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**The Problem of Free Will in Nietzsche's
Works**

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Statement

I declare that I have created the thesis by myself. All sources and literature used have been duly cited. The work was not used to obtain another or the same title.

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- . Due thanks to my supervisor Mgr. Jakub Marek, Ph.D. for his support.*
- . Due thanks to Nietzsche wherever or whenever he may be for his dedication and revolution.*

Abstract

Nietzsche is a philosopher whose philosophy has angered and enraged many ideological groups, however, he is one of the most authentic and original thinkers, not only of the 19th century, but arguably of all time. To learn from him, I embark, in this paper, on investigating his view on free will. Unlike others who affirm either the determined or indetermined notions of free will, Nietzsche offers a unique approach and a different path to the problem. The strong will, as he calls it, is one full of life and full of affirmation to life, not only to what is Good in life, but also to what is Evil; for both are constituents of our nature. He asks us to affirm these constituents and go further beyond them; *Beyond Good and Evil*. To overcome oneself, and to be the commanding master and the obeying slave of oneself is Nietzsche's answer to free will.

In an age full of hatred, *ressentiment*, and blame of the *Other* it is easy to come *vis-à-vis* on daily bases with what Nietzsche would call the herd, the sheep, and the slaves. Nietzsche's concepts of *knowing oneself*, *accepting oneself*, and *becoming oneself* are sign posts for the individuals who want to step beyond the *spirit of revenge*, and who want to affirm who they are, because they are the owner of themselves.

Keywords: Morality, Determinism, Liberum Arbitrium, Sovereign Individual, Ascetism, Ressentiment, Will to Power, Eternal Recurrence, Sublimation, Amor fati.

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1. Introduction

In this paper, I will attempt to tackle the problem of free will in Nietzsche's works starting from a scholarly accusation against Nietzsche which claims that there is a contradiction in his conception of free will. Nietzsche denounces free will and the *subject* as an error of language, yet he later talks of an individual who has become free, which constitutes a contradiction for Janaway. I will attempt to answer the question of whether this contradiction is valid and to what extent. To do so, I will firstly allocate Janaway's accusation and consequently further investigate its preliminary source in Nietzsche. In the *Genealogy of Morals* where Janaway finds this contradiction, Nietzsche does talk about an individual who has become free (i.e., the sovereign individual), however, he does so as a part of the process he has undertaken to explain the origins of morality. The evolution of morality serves as the foundation out of which that individual grows, so in order to do Nietzsche justice, I will resort to analyse the whole of the *Genealogy of Morals* with reference to other works of Nietzsche's and to secondary literature. This should provide some ground on which I can pinpoint where this individual originates from and under which circumstances. This foundation includes a discussion on master and slave moralities, punishment as the origin point of bad conscience and its relation to the sovereign individual, alongside a discussion of the ascetic ideal. Furthermore, I will provide a textual analysis of some of the major and most relevant schools and concepts of free will, in order to posit Nietzsche's conception of free will within them and to tackle the question of what kind of free will we are looking for. The relation of free will with responsibility, for instance, and its relationship to values and passions. In the third part, I will provide a comprehensive analysis to what Nietzsche would conceive as free will considering the discussion on the schools and principles of free will. The third part will utilise the concepts of the *Will to Power* and the *Eternal Recurrence* to explain *sublimation* and *amor fati* which are relevant concepts of Nietzsche's, in relation to the discussion of free will. In the third part, I will also attempt to answer the questions of how to acquire free will, if we do not inherently possess it, what role does sublimation play in acquiring free will and I will attempt to answer the question of what could prohibit us from acquiring free will with *amor fati*.

2. Accusation

Janaway,¹ in his book *Beyond selflessness* which discusses and analyses different topics in Nietzsche's writings, points out to what he calls a '*contradiction*'² in Nietzsche's conception on free will. Janaway's observation is that Nietzsche, in *essay I* of the *Genealogy of Morals (GM)*, describes, with reference to free will, the belief in a '*subject*' or an '*agent*' as false and as Janaway puts it '*nonsensical*'. To later contradict himself, as Janaway sees it, in *essay II*, where he speaks of a person who '*has become free*'. This, as it appears to be, is an apparent tension in the same work of Nietzsche's, so, *how does this tension come about and is it really a contradiction?*

To start off with, Janaway³ starts with Schopenhauer's⁴ and Rée's⁵ attitude towards free will, in which both are considered '*deterministic*' and both dismiss the notion of responsibility and free will all together. Both thinkers claim that an individual who commits an act A, for instance, cannot act differently, i.e., cannot commit act B granted that all the relative circumstances of the present and the past of both the individual and the action are static and unchanged, and therefore, both take the notion of responsibility as unsustainable. Nietzsche's first stance in opposition to free will, as Janaway conceives it, puts him on the same side with both of Schopenhauer and Rée, yet this cannot be further away from the truth according to Janaway who argues that, first of all, Nietzsche in the *GM* is not primarily concerned with free will, but rather with his analysis of morality, which puts him at odds with the authors' objectives of investigating free will.

Janaway⁶ continues to find connections between Nietzsche and both of Schopenhauer and Rée. He sees that early in Nietzsche's works, Nietzsche's thoughts on free will were mostly in accordance with Rée's; he, for instance, called the belief in free will '*an error*' and likened humans to animals or to a waterfall, which cannot control its flow. He, however, disagrees with Schopenhauer's conception of

¹ An academic and a professor at the University of Southampton

² All single quotes in *italics* are expressions or terms used by the referenced author.

³ Janaway, C. (2009). *Beyond selflessness: reading Nietzsche's Genealogy*. Oxford University Press: 107-108

⁴ Arthur Schopenhauer: A German philosopher and a determinist who is most famous for his book *The World as Will and Representation*.

⁵ Paul Ludwig Carl Heinrich Rée: A German philosopher and a friend of Nietzsche's. Best known for his book *The Origin of the Moral Sensations*.

⁶ Janaway 2009: 111

responsibility, which states that we feel responsible and, therefore, some faculty of ours must be free. Nietzsche's response to this, in *Human, All too Human (HAH)* corresponds with the response of Rée's as he sees that the feelings of remorse come about "because he [man] thinks he is free (but not because he is free), man feels remorse and the pangs of conscience"¹

Janaway² continues, in the search for responsibility, to discuss Nietzsche in *GM* and starts with Nietzsche's explanation of the origins of slave morality which is grounded in 'ressentiment' [resentment], as he explains. Nietzsche, in *GM* blames the mechanisms of language for paving the way for the concept of free will. Those mechanisms provide a platform in which the 'doer' of an action is separated from the doing [the *subject-object* relation] and portray the subject as a *separate* thing from the total sum of its actions. Moreover, and to shed a light on the feelings of resentment in slave morality, Nietzsche gives a story, a parable that introduces two parties; the birds of prey and the lambs. Knowing that those birds hunt the lambs, he assures that "it is not surprising that the lambs should bear a grudge against the great birds of prey, but that is no reason for blaming the great birds of prey for taking the little lambs."³ The parable is self-explanatory and lets us 'sympathize' with the birds of prey, and also reveals to us the '*morality of resentment*' and even how absurd we may perceive it in a case like this, Janaway comments. Combining the last two ideas, Nietzsche explains that slave morality has exploited that metaphysical subject of language, and weaponized it against the birds of prey, who are '*naturally strong*', to gain a form of cunning *mastery*, a revenge over the birds of prey by convincing them that their actions and show of strength is '*evil*', and to hold them *responsible* for those actions, which reveals the absurdity of such responsibility.

Furthermore, Nietzsche has denied a free will that is based on the concept of '*liberum arbitrium indifferentiae*' [free choice determined by nothing] and he claims, similarly to Schopenhauer, that if '*liberum arbitrium indifferentiae*' is the only proper way to conceive of free will, then there is no free will at all, Janaway⁴ explains.

¹ Nietzsche, F. (1878). *Nietzsche: Human, All Too Human: A Book for Free Spirits*. (M. Faber & S. Lehmann, Trans.; 1994th ed.). Penguin Books: 44

² Janaway 2009: 111–114

³ Nietzsche, F. (1913). *The Genealogy of Morals* (B. S. Horace, Trans.; 2003rd ed.). Dover Publication, Inc: 25

⁴ Janaway 2009: 114–115

Nietzsche's argument is that for an agent to be free and autonomous the agent must be the cause of itself, i.e., '*causa sui*'. For him, however, nothing can be the cause of itself, and therefore an agent cannot be '*causa sui*' and cannot be autonomous. On the other hand, in *Beyond Good and Evil (BGE)* Janaway observes Nietzsche¹ asking his readers to not only reject the "celebrated conception of "free will", but also to reject the '*enlightened*' contrary to it; the "non-free will", which is the point where Janaway sees Nietzsche shifts to contradict himself.

Janaway² continues to say that Nietzsche, even with his rejection of both viewpoints, for and against free will, does not leave his readers alone but offers them, instead, a different viewpoint on free will; the '*sovereign individual*'. At this point, the tension in Nietzsche's writings starts to appear, as Janaway initially explained, and it crystalizes when Nietzsche's view shifts from the '*non-free will*' to the will of the sovereign individual. This individual, Janaway explains after Nietzsche, is the final product of the '*morality of custom*' and is the ground of what a true human must be like; he is distinct from other types of humans with his superiority, pride, power and autonomy. Therefore, only a few are sovereign individuals, hence only a few have free will, and in this sense, free will is "a variably realizable condition, not a universal one. It is an achievement, or a blessing, of the few"³ and even though this individual is the final product and the '*fruit*' of the '*morality of custom*' yet he resembles this morality in nothing as he resembles only himself. He is the '*antithesis*' to that morality, he is the one "who gives back to the world its goal and to man his hope, the antichrist and Antinihilist, the conqueror of God and nothingness"⁴ and who "*renders the will again free*".⁵ This mysterious individual is arguably Nietzsche's answer to the problem of free will, therefore, to find Nietzsche's free will we need to find the sovereign individual, and to locate this individual I will resort to the book where this individual is mentioned; *The Genealogy of Morals*.

¹ Nietzsche, F. (1997a). *Beyond Good and Evil* (H. Zimmern, Trans.). Dover Publication, Inc: 15

² Janaway 2009: 116–118

³ Ibid. 117

⁴ F. Nietzsche 1913: 66

⁵ Ibid. 66

3. The Genealogy of Morals

Firstly, it is important to shed light on Nietzsche's writing style, which would allow us to understand his writings even better. Nietzsche, in many instances according to Novac,¹ writes² in an ambiguous, mysterious and hyperbolic style, and he, '*definitely*', does not only bestow his message to the reader through the letters and lines on the page only, but also through the spaces and between the lines. "As Heidegger would later on put it, there is as much to be considered about what Nietzsche did not write, but can be read between the lines, as it is about what he did write".³ Heidegger,⁴ here, seems to perceive a second layer – or more – in Nietzsche's texts; layers that arise, according to Novac, from Nietzsche's respect to his readers and his desire to compel them to think for themselves as authors without him *spoon-feeding* them information as passive receivers. I would also add that such writing style is necessarily packed with *meta-messages* that Nietzsche must be conveying through what is *NOT* said. Furthermore, "why didn't Nietzsche write *systematically*"⁵⁶ asks Novac, to which he answers that the way one comprehends '*the matter and its points*' of an issue is ultimately dependent on one's feelings. Those feelings are not necessarily only one's inner feelings, but also include external factors such as one's surroundings and that those inner and external feelings have an impact on how such a matter is perceived; shortly, comprehension depends on '*everything that I am*'.⁷ So, what we can see in Nietzsche is partially a reflection of us manifested through our interpretation of him. Building on this, I intend on reading Nietzsche with those notes in mind, and with an eye for the meta-text that is *unwritten*, as well as, attempt to write in a similar manner – partially at least – in an attempt to provide the reader with a similar experience to the experience undergone when reading Nietzsche and attempt to incite the subjective feelings, in the reader, mirroring, to the best of my abilities, the subjective feelings Nietzsche, in my interpretation, wants to incite in his audience. Those reading and writing styles will

¹ Mihai Novac: Doctor of Philosophy from the University of Bucharest. Doctoral thesis: *Consciousness and phenomenon. The concept of 'ego cogito' between Kantianism and Husserl's phenomenology.*

² Novac, M. (2017). *Amor Fati: Love Thyself by Becoming What You Are! Nietzsche on the Freedom of the Will.* Romanian Review of Social Sciences, 7: 22

³ Ibid. 22

⁴ Martin Heidegger: A German philosopher who was mostly associated with phenomenology and existentialism. One of the most influential figures of the 20th century and who was influenced by Nietzsche.

⁵ All *italics* within quotes are in the original.

⁶ Ibid. 22

⁷ Ibid. 22–23

facilitate the comprehension of the referenced preliminary texts in this paper; “We cannot *think* and *speak* the Whole, as Hegel would want it”.¹ I will, however, refer to my implicit messages postliminary, as this is an academic text. On the other, however, I will have to withhold, at some points, some academic rules (i.e., no use of generic masculinum) for ease of reference or/and for consistency with the referenced author’s quotes and terms.

3.1. ‘Good and Bad’ vs ‘Good and Evil’

It is rational to start our investigation in the same place where Janaway found his contradiction, i.e., in *The Genealogy of Morals* where Nietzsche embarks in the first essay on a genetic analysis of the origins of morality which he divides into two kinds; ‘*Good and Evil*’, and ‘*Good and Bad*’ moralities. Nietzsche² starts with a harsh statement, or rather an attack, aimed at the English psychologists and philosophers who investigated the origins of morality, calling their idea of the origin ‘*mistaken*’ and ‘*fundamentally stupid*’. This is an attack, not on those philosophers themselves, but rather on the morality that they promoted, i.e., ‘*the morality of altruism*’. He claims that the origin of this morality lies in its ‘*usefulness*’ to those on whom the altruistic acts were conferred, but, for Nietzsche, this is the wrong place to seek the truth of the origin, and instead he wants to start from the standpoint of those who are ‘*good themselves*’, as he calls them. Those are “the aristocratic, the powerful, the high-stationed, the high-minded”³ and those are the ones who derived the concept of *good* from their feelings of being *good*, and created the value *good* and assigned it to themselves to distinguish themselves from the lower casts, i.e., the plebeians. This contrast between the higher and the lower castes, between the good and the bad is the origin of the ‘*Good and Bad*’ morality, concludes Nietzsche.

Furthermore, Nietzsche turns to finding the origin of the ‘*noble good*’ and he uses etymology to track down this origin. He finds that the evolution of the word good ‘*everywhere*’ goes back to the words ‘*aristocrat*,’ ‘*noble*’, in their *social* sense, while the ‘*bad*’ originates from the ‘*vulgar*’ and the ‘*plebeian*’. The etymology of the word *good* reveals the characteristics of the nobles themselves, such as being

¹ Novac 2017: 23

² F. Nietzsche 1913: 9–11

³ Ibid. 11

'powerful', 'rich' and above all being 'truthful' for they were the ones who were *true* to themselves. He, furthermore, points out to the possibility that 'gut', the German equivalent to the word good, refers, in its origin, to the 'god-like' and to the men of 'godlike race', but he does not affirm these assumptions.

It is interesting seeing how etymology can give a glimpse into the past, and as a native speaker of Arabic I can add to Nietzsche's assertions that the etymology of the words *good*, *bad* and *evil* in Arabic have similar connotations to the ones just mentioned. Firstly, the word *good* in Arabic¹ is split between two kinds of good which almost perfectly align with Nietzsche's description of 'Good and Bad' and 'Good and Evil'. In Arabic *good* جَيِّدٌ [Jayyed], means with high quality, high calibre and as a verb means to elongate, heighten and empower and it can even refer to the long neck of a camel or a person which symbolizes respect and reverence. The opposite is *bad* رَدِيءٌ [radee!] which correspondingly refers to the lower, the vulgar, the rotten, the spoiled and is even the root word to refer to clothes that are of lower quality and status. The other word for *good* in Arabic خَيْرٌ [khayr] aligns with Nietzsche's good in 'Good and Evil' as it refers to the grace of God, to generosity [altruism] and the opposition to evil. شَرٌّ [Sharr] is the opposite of [khayr] and it means *evil* and is related to harmfulness. This all corresponds with Nietzsche's analysis so far and sheds a light on the next step he's taking which is analysing the origins of the *good* in 'Good and Evil'.

