, you seekers of knowledge!”<sup>90</sup>

According to Nietzsche then, before the Overman can come about, beings with the ability to wage a war of ideas is needed. Although Nietzsche phrases this in terms of the coming of a new historical age, it is clear that all will be for naught if not for the preparatory human being. This kind of human being is a solitary creature who has returned to his more animalistic nature. He is the lion who can say ‘no’.

To herald in the new age, the lion is needed as war implies, at the very least, conflicting ideas. Since the camel’s ideas are the most commonly held ideas (they are the ideas of the herd), they are the ideas that need to be overcome. It is the lion that opposes the herd morality with their holy ‘no’. He is the conqueror and robber, but not yet the ruler or possessor. That is, he is not yet strong enough to be the Overman, but he is strong enough to begin his opposition to the camel’s morality.<sup>91</sup>

That the preparatory human being is the lion becomes further evident in Aphorism 285 of the same work. Here Nietzsche writes:

“You will never pray again, never adore again, never again rest in endless trust; you do not permit yourself to stop before any ultimate wisdom, ultimate goodness, ultimate power, while unharnessing your thoughts; you have no perpetual guardian and friend for your seven solitudes; you live without a view of mountains with snow on their peaks and fire in their hearts; there is no avenger for you anymore nor any final improver; there is no longer any reason in what happens, no

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<sup>90</sup> Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, p. 228-229.

<sup>91</sup> Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, p. 228.

love in what will happen to you; no resting place is open any longer to your heart, where it only needs to find and no longer to seek; you resist any ultimate peace; you will the eternal recurrence of war and peace: you man of renunciation, all this you wish to renounce? Who will give you the strength for that? Nobody yet has had this strength!”<sup>92</sup>

Here Nietzsche is describing the path that is taken by the preparatory human being in creating a free space for the coming of the new age – the coming of the Overman. The path of the preparatory human being is one of instinctual renunciation. His heart is never at rest because it cannot be at rest. He has yet to develop the perspective that is needed for his heart to be at rest. That is, he is not the camel, but he is also not the Overman. From this we see that the lion is the preparatory human being as he is the man of renunciation.

Given that Deleuze and Guattari describe the nomad as wielding weapons and creating war machines, and that Deleuze argues that the eternal recurrence is the eternal return of the different, it makes sense that the nomad would wage war. The one who declares war is the one who says no to the ideas of the opposition. To will eternal difference then is in some ways like willing eternal war and peace as there will always be those who adhere to a herd morality and therefore, there will always be a need for an opposition to it such that a different principle can take its place.

However, when a particular moral principle is overcome and there is momentary peace, another principle in need of renunciation will arise. This is what Nietzsche means when he says that preparatory human beings “...are bent on seeking in all things for what in them must be overcome”<sup>93</sup> They are the war wagers *par excellence*. They wage war

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<sup>92</sup> Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, p. 229-230.

<sup>93</sup> Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, p. 228.

because waging war is in their nature. From this, it should be evident that the nomad is the preparatory man; he is the lion.

Furthermore, as will be discussed towards the end of Chapter 3, the eternal return of the different may not overcome nihilism at all; in fact, it may reconstitute it. That is, all of the references that Deleuze and Guattari make to the nomad, coupled with Deleuze's conception of the eternal return of the different, suggests that the nomad is still within the grips of nihilistic thought and hence, cannot be the Overman.

## CHAPTER 2: On Nietzsche's *Eternal Recurrence of the Same*

Although the eternal recurrence is one of Nietzsche's most well studied concepts, there are still debates regarding its interpretation, purpose and meaning. As will be discussed in Chapter 3, Deleuze sees the eternal recurrence as the eternal return of the different. However, as I will argue below, Nietzsche most certainly thought of the eternal return as the eternal recurrence of the same. To show this, I will analyze many of the passages in Nietzsche's texts where the eternal recurrence is considered. What should be noted with each presentation of a new passage is that every single passage indicates that Nietzsche never wavers from his position that the eternal recurrence is one of the same.

However, simply arguing that the eternal recurrence, for Nietzsche, is the recurrence of the of the same does little to emphasize the purpose and meaning of the eternal recurrence in Nietzsche. As a result, I will argue that although he saw the eternal recurrence of the same as a metaphysical doctrine, wherein the recurrence of the same is the recurrence of suffering, the importance of the eternal return to the Overman lies in the recognition that suffering will recur eternally while the thought of the eternal recurrence of the same provides the key to overcoming this suffering. That is, it is the psychological aspect of the eternal recurrence of the same that matters most to the Overman as Overman.

In this regard, I will argue that the eternal recurrence, for Nietzsche, is most importantly a psychological test that determines how willing one is to affirm life. Further, it is a psychological test, that if passed, indicates that the state of Overman has been more or less achieved. It is a benchmark for measuring perspective in that it indicates how well disposed one is to oneself and whether or not one love's their fate.



*Conceptual Analysis of the Eternal Recurrence of the Same*

Although Deleuze is convinced that Nietzsche's eternal recurrence must be a recurrence of the different this is not supported by the texts that Nietzsche wrote. In every instance where Nietzsche considers the eternal recurrence, he does not waver in his conviction that the eternal recurrence is an eternal recurrence of the same. That is not to say that this thought of the eternal recurrence is always a joyful thought for Nietzsche or Zarathustra; in many instances it is not. In Aphorism 341 of *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche calls the thought of the eternal recurrence of the same "*the greatest weight.*"<sup>94</sup> He writes:

“How, if some day or night a demon were to sneak after you into your loneliest loneliness and say to you, “This life as you now live it and have lived it, you will have to live once more and innumerable times more; and there will be nothing new in it, but every pain and every joy and every thought and sigh and everything immeasurably small or great in your life must return to you – all in the same succession and sequence – even this spider and this moonlight between the trees, and even this moment and I myself. Would you not throw yourself down and gnash your teeth and curse the demon who spoke thus? Or did you once experience a tremendous moment when you would have answered him, “You are a god, and never have I heard anything more godly.” If this thought were to gain possession of you, it would change you, as you are, or perhaps crush you. The question in each and every thing, “Do you want this once more and innumerable times more?” would you weigh upon your actions as the greatest stress. Or how well disposed would you have to become to yourself and to life to *crave nothing more fervently* than this ultimate eternal confirmation and seal?”<sup>95</sup>

What should be noted here first and foremost is that Nietzsche explicitly states that every moment, every pain and every joy will return exactly the same. That is, suffering will always return. Further, Nietzsche suggests that only those who love themselves and love their life will be able to say ‘Yes’ to the demon and adopt a new perspective that allows

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<sup>94</sup>Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, p. 273-274.

<sup>95</sup>Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, p. 273-274.

them to overcome their suffering. The strongest (the Overmen) most likely would not perceive this demon as the harbinger of ill tidings. Rather, they would recognize him as a god heralding a future of joy just the same as their presently experienced joy.

However, for those who are unable to come to terms with the coexistence of their pain and suffering with joy may be so weak, so full of resentment, guilt and bad conscience that the idea of the eternal recurrence of the same will “crush them.” That is, they will fall into a nihilistic perspective that may prevent their potential to affirm anything. This is why Nietzsche refers to this thought of the eternal recurrence as the *greatest weight*.

Thought of in another way, Nietzsche tells us that if we have at any one moment experienced such great joy that we would wish this joy to return eternally, we must also admit that we wish for all of our pain and suffering to return. This does not simply mean that we must come to an acceptance of the coexistence of pain and joy, but that we must come to love ourselves and our life to the extent that our pain is experienced as joy. That is, the strongest will recognize that the painful is actually the joyous – it is a necessary step in the process of overcoming the self.

That is, the Overman does not become Overman without overcoming the traps of nihilism – pain may be one of these traps. Moreover, since the achievement of the metamorphosis to Overman is the greatest achievement, the traps of nihilism may be welcomed with open arms. If one has overcome pain and is an Overman, then becoming the Overman is partially dependent on the overcoming of pain. In other words, one’s

eternal joy depends on the temporary experience of pain. For the Overman, this may be akin to having an instantaneous hindsight<sup>96</sup> in every moment.

This, however, is not the only account of the eternal return that Nietzsche describes as the eternal recurrence of the same. In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Nietzsche's first mention of the eternal recurrence occurs in "On the Vision and the Riddle." Here Nietzsche writes:

"Behold...this moment! From this gateway, Moment, a long, eternal lane leads *backward*: behind us lies an eternity. Must not whatever *can* walk have walked on this lane before? Must not whatever *can* happen have happened, have been done, have passed by before?...are not all things knotted together so firmly that this moment draws after it *all* that is to come?...must not all of us have been there before? And return and walk in that other lane, out there, before us, in this long dreadful lane – must we not eternally return?"<sup>97</sup>

Again, the first thing to be noted in this passage is that Nietzsche, although still somewhat unwilling to embrace the eternal recurrence, describes this eternal recurrence as the return of the same. Here he suggests that time and space and all organic things not only return, but must undergo exactly the same events and experiences eternally.

Furthermore, in the first section of "On the Vision and the Riddle," Zarathustra tells us that courage is needed in order to will that one's life would occur again.<sup>98</sup> But, this courage is the courage to destroy our old ideas and morality and all of the traps that

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<sup>96</sup> Although it might seem more appropriate to use the word insight or foresight here, I am not sure that insight and foresight entirely captures the mindset of the Overman. Insight and foresight imply that one may have a deeper understanding of an event, but it does not imply that one is able to use this insight to see painful events as joyous. Insight is often a key in dissolving pain, but this process is not instantaneous. Moreover, insight and foresight depend on an incomplete collection of facts. That is, a complete history of an event is unknown. Hindsight, on the other hand, implies reflecting on an event sometime after the event has happened. Often, when one employs their hindsight they are doing so in that moment because the event is no longer a source of pain for them. They are able to see the forest because they have forgotten the trees. In this sense, hindsight is often able to help one see painful events as joyous. Moreover, hindsight has the advantage of completely knowing what events have occurred and why they have occurred. Hindsight provides the 'aha' moment for overcoming an experience. Instantaneous hindsight then provides the 'aha' moment in the midst of experience.

<sup>97</sup> Nietzsche, *Zarathustra*, p. 270.

<sup>98</sup> Nietzsche, *Zarathustra*, p. 269.

nihilism presents.<sup>99</sup> Thus, the courage that Zarathustra needs to come to terms with his recognition of the eternal recurrence of the same must destroy pity, the nausea caused by the unknown and our fear of death as well.

Later, in “On the Convalescent,” Zarathustra reveals what has caused his reluctance to accept the eternal recurrence of the same. Here he tells us, that he has been “choked” by the thought that not only will he and those who are strong return, but the small, petty man will return as well.<sup>100</sup> This is the thought that he has found hardest to bear.

In this way, it becomes evident that, for Nietzsche, one of the consequences of the eternal recurrence is that all that he (as a lion) finds negative will return along with all that he finds positive. Nihilism and weakness will occur again amongst men, so he must destroy nihilism and weakness in himself and teach others the way out of nihilism; he must teach them to will the eternal recurrence of the same.<sup>101</sup> This is the only thing that he can do. Although he has yet to embrace these thoughts, as his animals assure him, his destiny is to be the teacher of the eternal recurrence.<sup>102</sup>

Zarathustra does not yet have the strength to announce the doctrine of the eternal recurrence of the same, but he does not stop his animals when they proclaim what he is still too afraid to admit. Zarathustra’s animals assure him that he already knows that:

“...the knot of causes in which I am entangled recurs and will create me again. I myself belong to the cause of the eternal recurrence. I come again...*not* to a new life or a better life or a similar life: I come back eternally to this same, selfsame life, in what is greatest as in what is

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<sup>99</sup> Nietzsche, Zarathustra, p. 269.

<sup>100</sup> Nietzsche, Zarathustra, p. 331.

<sup>101</sup> Nietzsche, Zarathustra, p. 331-332.

<sup>102</sup> Nietzsche, Zarathustra, p. 332.

smallest, to teach again the eternal recurrence of all things...to proclaim the overman again to men.”<sup>103</sup>

Not only do the animals reassure us that Nietzsche sees the eternal return as a recurrence of the same, but moreover, they suggest to Zarathustra that he is one of the causes of the eternal recurrence and not simply the effect of that recurrence. What this seems to imply is that human beings are at least partially responsible for the creation of the eternal recurrence itself.

What remains to be seen is what being a cause of the eternal recurrence means. That is, what part of the eternal recurrence is created by the individual. As I will argue in the next section, if humans create a part of the eternal recurrence, it is the thought of the eternal recurrence that is created as well as the suffering that recurs. Moreover, I will argue, affirming the eternal return may mean possessing the strength to cause the circle of recurrence to become decentered; that is to cause the circle to distort such that one is able to overcome suffering.

Section 6 of “The Seven Seals,” in *Zarathustra*, reasserts Nietzsche’s claims regarding the disposition of the Overman that begins in Aphorism 341 of *The Gay Science*. Here we are told that the Overman’s “alpha and omega” is the creation of a bliss that is capable of absolving all evil to the extent that that evil becomes holy.<sup>104</sup>

Nietzsche also reasserts that the eternal recurrence is a cycle. He tells us, “...all that is heavy and grave should become light; all that is body, dancer; all that is spirit, bird – and verily, that is my alpha and omega: Oh, how should I not lust after eternity and after the nuptial ring of rings, the ring of recurrence?...*For I love you, O eternity!*” What should be clear from this is that indeed, contra Deleuze, Nietzsche does hold that the

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<sup>103</sup> Nietzsche, *Zarathustra*, p. 333.

<sup>104</sup> Nietzsche, *Zarathustra*, p. 342-343.

eternal recurrence is a cyclical hypothesis. Moreover, the creation that takes place in the eternal recurrence is not necessarily the creation of a physical entity, as Nietzsche has characterized this as creation of light out of heaviness, a body that dances and a spirit that flies like a bird; it is rather a shift in perspective. These all speak of a character development that is part of the progression to the Overman and are subject to his self-overcoming. Although it is true that the eternal suffering that is created by the camel and lion cause the metamorphosis to child, this creation is done from within, not from outside the self as Deleuze would have it. But, more on this in the next chapter.

Finally, in section ten of “The Drunken Song,” Zarathustra has his final confrontation with the thought of the eternal recurrence of the same. At last the nausea he felt with the realization that the small and petty will return has subsided and he is ready to affirm his destiny. Speaking to the higher men, Zarathustra proclaims:

“Just now my world became perfect; midnight too is noon; pain too is a joy; curses too are a blessing; night too is a sun – go away or you will learn: a sage too is a fool.

