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Université de Montréal

Heidegger's reading of Nietzsche as a point of access to his
interpretation of modern technology

Par
Paul Catanu

Département de philosophie
Faculté des Arts et des Sciences

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Université de Montréal
Faculté des études supérieures

Ce mémoire intitulé

Heidegger's reading of Nietzsche as a point of access to his
interpretation of modern technology

présenté par

Paul Catanu.

a été évalué par un jury composé des personnes suivantes :

Iain Macdonald

(président-rapporteur)

Professeur Jean Grondin

(directeur de recherche)

Yvon Gauthier

(membre du jury)

SOMMAIRE

La lecture heideggerienne de Nietzsche comme voie d'accès à son interprétation de la technique moderne.

Chacun sait que Martin Heidegger a donné une série de cours sur la philosophie de Friedrich Nietzsche. Dans ces cours, Heidegger s'engage dans ce qu'il a appelé une *Auseinandersetzung* avec Nietzsche. Cette confrontation et remise en question de soi face à Nietzsche est riche en développements. D'un côté, elle montre Heidegger comme un des plus passionnés et persévérants interprètes de Nietzsche du vingtième siècle. Ainsi, Heidegger parvient à systématiser la pensée de Nietzsche en montrant une unité intrinsèque entre la volonté de puissance et l'éternel retour du même. D'un autre côté, l'*Auseinandersetzung* heideggerienne avec Nietzsche permet à Heidegger de trouver son propre vocabulaire en ce qui concerne un thème important de sa deuxième philosophie: l'essence de la technique moderne.

Le but de notre mémoire est de faire ressortir les deux aspects mentionnés ci-dessus de la lecture heideggerienne de Nietzsche. Nous tâchons d'élucider en quoi consiste l'unité de la volonté de puissance et de l'éternel retour et comment, à partir de cette unité, Heidegger est parvenu à développer une interprétation englobante de l'essence de la technique moderne. Enfin, nous voudrions attirer l'attention sur ce que nous pensons être un lien négligé par Heidegger dans sa lecture de Nietzsche : le rapport entre l'éternel retour et les thèmes de la transcendance et de la liberté.

Mots-clés : philosophie, métaphysique, ontologie, Nietzsche, Heidegger.

ABSTRACT

Heidegger's reading of Nietzsche as a point of access to his interpretation of modern technology

As is well-known, Martin Heidegger provided a series of lecture-courses on the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche. In those courses, Heidegger engages himself in what he has called an *Auseinandersetzung* with Nietzsche. This confrontation and coming to terms with Nietzsche provides us with many insights. On the one hand it makes of Heidegger perhaps the most consummate and unrelentless twentieth century reader of Nietzsche. Thus, Heidegger manages to systematize Nietzsche's thought by showing an inner unity between the will to power and the eternal recurrence of the same. On the other hand, Heidegger's *Auseinandersetzung* allows him to find his own vocabulary concerning an important theme of his later philosophy: the essence of modern technology.

The aim of this thesis will be to elucidate Heidegger's reading of Nietzsche in both the senses outlined above. We will be interested in investigating what the unity of the will to power and the eternal recurrence of the same consists in and how, starting from this unity, Heidegger develops an encompassing interpretation of the essence of modern technology. Lastly, we will investigate what we believe is a neglected link by Heidegger in his reading of Nietzsche between eternal recurrence, transcendence and freedom.

Key-words : philosophy, metaphysics, ontology, Nietzsche, Heidegger.

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INTRODUCTION

The subject of this thesis is to explore specific, yet crucial aspects of the relationship between the thoughts of Friedrich Nietzsche and Martin Heidegger. It will focus more precisely on the problematic character of Heidegger's interpretation of Nietzsche. It can come as no surprise that Martin Heidegger, one of the most important thinkers of the past century, should have been fascinated with, and explored the thought of one of his most important and influential predecessors from the previous century, Friedrich Nietzsche. Given Heidegger's stature as a leading figure of 20th century philosophy, his readers would expect important contributions from his delayed encounter with the prophetically inclined Nietzsche.

Indeed, Heidegger provides a thoroughly documented body of work to substantiate his views on Nietzsche and he attempts to systematize Nietzsche's thought by placing the main rubrics of his thought in dialogue with the rest of the tradition that begins with Plato and that constitutes the inception of Western thought. This is perhaps what is most brilliant and compelling about Heidegger's interpretation of Nietzsche. The aim of this thesis is to examine and set out how Heidegger's interpretation of Nietzsche is the starting point from which he progressively developed a global interpretation of the essence of modern technology. Starting from this interpretation, we will try to show that Heidegger, in examining Nietzsche's concept of the eternal recurrence of the same, has made too little of the concepts of freedom and transcendence. The relationship between the Nietzschean rubrics identified by Heidegger and their function as technological categories working and operating within Heidegger's own project that attempts to articulate the essence of modern technology has been most clearly explored by Reiner

Schuermann in *Heidegger on Being and acting: From principles to anarchy*. We will examine, as part of our critical assessment, the tenability of Schuermann's thesis that the rubrics are indeed technological categories and that, although formally speaking of Nietzsche, materially they articulate Heidegger's views on the essence of modern technology.

Despite the undisputable qualities of Heidegger's reading and of his critique of Nietzsche, which we take to culminate in his papers on technology, there remains a residue of confrontation that Heidegger does not address in his *engagement* with Nietzsche, stemming from what we perceive as certain insufficiencies in the Heideggerian interpretation of Nietzsche, and which shall provide fertile ground for a critique of Heidegger's reading.

By way of general background, it is perhaps useful for the reader to recall that Heidegger explored and dealt with the philosophy of Nietzsche in the course of an important series of lecture courses given at the university of Freiburg during the years 1936-1940 (hereinafter referred to as the "Lectures") and (b) an important number of essays written between the years 1940-1946, which are included in the English translations of the aforementioned Lectures. Therefore, and using these materials as a starting point, the topics explored in this thesis will be dealt with in the following sequence:

1) Firstly, we will begin by outlining the genesis and by providing a summary of Heidegger's interpretation of Nietzsche using the chronology of the Lectures for the purpose of which we shall consider not only the Lectures as published in 1961, but also their original version now published in the *Gesamtausgabe*. We will also consider

Nietzsche's word « God is dead », and Who is Nietzsche's Zarathustra as well as three works which are fundamental to any grasping of the full breadth of Heidegger's Nietzsche interpretation, namely, *Contributions to philosophy (From the event)*, *What is called thinking* (the conference course) and *Overcoming metaphysics*.