Before starting with the analysis of the good in 'Good and Evil', it is important to articulate my comprehension of the way Nietzsche is analysing that origin, which is something he seems to have implied in *essay I* of *GM*.² He appears to be taking the analysis in rather a chronological manner within each essay and throughout the whole book to a certain extent. He started the analysis with the nobles in ancient time, and he called them the powerful and the beasts of prey, and here he suggests that the 'essence of civilization' is the taming of man and that of the beasts of prey, therefore, the birds of prey were there, necessarily, before civilisation appeared.

The next phase occurred when the aforementioned political and social supremacy of the nobles started to be resolved, i.e., to be *sublimated* into

¹ Tarad 2016 طراد [Tarad] طراد, [M]. م. (2016). [Almojam Almofoasal fi Almotaradifat fi Allogha Alrabiya] دار الكتب العلمية [المعجم المفصل في المترادفات في اللغة العربية]. [Dar Al Kotob Al Ilmiyah]

² F. Nietzsche 1913: 23

psychological supremacy, as Nietzsche argues.¹ This started when the 'priestly' caste introduced the terms 'clean' and 'unclean' as means of class distinction. In the beginning, those characteristics did not have any theological connotation to them and only distinguished between the man who cleans himself and abstains from certain foods, and the man who does not; the terms referred to the purity of the body. Pappas² explains³ that priests were a part of the nobility, but later started to consider themselves 'pure' instead of good. This purity carried different modes of valuation; purity of the body which was manifested through the aversion of women of lower castes, for instance; a thing that the priests shared with the nobles. On the other hand, the theological type of *purity* with its disposition towards inaction brought the priests closer to slave morality by being more *reactive* than *active*.

Furthermore, the priestly nature, as Nietzsche⁴ describes it, is one of '*explosive emotionalism*' and '*neurasthenia*' owing to the priests' aversion to action. This nature of theirs consequently manipulated the terms 'clean' and 'unclean' by aggravating them to carry a metaphysical meaning which sublimated good and bad into clean and unclean creating, in the process, chasms in the social plane and creating a disease from which humanity is still suffering; the disease of purity which the priests represented and established as a high end, states Nietzsche. Moreover, the cure to this disease was offered by the priests themselves, which constituted *abstention*; abstention from various things, i.e., sexual intercourse, some foods ... etc; in other words, '*the ascetic ideal*'. In this form of society, the sacerdotal form, man became an '*interesting animal*' and his soul became deep enough to accommodate *evil*. The knightly-aristocratic values are built on the effervescent power and life, while the priests, on the other hand, are weak, and yet are the worst enemies, argues Nietzsche. He attributes this to their weakness which allows their hatred to grow to '*monstrous*' and '*gruesome*' shape, "a shape which is most crafty and most poisonous."⁵ *Clever* hate brings about *clever* revenge and '*the cleverest revenge*' in history is that of the priests', says Nietzsche. The revenge is represented

¹ F. Nietzsche 1913: 15

² Nickolas Pappas: A professor of philosophy at The City University of New York, and a Ph.D. graduate of Harvard University.

³ Pappas, N. (2005). *The Nietzsche Disappointment: Reckoning with Nietzsche's Unkept Promises on Origins and Outcomes*. Rowman & Littlefield: 136

⁴ F. Nietzsche 1913: 15–17

⁵ Ibid. 16

by the “radical transvaluation of values”¹ which came to nullify the aristocratic values of “good = aristocratic = beautiful = happy = loved by the gods”² to its contrary; “the wretched are alone the good; the poor, the weak, the lowly, are alone the good; the suffering, the needy, the sick, the loathsome, are the only ones who are pious, the only ones who are blessed, for them alone is salvation.”³ This is the origin of the good in ‘*Good and Evil*’, Nietzsche concludes.

An important point Nietzsche⁴ suggests on the characteristics of both the nobles and the slaves is their relation to action. The noble aristocrats, he argues, are too wise to separate action from happiness and, therefore, their morality springs out of their assertion to their own demands; they are the action-filled, the subjective and are the happy ones. “What is good? All that enhances the feelings of power, the Will to Power, and power itself in man. What is bad? – All that proceeds from weakness.”⁵ The slaves, on the other hand, are the recipients of life, the ‘*objective*’ and are a passive phenomenon whose happiness lies in ‘*narcotics*’, in ‘*quietude*’ and ‘*peace*’, because slaves abhor action and their *actions* are essentially just *reactions* to objective stimuli, which is the origin of slaves’ *ressentiment*, Nietzsche argues. Pappas explains this more explicitly⁶ by saying that according to Nietzsche’s ‘*law of the conservation of energy*’, a force that is not consumed, i.e., not drained does not just vanish, but rather turns inwards, and the inside is where *ressentiment* belongs; the slaves find their expenditure of action in ‘*imaginary*’ action, and their revenge in an ‘*imaginary revenge*’; a revenge within.

Pronouncing this receptive characteristic of slaves more affirmatively, Nietzsche⁷ articulates how the *bad* in the noble morality is merely an ‘*extra*’ an ‘*additional nuance*’ to the noble good, while the *evil* in slave morality is the genesis of the morality. This *evil*, as it is built on reference to the good in the noble morality, reveals that it is a *reaction* to the former and therefore, it is *NOT* an action; not a genesis. This brings us back to the parable Janaway discussed earlier; the parable of

¹ F. Nietzsche 1913: 17

² Ibid. 17

³ Ibid. 17

⁴ Ibid. 19–20

⁵ Nietzsche, F. (2007). *The Anti-Christ; Ecce homo; Twilight of the idols: and other writings* (A. Ridley & J. Norman, Trans.). Wordsworth Editions Ltd: 95

⁶ Pappas 2005: 141

⁷ F. Nietzsche 1913: 22

the beasts of prey. Nietzsche¹ here concludes that the resentment of the sheep, i.e., the slaves viewed the mastery of the birds of prey, i.e., the nobles as evil, because the sheep could not retaliate for their lack of power. Therefore, in a clever and resentful revenge the sheep transvaluated the noble values and declared that what was good is evil and what was bad is good, and suggested that the birds of prey are responsible for their strength and their exercise of power and redefined the inability to exercise power as a merit. “Weakness is turned to *merit*”.²

In short, the moralities of ‘good and bad’ and ‘good and evil’ can be compared to the values of power and weakness, respectively. Strong³ explains⁴ that being powerful is “having on one’s terms, be those terms authentic or not”⁵ and being weak means “not authentically one’s own.”⁶ Which means that the powerful self stands on its own; on its own conditions and definitions. Put differently: “He [the noble] honours whatever he recognizes in himself: such morality is self-glorification”⁷; the noble man is, therefore, a proud personality. The slave’s self, i.e., the weak self is ‘*dialectical*’ as it is built on a ‘*dialectical relationship*’ with an *Other* (e.g., the bird of prey), Strong explains, or as put by Novac: “Correspondingly, slave morality has a collective and impersonal notion of alterity, while master morality an individual and personal one”.⁸ Therefore, slave morality is established, per se, on the flow from the outside, i.e., from the *Other* inwards towards the self.

3.2. The Sovereign Individual

Furthermore, with the sheep blaming responsibility on the actions of the birds of prey, Nietzsche continues to denounce such responsibility by denouncing free will all together. “Must not that philosophical invention [...], the invention of “free will,” of the absolute spontaneity of man in good and evil, simply have been made for the specific purpose of justifying the idea, that the interest of the gods in humanity and

¹ F. Nietzsche 1913: 25–26

² Ibid. 27

³ Tracy Strong: a professor of political theory and philosophy at the University of Southampton

⁴ Strong, T. (2008). Nietzsche, the Will to Power, and the Weak Will. In *Weakness of Will from Plato to the Present (Studies in Philosophy and the History of Philosophy, Volume 49)* (pp. 231–251). Catholic University of America Press.

⁵ Strong 2008: 244

⁶ Ibid. 244

⁷ Novac 2017: 32

⁸ Ibid. 33–34

human virtue was *inexhaustible*?”¹ Nietzsche² argues here that the Greeks, who were a ‘*nation of actors*’, invented gods to spectate the unwitnessed suffering in the world and the philosophers, i.e., the ‘*friends of the gods*’ granted man – the concept of – free will, which was done in order for the gods not to get completely bored of a predictable and deterministic world.

As mentioned above, however, Nietzsche does not leave his readers with the concept of the ‘*un-free will*’ but instead, at the beginning of *essay II* in *GM*,³ he introduces the ‘*sovereign individual*’ saying that this individual is ‘*autonomous*’, ‘*moral*’ and is an individual who ‘*resembles only himself*’. This individual is ‘*competent to promise*’ and is the ‘*lord of the free will*’. This individual with his/her free will, is what Janaway sees as a contradiction in Nietzsche’s works. This individual– as mentioned above – is the ‘*ripest fruit*’ on the ‘*tree*’ of the ‘*morality of custom*’; he/she is an end result of this morality, claims Nietzsche. Moreover, he, in *HAH*,⁴ gives a similar argumentation stating that since the beginning Man took shelter in ‘*ignorance*’, “in order to enjoy life!”⁵ and that this ‘*will to ignorance*’ is actually the foundation and rock on which the ‘*will to knowledge*’ could rear itself “not as its opposite, but - as its refinement!”⁶ In the same sense, the sovereign individual can be argued to be the refinement of the morality of custom on which he/she takes root. *Is this individual attainable?* Nietzsche neither asks, nor answers this question, at least not explicitly, but he leaves us bread crumbs on the trails of his labyrinth, and I cannot but follow!

3.2.1. Promise Keeping

The first clue appears to be in *Memory and forgetfulness* which, as Nietzsche⁷ claims, are two opposing forces that are in a battle within the plan nature has set to itself. Nature’s plan, he argues, is to create a ‘*paradox*’, i.e., “the breeding of an animal that can *promise*”.⁸ A man who can *promise* is a man who can ‘*guarantee*

¹ F. Nietzsche 1913: 44

² Ibid. 43–44

³ Ibid. 36

⁴ Nietzsche, F. (1997a). *Beyond Good and Evil* (H. Zimmern, Trans.). Dover Publication, Inc: 18

⁵ Ibid. 18

⁶ Ibid. 18

⁷ F. Nietzsche 1913: 34–35

⁸ Ibid. 34

himself as a future', which is a characteristic of the sovereign individual, therefore, this is our first clue. As Strong puts it, "one has to *become* a person who has the right to keep promises"¹ and continues to explain, in the same paragraph, that a man *acquires* the ability to make promises by abiding to a '*universal standard*' such as '*rationality*' which appears to lie in memory. The memory of a promise is counteracted by '*forgetfulness*' which is an *active* '*power of obstruction*'. Memory, on the other hand, is the '*active refusal*' to forgetfulness, and within it promises lie, argues Nietzsche. So, promise keeping lies in the same mental faculty as reason does and both appear to be connected. Between the creation of a promise or the original '*I will*' and the execution of the act lies memory; the '*memory of the will*'. Therefore, to acquire the ability to promise we need to acquire and strengthen memory.

Furthermore, to create an individual who can promise, Nietzsche believes that one should first become '*calculable*', '*disciplined*' and '*necessitated*' and he argues that man became calculable with the hardness and the despotism of the morality of custom, which is the morality of obedience. Elgat² explains³ saying that "the production of a responsible agent presupposes the interrelated traits of (1) being calculable [...], and (2) being able to calculate."⁴ He continues saying that '*being calculable*' is defined by the ability of the others to calculate one's actions and this is a product of the morality of custom's uniformity of certain enforced values, while '*to be able to calculate*' is the ability to think practically and causally. No amount of self-control can guarantee the accomplishment of a task if one cannot firstly '*plan*' the task ahead, i.e., '*to be able to calculate*'. To have the '*power to calculate*' is, arguably therefore, equal to having the ability to "distinguish between necessitated and accidental phenomena"⁵ and "to fix with certainty what is the end, and what is the means to that end".⁶

There also seems to be a relation between memory, calculability and the ability to calculate. Firstly, "the autonomous man is the memorious man, whose memory

¹ Strong 2008: 245

² Guy Elgat: A lecturer at Northwestern University and author of *Nietzsche's Psychology of Ressentiment: Revenge and Justice in On the Genealogy of Morals*.

³ Elgat, G. (2020). The individualization of conscience: what Daybreak (9, 10, 544) and The Gay Science (117) tell us about the sovereign individual: 4-5

⁴ Ibid. 4

⁵ F. Nietzsche 1913: 35

⁶ Ibid. 35

has not the past for its ultimate object but the future. “Remember the future!” says the man who has earned the right to make a promise.”¹ So, the man who is competent to promise has a good memory that is directed towards the future, which means that he has the ability to calculate the future based on his experiences and memories of the past. *How to train this memory of the will then, in order to become competent to promise?* The answer through history was in the system of ‘mnemonics’, explains Nietzsche.² This system depends on the knowledge that “only that which never stops hurting remains in the memory”³ and thus the system of mnemonics is something that is ‘burnt’ in human consciousness with brute force which counteracts forgetfulness.⁴ Pain, blood, sacrifice, torture and punishment are the cruel instincts from which the most potent mnemonics originate, states Nietzsche. Elgat expands on this saying that “pain prompts the following questions: how did this happen that I am now punished? What did I fail to see? How did I get caught? And a result of such self-interrogations is a sharpening of prudence (causal thinking and planning) and a heightening of self-control.”⁵ Punishment is, therefore, the constitute of the past and it is what gave man memory which paved the way for man to also become able to calculate and think causally, argues Nietzsche. “With the help of this kind of memory man eventually attained “reason”!”⁶

Strong explains: “What does the lamb require of the eagle? He requires, first, that the eagle need a *reason* for doing what it does; second, he requires that the eagle have a *choice* in doing what he does[...]; this requires, next, that there be an *independent common framework* in terms of which both the eagle and the lamb can make judgments; and this requires finally that the eagle be *reflective*. The lamb wants the eagle to be rational.”⁷ We can further deduct here that promise making requires *rationality*, which is a universal standard produced by slave morality, therefore, the process of promise making must incorporate slave morality within it.

¹ Pappas 2005: 161

² F. Nietzsche 1913: 37–38

³ Ibid. 37

⁴ Ibid. 37

⁵ Elgat 2020: 6

⁶ F. Nietzsche 1913: 38

⁷ Strong 2008: 241

3.2.2. Bad Conscience

To expand on this let's go back to punishment. Nietzsche¹ argues that in history punishment did not begin from the premise that the wrong doer could have acted otherwise, but rather out of anger that simply just needed to 'vent out'. The venting out of anger was later regulated based on the equivalency between injury and pain and was governed by the "contractual relationship between *creditor* and *ower*",² argues Nietzsche. If the ower defects on the contract, the creditor was not paid back by money, land or anything of the sort, but rather by a '*sensation of satisfaction*'; the satisfaction of '*sheer violence*'; *the delight of "de faire le mal pour le plaisir de la faire"*³ through which "the creditor participates in the rights of the masters."⁴ The creditor, through punishment, gains an insight on the '*edifying*' experience of desecrating a creature as an '*inferior*', states Nietzsche. We can, therefore, add to our masters' list of characteristics their ability to inflict pain and ecstasy in cruelty and punishment. "The sight of suffering does one good, the infliction of suffering does one more good – this is a hard maxim, but none the less a fundamental maxim, old, powerful, and "human, all too human".⁵ The advance of morality taught the '*animal man*' to be ashamed of his instincts, but it did not do away with these instincts. The instinct of '*the infliction of suffering*' persisted, but with the advance of morality it was '*sublimated*' and '*translated*' into the '*psychic and imaginative plane*', Nietzsche argues.