Have you ever said Yes to a single joy? O my friends, then you have said Yes to *all* woe. All things are entangled, ensnared, enamored; if ever you wanted one thing twice, if ever you said, “You please me happiness! Abide, moment!” then you wanted *all* back....oh, then you *loved* the world. Eternal ones, love it eternally and evermore; and to woe too, you say: go, but return! *For all joy wants – eternity.*”<sup>105</sup>

Again, Zarathustra assures us that the eternal recurrence is the return of the same. Here he argues that if there has ever been a moment that you would happily greet again and again, then you will also have to concede that you should greet every moment that you wanted to go away with the same joyousness. That is, according to the disposition of the Overman, all that is joyous depends on all that is miserable. If this is the case, then one cannot regret mistakes nor look disdainfully upon misfortune. Only those ensnared in

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<sup>105</sup> Nietzsche, Zarathustra, p. 435.

the traps of nihilism could see this world this way. Those who are well disposed to themselves will have no choice but to see pain as joy, misfortune as opportunity and the seemingly imperfect world as already perfect in that the world could be no other way than the way that it is.

As a result, I will try to show that Nietzsche's primary concern when presenting the eternal recurrence is that the ability to affirm the recurrence of the same eternally would provide a means for overcoming nihilism. If nihilism is considered to be the perspective that sees no value in human life, willing the eternal recurrence of the same revives the values in life.

When Zarathustra first considers the return of the small and petty, he is nauseated. This nausea signifies his hopelessness for a world of pure joy for everyone. Keeping in mind that, at this point, he has yet to realize that the physical world of cause and effect is already perfect (in so far as it cannot be any other way), he seems to be considering whether life has meaning and value if the eternal recurrence returns the small and petty.

However, later, when Zarathustra is the Overman, he recognizes that his ability to say 'Yes' to the return of the small and the petty signifies that he has again found value and meaning in his life. The purpose of his life is to teach the eternal recurrence of the same. His life has value for him because of this purpose in that to teach it, he must also affirm it and find his own joy. Furthermore, to affirm the return of even the small and the petty signifies that his ability to say 'Yes' has been optimized in that he can affirm the ideas that had previously caused his nausea.

From all of this, it should be evident that Nietzsche conceived of the eternal recurrence as the return of the same. In every instance where Nietzsche presents this doctrine, he has argued that everything eternally returns exactly the same. What remains

to be seen though is whether Nietzsche meant for the eternal return to be a metaphysical doctrine, a psychological test or both.

Although, at times, it appears as though Nietzsche may be arguing that the eternal recurrence of the same is a metaphysical doctrine, as I will argue in the next section, to see the eternal recurrence as a metaphysical doctrine may present problems that are difficult, although not impossible, to overcome. In its simplest form, this problem is the problem of the lucky few.

However, as I will suggest, the problem of the lucky few is precisely the problem that nauseated Nietzsche. The solution lies in acknowledging and affirming that many will never progress past the stages of smallness and pettiness to become Overmen. This may be unfortunate, however, it does not indicate that there is no metaphysical basis for the existence of the eternal recurrence. Rather what it indicates is that the problem of the lucky few is not really a problem per se but may actually be an acknowledgement that becoming the Overman is a path for only the strongest to follow. In other words, luck does not determine who can become an overman, strength does.

Moreover, taking it as self evident that suffering will recur eternally, when one is progressing towards possessing the spirit of the child, it is the thought of the eternal recurrence of the same that is the key to the development of the perspective of the Overman. This thought acts as a test of one's disposition and can indicate whether or not one has achieved the state of Overman. Therefore, even though it seems that at least some experiences in life will recur eternally, such as the experience of suffering, overcoming the experience of suffering by developing a healthy perspective is the Overman's goal.



Another way to look at this might be to argue that willing the eternal recurrence of the same implies that one love's their fate. That is, in order to be well disposed to oneself, and to affirm the return of the same, to have the strength that Nietzsche envisions, one must be able to say 'Yes' to their destiny. This is what Zarathustra means when he proclaims that his world is perfect and he will return eternally to teach the eternal recurrence of the same. He has developed a perspective that causes him to love his fate.

Either way, the thought of the eternal recurrence provides a clue to the present disposition of the thinker. If the thinker is the Overman, then he will affirm his fate and moreover, will that that fate return eternally. If the thinker is not the Overman, then he will not love his fate; he will be nauseated by this thought and may desire the affirmation of a different fate.

***Is the Eternal Recurrence a Metaphysical Doctrine or a Psychological Test?***

In the passages quoted in the previous section, there seems to be two different aspects of the eternal recurrence of the same – the metaphysical aspect and the psychological aspect. However, it is unclear, at this point, which interpretation Nietzsche held to be of greater consequence. That is, at this point, it is still questionable whether Nietzsche thought the Overman should proclaim the metaphysical truth of the eternal recurrence or embrace the idea as a psychological test and a means to an end that provides the impetus for self-overcoming.

In this regard, Aphorism 341 does seem to suggest that Nietzsche did suspect (though never thoroughly argued, to the best of my knowledge) that the eternal recurrence of the same is a metaphysical doctrine. The allusion to the “eternal hourglass of

existence” does seem to suggest that there may be some physical mechanism that explains the occurrence of the eternal recurrence of the same, and time would be a part of that mechanism.

And, again in “On the Vision and the Riddle,” it seems as though Nietzsche is describing the eternal return as a metaphysical doctrine. While in Aphorism 341, Nietzsche implied this metaphysical basis through the allusion of the cycles of time (the turning hourglass), this time, he seems to be combining the thought of time (the Moment) with space (the path that is walked through time).

Moreover, in “The Convalescent,” Nietzsche suggests that man is at least partially the cause of the eternal recurrence. He is “entangled” in the “knot of causes.” This too seems to suggest that Nietzsche may have, at the very least, considered that the eternal recurrence may be a metaphysical doctrine.

These may be some of the aspects that Deleuze picks up on when he describes the eternal return of the different as cosmological and physical doctrine. Although I will not fully examine this possible aspect of Nietzsche’s version of the eternal return (as I think it is of little consequence to the conclusions of my arguments regarding Nietzsche) I will argue in Chapter 3 that this aspect of Deleuze’s version of the eternal return is not able to deliver on the promise of overcoming nihilism and hence cannot be the eternal recurrence of the Overman.

Assuming then that the eternal recurrence is only a metaphysical doctrine one would have to wonder how a person could change their perspective. That is, if the eternal recurrence is a fact of nature and one lifetime is exactly the same as the next lifetime, then how could a person possibly overcome themselves? That is, if in one life I had not found

joyousness in every event, feeling and experience, then it seems unrealistic to think that given the same events, feelings and experiences in the next life I will be able to find joy.

In this way, if the eternal recurrence is a metaphysical doctrine, then it seems as though only a few people who have always had the fortune to develop the spirit of the child will be able to become Overmen. Those who are not able to overcome resentment, bad conscience, guilt, pity and so forth in one lifetime will never be able to overcome these things regardless of how many lifetimes return. Those who die possessing nihilistic thinking and those who die without being able to love their fate will **never** be able to overcome themselves. Those who do overcome themselves are lucky that they have a fate that can be loved – they are the lucky few.

This seems to me to be the same problem that causes Nietzsche's reluctance to affirm the eternal recurrence of the same. While he is nauseated that the small and petty will continue to exist as a consequence of the eternal recurrence, he eventually overcomes this nausea with the solace that this smallness and pettiness aids him in overcoming his own smallness and pettiness and in helping others find the strength they need to overcome themselves.

Consequently, I would argue that when Zarathustra stands at the gate marked Moment, the path behind and the path ahead may lead to the same events, but the way in which this path is traversed may be different. In this respect, although the events remain the same, one's perspective of the events may change. In this way, if one is unable to love their fate and affirm the eternal return in one lifetime, they may be able to do so in the next lifetime.

In this regard, Nietzsche's answer to the potential problem of the lucky few is that the cycle of the eternal return is a crooked circle. Zarathustra biting the head off of the

black snake in “The Vision and the Riddle” decenters the circle of the return. This decentering is the different path traversed to the same event. In this way, everyone has the potential to cause this deviation from the circular path although only some will be strong enough to actually cause this deviation.<sup>106</sup> Perhaps this is what Nietzsche means when he says that he is a cause of the eternal return. That is, perhaps decentering the path of the eternal return means finding a new perspective towards suffering.

However, when Nietzsche discusses walking the path, he suggests that we always walk the same path. This implies that perhaps one cannot cause a deviation from the path such that they develop a new perspective. On the other hand, we could argue that if the path is sufficiently wide, we can zig-zag along the path without leaving it. This would be to both traverse the same path while causing a deviation from it.

Although it might be argued that saying the path is sufficiently wide is too vague to be meaningful, perhaps a return to the concepts of Dionysus, Apollo and the discerning creator will be helpful here. To walk the same straight line down the path is to be too Apollonian as not deviating from this straight line requires the utmost restraint and discipline. Traversing the path in this way may initially keep one as far away from the nihilistic ditch as possible but, after traversing the path over and over again (through eternal recurrence) the path becomes a deep ditch itself.

On the other hand, to proceed down the path willy-nilly with no regard for the ditches on either side is too Dionysian as it may lead to going over the edge. In this sense, walking the Dionysian path may be freeing at first, but eventually, due to lack of restraint, one will topple over and may succumb to the nihilistic ditch as well. Traversing the path as the discerning creator though would allow for one to deviate from the

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<sup>106</sup> Nietzsche, Zarathustra, p. 271-272.

Apollonian straight line while at the same time paying heed to the ditches such that Dionysian willy-nillyness does not cause one to leave the road.

It is worth mentioning here that there seems to be two diverse metaphysical meanings to eternal recurrence at play here. First, eternal recurrence may be interpreted as physical reincarnation whereby the birth, death and rebirth of the human becomes the cycle. Secondly, we might say that the eternal recurrence is the cycle of experiences of joy and sorrow.

Although the eternal return may, on face value, seem to be akin to physical reincarnation, these two concepts should not be confused. Whether I, as a human being, will be reborn on this Earth after I die is questionable, but what is less debatable is whether or not the experiences of joy and suffering will return. Such is the rollercoaster of life – full of ups and downs. In this regard then, what Nietzsche seems to be saying is that the self same life that the demon presents is not the cycle of birth, death and rebirth that might be ascribed to Buddhist and Hindu reincarnation, but rather is an eternal return of joy and suffering.

From the perspective of the Overman then, the thought of the eternal return is a solution to the problem of how one might overcome the experience of the cycle of joy and suffering as it is this thought that enables one to affirm the suffering that exists by recognizing the joyousness that can and has resulted from our negative experiences. That is, the thought of the eternal recurrence presents us with a reminder of the opportunities we have to experience suffering as joy through the recognition that, in many regards, suffering is a necessary condition for the existence of joy. Moreover, when one is an Overman, suffering is not experienced as suffering, but rather, all experience becomes joyous.

In this respect then, it seems as though there must be a metaphysical basis for at least the recurrence of joy and suffering and consequently, the thought of the eternal recurrence of the same gains its import from the actual recurrence of this cycle. In this way then, the eternal return of the same is, for Nietzsche, both a metaphysical and a psychological doctrine in that the metaphysical truth of an eternal return of suffering and joy necessitates the psychological development of those who would overcome themselves. As a result, I will argue towards the end of this section, it is the thought of the eternal recurrence of the same – the psychological aspect – that plays the most important role for the development of the Overman.

At this point, one might argue that Deleuze has also come up with a solution to this problem with his eternal return of the different as cosmological and physical doctrine and the eternal return as selective being. In this respect, we may then be in a position to decide which of these solutions is supported by the best available evidence. However, as I will argue later, Deleuze's conceptions of the eternal return of the different as cosmological and physical doctrine and as selective being suffer from other, more fundamental problems than the problem of the lucky few when it comes to the disposition of the Overman.

At this point it should not be overlooked, as John Nolt argues, that there is a difference between embracing an idea and holding an idea to be true. In "Why Nietzsche embraced eternal recurrence," he argues that embracing an idea shares some of the characteristics of believing an idea, but there are distinctions that must be made between these two epistemological categories.<sup>107</sup> The first difference, he argues, is that "...one who embraces an idea passionately endorses it, whereas we may believe what we do not

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<sup>107</sup> Nolt, p. 313.

endorse.”<sup>108</sup> This suggests that, at the very least, embracing an idea requires that we approve of that idea.

Beliefs, on the other hand may be thought to be true, but that does not mean that we would approve of that belief. For instance, we may believe that some people commit murder, but that does not mean that we approve of the fact that some people commit murder. Those who would embrace this idea, murderers for instance, would approve of the fact that some people commit murder.

The second difference between embracing an idea and believing an idea is that to embrace an idea does not commit one to affirming the truth of the idea.<sup>109</sup> That is, those who believe something are usually implying that their belief has, at least, some truth to it, while those who embrace an idea are not as concerned about the truth of their idea.

For instance, those who believe that manmade global warming exists usually support that belief with evidence of its truth – whether that be scientific or philosophical evidence. Those who embrace the idea of manmade global warming are not as concerned with the truth of the claim, as they are with the outcomes of the embrace of that idea. For them, embracing the idea of manmade global warming is all that is needed to provide the impetus to be better custodians of the planet.

Consequently, Nolt argues that even if Nietzsche did not think that the eternal recurrence is a fact of nature, he did embrace it.<sup>110</sup> For Nolt, this embrace of the eternal recurrence provides the impetus for self-overcoming and moreover, it helps Nietzsche to overcome a conflict that seems to exist between other ideas that he was deeply committed

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<sup>108</sup> Nolt, p. 313.

<sup>109</sup> Nolt, p. 313.

<sup>110</sup> Nolt, p. 313.

to.<sup>111</sup> In other words, Nietzsche may consistently argue that suffering returns eternally, because of the dispositions of man that cause suffering to occur, but that does not mean that Nietzsche needs to commit himself to the idea that suffering is a fundamental fact of this world. In this sense, it may be true that suffering will most likely always exist but this does not mean that suffering has to exist as it may be overcome through a development of the self.

Returning then to my previous claim that the master and slave see the world according to each other, this would be akin to saying that suffering will always exist for the slave and master as they see suffering in terms of the effects they have on each other. The master sees the disobedience of the slave as suffering, while the slave sees his oppression by the master as suffering. The Overman, however, sees suffering as a product of his own perspective. Suffering is suffering if and only if he perceives it as suffering. The Overman's goal then is to develop a perspective that allows him to overcome the suffering that he inflicts on himself (and all suffering is self-inflicted) as a result of his perspective.

As a result, I am not sure that we have to ground the eternal recurrence (of the same or different) as a metaphysical doctrine on anything other than experience since it may just be Nietzsche's way of providing Zarathustra with a psychological test. That is, even if suffering returns eternally, the thought of the eternal recurrence is of value as the outcome of this embrace is the Overman.