2) Secondly, we will elaborate and criticize Heidegger's position relating to the unity of the Nietzschean concepts of the eternal recurrence of the same and the will to power. We will expand on the way he appropriates and transforms these concepts into the fundamental categories through which he articulates the essence of modern technology.

3) Thirdly, we will test the philological and conceptual rigor of Heidegger's reading, and in so doing we will focus on certain aspects of Nietzsche's thought that are arguably occluded or overshadowed in the Heideggerian reading. Here we will again provide a summary of Heidegger's reading of Nietzsche, one that focuses on the eternal recurrence of the same. Specifically, we will claim that Heidegger has perhaps under-read the themes of freedom and transcendence in Nietzsche's thought.

1 Genesis and summary of Heidegger's Nietzsche interpretation

Heidegger has a very distinct reading of Nietzsche. Although Heidegger provides a great deal of textual evidence in order to substantiate his views, there is something strange about the way he interprets Nietzsche. Perhaps the problem with Heidegger's reading is that he tries to systematize Nietzsche's thought in a way quite foreign to Nietzsche. In fact, Nietzsche never thought very highly of systems and systematizers:

“I mistrust all systematizers and avoid them. The will to system is a lack of integrity.”
(Twilight of the Idols, “Maxims and Arrows”, 26)

Nevertheless Heidegger's reading acquires strength because he manages to show convincing links between Nietzsche's notions of will to power, *Übermensch*, eternal recurrence, nihilism and justice.

This section will be organized around what Heidegger has identified as the five main rubrics of Nietzsche's thought: will to power, *Uebermensch*, eternal recurrence, nihilism and justice. Heidegger's reading of Nietzsche evolves across the four lecture-courses : *The will to power as art* (N I), *Eternal recurrence of the same* (N II), *The will to power as knowledge and as metaphysics* (N III) and *Nihilism* (N IV). Sections 1.1, 1.2., 1.3 and 1.4 of this essay correspond roughly to a summaries of the first, second, third and fourth Lectures, respectively. Section 1.5 (Heidegger's interpretation of Nietzsche's concept of the *Uebermensch*) does not correspond to any Lecture in particular but is rather inspired by the rubric corresponding to the *Uebermensch* in the treatise *Nietzsche's metaphysics* and by the essay *Who is Nietzsche's Zarathustra*. In

general, even though the sections 1.1-1.4 in my essay correspond roughly to the material in the four lecture courses, I have also focused on the essays (*Who is Nietzsche's Zarathustra*, *Nietzsche's metaphysics* and *Nietzsche's word « God is dead »* from the *Holzwege*). In this respect, it is my opinion that the treatise *Nietzsche's metaphysics* is perhaps the most unitary and coherent way of approaching the five rubrics of Nietzsche's thought given the evolving nature of Heidegger's reading of Nietzsche in the four lecture courses. Thus, I have also completed my summaries of the Lectures by making explicit reference to that essay.

The summarizing of Heidegger's four lecture courses, allows us to introduce the subject matter and the way Heidegger interprets Nietzsche's philosophy. It's a necessary « entrée en matière » that will allow us to build up to and examine, in section two, the claim that Heidegger uses his reading of Nietzsche to develop an encompassing interpretation of the essence of modern technology.

1.1 Heidegger's interpretation of Nietzsche's concept of the will to power and its relationship to art

The purpose of this first part of our summary of Heidegger's Nietzsche interpretation is, among others, to present the concept of the will to power as art as expounded in Heidegger's first lecture titled *Will to power as art*. In addition, we shall use this exercise as an opportunity to explore the notions of will to power, art, truth, life, rapture and art in the grand style both with respect to their relevance in Nietzsche's philosophy and as Heidegger summarizes them and re-articulates them. Furthermore, we

shall endeavor to explain how Heidegger understands the concept of the will to power in its relationship to the way Nietzsche views art. More generally we shall attempt to present the will to power as both a condition of preservation and enhancement of life and as the Being of beings. The first characterization is purely Nietzschean although on the whole it is accepted by Heidegger. The second characterization is more Heideggerian, although Nietzsche does claim that the « innermost essence of Being is will to power » (*Will to power* 693, March-June 1888. The claim is made as a hypothesis, but there is room to believe that Nietzsche supports the hypothesis as being true.).

In order to clarify Nietzsche's notion of the will to power and how it functions in helping Heidegger articulate his reading of the essence of modern technology, we have to define the notion of the will to power. This notion is made up of some fundamental aspects. These aspects are truth, play of forces, conditions of enhancement and preservation, life and art. In order to understand how and whether the notion of the will to power functions as a technological category (by becoming in Heidegger's language the will-to-will, which characterizes the essence of modern technology), we have to clarify how it is presupposed through all of the aspects previously mentioned. It is necessary to understand that what we are doing here is both giving a summary of the lecture of *Will to power as art* and trying to understand why for Heidegger, Nietzsche could be satisfactorily systematized under the five rubrics of will to power, eternal recurrence, nihilism, justice and *Uebersensch*. We are examining throughout this thesis, the claim that, even though Nietzschean in origin, these rubrics, articulated and systematized by Heidegger, become totally appropriated by Heidegger, and to the point that Heidegger extracts from them the vocabulary to articulate his conception of the essence of modern

technology.

It must be noted that the thesis that Nietzsche articulates the essence of modern technology is doubled up with another Heideggerian thesis that Nietzsche is the last metaphysician of the West. According to this thesis, Nietzsche closes the circle of Western metaphysics. Nietzsche's inverted platonism would constitute the completion of a metaphysical project begun by Plato. In order to begin to show that Nietzsche completes and inverts Plato's metaphysics, Heidegger finds inverted statements about art and truth in Nietzsche and Plato respectively. Even though Nietzsche himself says that his philosophy is an inverted Platonism, he believes that he overcomes and goes beyond Plato. However, Heidegger claims that, in fact, Nietzsche never goes beyond Plato and that he remains trapped within metaphysics and within an inverted platonizing metaphysics. So even though Nietzsche claims that he is critical of and in fact breaks beyond metaphysics, and even though he has certain concepts which to some extent we believe do in fact achieve this break with metaphysics, Heidegger does provide convincing arguments in support of his position that by simply reversing platonism (which is not co-extensive with platonic metaphysics), Nietzsche does not in fact overcome but simply completes the Western metaphysical tradition.