When humans became '*imprisoned*' in the chains of customs, peace, and society, their primordial instincts of '*plight*', '*war*' and the instinct to inflict suffering were repressed by the civil life of society, Nietzsche argues.⁶ Those instincts, however, did not fade away and the pressing need to gratify them did not cease to exist, he continues to say. Human's instincts, which unconsciously ensured their safety, were abbreviated and sublimated in their '*most erratic organ*', their '*consciousness*' – the psychic and imaginative plane Nietzsche referred to – into '*thinking*', '*inferring*' and '*calculating*'. "All instincts which do not find a vent

¹ F. Nietzsche 1913: 37–43

² Ibid. 39

³ Ibid. 40 [in doing evil for the fun of it]

⁴ Ibid. 40

⁵ Ibid. 42

⁶ Ibid. 56–57

without, *turn inwards*”¹ and those ‘wild’, ‘free’ and ‘prowling’ instincts turned ‘against man himself’ creating out of man a ‘torture chamber’; “the animal ego turning against itself, taking part against itself”² which created a paradoxical drama in man turning him into a ‘stage’ instead of an ‘end’. Nietzsche continues to argue that this moment of the internalization of instincts grew what later became called the ‘soul’ in man and created ‘bad conscience’, thereby introducing a new disease of man – ‘the most grave and sinister’ of diseases; “the suffering of man from a disease called man”.³ In other words, the disease of instincts being pushed under the weight of society and custom; the disease of humans’ war against themselves and against their instincts; the disease of humans not accepting their nature. This, however, argues Nietzsche, has also made humans an interesting animal; a stage and not an end; this ‘pregnant phenomenon’ of bad conscience made humans a ‘great promise’ and a ‘bridge’; a bridge to this phenomenon’s child – the ripest of all fruits on the tree of the morality of custom – the sovereign individual.

The suppression of those natural instincts, which Nietzsche⁴ calls the ‘instinct of freedom’, created ‘bad conscience’. This phenomenon, however, should not be ‘taken lightly’, he argues, just for its initial ‘ugly’ start, as it is the same phenomenon at play in artists as well who, though on a grander scale, take this phenomenon and apply it on the material sculpturing and modifying it using all the tyranny the ‘instinct of freedom’ carries. Similarly, when this tyranny is used against the self it modifies it and carves it like an artist carves a sculpture out of a rock. This self-tyranny is the artist taking out of himself the material – the rock – and carving a new self – a sculpture – out of it. He continues to argue that this instinct to freedom, which he also calls the ‘Will to Power’, manifests itself into the self by splitting the self and using one part to dominate the other; one that makes the other suffer for the “delight in the infliction of suffering”⁵ and the aim of the artist should be to give an aim and an object to this suffering.

¹ Ibid. 56

² F. Nietzsche 1913: 57

³ Ibid. 57

⁴ Ibid. 58–59

⁵ Ibid. 59

3.2.3. The Ascetic Ideal

To answer the question of the attainability of the sovereign individual let us investigate the choice of the next topic in the *GM*, which appears to be intriguing to investigate, because Nietzsche does not just elaborate in the last essay on the ascetic ideal as part of, maybe, bad conscience, but rather chooses to dedicate the whole of the third essay to this ideal, which leads me to investigate this choice of his. *What is the ascetic ideal to begin with?* Simply put it is *self-denial*, a *contradiction*, a *'conflict'*, *'self-negation'* and *'self-elimination'*, Nietzsche states.¹ He, furthermore, discusses, within *essay III*, the ascetic ideal's genealogy for the philosophers and later for the priests which appears to follow the pattern of the first two essays in *GM*, where he demonstrated that the higher cultures' principles are the birthplace of the lower cultures' consequent metamorphosis of such principles. Namely, the transformation of *'Good and Bad'* into *'Good and Evil'* and the bearers of guilt, i.e., the noble gods' transformation into the gods of the eternal punishment. His choice of discussing the philosophers' ascetic ideal and later the priestly one appears to follow the same pattern given that Nietzsche regards philosophers and artists as higher culture while the priests as lower. Strong argues that there seems to be a relation between the philosopher and the man who can *'guarantee the future'*, which is a characteristic of the sovereign individual, and which consequently means that there is at least a relation between the philosopher and the sovereign individual. "Having this quality—being able actually to mean what one says—is the role that Nietzsche thinks reserved for the philosopher-legislator, that is, he or she who can authentically use the words "Thus shall it be".²

A philosopher who does not have a biased affection to the ascetic ideal and who does not possess hostility towards *'sensuality'* is not a real philosopher, states Nietzsche.³ All animals, he continues to argue, including the *'philosopher beast'*, seek an *'optimum of favourable conditions'* under which their strength and power are achieved and are manifest *at their peak*. Furthermore, for the philosophers, the ascetic ideal is *a bridge* that stretches from the *'narrowly cramped'* house of the

¹ F. Nietzsche 1913: 67–69

² Strong 2008: 245–246

³ F. Nietzsche 1913: 75–83

mind, i.e., the self of the philosopher to the highest independent intellectual 'optimum'; an 'optimum' where the philosopher fixates on affirming his existence and "only his existence".¹ The philosopher's 'maternal instinct' to protect and grow his *foetus* of philosophical work ensures the philosopher's bias towards the ascetic ideal, because, as Nietzsche states, "a grimly gay whole-hearted renunciation, is, [...] one of the most favourable conditions for the highest intellectualism".² The ascetic ideal is simply put "the greater power then *absorbs* the lesser"³; it is the philosopher's higher intellectual power, absorbing the lower powers of sensuality and impulsiveness. Moreover, Nietzsche argues that, like 'all' things, the history of the philosophers originated from 'bad things'; namely, from the philosophers' cowardice to be themselves and defend themselves against the masses. The philosophers, after all, do not 'play the martyr' and do not "suffer for the truth",⁴ argues he. Therefore, contemplation, in its early stages, borrowed a veil and a cloak of disguise to incite fear in the populace. "The oldest philosophers were well versed in giving to their very existence and appearance, meaning, firmness, background, by reason whereof men learnt to *fear* them".⁵ They also needed this fear and self-reverence in face of the pressure exerted on their souls by their inner 'valuation system' and they were consequently "obliged to force down the gods and the traditions of their own soul, so as to enable themselves to *believe* in their own revolution."⁶ In conclusion and shortly stated, Nietzsche considers the ascetic ideal, in the history of the philosophers, a disguise; a cloak that the philosopher wore "which enabled him to exist."⁷

The ascetic priest, on the other hand, even if his characteristics are not related to our discussion on free will per se, they are, however, still indirectly related for they show us what the sovereign individual is *NOT*. Contrary to the philosopher – who uses the ascetic ideal as a cloak, as means to an end – the ascetic priest, Nietzsche argues,⁸ takes the ideal as an *end in itself*. The ideal becomes that which defines the priest's 'will', 'power' and 'interest', and even "his *right* to existence

¹ F. Nietzsche 1913: 76

² Ibid. 79

³ Ibid. 79

⁴ Ibid. 78

⁵ Ibid. 82

⁶ Ibid. 82

⁷ Ibid. 82

⁸ Ibid. 83–84

stands and falls with that ideal".¹ In my interpretation, this is an example of the reactive characteristic of slave and lower cultures; the priests mimic the asceticism of the philosophers, who are of higher culture, without much understanding taking the *means* for the *end*. Moreover, Nietzsche argue that the philosophers' self-denial for the sake of a higher end develops, in the priest, into self-denial for the sake of self-denial. This entails the priest's hostility to life and his joy in '*decay*', '*pain*' and '*voluntary punishment*'. Suffering became the *purpose* of the ideal, Nietzsche claims, the '*state of punishment*' became the *end*.²

To recap, the priest, who was an intermediary between higher and lower cultures, vengefully transvaluated the noble values and continued to create the concept of purity which was expressed by abstention. The abstention of the ascetic ideal was stolen from the philosophers and was transformed into an end in itself, which means that suffering for the sake of an end became suffering for the sake of suffering. *So, what is the ascetic priest's cure for this suffering?* Salvation and redemption; a kingdom to come; the kingdom of self-immolation; the kingdom of nothingness; the '*Will to Nothingness*' was the cure. And *what remains of this ideal, in our day, Nietzsche asks?*³ The '*Will for Truth*', he claims, which was manifest through the Christian and Platonic belief in the '*divinity*' of truth and, in our day, the same '*divinity*' is manifest through modern science.

Furthermore, if the sovereign individual is the '*Antinihilist*' and '*the conqueror of God and Nothingness*', *shouldn't we then try to escape this nihilistic ascetism?* Firstly, the search for an antithesis of the ascetic ideal does not necessarily originate from a total opposition to the ascetic ideal itself, for Nietzsche states: "*all reverence on my part to the ascetic, in so far as it is honourable!*"⁴ Moreover, he argues⁵ that without it, man would have stayed an '*animal man*' with no meaning. The ascetic ideal simply tried to answer to the unanswerable question "what is the purpose of man at all?"⁶ and with its existence the ascetic ideal showed us that "something was *lacking*" in man and this is the meaning of the ideal, states Nietzsche. The ascetic

¹ F. Nietzsche 1913: 83

² Ibid. 102–103

³ Ibid. 110–111

⁴ Ibid. 115

⁵ Ibid. 117–118

⁶ Ibid. 117

ideal gave a meaning and a *'purpose of suffering'* which – regardless of the meaning it gave – saved the *willing* part of life, argues Nietzsche; man still exercised a *'Will to Power'* through this ideal, even when it pointed towards nothingness, for “man will wish *Nothingness* rather than not wish at all.”¹ *What is its antithesis then?* Art's *'will for deception'* and its ability of *fogging of truth* makes it *'fundamentally'* more of an antithesis to the ascetic ideal than science is, Nietzsche argues², and a man who can sculpt himself out of a rock is an artist and, arguably, a sovereign individual who can use the ascetic ideal as a tool to block his impulsive instincts and channel them in a direction he chooses and *guarantees*. Furthermore, Nietzsche's³ opposition is not an opposition of the ascetic ideal per se, but it seems that his opposition is to the lower cultures' “coquettish bugs who have an insatiate ambition to smell of the infinite, until eventually the infinite smells of bugs”.⁴ *Who are the bugs?* The *'counterfeiters of ideals'*; the *trans-valuators* of values, he states, and, in my understanding, the plebeians; the herd and their shepherd the priest.

To summarize, the sovereign individual is a bridge towards a phase of morality that is *Antinihilist*. The morality of the sovereign individual is characterised by his/her embrace of the instinct to freedom, i.e., the *'Will to Power'*. Therefore, the sovereign individual is a return to accept and embrace the *'human, all too human'* instincts of the old masters. However, the sovereign individual is *NOT* a regress back to prehistorical instincts and mastery, for this would be going against our current acquired civil nature and instincts, and such rejection of instincts is something Nietzsche does not support. He refers to this in *HAH*, where talking about culture he says that “we *cannot* go back to the old system; we *have* burned our bridges behind us”⁵ and in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra (ZS)* saying that “all beings hitherto have created something beyond themselves: and ye want to be the ebb of that great tide, and would rather go back to the beast than surpass man?”⁶ In the sovereign individual, the masters' rites are transformed into exercise of power against the self, not to inflict suffering for the sake of suffering, but rather to suffer for a *purpose* that the individual creates for the sovereign individual with his/her resemblance of the old masters is

¹ F. Nietzsche 1913: 118

² Ibid. 111

³ Ibid. 115

⁴ Ibid. 115

⁵ F. Nietzsche 1878: 152

⁶ Nietzsche, F. (1997). *Thus Spake Zarathustra* (T. Common, Trans.; 1997th ed.). Wordsworth: 6

also a *creator of values*. Furthermore, the ascetic ideal is turned back, in this individual, to be a means to an end, and the gods of both slaves and masters are present in him/her for he/she bears the guilt, i.e., is responsible for his/her actions and is also the punisher of the self. “Such “conflicts” actually allure one to life”¹ and nihilism is conquered when the individual sets a purpose for his/her suffering. If his/her ‘*Will to Power*’ is exercised through mastery over the self, then the *ultimate* supremacy over oneself, is the *ultimate* exercise of the ‘*Will to Power*’.

¹ F. Nietzsche 1913: 68

4. Schools of Free Will

4.1. Background and Principles

In order to properly investigate the problem of free will in Nietzsche, I will start by providing an analytical discussion on free will. I will use this discussion of the different camps and schools of thought on free will, in order to position Nietzsche's conception of free will among them, and to extract an analytical line of reasoning to use in connection to Nietzsche. More explicitly, instead of asking whether there is free will for Nietzsche or not, my goal here is to attempt to allocate the kind of free will that is reasonable to ask about in Nietzsche, which should sharpen our initial question.

Let us consider a novel written by B. F. Skinner.¹ The novel is called *Walden Two* and in short it is about a utopian society where people are 'free' to do whatever they want and, as a matter of fact, they live happily, and lead a pleasant way of life, as Kane² describes.³ There exists no punishment in *Walden Two* nor is there any crime, and its founder considers this society 'the freest place on earth'. So far, the case might appear to be so, but there is a twist; it is that even though the people of *Walden Two* are free to do whatever they want, they do not have the *ultimate* say about their choice, because they have been engineered by 'behavioural engineers' to *choose* what they *choose* and *want* what they *want*. This poses a dilemma, argues Kane, of whether a person, who is free to choose to do whatever one wants (e.g. choice of a drink, hobby, career ... etc.), would still be considered free if one's choice were preprogrammed by some external manipulator. I won't attempt to answer this question here, but this dilemma introduces us to different layers of what we could call free will. The freedom to do what one wants is considered a 'surface' freedom and this is not our focus in this paper. The free will that is of our concern here is the 'deeper' kind of freedom which is "to have the ultimate power over what it is that we willed."⁴

¹ Burrhus Frederic Skinner: An American psychologist and philosopher and he was a professor of psychology at Harvard University.

² Robert Kane: An American philosopher, a graduate of Yale University and the author of many books on free will.

³ Kane, R. (2005). *A contemporary introduction to free will*. Oxford University Press: 2-3

⁴ Ibid. 2

Furthermore, there are two principles on which most free will schools base their arguments;¹

1) The first principle is that for our choices and actions to be free they essentially need to be *'up to us'*, and therefore we need to be able to *'have acted otherwise'*. This is called the *'Principle of Alternative Possibilities'* (PAP). PAP states that "persons are morally responsible for what they have done only if they could have acted otherwise."² Shortly, *it is the ability to do otherwise.*

2) The second principle is that for our actions to be *'up to us'* their *'ultimate source'* needs to be *within* us and not within *'factors beyond our control'*, and hence the second principle is called *'Ultimate Responsibility'* (UR). "to be *ultimately* responsible for an action, an agent must be responsible for anything that is sufficient reason, cause, or motive for the action's occurring."³

Furthermore, Kane⁴ continues to introduce the term *determinism* which describes our actions when they are *determined* by internal or external factors. A determined event is defined as deterministic "when there are conditions obtaining earlier [fate, God's will, laws of nature ... etc.] whose occurrence is a sufficient condition for the occurrence of the event."⁵ Indeterminism, on the other hand, is the opposite of determinism, he exclaims, and is, simply put, the belief that free will is *indetermined* – hence the name – and does not fall on any causal chain. Determinism,⁶ however, is *NOT* considered an active force in opposition to free will, states Kane. It is not a hindrance nor is it a constraint. Determinism only means "that all events follow from earlier events",⁷ or in other words, *'same past, same future'*. Some causes could, arguably, even be an advantage for our ability to choose (e.g. physical strength).

Furthermore, Kane argues that when faced with a decision, our feeling of possessing freedom to choose leads us to deliberate in order to settle for one choice rather than the other. The outcome of such decision will lead us in a certain path and at some point, down that path we will need to take another decision and so on and so

¹ Kane 2005: 6. 80. 121

² Ibid. 80

³ Ibid. 121

⁴ Ibid. 4–8

⁵ Ibid. 5–6

⁶ Ibid. 18–21

⁷ Ibid. 18

forth. This maze of 'open future' with the different paths down the line is called the 'garden of forking paths',¹ explains Kane, (Figure 1) which is an essential component in understating free will. Determinism, however, seems to pose a threat to the intuitive feeling we have of our 'open future' and free will, and this leads us to question whether our feeling of free will comes in 'conflict' with determinism or not. This question is called the 'compatibility question' and the answer to it is as

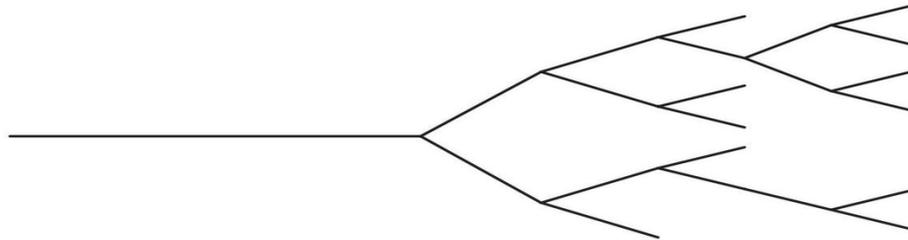


Figure 1

diverse as the schools of thought on free will are; for all of them answer it differently. Therefore, I will focus here on the most relevant to our discussion of free will in Nietzsche, and thus I will exclude those schools that are either take the freedom of will to be a problem of *liberum arbitrium indifferentiae*, or their counterparts who oppose any form of the freedom of will. Moreover, as Nietzsche, as mentioned above, denies the form of responsibility which is grounded on the ability to act otherwise (e.g. the birds of prey), I will, therefore, not focus on the schools that ground their arguments on the principle of alternative possibilities.