Although this is not a thorough analysis of Nietzsche's possible conception of the eternal recurrence of the same as metaphysical principle, I will discuss Deleuze's eternal return as cosmological and physical doctrine in the next chapter more thoroughly since

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<sup>111</sup> Nolt, p. 315.



this variation of the eternal return may not escape nihilism in the same way that Nietzsche's version proposes. Moreover, even with an acknowledgement that suffering may recur eternally, it seems as though the thought of the eternal recurrence is of higher importance to the Overman in the sense that the psychological aspect of the eternal return is precisely the key to overcoming suffering.

My reason for thinking that the metaphysical aspect of the eternal recurrence is of less concern for the Overman is that the Overman is the one who has found joy in every moment of this life. That is, if the eternal return as metaphysical doctrine is important to the Overman, it is only important in so far as it assures the Overman that suffering will always exist for others due to the return of the small and the petty. The eternal return of the same as psychological doctrine then is of greater importance since it inspires the Overman to eradicate his own suffering in the midst of the suffering of others by developing a new perspective. In this way, for him (or, sorry Nietzsche, her!)<sup>112</sup> the eternal return as metaphysical doctrine would only reassure him or her that they have indeed found a motivation for experiencing joy in all events.

Further, if the eternal recurrence has a metaphysical basis, this fact would do little to prescribe a path to joy in this life nor is it meant to. What it does do is show us that suffering (of one kind or another) has always existed and most likely will always exist. As a result, because eternally returning suffering can be regarded as a metaphysical fact of this world the development of the psychological aspect of the eternal return becomes

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<sup>112</sup> Although Nietzsche himself has asserted that the best that women can hope for is to be the mothers of Overmen, this does not mean that being an Overman depends on gender. For a feminist interpretation of Nietzschean thought please refer to *Feminist Interpretations of Nietzsche*, edited by Kelly Oliver and Marilyn Pearsall.

that much more important. The question for the Overman then is how are we to find joy in this life despite eternal suffering.

However, finding joy in this life is an intellectual and psychological pursuit that must remain grounded in the metaphysical world. Momentary joy is momentary simply because our mindset changes when new events occur. This is why life is sometimes alluded to as a rollercoaster. We perceive one event as good and find joy only to perceive the next event as bad and find misery. The Overman's response then to the metaphysical fact of the eternal recurrence of suffering is to seek a psychological perspective that allows him to perceive all events as joyous by eradicating the values inherent in classifying any event as fundamentally good or bad as, to the Overman, events are neither good nor bad, they are simply events. Joy then comes from the affirmation of events through the recognition that all events are necessary – *amor fati*.

In that regard, it should be noted that Aphorism 341 does imply that the thought of the eternal return of the same is some kind of psychological test that determines "...how well disposed...you have ...become to yourself and to life."<sup>113</sup> This is why the thought of the eternal recurrence of the same is seen by Nietzsche (and Zarathustra) as the greatest weight; it is the greatest stress.

If the eternal recurrence of the same were simply a metaphysical doctrine, then one would think that the eternal recurrence should not be a source of stress at all – and if some do consider it to be a stress, it is certainly not the greatest stress. However, the thought of the eternal return of the same does have the potential to be seen as a stressful thought – especially, as Nietzsche argues, for those not well disposed to themselves and life.

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<sup>113</sup> Nietzsche, *Gay Science*, p. 102.

Similarly, “The Convalescent” seems to imply that the eternal recurrence of the same is a thought. That is, since, for Nietzsche, nature is governed by laws and we are not the creators of these natural laws, the thought of the eternal recurrence of the same is what man creates. In other words, man is the cause of the thought of the eternal recurrence, but, he is not the effect of this thought unless he is able to affirm the eternal recurrence of the same.

Moreover, in “On Involuntary Bliss,” Nietzsche tells us that Zarathustra is preparing for his final test. Here Nietzsche tells us:

“Where the storms plunge down into the sea and the mountain stretches out its trunk for water, there every one shall once have his day and night watches for his testing and knowledge. He shall be known and tested, whether he is of my kind and kin, whether he is the master of a long will, taciturn even when he speaks...And for his sake and the sake of those like him I must perfect myself; therefore I now evade my happiness and offer myself to all unhappiness, for my final testing and knowledge.”<sup>114</sup>

From this it should be clear that, even if the eternal recurrence is a metaphysical doctrine, Nietzsche’s main concern is that it is the thought of the eternal recurrence that presents itself as a test for Zarathustra and all of those like him. This test will enable Zarathustra to determine whether he has succeeded in overcoming himself. However, before he is able to do this, he must confront all suffering. This confrontation will enable him to unearth the elements of nihilistic thinking that linger in his mind. Only then will he be able to affirm the eternal recurrence of the same and create new values.<sup>115</sup>

This seems to be further supported in Nietzsche’s final pronouncement of the eternal recurrence in *Zarathustra*. As this passage indicates, the thought of an eternity of joyous moments provides the impetus for overcoming the self. What section ten of “The

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<sup>114</sup> Nietzsche, *Zarathustra*, p. 273-274.

<sup>115</sup> Nietzsche, *Zarathustra*, p. 273-274.

“Drunken Song” does not indicate that the eternal recurrence is a fact of this world – that suffering has to exist.

Here Zarathustra is quite plainly speaking of the disposition of the one who would affirm the eternal recurrence of the same. He tells us that in the very moment when the “Drunken Song” is being composed, his world becomes perfect. However, the world itself could not have changed, in any meaningful way, in a physical sense. What has changed is Zarathustra’s perspective on the world such that the seemingly imperfect world becomes, for him, perfect.

Zarathustra also speaks of the desire one might have for the eternal recurrence. This desire speaks of the thought of the eternal recurrence as a psychological test of one’s character and/or disposition. Those who are strong enough to escape nihilism will love their fate and love the world. They would be joyous at the thought of the eternal recurrence of the same and would not just desire but will that their joy return eternally.

In this respect, even though the eternal recurrence may be a metaphysical doctrine, since we, as humans, cannot change the events that happen to us, the only hope that we have for overcoming pain, pity, guilt and so forth is through the perspective that we have of the events that occur to us and others. That is, all we have control over is the development of our character and our disposition towards ourselves, others and the world in general.

It might be objected here that the test that Zarathustra is preparing for is not a psychological test, but is rather a test that nature will provide. However, to suggest this, as will be discussed in the next chapter, would be to imply that nature has a plan for us.

Essentially, for Nietzsche, this would represent the return of religious thinking and this is exactly what Zarathustra is attempting to purge. That is, this line of thinking

implies that the universe is an organism that may intentionally perform actions – the universe is the new God.

This is one of the reasons that I have been arguing that the thought of the eternal recurrence of the same, for Nietzsche, is, most importantly, a psychological test. That is, the thought of the eternal recurrence of the same does not rely on the intentions of the universe, or God, but rather it is a self-test. If we would affirm the eternal recurrence of the same and say ‘Yes’ to all joy and all suffering, then we have transitioned from the defiant spirit of the lion to the spirit of the child that affirms all. Only the Overman is capable of this because he has overcome nihilism and has come to the realization that all is already perfect. Deleuze, however, would not agree.

### CHAPTER 3: On Deleuze's *Eternal Recurrence of the Different*

Although many interpreters of Nietzsche understand the eternal recurrence as an eternal recurrence of the same, Deleuze would like to persuade us that this is a misunderstanding of the eternal return. In fact, we should consider the eternal return as the return of only the different. According to Deleuze:

“We misinterpret the expression “eternal return” if we understand it as the “return of the same”...identity in the eternal return does not describe the nature of that which returns but, on the contrary, the fact of returning for that which differs. This is why the eternal return must be thought of as a synthesis; a synthesis of time and its dimensions, a synthesis of diversity and its reproduction, a synthesis of becoming and the being which is affirmed in becoming, a synthesis of double affirmation.”<sup>116</sup>

For Deleuze then, what Nietzsche meant by eternal recurrence of the same hinges on the meaning of the same. While many (if not most) Nietzsche scholars take the eternal recurrence of the same to mean that everything (every event, every experience, every feeling and so forth) recurs identically from one return to the next, Deleuze thinks that the only thing that remains the same is the fact of the eternal recurrence itself and of its repetition, but what the recurrence creates is difference.<sup>117,118</sup>

#### ***Forces and the Will to Power***

In *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, Deleuze explains that forces are brought into relation by chance, but there are no two forces that possess the same quantity (strength) so the interplay of forces is always an interplay of *unequal* forces.<sup>119</sup> The different strengths

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<sup>116</sup> Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 48.

<sup>117</sup> Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 189-191.

<sup>118</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Difference & Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), p. 41 and 300.

of forces (their quantitative difference) causes the quality of the forces themselves to be differentiated into active forces and reactive forces.<sup>120</sup>

Active forces, are the stronger (higher quantity) forces that dominate and command the weaker (lower quantity), reactive forces that are dominated and commanded. That is, active forces command while reactive forces obey.<sup>121</sup> As such, the active forces are the forces of the Master while the reactive forces are the forces of the Slave.<sup>122</sup> However, this does not mean that active forces always dominate reactive forces.

According to Deleuze, reactive forces may overwhelm active forces through the three forms of nihilistic thinking that Nietzsche sees as preventing humanity from overcoming their will to nothingness – *ressentiment*, *bad conscience* and *the aesthetic ideal*.<sup>123</sup> *Ressentiment* causes slaves to blame their own weakness on the strength of the master while *bad conscience* turns the blame for their own weakness inward, such that the slave sees himself as to blame. The *aesthetic ideal*, on the other hand, devalues life at its most fundamental level by making religious and philosophical values superior to life itself.<sup>124</sup> Through these three ways of thinking, reactive forces are able to dominate active forces by preventing active forces from being affirmed.

However, this does not mean, for Deleuze, that reactive forces can have a greater quantity of force than active forces. As Deleuze argues, if the reactive forces come to dominate active forces, it is through the reactive force subtracting something from the active force and hence the reactive force simply prevents the active force from being able

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<sup>119</sup> Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 40.

<sup>120</sup> Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 40.

<sup>121</sup> Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 40-41.

<sup>122</sup> Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 55.

<sup>123</sup> Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 34.

<sup>124</sup> Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 115-116.

to do what it does.<sup>125</sup> That is, nothing is added to the reactive force to make it stronger, but something is subtracted from the active force to make it weaker.

Deleuze then tells us that the forces at play are differentiated by the will to power.<sup>126</sup> That is, the quantity (strength) of a force and the quality (nature) of a force are determined by the will to power. Moreover, the will to power is also differentiated based on the qualities of affirmation, or the becoming-active of forces, and negation, or the becoming-reactive of forces.<sup>127</sup> Therefore, when active forces are dominated by reactive forces, it is through the relationship of reactive forces and the will to nothingness (nihilism) that active forces become reactive.<sup>128</sup>

### ***Nihilism***

According to Deleuze, there are three types of nihilistic thinking – ressentiment, bad conscience and the aesthetic ideal – that will eventually lead humanity to eradicate Master morality through the institution of Slave morality. For example, legislation is meant to prevent the Master from fully exercising his dominance by instituting penalties for the “excessive” exercise of that dominance. Eventually, legislation may turn the Master into a Slave himself.

According to Deleuze, this is bound to happen because human history, and the wills that constitute it, are essentially negative and reactive.<sup>129</sup> In order for nihilism to be overcome, nihilism itself must undergo three stages of development that release the affirmative will from the chains of negation.<sup>130</sup> In other words, reactive forces must be eliminated so that they are no longer able to prevent active forces from doing what they

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<sup>125</sup> Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 57.

<sup>126</sup> Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 7.

<sup>127</sup> Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 64-68.

<sup>128</sup> Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 69-70.

<sup>129</sup> Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 166-171.

<sup>130</sup> Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 147-152.



do. Once the three stages of nihilism have come to fruition, the eternal return will destroy all reactive forces allowing the affirmative will to flourish.

The first stage of nihilism, *negative nihilism*, arises through the fiction of a world beyond the world of experience that is created by a dependence on the religious and/or aesthetic ideal. The belief in this super-sensory world leads to a negation of life in the world of experience by instilling a sense of inferiority in humanity. That is, there is no need to value the reality of the world of experience when it is not the real world – it is the world of appearances. The real world is waiting for us in the beyond. Therefore, this life is not as valuable as the life humanity will have in the super-sensory world.<sup>131</sup>

Once humanity has realized the fictitious nature of this super-sensory world, once this super-sensory world has been revealed as an illusion, then humanity will find itself in the grips of *reactive nihilism*.<sup>132</sup> At this stage, all otherworldly values are lacking and one discovers, as Nietzsche would say, that “God is dead.”

Under the sway of this revelation, values themselves become devalued which leads humanity to the conclusion that there is nothing of value in this life – life is meaningless. As Deleuze argues, “Previously essence was opposed to appearance, life was turned into an appearance. Now essence is denied but appearance is retained: everything is merely appearance, life which is left to us remains for itself an appearance. The first sense of nihilism found in its principle the will to deny as the will to power. The second sense...finds its principle...in reactive forces reduced to themselves.”<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 147.

<sup>132</sup> Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 147-148.

<sup>133</sup> Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 148.

In other words, in the first stage, life in this world was an illusion but, in the second stage, all of life is an illusion. Therefore, in the second stage of nihilism, life continues its descent towards nothingness due to a lack of meaning and purpose.

In the third and final stage of nihilism, *passive nihilism*, the relationship between reactive forces and the will to nothingness is finally severed and because of this, nihilism itself may be overcome. In this stage, humanity would rather not will anything at all. Here, the reactive forces are themselves destroyed while the will to nothingness continues to persist.<sup>134</sup> It is the persistence of the will to nothingness that causes the self-destruction of the reactive forces, albeit in an active way. This process of active self-destruction, of becoming-active of forces, of transforming negation into affirmation, is Deleuze's eternal return.

### ***The Eternal Return***

According to Deleuze, since nihilism denies difference, overcoming nihilism requires the affirmation of difference.<sup>135</sup> This affirmation of difference leads to the development of two aspects of the eternal return of the different for Deleuze. The first aspect of the eternal return is the eternal return as a cosmological and physical doctrine wherein the passage of time may be explained.

In *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze tells us that the eternal return is “ungrounded” time itself.<sup>136</sup> That is, in order for time to pass, in order for the eternal return to produce the different, there must be a synthesis of the past, present and future

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<sup>134</sup> Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 150.

<sup>135</sup> Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 67-68

<sup>136</sup> Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 67.

such that “ungrounded” time incorporates these three dimensions of time simultaneously.

Using Deleuze’s words in *Nietzsche and Philosophy*:

“The infinity of past time means that becoming cannot have started to become, that it is not something that has become. But, not being something that has become it cannot be a becoming something. Not having become, it would already be what it is becoming – if it were becoming something. That is to say, past time being infinite, becoming would have attained its final state if it had one.”<sup>137</sup>

This synthesis is necessary, Deleuze argues, because, otherwise, the passage of time coupled with Nietzsche’s insistence on infinite past time would suggest that the eternal return cannot produce the different.<sup>138</sup> If time was not synthesized in this way, then becoming would not exist since all things would have already become what they were becoming. Therefore, for Deleuze, synthesized (ungrounded) time is becoming while the eternal return is being.