The completion of the Western metaphysical tradition is connected with the more far-reaching thesis that the Nietzschean/Heideggerian rubrics articulate the essence of modern technology insofar as Nietzsche's metaphysics is both the last metaphysics of the West and the consummation of metaphysics into the essence of modern technology. There is a diachrony, a double effect of temporal correspondence and non-correspondence, here, insofar as the last metaphysics (Nietzsche's) and technology as

the metaphysics of our time both coincide and distinguish themselves.

I will try to indicate as much as possible what Heidegger says about Nietzsche's philosophy when these claims are not obvious from a Nietzschean point of view.

Heidegger believes Nietzsche to be a thinker of a single thought. For him, this single thought is the thought of the will to power as what constitutes the basic character of beings¹ (Heidegger, *Nietzsche I*, p.3, Farrell-Krell translation). Furthermore, Heidegger claims that Nietzsche is « a thinker who says that all being is ultimately will to power ». In order to show that the will to power is Nietzsche's single thought, Heidegger notoriously decides to focus his reading on the posthumously published *Will to power*.

Heidegger begins by stating that will and power are, for Nietzsche, two aspects of the same thing. Will is something which seeks to increase itself, to overcome itself. Will always wills to be more. Similarly, power is something which is inherently oriented towards its own enhancement. Power is viscerally oriented towards more power, towards its own expansion. As Heidegger puts it:

Jedes Wollen ist ein Mehr-sein-Wollen. Macht selbst ist nur, sofern sie und solange sie ein Mehr-sein-Wollen bleibt. Sobald dieser Wille aussetzt, ist Macht schon nicht mehr Macht, wenngleich sie das Beherrschte noch in der Gewalt hat.

(Heidegger, *Nietzsche I*, Wille zur Macht als Kunst, S.72)

Every willing is a wanting-to-be-more. Power itself only exists insofar and as long as it remains a wanting-to-be-more. As soon as this willing ceases, power is no longer power even if it still has what it commands under its control (My translation, P.C.).

¹ Heidegger, *Nietzsche I*, p.4, Farrell-Krell translation.

Whether Nietzsche's one and essential thought is the will to power or the eternal recurrence of the same is not altogether clear in Heidegger's work. There does seem to be a stronger emphasis on the eternal recurrence of the same as Heidegger's interpretation progresses. In *Was heisst Denken*, it seems like the

It is important to understand that for Heidegger, the will to power, which he interprets as the concept of being, is an ontological notion. Insofar as Heidegger wishes to understand the will to power both as an ontological notion and as Nietzsche's one and only thought, he must, to a certain extent, reduce Nietzsche's thought to ontology. But it is not obvious that this can be done without disregarding important aspects of Nietzsche's thought. I will return later to this possible criticism of Heidegger's reading.

Thus, for Heidegger, will to power is the ontological concept of the Being of beings². Quoting Nietzsche, Heidegger claims: « Will to power is the ultimate *factum* to which we come ». ³ Heidegger deals with the relationship between truth, art and will to power in the thought of Nietzsche. In order to deal with truth, art and will to power in the philosophy of Nietzsche, Heidegger implicitly understands the relationship between the fundamental concepts that are life, truth and will to power in Nietzsche's philosophy as discussed hereafter. The will to power is conceptually linked to truth and will to truth. For Nietzsche, truth exists only insofar as it is posited by the will to power. Truth is a vital error. It is the type of error without which human beings cannot live. This leads to the discussion of what Nietzsche means by life.

Nietzsche's concept of life is closely related to will and power. Life should not be understood as the set of properties in virtue of which certain entities are said to be alive. For Nietzsche, life is something more organic and much akin to the will to power. Life is characterized as a multiplicity of forces (*Will to power*, 641). This multiplicity of forces is a play of forces. This play of forces constitutes life and it cannot in the last

eternal recurrence has attained a certain preeminence over the will to power.

² (See Schuermann's book *Heidegger on Being and acting: From principles to anarchy*, chapter: The retrospective categories, for reference)

³ XVI, 415, quoted by Heidegger, p. 3, *Nietzsche*, Vol. I, Farrell-Krell translation.

analysis be grounded or justified. Inherent to the notion of life is value-positing. Each form of life which is the result of a play of forces, establishes certain values that are posited in such a way as to preserve and enhance that form of life. Heidegger claims that conditions of enhancement are always at the same time conditions of preservation of life. (*N II*, 268, German version).

Nietzsche claims that forces interact, struggle with each other and come to a certain equilibrium. But this equilibrium is ephemeral and to think of it as something eternal amounts to deceiving oneself. The equilibrium is destroyed anew by the appearance of different configurations of forces. Because of changes occurring in the configurations of forces, new struggles ensue. (*Will to power*, 1067)⁴

Therefore, we understand the will to power as this movement of beings whereby they engage in struggles with each other. The struggle comes about because each being, as an instantiation of the will to power wants to enhance itself and become more powerful. Truth is the apparent equilibrium reached by the forces in their struggle with one another. According to Nietzsche, the philosophical tradition has named truth this apparent equilibrium, this petrification of the perspectival, force-laden interpretations of things. For Nietzsche truth « is a mobile army of metaphors, metonyms, and anthropomorphisms -- in short, a sum of human relations, which have been enhanced, transposed, and embellished poetically and rhetorically, and which after long use seem firm, canonical, and obligatory to a people: truths are illusions about which one has forgotten that is what they are; metaphors which are worn out and without sensuous power; coins which have lost their pictures and now matter only as metal, no longer as

⁴ Art and suffering are said to increase the feeling, the intensity of life. Heidegger insists on the fact that Nietzsche's talk of life is sometimes misleadingly biological and thus leads to a misunderstanding of

coins.”(On truth and lie in an extra-moral sense, *The Viking Portable Nietzsche*, p.46-7, Walter Kaufmann translation)⁵

Truth certainly plays an important role in Nietzsche’s philosophy, since it amounts to the preservation of certain interpretations and hence to the preservation of life (through value-positing). However, according to Nietzsche preservation is not the most important drive of beings understood as will to power. On the contrary, beings always want to enhance and overcome themselves. It is important to understand that Nietzsche’s notion of the play of forces does not apply only to the relationship that exists between beings. Rather, the play of forces is both interior and exterior to beings. It governs not only the relationship between beings as such, but it occurs also within each and every being. Even more, it could be said, but this is Heidegger’s expression and no longer Nietzsche’s that the will to power *qua* play of forces is the ground of appearance of all beings.⁶

Having exposed Nietzsche’s concept of truth, we can introduce now the relation of art and truth in Nietzsche’s work, as understood by Heidegger. Nietzsche’s statement that « art is worth more than truth » (*Will to power*, 853, IV) is seen by Heidegger as staking a counter-position, an inversion that closes the circle of Plato’s metaphysics.⁷

Heidegger understands this statement by Nietzsche in connection with Nietzsche’s claim

Nietzsche’s metaphysics. It leads to what Nietzsche himself has called a *Physiologie der Kunst*.