4.2. Compatibilism

Kane² explains that Compatibilism is a school which argues that determinism is 'compatible' with free will. *Classical Compatibilism* states that to be free we must:

- 1) have the 'power or ability' to do something
- 2) have *NO* 'constraints' that would hinder us from doing what we want to do.

Constraints can be anything that hinders our ability to do or choose what we want, whether it be 'compulsion', 'lack of ability', 'physical restrain' or 'coercion'. And regarding the 'deeper' kind of freedom, compatibilists regard it the same as any other action and it thus follows the same rules, argues Kane. For example, in the case of Walden Two, compatibilists would consider that the free will of the people living there has been compromised as brainwashing would hinder the freedom of choice of

¹ Kane 2005: 7

² Ibid. 12–16

the people. However, compatibilists do not believe in the *deeper* kind of free will as they believe that such conception of free will requires indeterminism of which they are opposed.

Kane¹ continues to discuss *New Compatibilism*, which, unlike *Classical Compatibilism*, differentiates between the '*freedom of action*' and the '*freedom of will*' which would be the deeper kind of free will mentioned in *Walden Two*. They, like classical compatibilists, think of free will as the '*absence of constraints*', but they, unlike compatibilists, investigate our internal constraints not only the external ones. Frankfurt,² who is a new compatibilist, introduces '*first order*' and '*second order*' desires; the second being desires about '*other*' desires. Humans are '*rational*', they argue according to Kane, and are thus capable of '*reflective self-evaluation*', and for that they assert that humans do not only act instinctively on first order desires but reflect on them and evaluate them and could instead act on second order desires. To further illustrate, they imagine a drug addict whose first order desire is to use a drug. The addict who is also a '*rational animal*' may desire to overcome her addiction, which is a representation of the second order desire, in order to save her job or marriage, for instance. Therefore, new compatibilists argue that if the addict could not overcome her first order desire, we could call her behaviour '*addictive*' or '*compulsive*' which they consider un-free; "when persons do not have *the will they want to have*, they lack free will."³

Watson,⁴ who is also a new compatibilist, appears to build on Frankfurt's '*higher-order desires*' theory and he argues, similarly, that we use reflection and self-evaluation, which involve practical reasoning, to get to a decision.⁵ The choice, for him however, is not between a lower and higher order desires, but is instead between '*desires*' and '*values*'. Furthermore, Watson states that our practical reasoning tells us which choice we should pursue, but this does not always mean that we actually pursue what is good for us, because often times our values, he argues, come in '*conflict*' with our desires. Therefore, he argues that, the '*conflict*' between values

¹ Kane 2005: 93–95

² Harry Gordon Frankfurt: An American philosopher and professor emeritus at Princeton University.

³ Ibid. 94

⁴ Gary Watson: A professor at the University of South California in the fields of moral agency, legal responsibility and freedom of will and action.

⁵ Ibid. 98–101

and desires, instead of being a mere choice, shows that the problem may not lie only in a difficulty of choice, but rather in *laziness* to do what one values and thinks is good for oneself; in other words the problem is the *weakness* of the will. The opposite to such laziness (i.e., weakness of the will) is '*self-control*', they argue, which is the ability to conform one's *desires* to one's reason.

In response, some have asked *whether we would still be considered free if our second order desires are manipulated or brainwashed, say in the example of Walden Two? Others also asked why to stop at 'second order' desires, why not the third or the fourth order?* Frankfurt, in return, responds to these questions by introducing a new concept he calls '*wholeheartedness*' which states that our actions are free *only* if we come to certainty about them *wholeheartedly*.¹ This means that we need to identify our higher order desires and become certain about them through reflection, regardless of what order they are. These desires must also be ours (not the case of Walden two) alongside being wholehearted and certain about them. For Frankfurt, "to have free will is to be able to act on higher-order desires to which we are wholeheartedly committed."² Critics have, however, argued that if to be free we must be wholeheartedly certain about our desires, then *how do we move from uncertainty to wholehearted certainty about our desires on our own and with our free will?* To which Frankfurt did not seem to give a convincing answer and only claimed that we should just think about our wholeheartedness at the moment *now* and not think about how we got there.

4.3. Ultimate Responsibility

Furthermore, the concept of '*wholeheartedness*' appears to entail a form of responsibility over our second order desires as a condition for it, which is comparable to the other principle of free will; the principle of *Ultimate Responsibility (UR)*. *UR* argues that for one to be responsible for one's actions one must also be responsible for the origins, causes, motives, ... etc. of such actions, argues Kane.³ More explicitly, our actions now arise from one's past choices, circumstances and character

¹ Kane 2005: 95–98

² Ibid. 97

³ Ibid. 120–123

and to be responsible for an action, in the present, one must also be responsible for the past occurrences and actions that led to it. This corresponds with Aristotle's idea, argues Kane, that for one to be responsible for the good and bad of his present actions one should *also* be responsible for forming his good or bad character out of which the present actions arise. In other words, to take responsibility of our present actions our actions must be based on occurrences for which we were responsible, in the past. Those acts in the past, however, could be argued to have also been determined by past occurrences before them, and so on so forth. This appears to introduce a new *dilemma of regress* in which the chain of past events continues indefinitely unless we find an event for which we were *ultimately responsible*. If that moment of *UR* were indeterministic the whole principle would collapse, for our discussion at least, as many philosophers including Nietzsche denounce the indetermined free will.

UR theorists,¹ however, provided a different answer to that problem which does not involve indeterminism in its chain of events. They argue that *UR* does not investigate the alternative possibilities of our actions, but rather the “sources,” “grounds,” “reasons,” and “explanations” of our wills, characters, and purposes,”² and, therefore, they differentiate between the freedom of ‘*action*’ and that of the ‘*will*’, explains Kane. The difference between the two can be illustrated in what is called ‘*Austin-style examples*’ which show that even if one’s action had alternative possibilities (*AP*), those alternative actions are not necessarily considered free. An example theorists give is of a man, in front of a coffee machine, who decides to buy black coffee. He, however, instead of pressing the black coffee button on the machine, presses the one for coffee with milk. Another example is of an assassin who has a rifle aimed at a politician with the intention to shoot and kill, but at the moment of firing the assassin feels a twitch in the muscles of his/her arm and instead of the politician, he/she shoots the person next to him/her. In both cases, there seems to be alternative possibilities for the action, but *can we consider an action taken accidentally responsible and free?* The answer is no, Kane argues. The point of the examples is, however, to show the distinction between the *action* (pressing of the wrong button or the killing of the wrong person) and the *will* that originates the action; *UR* investigates the freedom of the latter; the ‘*freedom of the will*’.

¹ Kane 2005: 124–125

² *Ibid.* 123

To illustrate further, *UR* investigates our relation to the will that created an action. Posited on the *garden of the forking paths*, the *initial will*, for which we are *ultimately responsible*, belongs to the past and out of it branches one, or maybe a series, of possibilities that eventually lead to the action taken (*Figure 2*). In the previous example with the politician and assassin, even though the twitch at the end of the causal chain is an alternative possibility and is indeterministic, the resulting action from it is *NOT* considered free, argues Kane: “indeterminism, wherever it occurs, seems to be a *hindrance* or *obstacle* to our realizing our purposes and hence is an obstacle to our freedom rather than an *enhancement* of it.”¹

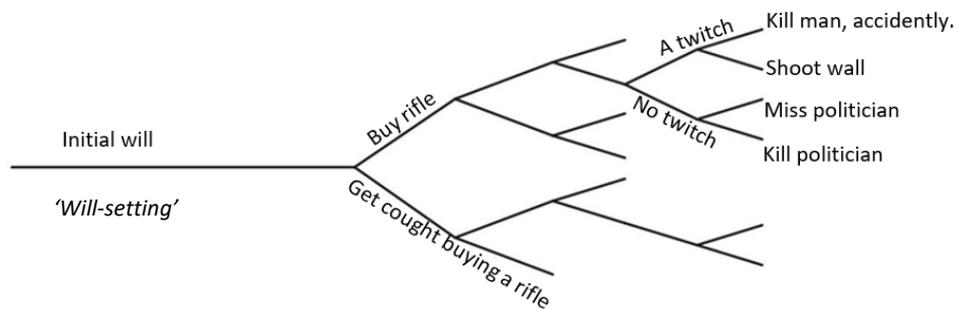


Figure 2

To solve the *dilemma of regress* and find a point for which we are *ultimately responsible*, *UR* theorists proposed the *setting of the will* as the first point in the causal chain of events for an action, explains Kane.² ‘*Will-setting*’ is the point to which an action regresses; it is the point at which the will is ‘*set one way*’ – or another (e.g. the setting of the will to kill the politician). Out of this ‘*will-setting*’ branches a series of events that lead to the actualization of the set will – or not if the will were faced with some difficulties (e.g. *Figure 2*). This concept appears to be parallel to Frankfurt’s concept of ‘*wholeheartedness*’ as both emphasise responsibility instead of alternative possibilities in their arguments, and besides that ‘*wholeheartedness*’ appears to be just another term for ‘*will-setting*’, as it can be argued that to *set the will* for something is the same as *deciding wholeheartedly* about it (e.g. the *will* to kill the politician is also a *wholehearted* decision to do so).

¹ Kane 2005: 143

² Ibid. 126–128

4.4. Analysis

To investigate more, let's take a look again at Nietzsche's aphorism *causa sui* in *BGE*.¹ Here he argues that *causa sui* is 'self-contradictory' and that this kind of freedom of will, in the metaphysical sense, grew out of the desire to attain such will with no grounds in either logic or reason. He calls the concept of 'free will' stupid and denounces it which means that the kind of free will in the schools of indeterminism are off the table for our search. Furthermore, in the same aphorism, Nietzsche also denounces the 'un-free will' which is the determined-will and, therefore, we can discard the deterministic kind of free will, i.e., the *un-free will*. Nietzsche, however, states that the problem of the free will is not a problem of free or un-free wills but that the problem lies in that "in real life it is only a question of *strong* and *weak* wills."² The kind of free will in *New Compatibilism* seems to have touched on this issue by referring to a conflict between values and desires and where they attributed laziness to the inability to act upon one's values, which in other words is the weak will, while on the other hand, they attributed self-control as a characteristic of the strong will which, in other words, is the ability to conform one's desires to reason.

The core principle of the kind of free will in *New Compatibilism* is the first and second order desires which Watson later develops into desires and values. New Compatibilists claim that free will lies in the ability to act on the second order desires, i.e., on values which, in other words, means to be able to *surpass* one's desires for one's values. This surpassing is based on the ability to self-reflect, i.e., is based on rationality. Reason and rationality, as mentioned above, trace back to the ability to calculate and think causally and both of which are based on the ability to retain memory. This ability arises from pain, hurt and punishment, which are also elements for the ability to make promises. Surpassing desires, alongside making promises, amounts to the ability to punish and inflict pain, therefore, it appears to be coherent to argue that surpassing one's desires is a promise one takes (*will-setting*) and acts upon it (*self-control*) by letting one part of the self be a master of another and punish and inflict pain upon it, in order to achieve one's desired values instead of one's raw desires. Surpassing raw desires is comparable to Nietzsche's concept of sublimation

¹ F. Nietzsche 1997a: 15

² Ibid. 15

which appears to be the mechanism of the strong will. To do so we firstly, however, need to investigate the question; *what is a strong will within Nietzsche's works?*

5. The Strong Will

5.1. The Eternal Recurrence as Will to Power

Nietzsche conceptualizes the world in terms of the Will to Power (*WP*) which is a striving (*force*) – and I use the word force very *loosely* here – towards ascending, surpassing and overcoming. In other words, it is pure *potential*. Explained by Strong: “The will to power is constant motion and finds expression as the overcoming of borders and obstacles.”¹ The first explicit mention of the *WP* in Nietzsche's corpus goes back to *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (*ZS*) in the aphorism *On Self-overcoming*, which gives us the first hint to its relation with self-surpassing, Kaufmann² explains. ³ Or as explained by Carson:⁴ “Life itself is an “instinct for growth” or “continuance,” but ultimately it is a “will to power.” The essence of “will to power” is [...] perpetual “self-surpassing.””⁵ Furthermore, in his search for the *Truth*, Nietzsche, in this aphorism, discards the ‘*Will to Truth*’ of the wise ones and instead claims that their sought is after the ‘*thinkability*’ of being; meaning that their will is towards reducing the world to *concepts* which can be *thought* of. He claims, instead, that their ‘*Will to Truth*’ does not seek the truth, but is actually an implicit will to *dominate* the world by the way they conceptualize it (e.g., “Aristotle and Hegel tried to subdue the entire cosmos, without cavalry and cannon, by sheer force of mind.”⁶) Therefore, the wisemen's will, he argues, is actually a will to subdue the world by projecting what is within their subjectivity outwards, and with this said their will is thus a *will for domination* – of the world. This domination of the world and this will to dominate is what Nietzsche calls the *Will to power* (*WP*). All valuations, moralities and even good and evil, are manifestations of the *WP*, he continues to say in *The Will to Power*,⁷ and there he also adds that the truth is a ‘*reinterpretation*’ of the falsehood of things into ‘*being*’ and that these ‘*reinterpretations*’, i.e., the truths are not ‘*discovered*’ but are rather ‘*created*’. The creation of truths is a ‘*process in infinitum*’

¹ Strong 2008: 236

² Walter Kaufmann: A German-American philosopher, professor, poet and photographer. The author of *Critique of Religion and Philosophy*

³ Kaufmann, W. (1974). The Discovery of the Will to Power. In *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist* (REV-Revised, pp. 178–208). Princeton University Press: 200; F. Nietzsche 1997b: 88

⁴ Nathan Carson: An American philosopher and associate professor at Fresno Pacific University.

⁵ Carson, N. (2006). *The Embrace of Life as Will to Power: The Anthropology of Friedrich Nietzsche*. Baylor University: 6

⁶ Kaufmann 1974: 203

⁷ Nietzsche, F. (1968). *The Will to Power* (W. Kaufmann & R. J. Hollingdale, Trans.). New York Vintage Books: 298

and he calls this process the *WP*. The *WP* is, therefore, the *process* of the creation of values, and which is the same process with which the masters and the birds of prey created values by tapping to their '*instinct for freedom*', which Nietzsche took as another name for the *WP*; it is an *active determination* of *this is this* and *this is that*, Nietzsche states. The truth of it and its composition lie in *becoming* and self-surpassing not in a thinkable truth within being. The *WP*, as explained by Porter,¹ is a '*simulacra*',² which means that its truth lies in the *absence* of an encompassing truth for it. The *WP* is the truth showing that there is no truth; it is "*untruth as a condition of life*", Nietzsche states.³ In other words, the truth about the world is that there is no inherent truth to it – nor to anything within it – and the only truth is that the world is a process of changing potential *ad infinitum*. This process is the *WP*. To further comprehend the *WP* we need another concept from Nietzsche's works as Kaufmann argues that "no interpretation of the will to power can be considered satisfactory unless the question of its compatibility with its twin conception [the Eternal Recurrence] is at least considered in some detail."⁴

Deleuze⁵ describes⁶ the *WP* as a '*plastic*' principle and asserts that its essence lies in it being a changeable process *ad infinitum*. The '*Eternal Recurrence*', or in other translations '*the Eternal Return*' "is the synthesis which has as its principle the will to power",⁷ therefore, the '*Eternal Return*' (*ER*) should give us a glimpse into the mechanisms of the *WP*. Deleuze retells Nietzsche's argument saying that if the universe had an '*equilibrium*' or an '*end state*' it would have achieved it already. The universe, however, is still in motion now, as we are in a passing moment every moment, and therefore Nietzsche concludes that there is no '*end state*' to the universe.⁸ An '*end state*', for Nietzsche, means a finished form, a '*being*' instead of the current '*becoming*' nature of the universe. Simply put, if the universe is *becoming* something it would have *become* thus already, in the given infinite time of the

¹ James I. Porter: A professor of rhetoric and classics at the UC Berkeley. An author of many philosophical books including *The Sublime in Antiquity*.