However, though the possibility of change may require the synthesis of the dimensions of time, it is not yet clear why the eternal return must be the return of the different. To make this argument, Deleuze turns to the second aspect of the eternal return – the eternal return as selective thought and selective being or the double selection of the eternal return.

As selective thought, Deleuze tells us, the eternal return eliminates reactive states that arise as a result of partial willing.<sup>139</sup> According to Deleuze, when it comes to willing, Nietzsche holds a view that is similar to the first formulation of Kant’s categorical imperative:<sup>140</sup> “...whatever you will, will it in such a way that you also will its eternal

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<sup>137</sup> Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 47.

<sup>138</sup> Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 82.

<sup>139</sup> Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 68-69.

<sup>140</sup> Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 68.

return.”<sup>141</sup> For Deleuze then, partial willing is willing anything that you would not will to return eternally while reactive states are those things that would be willed only partially.

The first selection of the eternal return then is the *thought* of the eternal return that prevents partial willing. Although this first selection eliminates the reactive states that are partially willed, for Deleuze, reactive forces are not eliminated. To eliminate these reactive forces, the eternal return performs a second selection.

The second selection, is the eternal return as selective being; the eternal return that produces becoming-active. This is the process through which the reactive forces destroy themselves.<sup>142</sup> As I have already discussed, for Deleuze, nihilism must be completed before it can be overcome. If nihilism arises because of the relationship between reactive forces and the will to nothingness, then to complete nihilism is to sever this relationship.

It is the eternal return that is responsible for the completion of nihilism through the destruction of the relationship between reactive forces and the will to nothingness. That is, the eternal return “...makes negation a negation of reactive forces themselves,”<sup>143</sup> ensuring that reactive forces deny themselves and thus become active. Therefore, since reactive forces do not have being<sup>144</sup> and the eternal return selects being, it can only select the active forces to return.<sup>145</sup>

This is why, on several occasions in *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze urges us to think of the cycle of the eternal return in terms of a spinning wheel that ejects the reactive in the course of its spinning. Because time is becoming, the selective being of

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<sup>141</sup> Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 68.

<sup>142</sup> Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 70.

<sup>143</sup> Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 70.

<sup>144</sup> Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 71-72.

<sup>145</sup> Deleuze argues here that the eternal return is the being of becoming and therefore must belong to only one kind of becoming. Because the reactive is nihilistic, it cannot be affirmed as the “being of the whole of becoming.” (p. 72). Only the active can be the being of the whole of becoming, so the active must be all that returns.

becoming, the eternal return, may be thought of as linear time joining with itself like a snake eating its own tail to form the cycle of the eternal return.<sup>146</sup> He writes:

“If eternal return is a wheel, then it must be endowed with a violent centrifugal movement which expels everything which 'can' be denied, everything which cannot pass the test. Nietzsche announces only a light punishment for those who do not 'believe' in eternal return: they will have, and be aware of, only an ephemeral life! They will be aware of themselves and know themselves for what they are: epiphenomena. This will be their absolute Knowledge. In this manner, negation as a consequence, as the result of full affirmation, consumes all that is negative, and consumes itself at the mobile centre of eternal return. For if eternal return is a circle, then Difference is at the centre and the Same is only on the periphery: it is a constantly decentred, continually tortuous circle which revolves only around the unequal.”<sup>147</sup>

Here Deleuze tells us that the centrifugal motion of the selective being of becoming causes negation to negate itself and all that is negative while that which is affirmed remains. In this sense, as time passes, reactive forces will exhibit their weakness and deny themselves leaving only active forces to flourish. What remains to be seen however, is whether or not this is the kind of eternal return that Nietzsche attributes to the Overman.

### ***Criticisms of Deleuze's Eternal Return of the Different***

The first criticism of Deleuze's eternal return of the different that I would like to address is that Nietzsche's texts, as they are written, do not speak of the eternal return of the different, but rather explicitly maintain that the eternal recurrence must be the recurrence of the same. Although it should be apparent from the renditions of Nietzsche's eternal recurrence of the same provided in the preceding chapter that there is little textual evidence to support Deleuze's claim that Nietzsche's eternal return should be

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<sup>146</sup> Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 121-122.

<sup>147</sup> Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 55.

interpreted as an eternal return of the different, this is not the only evidence in the texts that suggests that Deleuze's claim cannot be supported.

In this regard, Paolo D'Iorio's *The Eternal Return: Genesis and Interpretation* is exceptionally illuminating. From the outset, D'Iorio maintains that many of Deleuze's claims regarding Nietzsche's questioning of his own cyclical hypothesis<sup>148</sup> are seriously undermined because these claims rely on mistranslations in the texts that Deleuze read.<sup>149</sup>

In *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, Deleuze claims that even Nietzsche thought that the eternal return must be a return of the different because he seems to question the idea of the eternal return of the same while reading Vogt. According to Deleuze, this one note in Nietzsche's notebook should be taken as evidence that Nietzsche never intended for his readers to interpret the eternal return as one of the same.<sup>150</sup>

However, when D'Iorio recreates a conversation between Nietzsche and Johannes Gustav Vogt that compares Nietzsche's eternal return of the same to Vogt's ideas concerning the eternal return of the same and identical co-existing worlds, it is not so clear the Nietzsche was in fact questioning himself.

Using Nietzsche's personal notebook<sup>151</sup> and his personal copy of Vogt's *Force: A Realistic and Monistic Worldview*,<sup>152</sup> D'Iorio is able to show that an accurate translation of this note suggests that Nietzsche was questioning the validity of Vogt's cyclical hypothesis, not his own. According to D'Iorio, in this note, Nietzsche is discussing

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<sup>148</sup> Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 49.

<sup>149</sup> Paolo D'Iorio, "Eternal Return: Genesis and Interpretation," *The Agonist* 4, no. 1, (Spring 2011): 1-5 and 17-20. Accessed September 15, 2014.

[http://www.nietzschecircle.com/AGONIST/2011\\_03/essayDIORIO.html](http://www.nietzschecircle.com/AGONIST/2011_03/essayDIORIO.html)

<sup>150</sup> Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 49.

<sup>151</sup> Nietzsche's personal notebooks are housed at the Goethe-Schiller Archives in Weimar, Germany.

<sup>152</sup> Nietzsche's personal library is housed at the Duchess Anna Amalia Library of Weimar in Weimar, Germany.

Vogt's claim that the eternal return of the same implies an infinite number of perfectly identical coexisting worlds.<sup>153</sup> After laying out Vogt's argument, Nietzsche asks, "Is it necessary for me to admit this?"<sup>154</sup>

Unfortunately, according to D'Iorio, this question is rendered slightly differently in the French copy of *Will to Power* that Deleuze read. In Deleuze's copy, this question is translated as, "is it necessary to admit this?"<sup>155</sup> Although this difference seems rather insignificant, as D'Iorio argues, it changes the meaning behind this question quite dramatically.

In the first instance, it is apparent that Nietzsche sees a difference between his formulation of the eternal return of the same and Vogt's formulation of the same concept such that Nietzsche thinks his formulation does not suffer from the same errors as Vogt's formulation. In the second instance, it appears as though Nietzsche thinks that his formulation of the eternal return of the same corresponds exactly to Vogt's formulation and both may be flawed. When reading the French translation, it is easy to see why Deleuze thought that Nietzsche was criticizing his own idea.

What the proper translation suggests is that Nietzsche was committed to his conception of the eternal recurrence of the same, he was just not certain what consequences would be born from this hypothesis. This is not the same as saying that Nietzsche did not support the eternal return of the same. This, however, is not the only mistranslation in Deleuze's copy of *Will to Power* that leads Deleuze down the wrong path.

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<sup>153</sup> D'Iorio, p. 2.

<sup>154</sup> D'Iorio, p. 2.

<sup>155</sup> D'Iorio, p. 2.

D'Iorio also points out, in a footnote,<sup>156</sup> that the concept of the will to power cannot be “both a compliment of force and something internal”<sup>157</sup> to force without forcing Nietzsche’s work to adopt a kind of dualism that Nietzsche does not support.<sup>158</sup>

D'Iorio argues that the paragraph that Deleuze quotes here contains the phrase “innere Welt” in the original manuscript which is translated as inner will in the French translation that Deleuze read, while the accurate translation of this phrase is inner world.<sup>159</sup> According to D'Iorio then, the will to power is not the inner *will* of force, but rather, the inner *world* of force.

Although this may seem like an insignificant point to make, as D'Iorio argues, Deleuze’s understanding of the eternal return is dependent upon his reading of the will to power.<sup>160</sup> That is, the production of difference is intimately tied to the claim that the will to power is an internal element of force. As Deleuze writes:

“Forces in relation reflect a simultaneous double genesis: the reciprocal genesis of their difference in quantity and the absolute genesis of their respective qualities...it is always through the will to power that one force prevails over others and dominates or commands them...[the] synthesis of forces forms the eternal return...the forces in it [the eternal return] necessarily reproduce themselves in conformity with its principle.”<sup>161</sup>

From this we can see that if the will to power is not an internal will of forces, the difference that Deleuze sees as the product of the eternal return cannot come about.

According to the above quote, since the relationship between forces is what is supposed to generate difference in the eternal return, there must be a mechanism that makes some forces command and others obey. For Deleuze, this mechanism is the will to power. The

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<sup>156</sup> D'Iorio, footnote 7, p. 3.

<sup>157</sup> Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 49.

<sup>158</sup> D'Iorio, footnote 7, p. 3.

<sup>159</sup> D'Iorio, footnote 7, p. 3.

<sup>160</sup> D'Iorio, footnote 7, p. 3.

<sup>161</sup> Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 51.



internal will of the force determines whether the force is strong or weak (quantity) and whether the force is active or reactive (quality).

If, on the other hand, the will to power is the inner world of the force, there is nothing in Deleuze's eternal return that guarantees the production of difference as the production of difference requires that forces be determined in quantity and quality such that the interplay of the forces produce the different. That is, if there is nothing to distinguish forces as strong and weak and active and reactive, then the eternal return could conceivably return that which is the same.

In addition to the translation issues that D'Iorio points out, there are other significant textual reasons to suggest that Deleuze was mistaken regarding the claim that, for Nietzsche, forces have the qualities of active and reactive that are ascribed to them. The first is that, as D'Iorio argues, Nietzsche never does use the words active and reactive to describe forces. Nietzsche does write of active and reactive phenomena, but he does not write of active and reactive forces.<sup>162</sup> Moreover, in *Will to Power* Nietzsche himself says that there is only one kind of force.<sup>163</sup>

As should be evident by now, the claim that Nietzsche did not understand the eternal return as the return of the same is in serious question based on an examination of the texts that Nietzsche wrote.

But, perhaps Nietzsche was wrong to suggest that the Overman should affirm the eternal recurrence of the same and Deleuze's conception of the eternal return of the different as cosmological and physical doctrine and the eternal return as selective being provides a better way to overcome nihilism.. For surely, as Ashley Woodward argues, if

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<sup>162</sup> D'Iorio, p. 4.

<sup>163</sup> Nietzsche, *Will to Power*, p. 432.

Deleuze's argument is the better path to the Overman, Nietzsche would not take issue with Deleuze's interpretation of the eternal return.<sup>164</sup> That is, if affirming the eternal return of the different is more successful at overcoming nihilism, then this is the version of the eternal return that the Overman should affirm.

Briefly then, Deleuze's conception of the eternal return as cosmological and physical doctrine is that ungrounded time is becoming, and the eternal return is being, through the passage of time. By ungrounded time, Deleuze means virtual time. That is, time which does not correspond to the linear time of the actual world. It is in this sense that time is able to pass for Deleuze.

Linear time in the actual world proceeds from moment to moment and is generally thought of as discrete packets of time which we call seconds, minutes, hours – moments. But, this poses a problem when considering the passage of time, for how could time pass if each of these moments contains within themselves the potential to be a past moment, present moment and a future moment. If past, present and future are considered as the dimensions of time, there must be a time that simultaneously incorporates all of these dimensions. Otherwise, a present moment could not become a past moment and we would not have a future moment that would become a present moment. Nothing would evolve as it would already be what it was meant to become. This incorporated, dimensionless time is virtual, or ungrounded time for Deleuze.

Moreover, the common experience of relative time (not the relative time of Albert Einstein's physical theory) seems to suggest that this is may be the case. For instance, if

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<sup>164</sup> Ashley Woodward, "Deleuze, Nietzsche, and the Overcoming of Nihilism", *Continental Philosophy Review*, 46, no. 1 (2013), p. 134. Accessed January 23, 2015. [http://journals1.scholarsportal.info/details/13872842/v46i0001/115\\_dnatoon.xml?q=ashley+woodward&search\\_in=AUTHOR&date\\_from=&date\\_to=&sort=relevance&sub=](http://journals1.scholarsportal.info/details/13872842/v46i0001/115_dnatoon.xml?q=ashley+woodward&search_in=AUTHOR&date_from=&date_to=&sort=relevance&sub=)

you put your hand on a hot stove for a minute, it seems like an hour. If you sit with a pretty girl for an hour, it seems like a minute.<sup>165</sup>

What this suggests is that the discrete packet of time that we call a moment in the actual world may be experienced as slower, faster and/or in exact correspondence with virtual, ungrounded time. Although we may experience actual time in this way, virtual time is “ticking” away at steady rate from which the experience of actual time deviates. This is why Deleuze considers virtual, ungrounded time to be an operator on the “repetition of instants [infinitesimally small moments]”<sup>166</sup> as virtual time ticks on whether we observe it or not. When we differentiate time, virtual time is operating on instants to produce the past, present and future. Additionally, ungrounded time is becoming since each passing present moment produces something that is related to the past and the future, but is not the same thing as it was in the past or will be in the future – it is different.

However, as Woodward<sup>167</sup> argues, Deleuze’s conception of the eternal return as cosmological and physical doctrine reinstates the very nihilism that Nietzsche was seeking to overcome. The problem of nihilism in Deleuze’s eternal return as cosmological and physical doctrine arises from the hidden assumption that the world is a living organism which can be inferred from Deleuze’s claim that forces have an inner will.

Since, for Deleuze, the differentiation of time into past, present and future, would seem to be the result of the internal will of the forces at play in time itself, these forces themselves seem to have the capability of determining the world according to the

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<sup>165</sup> This analogy has been historically attributed to Albert Einstein, however, there is some question regarding its authenticity. Nevertheless, it is perhaps an ideal analogy for the purposes of this thesis.

<sup>166</sup> Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 70-71.