⁵ This is precisely the aspect of Nietzsche’s thought that comes into conflict with the tradition and specifically with Hegel. For Hegel, it is the nature of language and art that it allows for preservation (*Aufhebung*) of certain universal notions. These universal notions are always concretely instantiated in what Hegel calls the infinite/finite totality.

⁶ This Heideggerian way of putting the problem is probably indebted to Kant : the will to power as the condition of possibility of appearance of objects.

⁷ Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Vol.2, p.205, Farrell-Krell translation.

that his philosophy is an inverted Platonism.⁸ According to Heidegger, Nietzsche's statement that art is worth more than truth must find its inverse in Plato.⁹ This opposition between Nietzsche's position and Plato's leads Heidegger to say that Nietzsche is the last metaphysician, and that in his philosophy metaphysics consummates itself into technology which itself becomes the metaphysics of our time.

In Plato's *Phaedrus*, Heidegger finds the inverted relationship between art and truth that he is looking for. According to Plato, beauty is what first introduces human beings to the supersensible. Aesthetic experience works as a catalyst for the contemplation of truth. However, once human beings have contemplated the supersensible thereby discovering the pleasures of truth, beauty becomes secondary. The supersensible as the locus of truth takes precedence over the sensuous as the locus of the beautiful.

Nietzsche considers Plato's understanding of the relationship between art and truth as essentially flawed because it is based on a valuation of the supersensible, over and above the sensible. Indeed, we would expand on this claim by adding that for Nietzsche, this higher valuation of the supersensible and the positing of categories of reason that are grounded in the supersensible realm is nihilistic.¹⁰ While Nietzsche's use of the word "nihilism" is in itself a complicated issue, in this context it can be taken to mean «against life»¹². Accordingly, the platonic higher valuation of the supersensible

⁸ (Meine Philosophie, umgedrehter Platonismus, *Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, 3 roman numeral, 3:7 [156]).

⁹ Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Vol.1, p.188, Farrell-Krell translation.

¹⁰ Nietzsche, *Will to power*, Section 12.

¹² It is complicated because Nietzsche distinguishes between at least two senses of nihilism: an active nihilism and a passive one. Nietzsche associates passive nihilism with decadence whereas active nihilism is a way of overcoming decadence and going beyond the affection that is constituted by nihilism. Heidegger distinguishes between at least five meanings of nihilism: nihilism proper, classical nihilism, the essence of nihilism, ecstatic nihilism, and incomplete nihilism. Nihilism proper seems to be what

realm is against life because it cannot account for life's play of forces that takes place in the sensible realm. Plato's higher valuation of the supersensible rejects the bodily, finite existence of the senses in favor of an ascetic contemplation of the ideas. In this platonic move, Nietzsche sees the roots of the Christian world-view that he so strongly criticizes throughout his *oeuvre*. The notion of the supersensible realm is itself a fabrication, which is based on the perspectival aspect of life. This is the case because one perspective among many is *selected, evaluated* and *posited* as above and beyond all other perspectives that life makes available to us. For Nietzsche, insofar as Plato and the tradition have associated truth to the supersensible realm, they have been deceitful fabricators and have misunderstood or disregarded the instinctual and playful aspect of life.¹³

There are two further aspects of Heidegger's interpretation upon which I would like to focus: art as the grand style and art as rapture. I choose to discuss these concepts briefly because they are very important for Nietzsche's understanding of the will to

Heidegger the position associated with Nietzsche's philosophy. Incomplete nihilism follows (logically and chronologically) nihilism proper and consists in the fact that even though the highest values have become invalid, there is an attempt made to revalorize them in the same supersensible locus where they had been situated before. In this sense, classical nihilism goes beyond incomplete nihilism and constitutes a type of "completion" and overcoming of that position. Classical nihilism is also associated to Nietzsche's philosophy and corresponds to a way out of nihilism through the position of values (*Umwertung alle bisherigen Werte*, see *Holzwege*, S.208). The essence of nihilism constitutes Heidegger's own appropriation of nihilism for the purposes of articulating his own project. Nihilism constitutes according to this reading the inner law of history and of the history of Being. The main principle of this history of Being is the fact that in it Being is forgotten and "there is nothing to Being".

¹³ The higher valuation of the supersensuous is nihilistic for political reasons as well as metaphysical ones: it is against the life of the here and now because it claims that this life can only be understood through principles that transcend it and by the contemplation of something that turns us away from this world. But this also means that we do not need to concern ourselves with the concrete empirical, economic, political situations that we find ourselves in. In short, the platonic move seems to be a form of escapism but a dangerous one since it limits the potentialities of enhancement and growth of an embodied humanity that is grounded and involved in a multiplicity of immanent situations. It might be argued that this is not the case from the Platonic perspective. "Seeing the idea" might precisely be according to this metaphysical perspective the ultimate fulfillment and attainment that can be achieved by human beings.

power and of art. However, upon close examination, these concepts do not allow us to bridge to Heidegger's interpretation of modern technology. An oversimplification might allow us to draw superficial links (such as a connection between enhancement, will to power and rapture, and a connection between eternal recurrence, preservation and grand style), but a deeper analysis shows these connections to be spurious.

Nietzsche first introduces rapture in connection with the Dionysian aspect of creation in *Die Geburt der Tragödie*. At first, Dionysian rapture is opposed and contrasted to the Apollonian aspect of creation.¹⁴ The Dionysian is the chaotic, destructive frenzy in which the artist finds himself during the primordial act of creation. The Apollonian on the other hand is also associated to a state of the creating artist.¹⁵ This is a cool, ethereal, dream-like state. It is the state associated with vision and the sun. In this state, the artist sees the necessity of his creation clearly and distinctly. In the Apollonian, the maddened frenzy of mystical revelation is no longer present: there is rather a calm certainty as to what the work of art ought to be and how its essence must be articulated.¹⁶

Heidegger calls rapture the fundamental aesthetic state or mood and views it as fundamental to Nietzsche's thought on art. It also plays a key role in the rest of his philosophy. We would expand on Heidegger's claim, by adding that, in fact for Nietzsche, it is through rapture (*Rausch* in German) that man realizes the Dionysian aspects of existence.¹⁷ In rapture, man is taken beyond himself and witnesses the transfiguration of what is. It is through the experience of rapture that the thought of

¹⁴ Nietzsche, *Birth of tragedy*, Section 1.