² Porter, J. I. (2007). Nietzsche's Theory of the Will to Power. In *A Companion to Nietzsche* (pp. 548–564). John Wiley & Sons, Ltd: 554

³ F. Nietzsche 1997a: 3

⁴ Kaufmann 1974: 189

⁵ Gilles Deleuze: A French philosopher and one of the most influential figures of the 20th century. He wrote on metaphysics, psychoanalysis, aesthetics and devoted many books to reading other philosophers including Nietzsche.

⁶ Deleuze, G. (1986). *Nietzsche and Philosophy*. (H. Tomlinson, Trans.). Continuum: 50

⁷ Ibid. 50

⁸ Ibid. 47

universe. Therefore, the fabric of the universe – and everything for that matter – is this process of becoming which is the *WP*, and the *being of the universe* is the truth we already mentioned which is that it is *becoming*, argues Deleuze. The *truth of being* is that it is *becoming ad infinitum*.

A way to make this easier to grasp is by remembering what Nietzsche had to say about the subject; that it is not a '*separate thing*', but that it is rather *only* the sum of its actions. Superimposed on our issue here, the subject would represent the truth of the universe. In this case, the truth would not be a *separate thing*, but would only be the *sum of its actions*, i.e., the sum of its *WP*. The *ER*, which would be the name of the subject in this illustration, is therefore, a *synthetic inference a posteriori* (analogous to the subject) out of the *in motu* fabric of the universe which is the *WP*. However, even though the *ER* and its essence the *WP* may seem like a subject, Porter explains after Nietzsche saying that "the will to power is structured like a subject in every way but one: it is not a subject, but the antithesis of one, indeed its critique."¹ "What is the being of that which becomes, of that which neither starts nor finishes becoming? *Returning is the being of that which becomes*",² Deleuze exclaims. The *ER* is the *being* of the universe which supersedes the *WP* as a term for the *becoming* of the universe. "That *everything* recurs is the closest *approximation of a world of becoming to a world of being*".³

Approximation is a necessary word when discussing the *WP*. "We take the sum of its properties – "x" – as cause of the property "x": which is utterly stupid and mad!"⁴ Nietzsche argues. In the aforementioned example, this would mean that taking the subject as the cause of its actions, instead of the sum of its actions, is faulty. Porter argues, however, that this "logic is twice invalid: the second fallacy lies in getting the causal property wrong; but the first fallacy lies in the initial positing of *x* itself."⁵ In the example, this would mean that the mere thinking of the concept of the *subject* is faulty for the subject does not really exist. This is, in my understanding, similar to the *WP*, which for the mere attempt to encompass it in a word and in a concept and for the mere *signification* of it strips away from it a part

¹ Porter 2007: 551

² Deleuze 1986: 48

³ Ibid. 48; from F. Nietzsche 1968: 330

⁴ F. Nietzsche 1968: 303

⁵ Porter 2007: 553

of its real meaning. The *WP* as a concept is a unity and “all unity is unity only as organization and co-operation – just as a human community is a unity”,¹ while in reality the *WP* is closer to “an atomistic anarchy, as a pattern of domination that *signifies* a unity but *is not* a unity.”² Therefore, I will provide my understanding and consequent explanation of the *WP* with these linguistic and conceptual deficiencies in mind, however, taking all that is mentioned in a linguistically literal manner would be faulty for it would mutilate the *real* meaning of the *WP*. Instead, the explanation is to be taken with rather poetic and imaginative dispositions.

What is the WP then? Deleuze³ explains it through its relation to force. He starts with Nietzsche saying that “The *victorious* concept 'force', by means of which our physicists have created God and the world, still needs to be *completed*: an inner will must be *ascribed to* it, which I designate as 'will to power' ”.⁴ The *WP* is, therefore, related to force; *how is it related then?* Deleuze continues to say that the essence of a force lies in its relative difference to other forces, which comprises a *quantitative* aspect of the force, i.e., its amount, and the relation between forces which is the *qualitative* aspect, i.e., whether the force is *affective* or *effected* by other forces. The *WP* is both the ‘*differential*’ and the ‘*genetic*’ aspects of a force; it is the determining factor of both the quantitative and the qualitative aspects of a force.⁵ “The essence of force is its quantitative difference from other forces and that this difference is expressed as the force's quality”⁶ The *ER*, with the *WP* as its principle, has its essence within the ‘*synthesis of forces*’. The *ER* is *NOT* the ‘*return of the same*’, but rather the return of returning, the *being of becoming*, the *eternal return* of the *WP*, *as explained by Deleuze*. More explicitly: If the configuration of forces at a specific moment is the manifestation of *being* which is the *ER*, then at each time the configuration of forces *returns* to be the same, the *WP* determines their quantitative and qualitative aspects as it is the changeable element of the universe; it is the potential of the universe. The *WP*, therefore, determines the qualities of the forces

¹ F. Nietzsche 1968: 303

² Ibid. 303

³ Deleuze 1986: 49–50

⁴ F. Nietzsche 1968: 332–333

⁵ Deleuze 1986: 50

⁶ Ibid. 50

and thus determines the *becoming* of the forces, i.e., their *returning*. In simpler terms, “Force is what can, will to power is what wills”.¹

To illustrate further; in the aforementioned analogy, the subject not being an agent (not the cause of the action) is similar to the *ER* not being the cause of its configuration of forces at a certain moment in time. The *WP*, on the other hand, is the determining factor of the forces, as it is what wills them and, therefore, their consequent actions. Strong explains saying: “The will to power interprets: it is a question of interpreting during the building of an organ; it sets limits, defines degrees, differences of power..... In truth, interpretation is a means to become master of something.”² In other words, the *WP* is what determines the direction of *becoming* within the recurring configuration of forces (*being*). So, within the same configuration of forces (*being*), the *WP* determines the difference in amounts of these forces and determines their relations, and therefore, it creates a will that is changing (*becoming*) within the *ER* of *being*. Forces are determined to be dominant or dominated based on their quantity, and them being active or reactive depends on their different qualities, states Deleuze.³ A way we can visualize this is with this graph (Figure 3) in which *being* is represented by the configuration of forces on the horizontal axis. The *WP* is *becoming*, however, “linguistic means of expression are useless for expressing “becoming”,⁴ so, the *WP* is represented here by the vertical

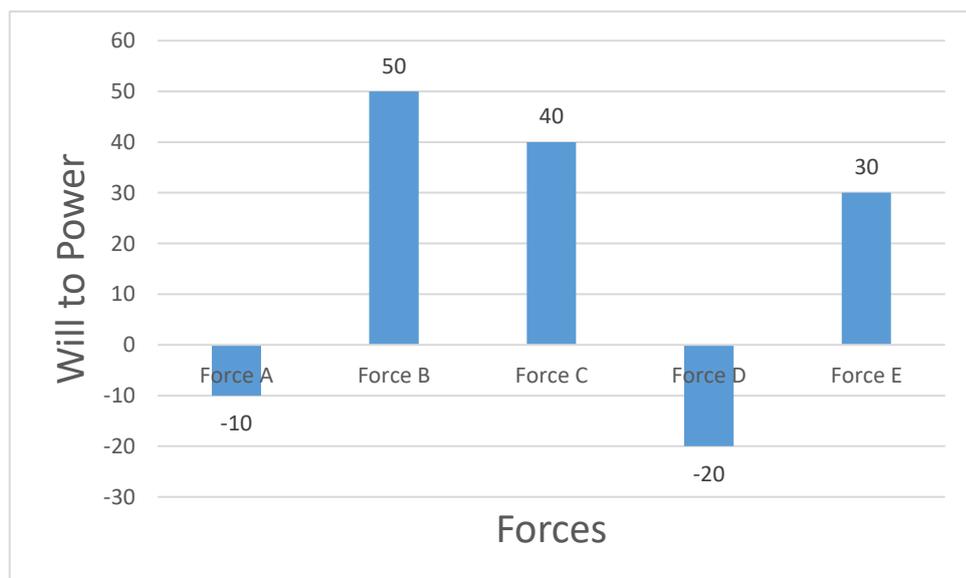


Figure 3

¹ Deleuze 1986: 50

² Strong 2008: 237; from (*Nachgelassene Fragmente*, VIII-1, 137.)

³ Deleuze 1986: 53

⁴ F. Nietzsche 1968: 380

axis and it determines the quantitative aspect of a force, in other words its amount (e.g. the amount of *Force B* is 50). The qualitative aspect of a force could be thought of as the negative or the positive amount of a force (e.g. *Force B = 50* vs *Force D = -20*). The positive figures represent active forces, while the negative represent reactive forces. The *ER* would, therefore, be the return of the same configuration of forces, but with the *WP* as its principle the quantitative aspect of the forces differs, followed by the qualitative which together determine the will (i.e., the aim of the given set of forces) and with this determination the outcome of the configuration of forces differs even though the forces remain the same. Porter explains after Nietzsche: “There is no will: there are treaty drafts of will [Willens-Punktationen]¹ that are constantly increasing or losing their power.”² This appears to mean that the will is not a single entity, but a multitude of *Willens-Punktationen* that compete and subdue one another with the resulting single will being the sum of their actions, which corresponds with *Figure 4*. Simply put, *being* is the set of forces (abilities) and *becoming* is the *WP* which sets the will and, therefore, it also sets which way the sum of abilities should go. So, if we take being and its configuration of forces to be the objective part of reality, argues porter, then “will and power are supposed to bring the extra element of “interpretation and subjectivity”.”³ A subjectivity that is represented by values as “ “value” is essentially the standpoint for the increase or decrease of these dominating centres”,⁴ which means that a value is what increase or decrease the *WP* in the different Willens-Punktationen and consequently in forces and their outcome.

5.1.1. Willing a Force

Furthermore, *how does the WP determine a force? (How does it determine a force’s quantity and quality?)* Deleuze⁵ explains that firstly any two forces are related in terms of which force is ‘dominant’ and which one is ‘dominated’. There seems to be a need, therefore, for a ‘complement’ that accompanies the force to determine its

¹ [*Willens-Punktationen*: meaning unclear; perhaps the point is that the will is not a single entity but more like a constantly shifting federation or alliance of drives.] *Footnote in the original*.

² F. Nietzsche 1968: 381; Porter 2007: 551

³ Porter 2007: 550

⁴ F. Nietzsche 1968: 380

⁵ Deleuze 1986: 51

position, aside from the quantity of it, argues he, but *why is it so?* Deleuze's answer is that we need this '*complement*', because without it the relation between forces would remain indeterministic and the relation of domination between forces would occur by chance, which is incomplete as an answer. Therefore, the *WP*, he argues, asserts this indeterministic position by being the '*element*' that exists in *both* forces *simultaneously* and determines their relation from a '*double point of view*'. In other words, this means that the *WP acts* – and I am using the term act very *loosely* – from within the two forces simultaneously to determine which one dominates, and which one obeys.

Furthermore, and in more detail, Deleuze argues¹ that the *WP* is the '*differential element of forces*' which means, as mentioned above, it is the element that decides the quantitative and qualitative aspects of a force and states that while the configuration of forces arises by chance, the *WP* '*implies*' this chance. Deleuze continues to analyse the mechanism of how the *WP* determines a force saying that between forces the position of domination [*dominant* or *dominated*] is dependent on the difference in quantity of the forces, while whether the forces are active or reactive is dependent on their quality. (There is, however, *WP* in both the *dominant-active* forces and the *dominated-reactive* forces, he states.) Forces, he continues, "express their difference in quantity by the quality which is due to them"² and "the principle of the qualities of force is the will to power."³ So, the *WP* determines the relative quality between forces, and the quality designate the quantity of the forces, thereafter. For the *WP* to determine the qualitative aspect, it must have qualities on its own, he argues, and these qualities are even more subtle than the qualities of a force. He uses Nietzsche's terms to explain saying, that the qualities of forces, as already mentioned, are either '*active*' or '*reactive*', while the '*primordial*' qualities of the *WP* are either '*affirmative*' or '*negative*'. Therefore, to say that the quality of a force is either *acting* or *reacting* expresses that the *WP* designating the quality of the force is either *affirming* [*appreciating*] or *denying* [*depreciating*], respectively. That is why nihilism, ascetism, Christianity and the '*will to deny*', even though are reactive forces, they are still manifestation of the *WP*; in this case the *denying* or *depreciating*

¹ Deleuze 1986: 52–54

² Ibid. 53

³ Ibid. 53

quality of the *WP* is in action. In short, that means that “action and reaction are more like means, means or instruments of the will to power which affirms and denies”.¹

Furthermore, to understand the process more, affirmation and negation are translated to action and reaction through the *WP*, because it is the essence of *being* itself, namely *becoming*, argues Deleuze.² More explicitly, this means that the affirmation and negation of the *WP* are *NOT* actions by the *WP*, but rather rely on the *power of becoming* itself being either *active* or *reactive*, to produce affirmative or denying *WP*. So, in my understanding, when the *power of becoming* is *active* it is interpreted into affirmation in the *WP* which is articulated as an active force, thereafter. When the *power of becoming* is *reactive* it is interpreted as negation of the *WP* which is articulated as a reactive force. Furthermore, the *WP*, continues Deleuze,³ does not only interpret but it does also evaluate. “Every will implies an evaluation.”⁴ The *WP*, therefore, by interpreting a force gives it a sense, while evaluating gives the *WP* a value, he argues. Explained by Magrini:⁵ “Values are created by will to power as it is *futurally* directed toward that which it has not yet attained, toward that which ultimately must be surmounted.”⁶ Therefore, the creation of values is part of the process of the *WP*, as it sets a value for itself to *become* it and later *surpass* it – hence *self-surpassing*.

5.1.2. The Noble, the Weak, and the Sovereign

Translated to less abstract terms, what Nietzsche references as “*noble, high and master*”⁷ is either an active force, or an affirmative will, i.e., evaluating will, argues Deleuze.⁸ On the other hand, “what he calls *base, vile and slave*”⁹ is either a reactive force or a negative will. In my interpretation, that is why the masters and birds of prey are good, because they enhance their *instinct to freedom*, i.e., their *WP* which

¹ Deleuze 1986: 54

² Ibid. 54

³ Ibid. 54–55

⁴ Ibid. 54; from Nietzsche, VP II 29.

⁵ James M. Magrini: An American philosopher and professor of Western Philosophy and Ethics at College of Dupage.

⁶ Magrini, James M. (2016). Portrait of the Supreme Metaphysical Artist: The Overman in Heidegger’s “Metaphysical” Reading of Nietzsche. *International Journal of Philosophy*, XX (2016): 8

⁷ Deleuze 1986: 55

⁸ Ibid. 55

⁹ Ibid. 55

puts them in harmony with the essence of *being* and makes them also creators of values. Slaves, on the other hand, are reactive and lazy and do not enhance their *WP* as they do not enhance their active forces, nor affirm values. Their *WP* is negative and reactionary, and it only affirms the already created values of the herd to which the slave belongs; a slave's *WP* affirms itself as it affirms the values of the herd; it affirms its value of it being *reactionary*. To which Strong appears to agree: "The preliminary sense is that a weak will [slave] is associated with a need to be weak, that is, not wanting to be a self, thus unable to own, to be one's own self, to have a right to what is one's own. Such a weak will is not weak at a particular moment: weakness is its nature."¹

So, as the sovereign individual is the *lord of the free will* and as previously shown the free will is the strong will and the strong will is the *WP*, so the sovereign individual is also the *lord of the will to power*. Here I must mention the other important figure in Nietzsche's writings which is the *Übermensch*. Explains Carson: "In short, the *Übermensch* is the man who embraces life *as will to power*, and thus orients his whole being around his own exercise of will to power."² Or by Magrini saying: The person "who in the midst of beings comports himself toward that being which as such is will to power (Being of beings) and as a whole is eternal return of the same (Being) is called *the overman* [*Übermensch*]."³ Which, as I understand it, means to seek the *WP* for the sake of the enhancement of the *WP*. The *Übermensch* also "determines his own values; he is self-sufficient and indeed "*creates values*" by the sheer exercise of his own will to power."⁴ All of these characteristics correspond with the characteristics of the sovereign individual, however, I won't go into the details of whether both of them *are* or *are not* the same figure, but for our discussion on free will I will mention both and use the terms interchangeably as both are candidates for the type of individual Nietzsche sees as strong-willed, for both embrace the *WP* as the essence of life.