<sup>167</sup> Woodward, p. 134.

intention of difference. For Nietzsche, this is a form of religious thinking that should be avoided. As Nietzsche argues (as quoted in Woodward):

“If the world had a goal, it could not fail to have been reached by now. If it had an unintended final state, this too could not fail to have been reached. If it were capable at all of standing still and remaining frozen, of ‘being’, if for just one second in all its becoming it had this capacity for ‘being’, then in turn all becoming would long since be over and done with, and so would all thinking, all ‘mind’. The fact of ‘mind’ as a becoming proves that the world has no goal and no final state and is incapable of being. But the old habit of thinking about all events in terms of goals, and about the world in terms of a guiding, creating God, is so powerful that the thinker is hard-pressed not to think of the goallessness of the world as, again, an intention. This idea—the idea that the world is intentionally evading a goal and even has the means expressly to prevent itself from being drawn into a cyclical course—is what occurs to all those who would like to impose upon the world the faculty for eternal novelty, that is, impose upon a finite, determinate force of unchanging magnitude like ‘the world’ the miraculous capacity to refashion its shapes and states infinitely. They would like the world, if no longer God, to be capable of divine creative force, an infinite force of transformation; they would like the world to prevent itself at will from falling back into one of its earlier shapes, to possess not only the intention but also the means of guarding itself from all repetition. The world is, thus, to control every one of its movements at every movement so as to avoid goals, final states, repetitions—and whatever else the consequences of such an unforgivably crazy way of thinking and wishing may be. This is still the old religious way of thinking and wishing, a kind of longing to believe that in some way or other the world does, after all, resemble the beloved old, infinite, boundlessly creative God—that in some way or other ‘the old God still lives’—that longing of Spinoza’s expressed in the words ‘deus sive natura’ (he even felt ‘natura sive deus’).”<sup>168,169</sup>

To Nietzsche then, to see the world itself, or ungrounded time in Deleuze’s case, as an infinite creator that only produces difference is to reinstate a religious mode of thinking that appears to be the result of wishful thinking rather than an assessment of the actual

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<sup>168</sup> Woodward, p. 133.

<sup>169</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Writing from the Late Notebooks*, ed. Rüdiger Bittner, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 24.

(finite) world. It is through this kind of religious thinking that we may fall into the trap of nihilism.

Even for Deleuze, religious thinking causes us to fall into the habits of resentment (weakness of the slave is blamed on the master), bad conscience (weakness is blamed on the self) and the aesthetic ideal (life is devalued by the superiority of religious/philosophical values) which allow reactive forces to dominate active forces. And, as Deleuze argues, these ways of thinking are the ways of thinking that lead to negative, reactive and passive nihilism. Consequently, it appears as though a Deleuzian deliverance from nihilism may reinstate nihilism itself.

To be fair to Deleuze, he might insist that forces, though possessing an internal will, do not intentionally produce difference; difference is just a consequence of the relationship between forces and the will to power. The difference engine, the eternal return (ungrounded time) produces the different because the will to power differentiates all forces. It is just a physical mechanism like any other that we experience. However, as I will argue shortly, when we consider the eternal return as selective being in conjunction with Deleuze's arguments that ungrounded time exists in the virtual world and not the actual world, this may present us with a stronger claim to Deleuze's religiosity in the eternal return of the different.

Deleuze's conception of the eternal return as selective being is that the eternal return severs the relationship between the will to nothingness and reactive forces such that the reactive forces are destroyed by the will to nothingness by ascribing to them a becoming-active. Because all forces are now active forces, it can be said that the eternal return selects the active and rejects the reactive – the reactive does not return.

Although Woodward does not support all of the criticisms that Peter Hallward has leveled against Deleuze, there is one particular criticism that Woodward claims is relevant and accurate.<sup>170</sup> According to Woodward:

“...Deleuze’s metaphysics identifies being with creation and affirms a pure process of creativity which is only *constrained* by the things it creates (creatures). Deleuze’s philosophy continually orients itself “out of this world” insofar as it views the things of this world (actual, created things) as having no authentic being, and as no more than constraints to be overcome...overcoming nihilism means the destruction of the creature man and all the life it has known. This destructive process takes place through the eternal return as selective being, which...means the destruction of creatures (reactive forces) so that creative processes (active forces) may reign unhampered. Created things appear only once, while creative processes are what return eternally.”<sup>171</sup>

For Woodward then, one of the consequences of the eternal return as selective being is that life is not affirmed, but rather is ejected by the difference engine. In this way, the process of creativity is given precedence over life itself. This is something that runs counter to what Nietzsche thought was the main point of all of his philosophy.

For Nietzsche, herd morality demeans life and he was seeking to affirm life. Moreover, and more problematically, the pure becoming that Deleuze seeks seems to be found not in the actual world of experience (as Nietzsche would have it), but rather in the virtual world.

One of the reasons that Nietzsche seems to have for formulating his philosophy is the attempt to find joy in every moment of this life in the actual world. For him, herd morality will fail to provide this feeling of joy in the actual world since it teaches man that life in the actual world is suffering and joy will only be found in a world outside of this one. For Nietzsche then, it is important that we find a way to affirm the suffering that

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<sup>170</sup> Woodward, p. 135.

<sup>171</sup> Woodward, p. 135.

we feel so that it becomes a means of achieving joy in the actual world. To presuppose a perfect virtual world outside the actual world of experience is therefore detrimental to man in that it prevents him from seeing that the actual world is the perfect world.<sup>172</sup> For Nietzsche then, there is no need to wait for a joyous life outside this world when we can achieve a joyous life in this world.

I would argue then that what Deleuze has done in formulating his eternal return as selective being is to ask us to wait for our joy by placing the process of creating that joy outside of the actual world. In other words, he has created the new heaven, albeit a mechanistic heaven. This may not be the heaven of the Judeo-Christian God, but it is a perfect world outside of the world of experience that promises to reject all that is reactive and opposes our joy. We are not the creators of our own joy, we must wait for the eternal return of the different to create that joy; only when it does, we will not be here to experience it.

Deleuze seems to imply this himself when he speaks of the eternal return of the different as “the repetition that saves.”<sup>173</sup> What this suggests is that we are not the creators of our own joy, but rather something outside of us (or more accurately, something outside of our control) must create this joy for us. Because we cannot stop the wheel from moving, that is, we cannot stop the process of the eternal return, it appears as though the eternal return may be a liberation from outside the self.

This seems inconsistent with a reading of Nietzsche. Nietzsche wants to help us overcome ourselves, to free ourselves from ourselves and others, to question ourselves and others and to affirm our own will as a means of overcoming nihilism. This process is

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<sup>172</sup> Nietzsche, *Zarathustra*, p. 435.

<sup>173</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Pure Immanence: Essays on a Life*, trans. Anne Boyman, (New York: Urzone, Inc., 2001), p. 90-91.

driven by our will. It is active. However, Deleuze's purification through the eternal return suggests that overcoming, becoming and so forth are passive processes driven by the eternal return of pure affirmation.

Not only would Nietzsche have vehemently opposed this, but he would have suggested that this way of thinking promotes religious modes of thinking that ensnare us in the trap of nihilism. That is, the argument for salvation through the other worldly demeans life in the actual world.

Furthermore, it is questionable whether we can ever achieve the kind of joy in a human life that Nietzsche is proposing. If Woodward (through Hallward) is correct that Deleuze's process of creation is given precedence over life in the actual world through the destruction of reactive forces (creatures) it stands to reason that we cannot experience joy since we will not be around for its creation. That is, the eternal return may create joy, but we cannot experience it because a part of its creation is the destruction of us!

In some ways, this is an even more depressing thought than the one proposed by Christianity. With Christianity all we have to do is bear our burdens well and wait for joy to come in the afterlife. With Deleuze, we will never experience joy. Joy may be created, but we will be destroyed in the process.

It might be argued here that the virtual world that Deleuze proposes is just as real as the actual world that we experience and therefore is not the same kind of world that is presupposed by Christians. This may be what Deleuze would like to argue, but there is just as little evidence to support this claim as there is to support the claim that God and heaven exist. Of course, we might consider that the virtual world is the world of thought and therefore the assertion that the virtual world is not outside of this world seems justified. However, even with this consideration, given Deleuze's insistence that the



virtual world is the creator of difference, it still seems as though Deleuze is creating a dualism that Nietzsche would not support. Moreover, it speaks to a lion nature in that creating difference through thought is the project of the private thinker that would oppose outside thought with outside thought for the sake of producing the different.

In other words, Deleuze seems to be saying that the virtual world is the world of the master while the actual world is the world of the slave. This Nietzsche may not disagree with, but what I think he would not support is the notion that we must choose either to the exclusion of the other.

For Deleuze, a life lived in the virtual world is a life lived freely while a life lived in the actual world is a life of subjugation. However, for Nietzsche, a life lived exclusively in either of these worlds is not the life of the Overman. That is, the Overman does not live in either the virtual world nor the actual world, he lives in both simultaneously.

It seems then that the eternal return as cosmological and physical doctrine and as the selective being are not as well supported as Deleuze would like. Furthermore, as Catherine Malabou has argued, the eternal return as selective being may be Deleuze's violent reaction against Hegel and as such, this may indicate lingering, underlying resentment in Deleuze.<sup>174</sup>

According to Malabou, one of Deleuze's primary motivations for positing the eternal return as the return of difference is that he would like to overcome the work of Hegel and the residues of Hegelian negation that still persist.<sup>175</sup> For Deleuze, the

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<sup>174</sup> Catherine Malabou, "The Eternal Return and the Phantom of Difference," trans. Arne DeBoever, *Parrhesia*, no. 10 (2010): p. 28.

<sup>175</sup> Malabou, p. 24-25.

synthesis achieved through a double negation does not signify affirmation, but rather the most drastic of negations. That is, Hegel sees difference as negative.<sup>176</sup>

Deleuze, on the other hand, would like to claim that his philosophy is one of pure affirmation that leaves no room for the negative through the eternal return of the different. Thus, his philosophy honours the positive and eliminates the negative. That is, for Deleuze, affirmation and positivity stand in direct confrontation with negation and negativity where positivity is understood as active force and negativity is understood as reactive force.<sup>177</sup>

In this way, Hegel, or more accurately, the Hegelian dialectic, to Deleuze, bestows honour on reactive forces when honour should be bestowed, according to Deleuze, on active forces. In another way, if nihilism results from victimization through reactivity, then to overcome nihilism requires that we become victors through the affirmation of active forces.

However, as Malabou points out, Nietzsche's line of thinking requires that we see nothing as either good or bad, good or evil, positive or negative. Therefore, for Nietzsche, there really is no active versus reactive forces, there are simply interplaying forces that are all of the same ilk.<sup>178</sup> Whether one is victimized through nihilism or is able to overcome nihilism, for Nietzsche, depends on, as I will discuss later, the thinker's perspective on and disposition towards the world. As a result, Malabou comes to the

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<sup>176</sup> Malabou, p. 23-24.

<sup>177</sup> Malabou, p. 25.

<sup>178</sup> Malabou, p. 25-26.

conclusion that Deleuze, rather than eschewing reactivity and overcoming nihilism, has instead put his own reactivity on display.<sup>179</sup>

Thus far, we have seen that Deleuze's conception of the eternal return of the different as cosmological and physical doctrine appears to rest on shaky philosophical grounds. Additionally, I have tried to show that Deleuze's eternal return of the different as selective being, is just as uncertain. Since, in both formulations it seems as though Deleuze has reinstated nihilism where he intended to overcome it, what we are left with then is the possibility that Deleuze was correct regarding the selective thought of the eternal return as the means for overcoming nihilism. However, this too is in doubt.

Recall that Deleuze has tried to persuade us that the thought of the eternal return of the different eliminates partial willing. He also defines partial willing as anything that you would not will to return. However, if only difference is able to return, then this statement seems confused. Either he is admitting here that the eternal return is one of the same and hence partial willing will cause the return of the reactive so we should not do it, or he is still committed to the eternal return of the different, in which case, it does not matter if we will partially as all partial willing (being reactive) will not return anyway.

Of course, I may be reading too much into this and perhaps I am confused, but if I am correct, then it seems that all of Deleuze's aspects of the eternal return of the different as a metaphysical doctrine may be called into question on philosophical grounds. But perhaps there is a way to frame the eternal return of the different as a psychological process that does not suffer from these same problems.

Recall that one of the issues with the eternal return of the different as a metaphysical doctrine is that it may reinstate nihilism as it is a process that we, as beings,

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<sup>179</sup> Malabou, p. 28.

do not have any control over. Really, this line of reasoning is that the eternal return of the different seems to strip the being of the eternal return from its agency. That is, the eternal return of the different appears to be a process that happens to us rather than a process that we as beings actively engage in.

As James Williams in *Gilles Deleuze's Difference and Repetition: A Critical Introduction and Guide*, suggests "Pure difference happens to us – it is not the result of direct action."<sup>180</sup> In other words, we, as beings, do not appear to have any control over or input in the process of the eternal return of the different. If this is the case, then it might be fair to suggest that Deleuze does not assign the power to change to the human being themselves, but rather the eternal return of the different. In this sense, we are still relying on a process outside of ourselves to save us and because of this, nihilism may rear its ugly head again. In other words, it won't matter what I do or don't do, the eternal return of the different will save me therefore this world is mere appearance and is meaningless.

One thing that should be noted at this time is that all of this relies on Deleuze's sense of the eternal return as a metaphysical concept.<sup>181</sup> However, as I have argued, although the eternal recurrence may be a metaphysical process for Deleuze; willing the eternal recurrence is more importantly a psychological process for Nietzsche so perhaps the eternal return of the different may be expressed as a psychological process as well which may restore a form of agency to the human being that it operates on.

In "Willing the Event: Expressive Agency in Deleuze's *Logic of Sense*," Sean Bowden argues that, at least in *Logic and Sense*, Deleuze does seem to assign a form of agency to human beings even though events, such as the process of the eternal return of

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<sup>180</sup> James Williams, *Gilles Deleuze's Difference and Repetition: A Critical Introduction and Guide*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), p. 91.

<sup>181</sup> Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 47-49.

the different, are something that happens to us. He argues that, although Deleuze see intention and willing as “...’effects’ of ‘sense-event[s]’ and not as the psychological causes of actions,”<sup>182</sup> it is through the concept of expressive agency that is implicit in *Logic of Sense* that we may be able to say that this or that action is indeed my action.

That is, Deleuze holds that humans, and their psychological states, are ontologically distinguishable from the events that happen to them and as a result, psychological states cannot cause events. Although, if I and those who witness my actions recognize me in the action, then I have established expressive agency and I am able to say that I performed that action – that action is mine. Moreover, if I am worthy of the event, that is if I will the event, then these actions may be said to be my actions.