¹⁵ Nietzsche, *Birth of tragedy*, Section 2.

¹⁶ Nietzsche, *Birth of tragedy*, Section 1.

¹⁷ Nietzsche, *Will to power*, Section 798.

eternal recurrence is granted. Through rapture man realizes that both he and the world are nothing but will to power¹⁸. Finally, it is through the affect of rapture that man realizes that at the highest peak of meditation, existence, truth and art are impermanent and transient falsifications, holy lies. Thus, we believe that Heidegger is right to claim that rapture is a fundamental aspect of Nietzsche's philosophy, one that encompasses his philosophy wholly and is wholly encompassed by it.

As mentioned above, according to Heidegger, another fundamental aspect of Nietzsche's aesthetic is what he calls art in the grand style (*Grosse Stil*).¹⁹ Creation in the grand style is the supreme state of aesthetic rapture. In this act of creation, the will legislates and produces form out of the chaos of existence²¹. We should not understand this willing of chaos into form only as a voluntaristic act of the artist to extend his rational dominion over chaos. If that were the case, then Nietzsche would be repeating the "mistake" of Cartesian metaphysics only, in a different domain: that of the aesthetic. The artist does not want to make his creation eternal by giving it a form that transcends the chaotic and perspectival aspect of life. If that were the case, he would be nothing different from those fraudulent, yet brilliant metaphysicians who thought of Being and truth as immutable and eternal. This would be to misunderstand Nietzsche's conception of being.

The problem is that the distinction between the categories of being and becoming does not seem sufficient to fully capture the notion of the grand style. In order to give a

¹⁸ "-This world is the will to power and –and nothing besides! And you yourselves are also this will to power- and nothing besides" (*Will to power*, Friedrich Nietzsche, Section 1067)

¹⁹ Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Volume 1, p.124, Farrell-Krell translation.

fuller characterization of the grand style, Heidegger appeals to the distinction between two types of artist : the active and the reactive. This distinction is examined in Heidegger's treatment of Nietzsche's position *vis-à-vis* Romantic art and Classical art. All that needs to be added is that both Romantic art and Classical art can be nihilistic i.e. against life. In other words, a form of art might glorify being because it is incapable of willing a revaluation of all values. It seeks to preserve what is, the *status quo* not out of an overpowering feeling of life and health but precisely because it fears change and is incapable of going beyond itself. In that sense even classical art may be nihilistic. Thus, what is at stake is not whether being versus becoming is favored in a form of art but whether that form of art is life-affirming or not.

There are two more aspects that we need to focus on. First, it is the connection of the "grand style" to Nietzsche's aesthetics and metaphysics. What is of relevance for Heidegger is the fact that in the "grand style" although Nietzsche seems to be describing aesthetical phenomena, he actually reaches into the core of his metaphysics²². This is the case because Nietzsche has to fall back upon a discussion of Being and Becoming, action and reaction that are essentially metaphysical concepts.

Finally, the "grand style" is essentially related to the concept of mastery that is associated to the concepts of will to power and *Uebersich*. As Heidegger puts it :

The grand style is the way in which will to power from the start dictates the arrangement of all things and the breeding of mankind as the mastery of essentially end-less beings as a whole, subjecting them to its own power, and on this basis overpowering in its ongoing enhancement. Metaphysically considered, such dominating mastery over the earth is the absolute permanentizing of the whole of Becoming
(Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Vol.3, Sec.5, p.232, Farrell-Krell translation)

²² "When we are able to survey what Nietzsche thinks and demands with regard to the grand style, only then have we arrived at the peak of his 'aesthetics' which at that point is no longer aesthetics at all" (Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Vol.1, Sec.17, p.137, Farrell-Krell translation)

This section has presented the concept of the will to power as art and as metaphysical concept both as it is expounded in Nietzsche's first lecture called *Will to power as art* and with reference to it as a rubric in Heidegger's text *Nietzsche's metaphysics*. It has tried to explain the concept of the will to power in its relationship to the way Nietzsche views art. More generally it has tried to articulate the will to power as both condition of preservation and enhancement of life and Being of beings.

1.2 Heidegger's interpretation of Nietzsche's notion of eternal recurrence and its relationship to the will to power.

This second part of our summary of Heidegger's Nietzsche interpretation deals with Heidegger's analysis of Nietzsche's eternal recurrence and its relationship to the will to power, as expounded both in the Lecture given during the summer of the year 1937 called the *Eternal recurrence of the same*, and in the summary of his position given in the essay *Nietzsche's metaphysics* appended to the 1939 Lecture entitled the *Will to power as Knowledge*. I will focus my exposition of Heidegger's reading on both these texts. The sections of the, *Eternal recurrence of the same* Lecture which we consider to be key to summarizing Heidegger's interpretation are sections 12, 13, and 14, and accordingly, we have focused our reading on them.

Heidegger's examination of the concept of eternal recurrence is a crucial and minacious exercise. He presents an exhaustive analysis of the different expositions of the doctrine of eternal recurrence in the Nietzschean corpus. In addition, he also examines

different sets of unpublished fragments²³. Nevertheless, his ultimate assessment with respect to this doctrine can be easily summarized: Nietzsche's philosophy is, according to Heidegger, not only a metaphysical one, but, in fact, the last Western metaphysical position and in the Nietzschean metaphysics the doctrine of eternal recurrence makes up one aspect of what Heidegger calls Nietzsche's *Grundstellung* (fundamental position). With respect to the concept of *Grundstellung*, we have to mention another project of Heidegger's called the *Seinsgeschichte* or history of Being. The history of Being is a concept in itself, that is complex, and that warrants a separate discussion on its own terms. For our purposes we will state that this history corresponds or is made up of the positions of certain key thinkers such as Plato, the medieval scholastics, Leibniz, Descartes, Kant, Schelling, Hegel, and Nietzsche. To these key thinkers correspond what Heidegger calls fundamental metaphysical positions (*metaphysischen Grundstellungen*). A fundamental metaphysical position is characterized by the fact that it answers what Heidegger calls the guiding question of philosophy (What are beings?) in a specific and characteristic way. However, generally, the grounding question of philosophy (What is Being ?) does not get asked and is even occluded in the fundamental metaphysical positions preceding Heidegger's own philosophy.