How can we then enhance the WP and have a strong will? Both individuals are lords of the *WP*, so, it is necessary that they share characteristics of the old masters, i.e., the birds of prey. Such characteristics as mentioned above include being

¹ Strong 2008: 238

² Carson 2006: 15

³ Magrini 2016: 27, [Heidegger 1991, *Nietzsche*: 216]

⁴ Carson 2006: 15; F. Nietzsche 1997a: 127

powerful, cruel, rich, creators of values and above all being *truthful*, for the masters were the ones who were *true* to themselves; they were the owners of themselves and the masters of themselves, which are the characteristics opposite to that of the weak willed. As the opposite of the weak will, the strong will is an active will that is a master of itself, and being a master of oneself means *wanting* to be oneself and this entails exerting the power, i.e., *WP* to actually carve the self and shape it as an artist would do to a rock. “Art is of more *value* than truth because it lies nearest to the metaphysical essence of life”.¹ The sculpture is a metaphor and the emphasis is on the process of shaping oneself, for the *WP* sets values and surmounts them, and so does the artist who sets aims and surpasses them, but if the artist settles for a certain shape, i.e., a certain *truth* of the self, the artist would step away from the truth of *being*, which is the process of *becoming* as *WP*.

To recap: Nietzsche takes the *WP* to be the essence of *being*, and while *being* does not really exist, it is, like the concept of the subject, only the sum of its actions, and the closest description of a universe that is *becoming* to *being* would be that it does *return eternally*. So, if being is the various forces with various abilities, the *WP* is what organizes and sets a goal and an outcome to these forces. The *WP* does so by first being evaluative, and with a set value the *WP* either affirms or negates a force, by either having the *becoming* essence of the world active or reactive within it, which leads the force to be expressed as either an active or a reactive force. Forces interact and the qualities and quantities given to a force by the *WP* decide the position and the rank of a force within the other forces, i.e., whether the force is dominant or dominating. Furthermore, we explained that what Nietzsche calls master and noble is consequently active forces and is thus the *becoming* essence of the world active. The slavish and bile is the opposite of the masterly and is thus a reactive force based on inactivity in the *becoming* essence of the world. In short, the masterly will sets a value to consequently *become* it by actually *surpassing* it, while the slavish only *reacts* to values. The sovereign individual and the strong-willed person use these properties of the *WP* to organize and rank forces according to values they set, just like an artist would do to sculpt a sculpture out of raw materials with an image, i.e., an aim the artist sets as a value to eventually *become* and *surpass*.

¹ Magrini 2016: 9

5.2. The Self in Nietzsche

Firstly, however, we need to see how Nietzsche conceives the self before we could carve it. As mentioned above, when bad conscience was created, it was created when one's ego turned against itself, or in other words when part of the ego turned against the other parts. Phillips¹ elaborates saying that Nietzsche's conception of the *in-dividual*² is that it is a system of 'competing drives and subdrives', such as "the creative drive, the sex drive, the property drive, the dominance drive, the agonistic drive, the lust for adventure drive, the drive to obey, the tyrannical drive, the drive to honesty about oneself, the drive to justice about things, the sociable drive, and the aesthetic drive."³ Drives are deterministic in their aims, but *NOT* in their objects, so they are, argues Phillips, "more like motives (such as jealousy) than they are like end-directed desires."⁴ These drives, in my interpretation, are similar to forces which the *WP* affirms and negates within the self, to which Porter seems to imply quoting Nietzsche in the *GM* saying "a quantum of force is equivalent to a quantum of drive, will, effect"⁵ and to which Whitmire⁶ also agrees saying: "We might make a methodological attempts to explain all our drives as manifestations of a single, overarching kind of impulse – will to power – but the irreducibility of the drives would remain."⁷ Nietzsche even continues to say that "rather it [the quantum of force] is nothing else than just those very phenomena [drives, will, effect]"⁸ which means that a force does not exist *ex vivo*, i.e. independently, but rather it is the element within, i.e. comprising, these phenomena.

Furthermore, bad conscience, for example, could be argued to be the *WP* affirming the values of morality which come in conflict with the natural configuration of the drives within the self, or in other words in conflict with the configuration of forces of the self. The *WP*'s affirmation (appreciation) of such

¹ Luke Phillips: A Ph.D. graduate from Indiana University Bloomington and lecturer at the University of Hong Kong.

² The individual for Nietzsche is not a singularity, but a multiplicity, hence in-dividual.

³ Phillips, L. (2015). Sublimation and the Übermensch. In *Journal of Nietzsche Studies* (Vol. 46, pp. 349–366). Penn State University Press: 351

⁴ *Ibid.* 356

⁵ F. Nietzsche 1913: 25; Porter 2007: 556

⁶ John Whitmire: An associate professor at the philosophy and religion department of the Western Carolina University.

⁷ Whitmire, J. F. (2009). The Many and the One: The Ontological Multiplicity and Functional Unity of the Person in the Later Nietzsche. *The Pluralist*, 4: 2

⁸ F. Nietzsche 1913: 25

values leads some of these drives to become active while others to become reactive according to the appreciated value. In a more simplified way, the causal chain could be argued to look something like this;

1) a priest's *WP* appreciates a value, namely, *purity* →

2) a slave's configuration of forces is reactive and thus adopts the value of purity when her *WP* appreciates *purity* as a value →

3) the tyrannical drive (the infliction of suffering for the sake of it, as I understand it) is blocked and its active force is turned inwards inflicting suffering on the self for the pleasure of inflicting suffering.

This way of channelling and translating a drive from one form to another is called '*sublimation*' and it is important for our understanding of the way the self's will becomes '*strong*'.

5.3. Sublimation

Sublimation, states Phillips,¹ is the process of elevating a force, i.e., "a drive, affect, instinct, passion, and so on"² and transforming it into the '*mental*' or '*imaginative plain*'. As mentioned earlier, the instinct to inflict suffering, for instance, was '*translated*' into the '*psychic and mental plain*' which produced '*bad conscience*'; this process of translation is the process of sublimation. The process of sublimation entails three elements, argues Phillips:

1) The translation of a drive into the mental plain.

2) '*Augmentation*' and the enhancement of the power of the drive.

3) That the first two elements must retain the characteristics and aims of the drive. The *aim*, he continues to explain, is the characteristic activity of the drive (e.g. procreation, dominance ... etc.) while the *object* is the way through which the aim of the drive expresses itself (e.g., the dominance drive → overcoming the enemy, or sublimated → "suppressing one's desires in pursuit of a heavenly reward",³ i.e. ascetism). So, for Nietzsche, Phillips continues to say, sublimation is the process of becoming more '*abstract*' and '*sophisticated*', while also more '*intense*' and

¹ Phillips 2015: 350–353

² Ibid. 350

³ Ibid. 351

'effective', which means that the drive becomes 'augmented'. Augmentation is the strengthening and enhancement of the drive; therefore, a sublimated drive expresses itself with more power, he argues. For example, the drive for revenge may take the worldly defeat of the enemy in a battle as its object, but a sublimated drive for revenge may express itself with much more power such as when the Judaic drive for vengeance was sublimated into the eternal damnation of the Romans, which is a more powerful expression of vengeance, argues Phillips. Furthermore, Nietzsche's understanding of sublimation goes in accordance with Plato's understanding, Phillips argues, in that both see sublimation as "an elevation of the attitude toward the beloved",¹ which means an increase of strength with the retention of the drive's character. Plato differs, however, in that he takes sublimation to be an uncovering of a higher value within a lower one, while Nietzsche takes sublimation as a 'creative act' which creates a higher value out of the one already existing, argues Phillips. Nietzsche's conception also differs from Freud's conception of sublimation in that he, unlike Freud, believes that sublimation occurs as a result of the 'very suppression of a drive' which is what sublimates the drive. In other words, when a drive is blocked it effervesces into a higher, mental and psychic state, similarly to the case of the blockage of the tyrannical drive that effervesced into bad conscience as the sublimation of that drive. Moreover, Heidegger, according to Magrini,² considers the *WP* to be responsible for the mastery over the 'multiplicity of drives' which is the self. This mastery is not indeterministic, but is rather conducted by the process of the *ranking* of the drives with art. This mastery is manifested as a will, like an artist's will to value, which ranks and organizes the drives and forces that constitute the self 'in service' of ascending the raw objects of a drive which is 'self-overcoming'.

Why to sublimate one's drives though? Phillips³ continues to say, that Nietzsche believed sublimation to be a good thing for having a 'healthy psychological whole', or in my understanding a healthy configuration of drives and their sublimated objects. Sublimation he continues, elevates one's culture by satisfying one's instincts, whether they be healthy or unhealthy instincts, in a way that aims at obeying what one values the most – and what better values than the values one creates. The creator of values is a master, and the sovereign individual, as

¹ Phillips 2015: 353

² Magrini 2016: 14

³ Phillips 2015: 354

the refinement of the morality of custom, retains the tendency to elevate the expression of drives by sublimating them, however, he does not do so for moral reasons, but for his own morality, i.e., for his own created values, which makes him, as Nietzsche states,¹ ‘*super-moral*’ and ‘*autonomous*’. Moreover in *BGE* he says: “The essential thing “in heaven and in earth” is, apparently (to repeat it once more), that there should be long obedience in the same direction; there thereby results, and has always resulted in the long run, something which made life worth living; for instance, virtue, art, music, dancing, reason, spirituality – anything whatever that is transfiguring, refined, foolish, or divine.”² So, it appears that here Nietzsche is calling for the transfiguring and the refinement of the self’s drives by sublimating them, and with that being aimed towards achieving a certain goal utilising a consistent obedience of the self for its sake. The nature of the goal is not important though, as Nietzsche does not believe in objective truth, and hence not a certain ideal to follow.

Why pursue such a goal in the first place? To put it all together, sublimation translates a drive into the psychic plain while at the same time it also *strengthens* it, and if drives and instincts are, as explained above, manifestations of the *WP*, then the strengthening of drives means the strengthening of the *WP*, and as Nietzsche says: “What is good? All that enhances the feeling of power, the Will to Power, and power itself in man. What is bad? – All that proceeds from weakness. What is happiness? – The feeling that power is *increasing* – that resistance has been overcome.”³ Being a master over oneself entails the expression of more power which is good, as power, or rather the *WP*, is the essence of *being*. While this is true and as the self is a multiplicity for Nietzsche, it is also arguably good to be a slave; a slave to one’s inner master who creates values to which the inner slave is a good slave when it obeys these values. “There is *master-morality* and *slave-morality*; [...] indeed sometimes their close juxtaposition – even in the same man, within one soul.”⁴ This mastery is articulated by the coherent and calculated blocking of one’s drives, which leads to their consequent sublimation, in order to achieve a certain value as a goal to *become*. More precisely, it is the value that blocks a drive and its initial object and sets a new and sublimated one for it, in order to *become* itself, i.e., in order to surpass itself.

¹ F. Nietzsche 1913: 36

² F. Nietzsche 1997a: 58

³ F. Nietzsche 2007: 95

⁴ F. Nietzsche 1997a: 126

Furthermore, it is, as already mentioned, bad to be weak and to succumb to one's raw instincts, as that does not entail the enhancement of the *WP*. Kaufmann explains saying that "Nietzsche asserts that moral goodness consists in doing what is difficult. To do the easy is not "morally good.""¹ Value creating is better than value following as that enhances the *WP*, for a value is a passion and passion is a commanding faculty of the mind as Strong suggests saying that "all weakness of will stems from the fact that no passion, no categorical imperative, commands."² This brings us back to the sovereign individual who grew out of the morality of custom, and thus has learned to sublimate his/her drives and instincts. He/she outgrew the ascetism of the morality of custom, and thus learned to increase his/her power by blocking his/her drives in order to sublimate them, instead of blocking them for the sake of self-denial. He/she is sovereign for he/she creates his/her own values, and thus is not a follower of values, i.e. he/she creates and finds his/her own passion within him/her, which would drive him/her to exert *WP* to sculpt himself/herself as an artist would do according to the passion (*value*) he/she has in mind. He/she does so with his/her ability to keep promises (e.g. a promise to withhold a value, or a goal), for keeping promises is necessarily equal to mastery over oneself and thus "mastery over circumstances, over nature, and over all more short-willed and unreliable creatures."³

Furthermore, Nietzsche, Phillips⁴ continues to explain, did not understand sublimation as a tool to soften or moralize the 'evil' instincts, but rather as a way to make them healthier and 'more potent'. In other words, drives are not morally bad or good, but rather aesthetically so. Therefore, the drives to be sublimated are not those morally bad but rather those which are 'aesthetically bad', and as aesthetics is arguably subjective, it is, therefore, up to each artist how he/she carves his/her rock, i.e., how he/she shapes and sublimates his/her drives to sculpt himself/herself into a sculpture. Magrini explains: "The ultimate task of the metaphysical artist [the *Übermensch*] is to will life into new and superior forms, and then ensure that that which is brought forth into existence is continually surmounted through aesthetic activity."⁵ The erotic drive, for instance, Phillips continues to argue, is the flow of

¹ Kaufmann 1974: 201

² Strong 2008: 238

³ Ibid. 248; from F. Nietzsche 1913: 36

⁴ Phillips 2015: 358

⁵ Magrini 2016: 31

'psychic energy' towards a creative or rather a 'procreative' outlet. This energy can be expressed in its raw form through sexual intercourse, or with effort – with *WP* – it can also be sublimated and expressed differently through romantic love, or even on a higher plain through artistic endeavours; one of which could be the sculpting of a sculpture out of the raw rock that is the self, i.e., to sculpt a sculpture out of the raw configuration of drives and instincts of the self. This is how sublimation is different from ascetism. Ascetism denies instincts, generally, while sublimation metamorphosise them. Ascetism in its moral and theological form calls for *self-denial for the sake of self-denial*; it uses the *WP* of the self against the self which does not enhance the *WP* and that is not 'what is good' nor 'what is happiness'. Khalfa¹ explains: "The struggle and the war applauded by Nietzsche are not a struggle against, aiming at reducing to nothing, but a struggle in which a force seeks to win over another force, to make it its own, to attach it to a new will, 'a process by which a force enriches itself by winning over other forces and joining them together in a new combination, in a becoming'."² And as mentioned earlier, Nietzsche was not an opposer of the whole ascetic ideal, but rather of *ascetism for the sake of ascetism*, in other words, it can be argued that the element of blocking an object of a drive in ascetism for Nietzsche was the only part of ascetism that had a value as the blocking of the object of a force is the first step to sublimate it into something else.

5.4. Amor Fati and the Eternal Recurrence

Furthermore, the *Übermensch* – and with him the sovereign individual – is a bridge; a bridge to the highest hope, argues Magrini.³ A bridge to overcoming the 'spirit of revenge' and affirming the *ER*. Heidegger's 'spirit of revenge', according to Magrini, is *ressentiment* against time's passage, or to Nietzsche it is the spirit against what 'was and is'⁴ and arguably against fate. According to Margini, Heidegger considers the 'spirit of revenge' to be a 'mood', i.e., it is the "will's ill will toward time and that means toward passing away, transiency"⁵ or in Magrini's words

¹ Jean Khalfa: A Senior Lecturer in French Studies at Trinity College Cambridge.