Using the example of taking a dog to play outside, Bowden shows how it might be that my intention to provide the dog with exercise may not coincide with the actions that I subsequently perform when my dog disobeys me and I begin to train him. According to Bowden, I will continue to believe that I am providing my dog with exercise (even though I am in fact training him) until someone else points out that I am training the dog.<sup>183</sup>

As a result, because I have the intention to provide my dog with exercise and my action of training the dog does not correspond to this intention, it is clear that my intention (psychological state) could not have caused my action. What causes my “action,” the sense-event, is the dominant force of wanting to train my dog that acts through me.<sup>184</sup>

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<sup>182</sup> Sean Bowden, “Willing the Event”: Expressive Agency in Deleuze’s Logic of Sense,” *Critical Horizons* 15, no. 3, (November 2014), p. 232.

<sup>183</sup> Bowden, p. 236.

<sup>184</sup> Bowden, p. 236.

If, however, I were to express the intention to train my dog and others confirm that I am training my dog, then, through expressive agency, I may say that the action is mine. Further, even if my intention does not coincide with my action, when I recognize that my witness is correct that I have been training my dog, then again, I may say that the action of training the dog is mine.<sup>185</sup>

However, this seems problematic for several reasons. First, it assumes that intentions do not change. For instance, when I have the intention to provide my dog with exercise and then begin to train him, the assumption is that I still have the intention of providing him with exercise. Perhaps, however, my initial intention is actively expressed by my taking him outside and playing fetch with him. When he unexpectedly takes off down the street after the neighbour's cat, my intention may change such that I now intend to take this opportunity to train him. If this is the case, it is much less clear that my intention does not cause my action.

Secondly, Bowden's explanation of agency in Deleuze does not entirely account for a freedom that we would typically assign to agents in that it relies too heavily on others witnessing my actions and coming to a consensus on what actions I am performing in order to determine if those actions are mine. Now, Bowden does suggest that I may disregard the witness' account if I have reason to believe that their account is biased in some way that makes their account unreliable, but this is not really helpful in determining if the action I have performed is mine.

For example, suppose I am President George W. Bush (when he was in office) and that I decide to use enhanced interrogation techniques on prisoners with the intention of keeping the nation safe. Some of my staff and I will suggest that I have interrogated the

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<sup>185</sup> Bowden, p. 239.

prisoners while some other staff and the prisoners in question may suggest that I have tortured the prisoners. Since expressive agency requires that my account matches the account of those who have witnessed the event, and we are in potentially equal disagreement, I'm not sure that we could say that an action had been performed by anyone at all.

That is, there is no discernible way to determine (especially if those on both sides are of equal number) which interpretation of the event is correct. Clearly I will see the side of the dissenters as biased (they are all Democrats unwilling to get their hands dirty to keep the nation safe) so I, and those who agree with me, will say that I have interrogated the prisoners. However, the prisoners and those who side with their account will say that my side is biased because we are trying to stay in office and get re-elected hence the phrase "enhanced interrogation" and therefore I have tortured the prisoners. But, none of this seems to tell any of us what action has actually been performed. Nor does it account for which action I could say was my action. That is, an event has certainly occurred, but there is no way to be sure that the actions performed in the event are mine.

That being said, Bowden does remind us that Deleuze must have in mind some sense of agency that involves intention since he urges us to become "worthy of the event" by willing the event.<sup>186</sup> For Deleuze, willing the event is to will a sense event such that the sense-event causes willing to be created in us.<sup>187</sup> That is, although we cannot will the occurrence of the specific event, we can find, through the event, some aspect that is consistent with the will that we would like the event to express.

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<sup>186</sup> Bowden, p. 241.

<sup>187</sup> Bowden, p. 241.

In this sense, if I will, as President Bush, to promote the security of my nation, then the event constituted in the used of enhanced interrogation techniques may be consistent with my will and my claim that I have interrogated the prisoners will be validated. As a result, it does seem as though willing the event and expressive agency do account for a sense of agency that might be present in affirming the eternal return of the different.

On the other hand, I would point out here that this form of agency in affirming the eternal return of the different may not escape the grips of nihilism as it still requires that I consider forces external to myself as an authority and as a means for understanding my actions. Essentially, this form of agency may suffice for the slave, the camel, the master, the lion and the nomad, but it is not the agency of the Overman.

According to John Richardson in “Nietzsche’s Freedoms” there are three forms of self, agency and freedom that may come to constitute a self that is an autonomous agent, or in Nietzsche’s words, a “sovereign individual.” Firstly, there is a freedom, agency and self that belongs to the realm of the camel or slave and the lion or master – the freedom of unifying the drives and the agency and corresponding self that is involved in this unification.<sup>188</sup>

According to this first sense of freedom, agency and self, we are a collection of drives (or forces for Deleuze) that cause events to happen and that give rise to our feeling of “freedom of will” although this freedom of will is just an appearance since we are actually slaves to the drives that operate through us.

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<sup>188</sup> John Richardson, “Nietzsche’s Freedoms,” in *Nietzsche on Autonomy and Freedom*, eds. Ken Gemes and Simon May, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 134-135.



For Nietzsche, initially, our drives are all of varying strengths such that at some times, some drives dominate while others obey and at other times, different drives dominate while the others obey. Our feeling of free will results from our feeling that there are some drives whose interests are being expressed while there are other drives whose interests are being suppressed.<sup>189</sup>

Unifying the drives then lies in one (a single) drive or a group of governing drives that have its/their interests represented in all cases such that it/they always dominate the other drives. This leads to a stable system of drives that enables the human with these drives to be sustained by being under the command of a ruling drive. Each drive is ascribed a “position” in the hierarchy of drives which gives rise to the stable system of drives that is the preliminary self.<sup>190</sup>

This, for Nietzsche, is freedom in the sense that the commanding drive may use all of the human’s resources, including, but not limited to the other drives, to sustain itself (and the human life) while not being hampered by other drives that may assert themselves on him. In this sense then, the self as agent is the collection of unified drives.<sup>191</sup> What determines whether one is a slave or a master then depends on whether the dominant drive (or governing group) is one that tends to cause one to obey other wills or command other wills.

So far, it seems, Deleuze would agree that beings have this kind of freedom and may have agency and a self in the sense presented by Nietzsche. However, according to Richardson, Nietzsche also argues for a higher order form of freedom, self and agency

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<sup>189</sup> Richardson, p. 134-135.

<sup>190</sup> Richardson, p. 138-139.

<sup>191</sup> Richardson, p. 139-140.

which are “naturalized and de-moralized.”<sup>192</sup> This is the form of freedom, agency and self that Deleuze might argue is present when one is worthy of the event or is willing the event.

This second order freedom, agency and self is the unified collection of forces operating through deliberation and choice.<sup>193</sup> The capacity for this deliberation and choice arises, according to Nietzsche, from the socialized environment within which humans are embedded and competes with the unified collection of drives as a new drive itself.

Thus, language and consciousness emerge from the social embeddedness of the drives themselves and operate to oppose the unified drives as a means of usefully sustaining the human in the social context.<sup>194</sup> In short, the unified collection of drives urge me to perform a certain action while language and consciousness remind me why I should not perform that action.

For example, a functioning society prohibits murder because it opposes the drives of others to sustain themselves. To sustain myself, my drives may urge me to commit murder (when perhaps it is not the only option) but, language and consciousness will oppose these drives by reminding me and compelling me to not commit murder. In this way, language and consciousness suppress the interest of the drives and hence promote the freedom to do or not do. The self then results from this second order freedom as the feeling that the ability to suppress the drives has of itself as a commander of the drives.<sup>195</sup>

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<sup>192</sup> Richardson, p. 140.

<sup>193</sup> Richardson, p. 140-141.

<sup>194</sup> Richardson, p. 142.

<sup>195</sup> Richardson, p. 145.

If this second order freedom results in the suppression of the drives to conform with the drives of others in society for the sake of conforming (one way to sustain the self) and hence preserving herd morality, then this is the second order freedom of the slave. If, however, a consideration of the drives of the community leads the drive to contravene the drives of others in society for the sake of breaking with herd morality (another way to sustain the self), then this is the second order freedom of the master.

This is also akin to Deleuze's meaning regarding willing the event in that what is most important in this second order freedom is that "I must align my agency with a unity that is achieved in my drives."<sup>196</sup> This seems to me to be just another way of saying that to will an event is to find an aspect of the event that is consistent with the will that I would like the event to express. Moreover, this freedom, agency and self still preserve Deleuze's ontological distinction between human beings and events. However, this is not the highest order freedom, agency and self that Nietzsche urges us to develop.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> order freedom, agency and self – the freedom, agency and self of the Overman – are achieved through "self-genealogy." While second order freedom is still constrained by a consideration of the drives of others, the freedom of the Overman lies in noticing, uncovering, questioning and revaluating the interests and values expressed through the individual drives themselves such that they are all replaced with drives assigned the values that he has given them. This self genealogy, provided it is done successfully, finally frees the drives from the interests of others, but moreover, gives rise to a self as agent that is free from the compulsion of the drives such that individual drives

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<sup>196</sup> Richardson, p. 148.

may be overwritten by assigning to them new values and interests of the Overman's choosing.<sup>197</sup>

That is, the drive to sustain the self in a social context is no longer commander, but has been replaced by the drive to notice, uncover, question and choose values and interests. This drive is the drive that expresses the interest of the self in itself.

Although this self, even with this 3<sup>rd</sup> order freedom is still a fiction of sorts, in the sense that the drives still cause the action of the being composed of them, and hence still maintains Deleuze's ontological distinction, it goes beyond Deleuze's sense of freedom and agency in an important way by making the self the sole authority over the self. That is, it restores to the self the power of the will. Deleuze may urge us to will the event by finding in it something that corresponds to the will (and hence the will is dependent on the event) but, Nietzsche urges us to will our will regardless of the event.

Oddly enough though, this sounds a lot like Deleuze's arguments for the eternal return of the different, although not as a metaphysical process, but rather as a psychological one. The first selection of the return eliminates partial willing (the unification of the drives under one commanding drive or group of drives) while the second selection produces becoming active (the development of deliberation and consciousness).

However, what Deleuze fails to see in Nietzsche is that the eternal return requires a third selection, the revaluing of the individual drives to sustain the self for the self by restoring its power of will through a complete collection of revalued drives. It is this third selection that results in the Overman's affirmation of the eternal return of the same.

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<sup>197</sup> Richardson, p. 151-152.

That is, the lion overwrites his drives so that the dominant drives of deliberation and consciousness will always return, but produce different drives in the sense that they contravene social norms and allow for the development of the drives of noticing, uncovering, questioning and revaluing. In this sense, the lion will affirm the eternal return of the different, **until** the dominant drive becomes the ones that eternally express the will that is the self for itself. When the dominant drives of noticing, uncovering, questioning and revaluing come to dominate, then one is the Overman.

When one has achieved the metamorphosis to the Overman and when all of the drives have been successfully revalued, then these revalued drives are the expression of the powerful will of itself for itself which becomes the will that henceforth returns eternally the same. This complete collection of revalued drives are the drives of the Overman. All of his drives express his will of itself for itself and hence he is joyous. He would affirm the return of the same eternally because it has led to his joy.

Assuming then that Deleuze's eternal return of the different is not solely a metaphysical doctrine, and given that it seems as though we cannot support Deleuze's claim that Nietzsche thought the eternal return is the return of the different, we are left with two distinct versions of the eternal return as psychological doctrine. That is, we are left to determine which psychological perspective on the eternal return is justified.

In this regard, and as I have already hinted at above, I will argue both – but, whichever version one would embrace will depend on whether one has the perspective of the Overman or the perspective of the nomad. Moreover, in the following chapter, I will try to show that my argument for the eternal return as a psychological process is strengthened when one takes the perspectives of the nomad and the Overman into consideration.



## CHAPTER 4: Perspectivism and the Eternal Recurrence

It is well known that Nietzsche considered his philosophy to be an example of perspectivism. According to perspectivism, objective truth and objective knowledge, as we commonly conceive them, will never be possible since the thinker will always examine truth and knowledge through the lens of their own experiences, feelings and reason. To deny perspectivism is create a world of fiction and to render the intellect futile. Making thought reliable then, requires that we understand our own perspective and how it impacts our thoughts. According to Nietzsche:

“To renounce belief in one’s ego, to deny one’s own ‘reality’ – what a triumph! not merely over the senses, over appearance, but a much higher kind of triumph, a violation and cruelty against *reason* – a voluptuous pleasure that reaches its height when the ascetic self-contempt and self-mockery of reason declares: ‘*there is a realm of truth and being, but reason is excluded from it!*’. . . let us be on guard against the dangerous old conceptual fiction that posited a ‘pure, will-less, painless, timeless knowing subject’; let us guard against the snares of such contradictory concepts as ‘pure reason,’ ‘absolute spirituality,’ ‘knowledge in itself’: these always demand that we should think of an eye that is completely unthinkable, an eye turned in no particular direction, in which the active and interpreting forces, through which alone seeing becomes *something*, are supposed to be lacking; these always demand of the eye an absurdity and a nonsense. There is *only* a perspective seeing, *only* a perspective ‘knowing’; and the *more* affects we allow to speak about one thing, the *more* eyes, different eyes, we can use to observe one thing, the more complete will our “concept” of this thing, our “objectivity” be. But to eliminate the will altogether, to suspend each and every affect, supposing we were capable of this – what would that mean but to *castrate* the intellect?”<sup>198</sup>

Here Nietzsche is warning us that to deny subjectivity is to attempt to see with a single eye. He claims that the attempt to obtain objective knowledge is akin to invoking a God-like knowledge of the actual world. In doing this, we endeavor to exclude subjective reason from intellectual pursuits. Although the common claim is that excluding

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<sup>198</sup> Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, p. 118-119.

subjective reason leads to objective perspectives that lend themselves more readily to judgements concerning truth, what we are actually doing is creating a less objective understanding of the concept under examination.

Nietzsche argues, that objectivity, as it is commonly understood, posits sight with one eye that is able to see all, but looks in no particular direction. According to the proponents of objective knowledge, therefore, we should all make an effort to see from this one privileged perspective.

However, for Nietzsche, this privileged perspective is actually quite limiting if it is the truth that we are seeking. For him, to take perspective into account when performing conceptual analysis allows us to see with more eyes looking in more directions. Perspectivism thus allows us to examine the context within which a concept is being both used and examined, it acknowledges the contingency of our conceptual understanding and it allows us to come to a much more robust awareness of the concept itself.

If thinking is akin to seeking knowledge, then perhaps a simple example may be helpful. Suppose that a hiker named Thinker treks off into the mountains in the search of his friend Truth, who disappeared in the land of Objectivity. Unable to find Truth, Thinker creates a search party to aid him in his search. The leader of the search party, Privileged Eye, decides that, for safety, it is best to keep all of the searchers together when heading down the path to Objectivity. Privileged Eye is convinced that if they just keep going down this path, they will find Truth just around the corner.