²³ He examines the unpublished fragments from the period of the *Gay Science*, 1881-1882, from the *Zarathustra* period 1883-1884 and from the period of the *Will to power*, 1884-1888.

Eternal recurrence of the same is, according to Heidegger, the supreme thought of what he argues to be the metaphysics of Nietzsche :

It would scarcely be possible to say in a more lucid fashion, first, how and on what basis the stamping of Being on Becoming is meant to be understood, and second, that the thought of eternal recurrence of the same, even and precisely during the period when the thought of the will to power appears to attain preeminence, remains *the* thought which Nietzsche's philosophy thinks without cease.
(Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Vol.2, Sec.26, p.203, Farrell-Krell translation)

Heidegger's interpretation is informed by how he sees the relationship between Nietzsche's will to power and the doctrine of eternal recurrence. In the following paragraphs I will give an account of Heidegger's reconstruction of Nietzsche's proof of eternal recurrence. This reconstruction is given by Heidegger in the essay called *Nietzsche's metaphysics* that is appended to the 1939 lecture course the *Will to power as Knowledge*. This reconstruction is based on the fundamental unity that Heidegger sees at work between will to power and eternal recurrence and that was alluded to earlier in this section. Heidegger begins by stating that « the endless and eternally empowered character of will to power is at the same time finite in its positions and configurations ». (Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Vol 3, Sec.4, p.211 Farrell-Krell translation.)

Since the positions and configurations of the will to power are finite there seems to be a contradiction between the nature of the will to power and its embodiments. The will to power strives for infinity in its desire to overcome itself but it always finds itself in concrete and finite situations and hence is limited and finite. This tension is what allows for the movement or the state of becoming to be associated with the will to power. Each concrete position or configuration of the will to power must go under and transform

itself into another radically different embodiment of the will to power. But this cannot go on indefinitely. This is the case because the reserve of will to power (if one may call it so) is in itself limited. Enhancement cannot go on forever. At this point Heidegger quotes Nietzsche who says that :

The world as force dare not be thought of as unbounded, for it cannot be so thought of, we forbid ourselves the concept of an infinite force as incompatible with the concept of 'force'. Thus- the world also lacks the capacity for eternal novelty. (WM,1062)
(Quoted by Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Vol.3, Sec.4, p.211, Farrell- Krell translation).

Heidegger goes on to give a pithy summary :

If being as such is will to power and thus eternal Becoming, and if will to power demands end-lessness and (but, my parentheses, P.C.) excludes endless progress towards an end in itself; if at the same time the eternal Becoming of will to power is delimited in its possible configurations and constructs of domination, because it cannot be new unto infinity; then being as a whole as will to power must permit the same to recur and be an eternal recurrence of the same.
(Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Vol.3, Sec.4, p.211, Farrell-Krell translation)

Heidegger gives a slightly different reconstruction of Nietzsche's proof of eternal recurrence in the lecture course of 1938 entitled *The eternal recurrence of the same*. This reconstruction does not focus so much on the notion of the will to power. However the argument provided by Heidegger is not radically different from the one provided in the 1939 essay *Nietzsche's metaphysics* and stated above. This is the case because the terms becoming and will to power are quasi-synonyms in Heidegger's reading of Nietzsche : will to power is, according to Heidegger, Nietzsche's original way of re-thinking the concept of becoming.

In order to follow the proof more readily, it would be useful to recall a number of theses that make up Nietzsche's metaphysical understanding of the world according to

Heidegger. These are metaphysical theses on the physico-cosmological nature of the world that Heidegger identifies in the Nietzschean *Nachlass*. I will focus on only those theses that I consider to be the most relevant :

- 1) *The world's pervasive character is force.*
- 2) *The nature of force is limited.*
- 3) *Because of 1) and 2), the totality of the world itself is deemed to be finite.*
- 4) *There is no equilibrium state of force and hence of the world.*
- 5) *Space is bounded and finite.*
- 6) *In contrast to space, time is infinite.*
- 7) *The collective character of the world is Chaos.*
- 8) *Cosmic Chaos is in itself necessity.*²⁴

We will now consider the Heideggerian reconstruction of eternal recurrence as provided on p.109 of Vol.2 of his Nietzsche lectures. Heidegger begins by asserting that the general character of force yields the finitude of Being and its becoming. From this there follows that the advance and progress of cosmic occurrence into infinity is impossible. This in turn implies that the world's becoming must turn back onto itself. But thesis 6) implies that the world's becoming runs backward and forward in endless (infinite) time as real time. Thus the finite becoming which runs its course in such infinite time must have achieved some kind of homeostasis or equilibrium since the finite possibilities of becoming must be exhausted in the infinite flow of real time. Nietzsche claims (and Heidegger repeats this argument) that since no such homeostasis has been achieved, this means that no such state of equilibrium can ever be achieved. This implies that the world

²⁴ (Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Vol.2, Sec.12, pp.84-93, Farrell-Krell translation)

is in permanent becoming : it turns back on itself and flows into an eternal becoming. But since this cosmic becoming takes place continuously and does not cease whenever its finite possibilities are exhausted this implies that it must have repeated itself and that this repetition has occurred an infinite number times. Since this becoming is permanent it will continue to repeat itself in the future. But since the world totality is finite in the configurations of its becoming as asserted in thesis 3) the possibilities of transformation in its collective character are finite as well. Because the nexus of effects among the various processes of becoming is a closed nexus, every single process of becoming must draw the entire past in its wake. Alternatively, since the process of becoming works its effects ahead, it must propel all things forward. This in turn implies that every process of becoming must reproduce itself. Thus the eternal recurrence of the totality of world becoming must be a recurrence of the same.²⁵

Another aspect that we need to focus on is the thought of eternal recurrence as what Heidegger calls the constantification of the constant. This aspect of the thought is briefly mentioned in the essay *Nietzsche's metaphysics*. The idea seems to be that eternal recurrence stands in contradistinction to the will to power which is a new way for Nietzsche to think becoming. In this sense eternal recurrence of the same allows beings to come to presence: it provides the constant framework within which beings can come to

²⁵ How does the previous dialectic of the will to power and eternal recurrence (because that's the way Heidegger treats it, in dialectical fashion, which in itself might be a distortion of Nietzsche's thought) fit in with the Nietzschean argument that there cannot be an equilibrium in the state of the world quoted by Heidegger in vol.1 (German) :

- I) if there had been a state of equilibrium in the world it would have been reached by now
- II) it has not been reached (What kind of criteria need to be applied here logical, phenomenological, scientifico-empirical ?) hence
- III) there cannot be such a state of equilibrium ?

appear²⁶. Heidegger asserts that :

Being and Becoming are only apparently in opposition because the character of Becoming in will to power is in its innermost essence eternal recurrence of the same and thus the constant permanentizing of the unstable.

(Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Vol.3, Sec.4, p.213, Farrell-Krell translation)

This aspect of eternal recurrence does not seem to be involved directly in the proof of eternal recurrence that is given by Heidegger.

I would like to focus on a few more points in this section. First, I would like to discuss the temporality of eternal recurrence. Eternal recurrence is instantaneous i.e. it occurs in the temporality of the moment. However recurrence can also be thought of as the synthesis in a moment of the temporality of being (eternity) and becoming (instant). We believe this affords the thought of eternal recurrence a dialectical quality that is not present in most of Nietzsche's other concepts. This is not an obvious Heideggerian reading of the thought of recurrence. This is rather my own reading of eternal recurrence and I will develop it more in the second part of this paper. There is however in the Heideggerian text evidence for this reading and I will shortly expose it here. Two main quotes substantiate this reading :

The 'momentary' character of creation is the essence of actual, actuating eternity, which achieves its greatest breadth and keenest edge as the moment of eternity.

(Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Vol.2, Sec.26, p.203, Farrell-Krell translation)

²⁶ "Eternal recurrence of the same is the way in which the impermanent (that which becomes) as such comes to presence; it comes to presence in the highest form of permanence (in circling), with the sole determination of securing its possibility to be empowered."(Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Vol.3 p.212, Farrell-Krell translation)

and

"The same that recurs has only relative stability and is therefore essentially unstable. Its recurrence however, signifies a continual bringing back into stability, that is, a permanentizing. Eternal recurrence is the most constant permanentizing of the unstable"

(Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Vol.3 p.212, Farrell-Krell translation).

But will to power is as eternal recurrence. In the latter Nietzsche wants his thinking to fuse Being and Becoming, action and reaction in an original unity.

(Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Vol.1, Sec.17, p.136, Farrell-Krell translation)

The question of the temporality of recurrence is related to the problem of transcendence.

Again this is my reading of eternal recurrence and it does not belong in this section but rather in the critical section. I will just state that I read recurrence in a different way than

it is normally understood and that I see a dialectic of transcendence and immanence

operating in Nietzsche's thought, something that has not been identified by any of the

commentators that I am familiar with. The traditional reading of recurrence sees it as

evacuating all trace of transcendence from the world. On this reading, eternal recurrence

consists rather in restoring the full immanence to the world that has been occluded by

traditional metaphysics. More will be said in the critical section of this paper. But again

Heidegger's text presents some evidence for my reading. (Since the translation from the

German is difficult, I include both versions of this passage) :

Dieses Seiendwerden aber wird zum werdenden Seienden im staendigen Werden des Festgewordenen als eines Erstarrten zum Festgemachten als der befreienden Verklaerung.

What is and what becomes are fused in the fundamental thought that what becomes is inasmuch as in creation it becomes being and is becoming.

But such becoming-a-being becomes a being that comes-to-be, and does so in the perpetual transformation of what has become firmly fixed and intractable to something made firm in a liberating transfiguration.

(Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Vol.2, Sec.26, p.200, Farrell-Krell translation)

The last topic that I would like to focus on is how Heidegger treats the thought of eternal recurrence of the same in relation to the concept of freedom. Heidegger begins by

asserting that the thought of eternal recurrence leads us back to the problem of freedom

and necessity (Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Vol.2, Sec.18, p.133, Farrell-Krell translation)

But very bluntly, Heidegger questions the fact that the thought of eternal recurrence might be subordinated to the problem of freedom and necessity :

Yet so much is clear : the doctrine of return should never be contorted in such a way that it fits into the readily available 'antinomy' of freedom and necessity. At the same time, this reminds us once again of our sole task-to think this most difficult thought as it demands to be thought, on its own terms, leaving all supports and makeshifts.

(p.138, Sec.18, Vol.2, Nietzsche, Heidegger)

Heidegger does not really provide an argument for why the thought of recurrence should not be thought in relation to the problem of freedom and necessity. I will argue in the second part of this paper that the connection to freedom and necessity is precisely what makes the thought of eternal recurrence so important for Nietzsche's philosophy.

However, at this point in the paper, I only wanted to expose Heidegger's view of eternal recurrence.

Some new developments with respect to Nietzsche's thought as a whole and with respect to the thought of eternal recurrence can be detected in the 1951-52 lecture course *Was heisst Denken ?* In that course, Heidegger finally arrives at the core of the Nietzschean doctrine of eternal recurrence of the same. Heidegger also understands that Nietzsche's fundamental, essential, single thought is that of eternal recurrence of the same as opposed to that of will to power. (See note 24 for complete reference).

Heidegger also arrives at the conclusion that it is Nietzsche's ultimate, metaphysical goal to redeem man from the spirit of revenge. The spirit of revenge is essentially metaphysical and is understood in terms of the thought of eternal recurrence of the same.