² Khalfa 2003: 52

³ Magrini 2016: 14

⁴ F. Nietzsche 1997a: 39

⁵ Magrini 2016: 11; from (*Nietzsche II*, 224)

“the vengeful attitude toward time’s passage”.¹ This ‘*vengeful attitude*’ started with Plato – as far as we know – and with Plato’s nihilism, “Plato’s *idealist* philosophy”² and with Aristotle’s linear conception of time, argues Magrini.³ Going back to the ‘*mood*’ counter to the ‘*spirit of revenge*’ is what Nietzsche would call the *re-transvaluation* of values which will be done by the *Übermensch* who, Magrini argues, “works to free humanity from its previous values (*trans-valuation*), revealing life as a psychic-physiological process of bodying forth, i.e., the human as raw, naked will to power, the maelstrom of Chaos, struggling for momentary supremacy.”⁴ *How will the Übermensch, or the sovereign individual who is also the Antinihilist and who will set the will free, deliver humanity from the ‘spirit of revenge?’* With “The affirmation of time’s passage”⁵ which is the affirmation of the *ER*, Magrini argues.

As shown above, the *WP* is the essence of the world and the essence of *being*. The *Übermensch* embraces this essence, which also leads him to embrace the *ER* as the manifestation of that essence, argues Magrini.⁶ Or as Reginster⁷ puts it: “the idea of the eternal recurrence, this highest formula of affirmation [of life] that is at all attainable”.⁸ So, the *Übermensch* does not only embrace the *WP* as the essence of life, but also affirms life itself by embracing the *ER*, but *what does it mean to embrace the ER?* To go back to the *ER*, Reginster⁹ had an uncomplicated way to approach this, where he asserts that the *ER* is the ‘*centrepiece*’ for the ‘*affirmation of life*’. He argues, that the *ER* is a ‘*thought experiment*’ the purpose of which is “to determine whether you are life-affirming or life-negating.”¹⁰ To go in more detail, he, however, divides the ‘*ideal*’ of the ‘*affirmation of life*’ within the *ER* into two ‘*roles*’; the theoretical and practical roles. In the theoretical role, he considers the *ER* to be denoting a ‘*particular property of life*’, or in other words a more literal meaning. So, in this role, Nietzsche, according to Reginster, “may simply ask us to heed the fact

¹ Magrini 2016: 11

² Ibid. 2

³ Ibid. 11–12

⁴ Ibid. 16

⁵ Ibid. 20

⁶ Ibid. 2.4.20.27

⁷ Bernard Reginster: An American philosopher and professor of philosophy at Brown University. Known for his expertise Nietzschean philosophy and especially Nietzschean affirmation.

⁸ Reginster, B. (2008). *The Affirmation of Life: Nietzsche on Overcoming Nihilism*. Harvard University Press: 201 (*EH*, III, *ZS* 1; cf. *BGE* 56)

⁹ Reginster 2008: 201

¹⁰ Ibid. 202

that it [life] will, in fact, recur eternally.”¹ An interpretation of this role might take the *ER* as a ‘*scientific theory*’ of the cosmos and that life, in a matter of fact, will recur eternally, argues Reginster.² However, I will not argue for or against such theorem, as it is not within the scope of this paper.

The ‘*practical role*’, on the other hand, is more relevant, and according to Reginster,³ the practical interpretation of the *ER* describes an ‘*attitude*’ that Nietzsche wants to invoke in us from the thought experiment of the *ER*, which is to affirm life, which I will argue is the *attitude* or, in Heidegger’s terms, the *mood* counter to the *spirit of revenge*. “The contrast between the theoretical and the practical interpretations is also a contrast between two views of what is relevant to the justification of the claim that, in order to affirm life, I ought to live it so as to be able to desire its eternal recurrence”,⁴ explains Reginster. The attitude of the affirmation of life and the *ER* is *amor fati*, I and so would Domino⁵ argue.⁶ The term, according to Domino, first appears in Nietzsche’s aphorism ‘*for the new year*’ in *The Gay Science*: “I want to learn more and more how to see what is necessary in things as what is beautiful in them - thus I will be one of those who make things beautiful. *Amor fati*: let that be my love from now on!”⁷ The term *amor fati* literally means ‘*love of (one’s) fate*’, and Nietzsche limits the application of the term to the ‘*necessary*’, argues Domino.⁸ The other instances where the term is mentioned in Nietzsche’s works are those listed here chronologically by Domino:

“My formula for greatness in a human being is *amor fati*: that one wants nothing to be different, not forward, not backward, not in all eternity. not merely bear what is necessary, still less conceal it—all idealism is mendaciousness in the face of what is necessary—but *love* it.” (*EH* “clever” 10)”

“[W]hat is necessary does not hurt me; *amor fati* is my inmost nature.” (*EH CW* 4)”

“As my inmost nature teaches me, whatever is necessary—as seen from the heights and in the sense of a great economy—is also the useful par excellence: one should

¹ Reginster 2008: 203

² Ibid. 205

³ Ibid. 203

⁴ Ibid. 203

⁵ Brian Domino: An American associate professor at Miami University. Research focus on the philosophy of Nietzsche and ethics.

⁶ Domino, B. (2012). Nietzsche’s Use of Amor Fati in Ecce Homo. *Journal of Nietzsche Studies*, 43(2): 285

⁷ Ibid. 287; from Nietzsche, F. W. (2001). *The Gay Science: with a prelude in German rhymes and an appendix of songs* (B. Williams, Ed.; J. Nauckhoff & A. Del Caro, Trans.). Cambridge University Press: 157

⁸ Domino 2012: 288

not only bear it, one should also love it. *Amor fati*: that is my inmost nature.” (NCW “epilogue” 1)”

In all these parts, there seems to be an emphasis on the notion of ‘*what is necessary*’ within *amor fati*, and Domino relates this necessity to what ‘*repeats eternally*’, i.e., the *ER*, and he¹ continues to argue that if the *ER* is ‘*what is necessary*’, then *amor fati* would be “the attitude of one who affirms eternal recurrence.”² With *amor fati* the soul is delivered from the spirit of revenge, which is, in our account, according to Domino, “the disposition of the overman [Übermensch]”.³ Domino,⁴ even though that he claims that *amor fati* is incompatible with the *ER* based on *BGE 56*, he speaks of the *ER* being a psychological concept rather than a cosmological one, and he says that *amor fati* is ‘*future directed*’, and I will touch upon both of these arguments later.

Firstly, to investigate what Nietzsche means by the necessary, Domino⁵ suggests contrasting what is necessary to what is accidental, which is arguably the difference between what Domino calls ‘*determined machinations*’ and ‘*random eruptions*’; *amor fati* being the love of those necessary and determined machinations. In *BGE 23*, he argues that Nietzsche shifts the question of the free will from metaphysics to psychology which leads the *question of necessity* to also shift from “is this event necessary?” [to] “what beliefs do I hold that lead me to think of this event as necessary?”⁶ Put differently, the line of reasoning shifts here from the *objective* and outside the self, to a more *subjective* inquiry of the values one holds against one’s necessities. Under this light, free will as an attitude towards the necessary is divided, as Domino interprets Nietzsche, into those who affirm free will, for they “will not give up their “responsibility,” [and] their belief in *themselves*”,⁷ while others embrace their unfreedom, for they “owing to an inward self-contempt, *seek to lay the blame for themselves somewhere else.*”⁸ Both of these attitudes if applied to *amor fati*, would show a similar pattern. Explains Domino: “Those who reject it [*amor fati*] might do so because it robs them of merit for what they believe to be their actions. conversely, others wish to embrace *amor fati* precisely to avoid

¹ Domino 2012: 289

² Ibid. 289

³ Ibid. 289

⁴ Ibid. 290–291

⁵ Ibid. 292–293

⁶ Ibid. 293

⁷ Ibid. 293; from F. Nietzsche 1997a: 16

⁸ Ibid. 293; from F. Nietzsche 1997a: 16

responsibility.”¹ Both of these points of view do not manifest love of fate, i.e., *amor fati* as Nietzsche would want it, argues Domino and to which I agree.

To illustrate further, *amor fati* involves two terms combined *amor*, i.e., love and *fati*, i.e., fate. Reading Nietzsche’s aphorism *for the new year*, Elgat² argues that the term *amor* carries with it two different ideas. The first idea is taken from the beginning of the aphorism where the love of faith is shown as a process of ‘*making fate beautiful*’ or “the beautification of the “necessary,” of fate”.³ The second idea, he argues, is devoted for the ‘*yes-sayer*’ who possesses a positive and an *affirmative* attitude towards life and fate, which is the same aforementioned *affirmation of life*. He, however, argues that this distinction between the two ideas is not that of a contrast but that those two ideas are rather connected. “the ability to see things as beautiful [...] can ground their affirmation”.⁴ Moreover, he argues that, for Nietzsche, seeing the beautiful in things – including fate – is not something that is given, but is rather a result of toil and effort. In other words, seeing the beautiful in things is learned through a learning process, he states. Furthermore, the object of the love in *amor fati* is to love fate, i.e., to love the *fati* part of *amor fati* which he also takes to mean ‘*what is necessary*’. He argues that what Nietzsche means by the necessary is the things we cannot change or do anything about, i.e., our fate. He, however, states that Nietzsche does not provide a comprehensive explanation of the nature of this fate, be it logical, physical, metaphysical ... etc. Elgat poses this lack of clarity as a question *NOT* to unravel the actual nature of the necessary things in question., but instead, rather as a question of “whether one thinks it is within one’s power to do anything about it or not.”⁵ He, therefore, concludes that *amor fati* is the love of these things one *believes* to be necessary, whether they are in the past, present or future. This agrees with Domino’s view that the necessary things are rather subjective and are what we believe to be necessary, and not objective and universal for everyone. So, the *subjective necessary things* is the viewpoint I will be using hereafter.

¹ Domino 2012: 293

² Elgat, G. (2016). *Amor Fati as Practice: How to Love Fate*. *Southern Journal of Philosophy*, 54(2): 175–178

³ Ibid. 175

⁴ Ibid. 176

⁵ Ibid. 177

Furthermore, Elgat¹ continues to search for the process of learning of how to love. He argues that, within *amor fati*, the necessary in question is not just any necessary, but is rather the 'ugly' necessary, as the beautiful necessary is arguably innately loved, and in my words, because the beautiful does not need to be beautified. Basing his search on Nietzsche's aphorism *One Must Learn to Love*, he compares learning to love fate for learning to love music. The learning process, according to Nietzsche, starts with *learning to hear* the music and distinguishing it, which is followed by *tolerating* the music, which in turn leads to getting *used to* the music or, in other words, loving it and wanting its *repetition endlessly*. Compared to *amor fati*, loving to distinguish one's fate leads one, in some instances, to assign his accomplishments and the beautiful in his life to a '*divine providence*'. Nietzsche warns against that and asserts that the '*expert lover of fate*' does not attribute his achievements to a theology, but he rather distinguishes them as his own; he distinguishes them as "achievements that are due to his "practical and theoretical skill in interpreting and arranging events",² exclaims Elgat. In other words, "the act of beautification involves, [and] [...] requires a skill in interpreting and arranging events".³

Furthermore, Elgat⁴ resorts to another aphorism of Nietzsche's which tackles the idea of how to see something as beautiful. The aphorism in question is *What One Should Learn from Artists*, which is relevant, in my opinion, as the individual of strong will we are looking for – whether sovereign individual or Übermensch – is an artist, as previously argued. Moreover, Nietzsche in the aphorism gives examples of how the artist beautifies things, and these examples affirm the subjective stance of the artist, and when put in relation to *amor fati* they also assert the subjective attitude towards '*what is necessary*'. The examples in the aphorism are these: "Moving away from things until there is a good deal that one no longer sees . . . or seeing things around a corner or as cut out and framed; or to place them so that they partially conceal each other and grant us only glimpses of architectural perspectives".⁵ Therefore, it can be affirmed that the beautification process, i.e., to love fate appears

¹ Elgat 2016: 178–180

² Ibid. 180; from Nietzsche (*GS* 277)

³ Ibid. 180

⁴ Ibid. 181–183

⁵ Ibid. 180–181; from F. W. Nietzsche 2001: 169

to be a subjective process and it depends on the perspective of the beholder. *What constitutes this perspective within amor fati, asks Elgat?* Based on GS 277, he argues that this perspective is the ability to see some necessity in one's life as something "that must not be missing," or in other words, that such necessity has a "profound significance and use precisely for us."¹ Finding this perspective is part of the beautification process, he argues, and finding it is what Nietzsche calls arranging events as the embrace of the significance of an 'ugly' event in one's life in a way that contributes to and promotes a 'positive valued aspect' in one's life is arguably also finding perspective for it and making it beautiful. The embrace of the necessary and ugly, argues Elgat, "is to come to see its use value in relation to those already affirmed things."² And arranging events, for him, is placing them next to each other and connecting them in a way that allows us to see their value. This process of arrangement is of an aesthetic quality, he argues, in which we find the value of an event within our life, which in return brings that event in 'a beautiful harmony' with the rest of our life's events. He continues to state that, for Nietzsche, what is not harmonious in our lives is ugly and when we find its value for our overall harmony that makes it beautiful, or in other words, to find the value of an ugly event is to beatify it. With this Elgat reached his initial aim of showing that the affirmation and the beautification of fate are two sides for the same coin. Nietzsche states: "Love is induced by its secret craving to discover as many beautiful qualities as possible in the loved object, or to raise this loved object as high as possible"³ and *amor fati*, is arguably to love and elevate the qualities of fate and necessity, i.e., to affirm fate and life.

What would fati be then in amor fati? In another interpretation of the *ER*, Reginster,⁴ writing from Nehamas,⁵ describes another conception of the *ER*, not as an account of cosmology, but rather as a 'view of the self'. In this view, the *ER* is a concept that reveals the difficulty of the self in affirming itself, i.e., affirming life. He argues that, as the *ER* implies that everything in my life will recur again, then this 'conditional claim' implies that everything in my life is 'essential' to it, which is a

¹ Elgat 2016: 181 [both quotes]

² Ibid. 181

³ Nietzsche, F. (1911). *Dawn of the Day* (J. M. Kennedy, Trans.; 2011th ed.). The MacMillan Company: 230

⁴ Reginster 2008: 212–213

⁵ Alexander Nehamas: A Greek-American philosopher and a professor at Princeton University.

claim he bases on Nietzsche in *ZS* where he says the following: “Have you ever said Yes to a single joy? O my friends, then you have said Yes too to all woe. All things are entangled, ensnared, enamoured; if ever you wanted one thing twice, if ever you said ‘You please me, happiness! Abide, moment!’ then you wanted all back”.¹ This passage as interpreted by Nehamas means that the affirmation of an aspect of one’s life is necessarily reliant on the affirmation of one’s whole life. Reginster calls this view ‘*essentialist egalitarianism*’ which is, put differently, “strictly speaking all properties are equally essential to their subjects.”² Nehamas,³ in his book, compares this to Nietzsche in the *GM* where Nietzsche stated that it is an error to think of the subject as a ‘*separate thing*’, but rather that the subject is only the sum of its actions. He continues to discuss the metaphor of the lightening in Nietzsche which questions the relation between the lightening, which is taken to be the subject and the subject being the cause of its object, i.e., the flash. Nietzsche, however, asserts that both are actually the same thing and that this misconception is an error of language. Similarly, therefore, Nehamas concludes that the connection between the *WP* and the *ER* is the same as the connection between lightening and its flash. Namely, that as the flash is not a ‘*separate thing*’ caused by the lightening, and as both are rather a manifestation of the same thing, the *WP* and the *ER* are thus similarly a manifestation of the same thing and one does not cause the other. Writes Nietzsche: “If I say ‘lightning flashes,’ I have posited the flash once as an activity and a second time as a subject, and thus added to the event a being that is not one with the event but is rather fixed, *is*, and does not ‘become’ ”.⁴ This affirms my interpretation of the *ER* as a *synthetic inference a posteriori* which arises from the sum of its (actions), i.e., from the sum of its *WP*. To summaries, the affirmation of the essential and the affirmation of the *ER* is the affirmation of life, and as shown above by Elgat and Domino *amor fati* is the affirmation of life. Therefore, as *fati* is the essential and necessary in life, we can conclude that *amor fati* is thus the affirmation of life and its recurrence; it is the affirmation of the *Eternal Recurrence*.