However, this is a very narrow path and each searcher is only able to see what the other searchers see since their search is limited by the one sightline that they all share. Thinker becomes frustrated with this search because he knows there are other areas that



should be searched as well. He knows that Truth will die in the mountains of Objectivity if they continue their search in this way.

As a result, Thinker fires Privileged Eye and replaces him with Many Eyes. Many Eyes constructs an ingenious plan. He hires those experienced in air rescue to search from the sky. He divides his group of ground searchers and sends them into Objectivity along various paths. Finally, at noon, the search ends with Thinker having found Truth safe and sound thanks to Many Eyes' search methods.

In a nutshell, this is Nietzsche's concept of perspectivism. Truth, in this way is neither entirely objective, nor is it entirely subjective; it is a perspective. That is to search for truth through one path alone is to never find the truth. When we take many paths to truth, truth may be found. Objective truth then comes from the incorporation of as many perspectives as possible. However, perspectivism should not be confused with relativism.

While perspectivism and relativism seems to have a lot in common, there is at least one key difference between them. Perspectivism acknowledges that truth can be found while relativism suggests that there is no truth to be found and any search for it is futile.

Using the hiker example above, perspectivism would suggest that Truth can be found and should be found or else he will die. Thinker the Perspectivist, is willing to search for Truth. Using the methods of Many Eyes, he will at least try to find his friend and has reason to think that he will find him.

Relativism, on the other hand, will deny that Truth is even lost if he acknowledges that Truth exists in the first place. Consequently, Thinker the Relativist would not even bother to search as he thinks that all searching for Truth will be useless because he can never be found.

With this in mind, the following sections will examine how perspectivism relates to the Overman as child, the nomad as lion and both Nietzsche and Deleuze's conceptions of the eternal recurrence. In what follows, I will try to show that, although it may not be clear at this point, that there may be a way out of having to make an argument that either version of the eternal recurrence is true while the other is false. That is, I do not think that we have to support one version of the eternal recurrence to the exclusion of the other.

Considering perspectivism, and my arguments concerning the eternal return of the different as psychological doctrine, the argument for the eternal recurrence as psychological test may then lead us to the conclusion that willing Nietzsche's eternal recurrence of the same and willing Deleuze's eternal return of the different may depend on the perspective of the thinker. In this way, these two distinct versions of the eternal recurrence may be complimentary rather than antithetical.

In this regard, I will argue, in what follows, that if the thought of the eternal recurrence is seen as a psychological test, then, given his perspective, the Overman must affirm the eternal recurrence of the same. On the other hand, the nomad must affirm the eternal recurrence of the different, given his perspective.

### ***The Overman's Perspective on the Eternal Recurrence***

As has been argued so far, the Overman, for Nietzsche, possesses the spirit of the child. As such, the Overman is considered to be the highest exemplification of man. He is no longer human, all too human and has become the artist of the masterpiece called himself. Moreover, it is his willing of the eternal recurrence of the same that signifies his triumph over nihilism and all of its traps.

As well, I have argued that to will the eternal return of the different, suggests that one has not entirely eschewed the chains of nihilism as this version of the eternal return retains the shadow of religiosity that Nietzsche sought to purge and may be reactionary in its nature.

Moreover, I have argued that, for Nietzsche, the thought of the eternal recurrence seems to be, most importantly, a psychological test in response to eternal suffering that may indicate the disposition of a person towards themselves. Further, the thought of the eternal recurrence may also operate as a means for determining the joyousness of one's life.

Assuming that I am justified in reading the eternal recurrence this way, we may now be able to incorporate perspectivism into this reading. That is, the Overman's insistence that the world is already perfect (in so far as physically he cannot change it) and that all is joyous, may shine some light on the version of the eternal recurrence that he or she would embrace.

In this sense, it seems clear to me that the Overman must embrace the eternal recurrence of the same. First of all, the Overman's perspective suggests that the world is already perfect (in that physically, the world could not be any different than it is); all trials and triumphs are not only necessary, but they are joyous events. As a result, unless the Overman would commit himself to willing an eternal recurrence that produces something that is physically different and/or experienced differently, he cannot will the eternal recurrence of the different.

That is, the thought of the eternal recurrence of the same, from the Overman's perspective acknowledges that his present joyousness is the result of his experience. For him, life as a rollercoaster does not exist. He has overcome his notions of good and bad

and as a result has come to the conclusion that each life event is an opportunity to affirm his joyousness. He does not repress the negative in favour of the positive, but rather comes to see that the concepts of negative and positive have been imposed on experience by nihilistic thinking. In this way, the Overman does not draw a distinction between positive and negative, but has moved beyond this distinction; it is a nihilistic trap that he has overcome.

The Overman's affirmation of the eternal recurrence of the same then seems to signify that he has overcome the shadows of his own nihilistic thinking. Consequently, the Overman would will the eternal recurrence of the same because he is willing the eternal recurrence of this joyousness. To will otherwise would be to will something other than his own joyous experience.

Furthermore, if the eternal recurrence is seen as a psychological test, it can be said of the Overman that he has passed this test. On several occasions before the final book of *Zarathustra*, Nietzsche presents the thought of the eternal recurrence of the same as a nauseating thought in the sense that with this thought comes the realization that the small, the petty and the nihilistic will return alongside the Overman. What this seems to imply is that Zarathustra, in the first three books, is not yet the Overman. However, by the conclusion of the final book, Zarathustra has come to find that the thought of the eternal recurrence of the same is no longer terrifying since he will recur again to teach this doctrine and deliver himself once more from nihilism.

In this sense as well then, the Overman must will the eternal recurrence of the same. That is, if there is an eternal recurrence, then the Overman would will the recurrence that allows him to externally overcome his own nihilistic thinking and live joyously. He would wish for nothing to be different since his present joyousness depends

on all of the experiences, feelings and events that have shaped his affirmative disposition towards himself and given him a perspective that allows him to overcome himself. If the eternal recurrence is a psychological process and the thought of the eternal recurrence is a psychological test, then the Overman has shown that psychologically, he has overcome his own smallness, pettiness and nihilistic thinking.

To will the eternal return of the different, to the Overman, would be to fail this psychological test as it implies that he does not want to return to a “selfsame life.” That is, to will the eternal return of the different suggests that the Overman is not really the Overman since he has yet to find permanent joyousness in this life – he has yet to gain the perspective that, in the physical sense, everything is already the only way that it can be. He seeks a new life out of dissatisfaction with this one.

Moreover, and I concede that this is not the strongest argument that can be made, by definition alone, the Overman must will the eternal recurrence of the same. That is, if, for Nietzsche, the Overman can be defined as the affirmer *par excellence* and as such would will the eternal recurrence of the same, then to will the different necessarily means that one is not the Overman, in the Nietzschean sense. In other words, by definition alone, the Overman and the eternal recurrence of the same are too intimately dependent upon each other to be separated.

Put yet another way, the Overman is at least partially defined, for Nietzsche, by his affirmation of the eternal recurrence of the same while willing the eternal recurrence of the same, is at least partially defined by the one who would will such a life. Therefore, it seems that based on definition alone, the Overman, according to Nietzsche, must will the eternal recurrence of the same; to will any other eternal recurrence would suggest that the one who wills is not the Overman.

What I have attempted to show through the arguments above and will try to show in the arguments that follow is that the Overman's willing the eternal recurrence of the same provides some insight into his psychological perspective, while willing the eternal recurrence of the different may provide insight into the psychological perspective of the lion and nomad. In other words, the psychological perspective of the nomad is the precursor to the psychological perspective of the Overman.

### ***The Nomad's Perspective on the Eternal Recurrence***

As I have argued thus far, the nomad and the Overman are not analogous concepts. One reason for thinking that this is the case is that the characteristics that Deleuze and Guattari ascribe to the nomad are not the characteristics of the Overman. Likewise, the description that Deleuze provides of the Overman in *Nietzsche and Philosophy* does not seem to be consistent with Nietzsche's description of the same concept.

While Deleuze describes the Overman as being a Master, Nietzsche would suggest that the Overman is beyond the Master and the Slave. Where Deleuze sees the Overman as an artist whose canvas is painted in the virtual world, Nietzsche's Overman is an artist whose canvas is painted in both the virtual and actual world as these are both himself.

As well, while Deleuze's Overman would reject the negative, Nietzsche's Overman would not only embrace it, but, because he is the Overman, it is questionable whether he would even think of the negative and positive as two separate things. Finally, where Deleuze's Overman would will the eternal return of the different, Nietzsche's Overman wills the eternal recurrence of the same. Therefore, to suggest that the nomad (Deleuze's Overman) is analogous to Nietzsche's Overman seems unjustified.

However, I have also argued, that there is a Nietzschean concept that is analogous to the nomad. This is Nietzsche's lion – the preparatory man. As I have suggested, the characteristics that Deleuze and Guattari ascribe to the nomad, are the characteristics that Nietzsche ascribes to the lion.

Moreover, the methods of creation (the destruction of herd values) that Deleuze describes as being the methods of the nomad, appear to be the same methods used by Nietzsche's lion. And, as I will argue below, from the perspectives of the nomad and the lion both would fail the test provided by the eternal recurrence of the same and as a result, both would will the eternal return of the different.

The perspective of the nomad and the lion insists that the morality imposed upon them is derived from values that promote weakness and reactive phenomena through the elevation of suffering as the path to freedom in the afterlife. Having questioned these values and realizing that these values demean human life, the lion seeks to destroy them in the hopes of finding joy in this life. However, the lion cannot create these new values, he can only tear his old values to shreds. To create new values, he must become the Overman.

From the perspective of the lion and the nomad then, their life, as it is presently being lived, is not a satisfactory life. They are not free to flourish as humans and must find a way to carve out a space in which they will be free to create new values.

At this point in their metamorphosis, neither the lion nor the nomad would pass the test of the eternal recurrence of the same. To will the eternal recurrence of the same, for the lion and the nomad, would either mean that they must be satisfied with becoming a camel once more or they must be satisfied with remaining a lion. That is, they must either grin and bear their existence forever or they must seek to eternally destroy values

without being able to create new ones. Both options deny a love of fate and promote an acceptance of nihilistic thinking.

As evidenced by their metamorphosis to the lion state, neither the lion nor the nomad could love the fate of the camel. That is, the impetus to question the values of the camel implies that the camel's fate is not one that could be loved. The lion becomes the lion because he cannot love himself as a camel.

Likewise, the lion cannot love his fate as a lion as it leaves him in a veritable no-man's land. This may be understood in two ways. First, the lion and the nomad are quite literally the kinds of humans who renounce their old values; they say no to everything to create the space they will need to find things to which they may say yes.

Secondly, since the child is needed to create new values, not having this metamorphosis open as a possibility leaves the nomad and lion in an existence where they have no values. That is, the values of the camel are unsatisfactory for the lion and nomad, but they cannot create new values as a lion, so they find themselves without values at all. This life of destruction is not a fate that could be loved.

It is not difficult to see how either of these interpretations would reinstate nihilism. In the first case, an eternal fate of denial and renunciation leads to the reactive nihilism that Deleuze is seeking to overcome. Having come to the conclusion that the morality and values of the camel are undesirable and having denied the existence of a super-sensory world, but being unable to create new values to replace the old renders the lion's work futile. He is destined to say no forever without ever being able to say yes. This becomes a new form of suffering that is his fate to bear. From the perspective of the lion and nomad then, this kind of life has no meaning.



In the second case, a life without values leads to passive nihilism. If the lion and nomad do not have values, then there would be no point in willing anything. Moreover, even if the nomad or lion wanted to will something, they would not know what to will as they have no values. Psychologically, this thought is depressing in the sense that it implies an eternity of frustration with the old without the ability to create the new. From the perspective of the nomad and the lion, there is no meaning to this kind of life.

From this perspective then, willing the eternal recurrence of the same would result in willing a fate that cannot be loved. The lion and nomad are dissatisfied with being a camel that bears. Nor could either be satisfied with remaining a lion or nomad forever since their lion nature renounces without being able to affirm. Both kinds of fate lead to nihilistic thinking and demean life.

Consequently, both fail the psychological test of the eternal recurrence of the same. Presently, they are not living joyously for if they were they would not need to renounce and say no, nor do they desire that this fate recur eternally since it would mean infinite eternities of dissatisfaction with life. Therefore, the lion and the nomad, **must** will the eternal return of the different.

Willing the eternal return of the different, from the perspective of the lion and the nomad, means that new values can be created by becoming different themselves. Their satisfaction with life will be possible if they are able to become different than the lion and nomad; if they are able to become the child. Their fate can be loved if they are able to have a different outcome from the one that they presently endure; if they can have the fate of the child. Their life can become joyous and they will later be able to will the eternal recurrence of the same, if they have a different fate; if they have the possibility of becoming the Overman.

Deleuze might argue here that the nomad would will the eternal return of the different, but not for the reasons that I have given. Rather, at the most basic level, the nomad analogous to Overman would will the different since the eternal return of the same is a terrifying thought for Zarathustra and as such, we should take this as evidence that Nietzsche did not, in fact, consider the eternal return to be the return of the same.<sup>199</sup> That is, for Deleuze, by definition, the Overman is the one who wills the eternal return of the different.

I would argue, however, that Deleuze fails to realize that, at this point, Zarathustra is not yet the Overman. If he finds the thought of the return of the small and petty terrifying, it is because he has yet to see their return as joyous. That is, at this point, Zarathustra has yet to overcome his resistance to the return of the rabble and their nihilistic thinking and has yet to develop the perspective of the Overman.

At this point, I would argue, that because he still possesses the spirit of the lion, Zarathustra *may* affirm the eternal return of the different by not willing the eternal return of the same. But, this does not mean that Nietzsche intended for the eternal recurrence of the Overman to be one of difference.

That is, Zarathustra has not yet developed a perspective that would permit him, let alone prompt him, to will the eternal return of the same. When Zarathustra becomes the Overman in Book IV of *Zarathustra*, then and only then does he have the courage Nietzsche insists is needed to be able to will the eternal return of the same and find joy in the return of the small and petty. His perspective is such that he is able to see the small and the petty as necessary to his metamorphosis to the Overman. It is also an acknowledgement that he cannot overcome the suffering of others for others, but must

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<sup>199</sup> Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 65.

overcome his own suffering for himself. He cannot change the world, but he can change his perspective.

Moreover, if my problem with Deleuze's formulation of the eternal return of the different as selective thought really is a problem and partial willing does imply that the eternal return must be an eternal return of the same, then Deleuze's argument regarding the Overman's willing the eternal return of the different is not supported.

Briefly, this problem can be summarized as either I should not will partially because if I do, then the return of the same will return partial willing or I should not really be bothered by partial willing since the eternal return returns the different, therefore partial willing cannot return.