¹ F. Nietzsche 1997b: 312; Reginster 2008: 213

² Reginster 2008: 213

³ Nehamas, A. (1985). *Nietzsche: Life as Literature*. Harvard University Press: 155

⁴ *Ibid.* 155; from F. Nietzsche 1968: 288–289

In order to affirm the *ER*, Reginster¹ continues to analyse Nietzsche in *ZS II 20*. There Nietzsche argues that the will *cannot* will backwards and that time cannot be turned back, however, the will can ‘redeem’ the past by ‘willing’ it. “To recreate all ‘it was’ into a ‘thus I willed it’—that alone I should call redemption.”² If the will cannot ‘will backwards’ to change the past, *how can it then ‘will backwards’ to redeem the past?* To will backwards to change the past is not possible as just mentioned. In order to redeem the past on the other hand, Reginster differentiates between ‘*a fact and its significance*’. He explains that, the facts – arguably what is necessary – in our lives and in our past are unchangeable, however, the significance and the value of those facts seen from the perspective of the present are changeable. Their significance is changeable, he argues, because any fact or aspect of life is *NOT* inherently valued one way or the other, but instead its significance is reliant on its relation to other aspects of our lives and their significance. A particular event in someone’s life, for instance, might have a certain significance within the context of that person’s life, however, the same event may have no significance at all within the context of someone else’s life. Reginster calls this view ‘*normative contextualism*’. This view essentially means that the significance of an event from the past “is always yet to be determined, precisely because it depends on its relation to my future.”³ Reginster gives an example of someone who has gotten an unsatisfactory mark in an exam. This unsatisfactory mark does not have an inherent significance on its own but is rather dependent on its relation to a certain future; “whether it is a regrettable failure or a welcome character-building experience depends on that past’s relation to a certain future.”⁴ Nietzsche, according to Reginster, calls this process ‘*redemption*’. It might be tempting, Reginster argues, to apply this view in a utilitarian way which attempts to reconcile the past only by assigning a future significance to it. He gives an example: if someone has endured suffering, then he/she can use this suffering as an inspiration to write a book about human existence, for instance. He argues, however, that this instrumental view does not encompass the whole of the relation between suffering and writing in this example, because “According to contextualism, nothing is intrinsically good, and the value of anything depends on its relation to

¹ Reginster 2008: 214–215

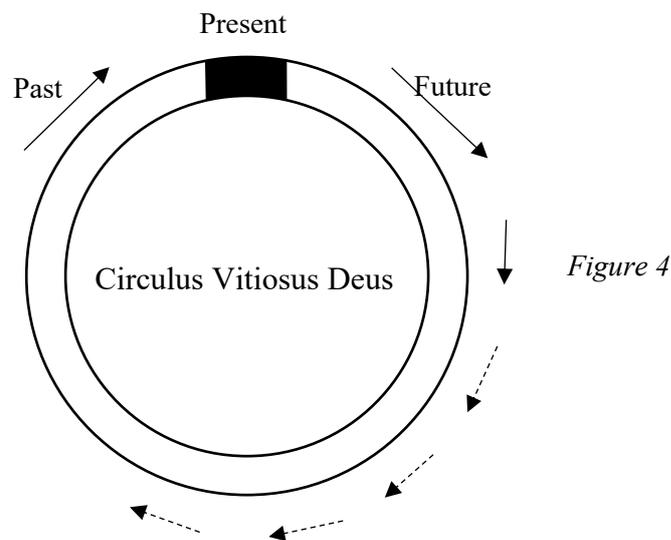
² Ibid. 214; from F. Nietzsche 1997b: 138

³ Ibid. 214

⁴ Ibid. 214

everything else.”¹ Which means that writing, in this example, does not, on its own, carry an inherent significance or value, but rather that its value depends on the presence of the suffering itself. “Presumably, writing, let alone writing about the burdens of human existence, might have no such significance for one who has not endured comparable suffering.”² Therefore, the relation between the fact and its signification is dialectical and severing this relation results in the loss of the signification.

To illustrate this interpretation of the *ER* further (*Figure 4*); when we are in the present our past cannot be changed and the will cannot change the past. Our present,



however, is influenced by the past which is represented by *what is necessary*, i.e., *fati* and on the illustration as the arrow of the past. We, however, in the present can also signify and change the signification of a past event by willing its new significance into the future. This valuation of the event into the future, does not only change the future, but it also changes our subjective relation to the past by willing, into the future, a new significance for the past (illustrated by the arrows stretching from the future to the past) and hence the will changes the signification of the past subjectively, by willing its new significance into the future. *Amor fati*, in my interpretation is the ability to affirm the *ER*, which is *fati*, by affirming its circular path and its recurrence. This subjective conception of time is the opposite of Plato's objective nihilism, as Nietzsche would call it, and opposite to Aristotle's linear time. Understanding the *ER* and affirming it is a subjective act and it means that our past,

¹ Reginster 2008: 215

² Ibid. 215

present and future are all existent simultaneously at all times for us, at least in their significance and value. If the events in our life, using the terms used above, are the forces that *can*, our *WP* is what *wills* them. If our past events produce anger, for instance, our *WP* can will this anger differently, channel it, affirm it and, in other words, sublimate it into a more personally valued outcome. With this affirmation, the *WP* affirms such event's *becoming* [*becoming* in the case of affirmation is active]. It also affirms the *ER*, by becoming its essence which is *active becoming*. If the *WP*, on the other hand, wills to deny such event, the will is thus a will to denial and it, therefore, assigns a negative significance to the event and hence denies the essence of *ER* which is *active becoming*. This denial is the ascetic spirit denying itself, and negating life; this is *the spirit of revenge* and *ressentiment* and as Heidegger puts it, according to Magrini, the spirit of '*revenge against time*'.¹ *Amor fati*, as the opposite of self-denial, is the *WP* affirming fate, i.e., affirming the *ER* by embracing its essence which is *becoming*. The circular pattern of the *ER* even appears in the relation between the *WP* and the *ER*. The *WP* affirms the *ER*, which is based on its essence *becoming* and the *WP* is *becoming* itself. So, while ascetism, by its denial of the past follows the linear time and thus does not mirror life's essence and is thus unhealthy. *Amor fati* is the healthy approach to life because it mirrors its essence and its return, i.e., its circular return. "What? And this would not be – *circulus vitiosus deus*?"²

¹ Magrini 2016: 13

² F. Nietzsche 1997a: 39

6. Conclusion

A way to visualize the *WP*, the configuration of drives, ascetism, sublimation and *amor fati* is with this analogy. Let us take the self, with its configuration of drives, as a wood oven (*Figure 5*). The wood inside the oven is the objects of the drives and different objects produce different amounts of power, i.e., Will to Power. The oven can handle a certain *amount* of energy burnt within it; its *potential* is represented by the amount of heat it can handle. The 'optimum of favourable conditions' which Nietzsche conceived, is arguably the maximum potential of the wood oven in our analogy, i.e., it is the oven's maximum potential temperature. Moral ascetism, as self-denial for the sake of self-denial, is the use of the *WP* to block the drives from their objects, which annihilates their potential; which is arguably similar to taking pieces of wood out of the oven. This leaves the oven cooler, thus being further from its maximum temperature, i.e., its optimum. A regular oven, with raw drives would burn hotter than an ascetic oven, as its drives' objects are not blocked and thus there is more wood to burn, and depending on the kind of oven it may – or may not – reach its maximum temperature, i.e., its optimum. For an oven such as that of the masters, the sovereign individual or the Übermensch the optimum may prove much harder to reach and, therefore, more wood, or more accurately, more power is needed. More power can come from the sublimating the drives' objects, or in our example, from replacing low burning wood with high burning wood, or even replacing wood with other substances all together (e.g. coal, gasoline ... etc.). Such sublimation, i.e., the replacement of wood with other substances provides more power which brings the oven (the self) closer to its optimum. To illustrate *amor fati*, let us take the oven as the psychological interpretation of the *ER*. This means that to love the oven is to affirm it and affirm its *ER*, which in our case would mean to affirm its configuration of forces, past, fate ... etc. To be in possession of some *ugly necessary* would arguably be like having a hole in the walls of the oven. To be resentful about that would mean not to embrace *amor fati* and thus would mean that our *WP*, or in this

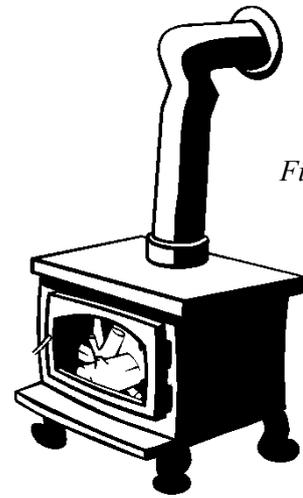


Figure 5

example, the fire from the wood would be pointed towards *ressentiment* over the existence of the hole. With embracing *amor fati*, we would use the hole not as an outlet for the fire to heat the outside, or in other words wills what it cannot change. Instead, *amor fati* affirms the ugly in the self and, in this case accepts the existence of the hole and even uses it to create more fire, by letting in more air, for instance.

In conclusion and to start from the beginning. There were the masters who were creators of values and who embraced their instinct to freedom and Will to Power fully. Those were the good ones who were free to be who they are. The priests, however, in a cunning revenge against the masters transvaluated the values of good and bad and provided instead a theological morality which appealed to the herd of slaves and which eventually inflicted humans with a sickness; the sickness of living under the weight of society. Within this new morality of custom, humans grew a soul and became evil for the first time and they tasted the cure for this disease which was the ascetic ideal, i.e., the *will to nothingness*. The instincts, however, did not just disappear and instead they were turned inwards, or in other words, they were sublimated in the psyche and instead of tormenting others and the environment, the individual started to torment himself/herself, which eventually resulted in making the individual a bridge and a promise for something to come. As was later shown, free will for Nietzsche did not mean any kind of *liberum arbitrium indifferentiae*, nor did he conceive it as a determined will. Instead, he conceived free will to be a strong will that is full of Will to Power and which embraces life.

Furthermore, the masters were strong, and they embraced life by embracing themselves and their instincts, however, they did so more or less instinctively. The priests and the slaves, on the other hand, are not considered free, because they are weak and abhor action. The sovereign individual – or the *Übermensch* – on the other hand, are the bridge and the individuals who will *set the will free again*. They are strong willed, and they embrace their instincts and affirm life, just like the old masters did. However, as they grow out of the morality of custom, they also refine their nature to enhance their Will to Power. They do so by sublimating their drives into something which is more aesthetically pleasing to them, and just like the old masters, who were the owners of themselves and who glorified themselves, the sovereign individual or the *Übermensch* also glorify themselves and thus also their past and the events and forces that made them who they are ,i.e., they affirm life. They affirm life by embracing *amor fati*, and they

glorify themselves by embracing all the necessary that has made them who they are and is part of who they are and thus they are not resentful against the passage of time. Moreover, similar to the old masters, those individuals' strong will creates a value (e.g. a promise) as a point in the future and with that it arranges and ranks the forces it commands (e.g. drives) in service of achieving the set value. Achieving the set value is to actually *become* the set value and when the will *becomes* the set value it does not stop time and crystalizes into *being*, but instead it *surpasses* it and continues on, therefore, it embraces the essence of being which is Will to Power and *bodying forth*. The strong will actualizes the set value by knowing with *wholehearted* certainty that it will actualize the value as if the value were an event that is remembered from the past (*Figure 6*). (Similarly to *Figure 4*, the will wills a value into the future which affects the past around the circle of time, the will also sets a value into the future and actualizes it with

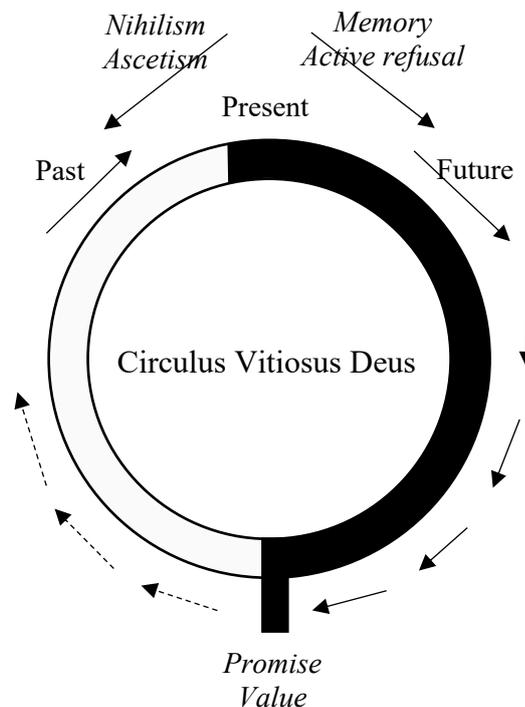


Figure 6

wholehearted certainty as if it were a memory from the past, i.e., by circling the circle of time and coming to the present from the past). Therefore, a strong will embraces the circular passage of time when affirming life with *amor fati*, and the same will appears to be entwined to affirm the same pattern around the circular time when actualizing a set value with the Will to Power. The ascetic will, on the other hand, with its *spirit of revenge* is resentful against the passage of time and denies its circular nature, as it wills to change

the past, i.e., it wills to change *what is and was*. The ascetic spirit *actively refuses* forgetfulness creating memory; however, this memory is not pointed towards the future to actualize a value (e.g., keep a promise) nor to set a new significance of the past (i.e., *amor fati*). Instead, the ascetic spirit wills its memory to *resent* the past and its occurrences, which also includes the ascetic spirit's nature and instincts. The memory is a will, but as it is pointed towards changing the past, which *CANNOT* be willed, therefore, it is a will that aims towards a null value, a void, or in other words, a *will to nothingness*.

Moreover, it is necessary, for having a memory towards the future (e.g., the ability to calculate), to also have a memory towards the past. Such memory is trained with pain, punishment, and the infliction of suffering. One part of the self is affirmed a master for the set value, and it enslaves another part upon which it inflicts suffering and punishment in order to actualize the set value. Therefore, the strong will possesses both masterly and slavish sides, and the strongest will is arguably that of the individual with the strongest masterly and slavish sides. The strong will, therefore, is the possession of the few, for, firstly, few are masters, while slaves are the many, while arguably possessing both masterly and slavish sides in one individual is even rarer. Secondly, it is a will that is acquired which requires action, toil and effort. It sets a value to itself, *becomes* it and *surpasses* it and that is how it trains itself (both in creating values, arranging and ranking forces both of which are the masterly side, and on the other hand, in the ability to follow and obey the rules set by the masterly side, which represent the slavish side). If the strong will is the will that can guarantee a value into the future on the *garden of the forking paths*; determining its causal chain with the ability to calculate and exercise of Will to Power. In such case, I believe it would be safe to argue that the ultimate strong will is a will that can read the future and guarantee it with high artistry as if it were playing the harp.

The different entangled causal chains and *gardens of forking paths* form a web of entangled strings leading and determining events both at the moment and in time. The ultimate strong will can arguably read this web, both in its effects on the present and future. An individual with such will manipulates this web pulling and pushing its strings as if these strings were the strings of a music instrument. Such a guarantor of the future can arguably read the patterns on this *web of forces led by wills* as if the web were a pond and the guarantor is an artist playing the water as a music instrument; creating ripples

and waves with such certainty as if such will sets a form for the water. The will that initially set form to water creating biological molecules such as RNA, DNA, cells and the like – sometimes such force is called God – is arguably the same or a similar will to the will that can read, manipulate, form and deform the water of the subjective world. I will, however, leave this part as a poetic expression rather than an academic argument.

All in all, the strong-willed individual, whether sovereign individual or Übermensch, is a master and a slave; is both a creator of values and a rational being who can block and sublimate the self's drives in service of a set value. The strong-willed individual is an Antinihilist for such an individual is not resentful against the past and affirms the passage of time by embracing *amor fati*. This embrace of *what is necessary*, in the past, can arguably train the strong-willed individual to see a value, in the future, as necessary and to thus actualize it with Will to Power, as if this individual remembers such value from the past. To answer the initial question of Janaway's of whether there is a contradiction in Nietzsche's writings or not: No there is not, for it is true that Nietzsche denounces the indetermined will, however, the will he conceives in the sovereign individual as an individual who has *become* free can be explained by the process of *becoming* free-willed, or in other words, *becoming* strong-willed. The sovereign individual is free for such individual mirrors the *becoming, self-surpassing, and bodying forth* essence of the world.

*The victory of the slaves' revolt has ravished the earth.
But just like the Phoenix the masters will thus return.
Out of the ashes to themselves they'll give birth.
A spectacle in thy eyes a reflection of Saturn burn.*

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