As a result, if Deleuze would like to maintain that his nomad wills the eternal return of the different, then the nomad is not the Overman because the Overman sees a need to actively overcome his partial willing rather than relying on the passive function of the eternal return of the different. If, on the other hand, Deleuze would like to commit himself to the claim that the Overman and the nomad are analogous concepts, then he is bound to conceding that the eternal return of the Overman is one of the same, hence the need to actively eliminate partial willing such that overcoming partial willing is what returns.

Essentially, in order for Deleuze to maintain his commitment to the eternal return of the different, the nomad cannot be the Overman. Conceding this enables us to establish that the eternal return of the different is not in conflict with the eternal return of the same. Since, as I have argued, the eternal return of the different is willed by the nomad and the lion and the eternal recurrence of the same is willed by the Overman, then

these two versions of the eternal return signify the psychological progression from the perspective of the lion and nomad to the perspective of the Overman.

Moreover, assuming that I am correct regarding my conclusions that the eternal return may not just be a metaphysical doctrine, but also a psychological doctrine for Deleuze, and that the nomad's progression through the first two selections is dictated by his psychological perspective, then it appears as though Deleuze's eternal return of the different and the nomads affirmation of this version of the eternal return is not an inversion of Nietzsche's eternal recurrence of the same. Rather, what Deleuze's conceptions of the nomad and the eternal return of the different seem to accomplish is strengthening Nietzsche's project by providing us with a much more robust understanding of the precursor to the Overman – the lion.

## CONCLUSIONS

I have argued that, although Deleuze may have conceived of his nomad as being analogous to Nietzsche's Overman, after an examination of Nietzsche's description of the Overman in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, this does not seem to be supported. Where Deleuze sees the Overman as a Master, Nietzsche tells us that the Overman is beyond both Master and Slave. Where Deleuze sees the Overman as an artist whose creation takes place in the virtual world, Nietzsche sees the Overman as an artist whose creation takes place in himself as the symbiotic conjunction of the actual and the virtual. Moreover, where Deleuze argues that the Overman wills the eternal return of the different, Nietzsche argues that the Overman wills the eternal recurrence of the same. Therefore, although Deleuze might insist that his concept of the Overman coincides with Nietzsche's concept of the Overman, based on evidence from their texts, this conclusion cannot be supported.

I have also argued that if Deleuze's nomad does have a counterpart in Nietzsche's texts, then this counterpart is the lion. Both the lion and the nomad destroy the values that have led them to become camels. Both renounce herd morality and the values that have created it by violently opposing them. Both create a space for the creation of new values, but neither are able to create those values themselves. Both would will the eternal recurrence of the different.

Moreover, I have argued that Deleuze's insistence that Nietzsche intended for the eternal return to be a recurrence of the different cannot be supported. First, in every instance where Nietzsche discusses the eternal recurrence in his texts, he never wavers from his position that the eternal return is one of the same events, same feelings, and same experiences – it is a selfsame life.

Secondly, Deleuze's eternal return of the different, as cosmological and physical doctrine cannot be supported as the eternal return of the Overman since it reinstates the kind of religious thinking that Nietzsche is trying to purge. Through Deleuze's conception of the passage of time, it can be inferred that the inner will of forces demonstrates some kind of intention that presupposes the universe as a living organism. However, Nietzsche has explicitly argued that these kinds of philosophical moves lead to a reinstitution of religious values that lead to nihilism.

Likewise, the eternal return of the different as selective being leads to the kind of nihilistic thinking that it is supposed to overcome and may be considered as an exemplification of resentment. Deleuze's proposal that the mechanism of the eternal return necessarily rejects the negative such that the reactive cannot return may be a reaction to Hegel rather than the consequence of the eternal return itself. Moreover, while Deleuze would have his eternal return of the different explicitly reject the negative in favour of the positive, Nietzsche's eternal recurrence of the same would embrace both as a means to overcome all.

This all relies on the interpretation of Deleuze's eternal return of the different as a metaphysical doctrine. If instead, we argue that Deleuze's version of the eternal return is additionally a psychological doctrine, then may be able to understand the first selection of the eternal return as the unification of the drives (forces) under the command of a dominant drive or group of drives. The second selection suggests the development of deliberation and consciousness such that the eternal return of the different culminates in the production of different drives that lead to a will that wills of itself for itself in Nietzsche's version of a third selection in the eternal return.

However, what Deleuze has failed to see in Nietzsche is that there is this third selection in the eternal return that results in a complete set of revalued drives that restores the power of the will of itself for itself. Because the will of the complete set of revalued drives is of itself for itself and will be eternally expressed regardless of the event, it is this third selection, the selection of the Overman that results in the affirmation of the eternal return of the same.

Consequently, I have argued, the thought of the eternal return is most importantly a psychological test that determines one's disposition towards oneself, the joyousness of one's life and the version of the eternal return that one would embrace. Although there are arguments for a metaphysical explanation of the eternal return, these arguments do not give any indication as to a solution to the problem of the eternal return of suffering. Therefore, the aspect of the eternal return that provides this solution and is of most value to the humans who would will it, is the psychological aspect – the thought of the eternal return and the eternal return as psychological doctrine.

From the perspective of the Overman, he is well disposed to himself; he loves himself and his fate. He finds everything joyous because everything is necessary in his progression to Overman and the creation of his joy. Moreover, he would will the eternal recurrence of the same because he loves his fate and would will that this selfsame fate would return eternally.

The nomad and the lion, on the other hand, would will the eternal return of the different. From their perspective, life as a camel is unsatisfactory so they become the lion. To will the eternal recurrence of the same would imply their return as a lion who can destroy values but not create them. This results in the lion and nomad being left in a state where they will forever be renouncing without affirming. It also results in an

existence that recognizes no values whatsoever. Both are unsatisfactory outcomes.

Therefore the lion and the nomad fail the psychological test of the thought of the eternal recurrence of the same.

The lion and the nomad are not joyous and do not love their fate. They are not well disposed to themselves, simply because without values, they have yet to know who they are. Consequently, the lion and the nomad must will the eternal return of the different in the hopes that they will not revert to being a camel, nor will they remain a lion and nomad forever. From their perspective hope lies in an existence that is different from that of the lion and the camel; it lies in their becoming the Overman.

As a result, it may be said that Deleuze's philosophical understanding of the nomad and the eternal return of the different are not an inversion of Nietzsche nor do they supplant Nietzsche's philosophical understanding of the Overman and the eternal recurrence of the same. Rather, it appears as though the nomad is really a version of Nietzsche's lion that would will the eternal return of the different through a psychological process that corresponds to the perspective he has on the world. In this sense then, Deleuze's understanding of the nomad and the eternal return of the different appears to be a much more robust fleshing out of Nietzsche's concept of the lion. In this way then, the eternal return of the different strengthens Nietzsche's philosophical project rather than weakening it.



## APPENDICES

## Appendix A

Table 1 - Table of Dispositions<sup>200</sup>

TYPE	VARIETY OF TYPE	MECHANISM	PRINCIPLE	PRODUCT	QUALITY OF THE WILL TO POWER
<i>Active Type:</i> the Master (active forces prevail over reactive forces; reactive forces are acted)	<i>Dream and Intoxication</i>	The excitants of life, the stimulants of the will to power	Apollo and Dionysus	<i>The Artist</i>	AFFIRMATION
	<i>Consciousness:</i> System of the reactive apparatus where reactive forces react to excitations	Distinction between trace and excitation (repress the memory of traces)	Faculty of forgetting (as regulative principle)	<i>The Noble</i>	
	<i>Culture:</i> Genetic activity by which reactive forces are trained and tamed	Mechanism of violence; <i>external meaning</i> of pain; establishment of the debtor – creditor relationship; responsibility – debt	Faculty of memory; memory of words (as teleological principle)	<i>The Sovereign Individual, the Legislator</i>	
<i>Reactive Type:</i> the Slave (reactive forces prevail over active forces; they triumph without forming a greater force)	<i>Ressentiment</i>	<i>TRIUMPH OF REACTIVE FORCES</i>	Memory of traces; ascent of traces; confusion of excitation and trace	The man who cannot “have done” with anything	NEGATION
		Topological Aspect: <i>Displacement</i> (displacement of reactive forces)			
		Typological Aspect: <i>Reversal</i> (reversal of values of the relation of forces)			
	Bad Conscience (Internalisation)	Topological Aspect: <i>Turning back</i> (internalisation of force)	Active force separated from what it can do	The man who multiplies his pain	
		Typological Aspect: <i>Changing of direction</i> (internalisation of pain by changing the direction of <i>ressentiment</i> )	Second FICTION: Reactive projection of debt; usurping of culture and formation of the herd	<i>The guilty man</i> internal meaning of pain responsibility – guilt. <i>The domesticated man</i> (who is not Legislator)	
	Ascetic Ideal	Ways of making bad conscience and <i>ressentiment</i> bearable	Third FICTION: Setting up a world beyond	<i>The ascetic man</i> (who is not Artist)	
Expression of the will to nothingness					

<sup>200</sup> Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 146.

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## INDEX

**A**

**actual world**, 1, 65, 66, 69, 70, 71, 72,  
74, 77, 86, 92  
**Apollo**, 2, 4, 5, 9, 23, 27, 29, 96  
**artist**, 23, 24, 25, 26, 28, 29, 80, 86, 92

**B**

**bad conscience**, 6, 35, 43, 53, 55, 69, 97

**C**

**camel**, 3, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15,  
17, 20, 22, 23, 30, 31, 87, 88, 89, 94  
**cause of the eternal recurrence**, 37, 38,  
42  
**child**, ii, 3, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17,  
21, 22, 23, 26, 27, 30, 41, 43, 51, 80,  
88, 89  
**cosmological and physical doctrine**,  
43, 45, 47, 57, 65, 67, 73, 74, 93  
**cycle**  
**cyclical**, 38, 44, 60

**D**

**D'Iorio**, 6, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 99  
**demon**, 34  
**destiny**, 37, 39, 41  
**Dionysus**, 2, 3, 4, 5, 9, 10, 23, 27, 29, 96  
**disposition**, 38, 39, 41, 50, 74, 81, 83,  
93

**E**

**embracing an idea**, 7, 45, 46  
**eternal recurrence of the different**

**eternal return of the different**, ii, 6, 7, 8,  
80, 81, 85, 92

**eternal recurrence of the same**, ii, 5, 6,  
7, 8, 29, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 39, 40, 41,  
42, 45, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 61, 63,  
80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 89, 90,  
91, 92, 93, 94

**F**

**fate**, ii, 6, 14, 33, 41, 43, 44, 50, 87, 88,  
89, 90, 94

**forces**

**reactive forces**, 19, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56,  
57, 59, 60, 63, 64, 65, 67, 68, 69, 70,  
72, 73, 74, 77, 96

**G**

**Go piece**, 16, 17, 18

**H**

**Hallward**, 70, 72  
**herd morality**, 31, 32, 70, 71, 92  
**hiker**, 78, 79

**I**

**Indra**, 3, 16, 17, 18  
**intention**, 3, 68, 93

**L**

**lion**, ii, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14,  
15, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21, 22, 23, 26, 30,  
31, 32, 37, 51, 80, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89,  
90, 91, 92, 94  
**living organism**, 67, 93

**lucky few**, 41, 44, 45

## M

**Malabou**, 73, 74, 97

**master**, 11, 15, 17, 21, 22, 23, 27, 49, 53, 69

**metamorphosis**, 16, 21, 35, 87, 88, 91

**metaphysical**

**metaphysics**, 6, 7, 33, 38, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 47, 48, 49, 50, 65, 75, 93

## N

**negative**, 21, 37, 55, 60, 69, 73, 74, 82, 86, 93

**negative nihilism**, 55

**nihilism**, 1, 27, 28, 29, 32, 35, 36, 37, 39, 43, 50, 51, 55, 56, 57, 59, 67, 68, 69, 70, 72, 74, 81, 83, 85, 88, 89, 93

**nihilistic thinking**, 43, 49, 53, 55, 82, 83, 87, 89, 90, 93

**Nolt**, 6, 7, 45, 46, 47, 99

**nomad**, ii, *I*, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 26, 27, 29, 30, 31, 32, 76, 80, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 94

## O

**overcome**

**overcoming**, iv, 4, 10, 12, 13, 18, 21, 23, 27, 30, 31, 32, 35, 41, 43, 47, 51, 55, 57, 59, 67, 70, 72, 73, 74, 82, 83, 85, 88, 90, 93

**Overman**, ii, iii, vi, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 35, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 45, 47, 48, 51, 60, 76, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 90, 91, 92, 94, 95

## P

**partial willing**, 58, 59, 75, 91

**passive nihilism**, 56

**perspective**, ii, iv, 2, 6, 7, 8, 12, 20, 30, 31, 33, 34, 35, 40, 41, 43, 44, 48, 50, 74, 75, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 85, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 94

**perspectivism**, 20, 77, 79, 80, 81

**positive**, 37, 73, 74, 82, 86, 93

**preparatory human being**, 30, 31

**preparatory man**, 32, 85, 86

**psychological test**, 6, 7, 33, 40, 42, 47, 48, 50, 51, 80, 81, 82, 83, 89, 93, 94

## R

**reactive nihilism**, 88

**relativism**, 1, 79

**religious**, 12, 51, 53, 55, 68, 69, 72, 93

**religious thinking**, 51, 68, 69, 93

**ressentiment**, 6, 14, 20, 35, 43, 53, 55, 69, 73, 93, 97

## S

**selective being**, 45, 58, 59, 60, 65, 69, 70, 71, 73, 74, 93

**selective thought**, 58, 74, 75, 91, 94

**Slave**, 23, 26, 29, 53, 55, 86, 92, 96

**strength**, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 30, 31, 37, 38, 41, 52, 53, 54

**super-sensory world**, 55, 56, 88

## T

**the aesthetic ideal**, 6, 53, 55, 69

**thought of the eternal recurrence**, 33,  
34, 35, 38, 39, 41, 45, 47, 48, 49, 50,  
51, 81, 82, 94

## U

**ungrounded time; virtual time**, iv, 3,  
18, 22, 28, 36, 42, 52, 57, 58, 60, 65,  
66, 67, 68, 69, 75, 93

## V

**virtual world**, 28, 69, 70, 71, 86, 92, 93  
**Vogt**, 61, 62, 84

## W

**wheel**, 12, 60, 72  
**will to nothingness**, 53, 54, 56, 59, 69,  
97  
**will to power**, 54, 56, 63, 64, 69, 96  
**Woodward**, 6, 65, 67, 68, 70, 72, 97

## Z

**Zarathustra**, iii, 1, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11,  
12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 21, 22, 24,  
25, 34, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 44, 47,  
48, 49, 50, 51, 71, 82, 90, 91, 92, 98,  
99