The spirit of revenge is characterized as « the will's ill will (*Des Willens Widerwille*)

against time and its « it was » ». Taking this characterization as the essence of eternal recurrence of the same, Heidegger goes on to reconstruct the argument of eternal recurrence in a way that is totally original with respect to his 1936-37 lectures. I will attempt to convey this reconstruction here. Heidegger first proceeds by claiming that Nietzsche thinks revenge only from the Being of beings. In order to make good on this claim, Heidegger examines how the Being of beings has been thought of in German Idealism, more particularly in Schelling. Thus the important quote that Heidegger examines comes from Schelling's 1809 *Philosophical Investigation Concerning the Nature of Human Freedom and its Object* :

In the final and highest instance, there is no being other than willing. Willing is primal being and to it (willing) belong all (primal being's) predicates : being unconditioned, eternity, independence of time, self-affirmation. All philosophy strives only to find this highest expression. (Quoted by Heidegger in *What is called thinking*, pp.90-91. I believe parentheses to be Heidegger's addition)

Heidegger emphasizes that the word « willing » does not mean a capacity of the human soul but that willing designates the Being of beings as a whole. Heidegger then claims that Leibniz with his notion of *perceptio* and *appetitus* was already thinking of Being as willing. In Heidegger's own words :

What Leibniz thought is then expressed by Kant and Fichte as the rational will which Hegel and Schelling each in his own way, reflect upon. Schopenhauer names and intends the same thing when he thinks of the world as will and idea; and Nietzsche thinks the same thing when he defines the primal nature of beings as will to power. (*What is called thinking*, p.91)

The reconstruction of a proof of eternal recurrence of the same is not conducted along the same lines as in the 1936-37 lectures. This time the « proof » of eternal recurrence is conducted through an examination of the notion of will and how it relates to time. At

crucial moments in the reconstruction Heidegger introduces *telle quelle* Schelling's thesis that will is primal being. This makes the nature of this proof highly problematic. This is the case because Nietzsche was highly suspicious of both the concepts of will and Being. This can be readily demonstrated. Nevertheless, at this point, we choose to follow the Heideggerian argument in its intricacy if only to better unhinge it later.

Heidegger begins by asserting that the will becomes free from what revolts it when it becomes free as will, that is, free for the going in the passing away-but the kind of going that does not get away from the will, but comes back, bringing back what is gone. (*What is called thinking*, p.104)

This is the first step in his reconstruction of the « proof » of eternal recurrence. In a second step Heidegger claims that the will becomes free from what is revolting in the « It was » when it wills the constant recurrence of every « It was ». Heidegger further asserts that the will wills its own eternity. (*What is called thinking*, p104) But then at a crucial moment in the argument Heidegger introduces Schelling's claim (not shared by Nietzsche according to me, for reasons I will shortly provide) that will is primal being. From this Heidegger not only concludes his own version of the statement of recurrence that « the primal being of Beings is the will, as the eternally recurrent willing of the eternal recurrence of the same » but also the thesis that « The eternal recurrence of the same is the supreme triumph of the metaphysics of the will that eternally wills its own willing » (*What is called thinking*, p.104)

For Heidegger, will to power and eternal recurrence are inherently related in that they both pertain to what he calls the beingness of beings (*Sein des Seienden*) (Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Vol.2, Sec.26, p.199, Farrell-Krell translation). In essence, the

will to power represents the *quod* (the what, *Was-sein*) of beings. It is the constitution (*Verfassung*) of beings. Beings are, according to their essence, according to how they are constituted, will to power. On the other hand, the way in which beings are, their *quomodo* (*Dass-Sein*, way of being, way to be) is eternal recurrence. In Heidegger 's own words :

Accordingly, in Nietzsche's philosophy will to power and eternal recurrence of the same belong together. It is thus right from the start a misunderstanding –better an outright mistake- of metaphysical proportions when commentators try to play off will to power against eternal recurrence of the same, and especially when they exclude the latter altogether from metaphysical determinations of being. In truth, the coherence of both must be grasped. Such coherence is itself essentially defined on the basis of the coherence of constitution and way to be as reciprocally related moments of the beingness of beings.²⁷
(Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Vol.2, Sec.26, p.199, Farrell-Krell translation)

According to Heidegger, the thought of eternal recurrence plays a crucial role as the counter-movement to nihilism and he gives a brilliant analysis of how this counter-movement must occur. The thought of eternal recurrence first sinks the thinker of this thought into an abyss because of its depth. If everything that we as finite human beings undertake will repeat itself over and over, again and again, then everything seems to occur in vain. If the same repeats itself infinitely, then everything is indifferent. The fatalism of eternal recurrence seems to block the way to any possibility of establishing a center, of establishing values which can act as guiding principles for life. Eternal recurrence makes everything vain and pursuit of wind. But this is only an illusion.

²⁷ Demnach gehoeren in Nietzsches Philosophie auch Wille zur Macht und Wiederkehr des Gleichen zusammen. Es ist daher im vorhinein ein metaphysisches Miss- oder besser Unverstaendnis, wenn versucht wird, den Willen zur Macht gegen die ewige Wiederkehr des Gleichen auszuspielen und diese gar als metaphysische Bestimmung des Seienden auszuschneiden. Im Wahrheit muss gerade die Zusammengehorigkeit beider begriffen werden, aber diese Zusammengehorigkeit bestimmt sich selbst wesentlich aus der Zusammengehorigkeit von Verfassung und Weise zu sein als aufeinander bezueglicher

Against the great illusion of nihilism (that “Buddhism for Europeans” as Nietzsche calls it in the 5th section of the Preface to the *Genealogy of morals*) a powerful thought is necessary. As Heidegger puts it

What is most difficult at the outset is the confrontation with nihilism along with the thought of return inasmuch as the latter itself betrays a nihilistic character in the fact that it refuses to think of an ultimate goal for beings. (Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Vol.2, Sec.23, p.174, Farrell-Krell translation)

There appears to be an unresolved tension in the way Heidegger interprets Nietzsche’s eternal recurrence. On the one hand, there is an aspect of his interpretation that acknowledges that eternal recurrence is something experienced by a human being or subject. In this sense, eternal recurrence is associated with the problem of the flow of time, the finitude of human experience and the apparent contingency associated to this finitude. It is also connected to the experience of suffering and of what Nietzsche calls nihilism. But, on the other hand, there appears to be another aspect of Heidegger’s interpretation of eternal recurrence which delves into the physico-cosmological aspects of this doctrine. This aspect of the interpretation also touches upon the issue of the proof of eternal recurrence. Accordingly, what needs to be clarified is the following: Is eternal recurrence a thought, something that is experienced as a possibility by a particular being or subject or does it have the status of a metaphysical doctrine, part of what Heidegger calls Nietzsche’s *Grundstellung* ?

Heidegger clearly rejects Nietzsche’s attempts to ground eternal recurrence in terms of the deduction of physico-cosmological arguments (i.e. based on concepts of natural science in the Western tradition prevalent in Nietzsche’s time) (Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Vol.2, Sec.23, p.116, Farrell-Krell translation). There are very good reasons

to do this since there is little doubt that Nietzsche's notions of physics were sketchy at best. Evidence for this lack of knowledge on Nietzsche's part and his own awareness of ignorance is provided by the well-known fact that after having attained or "received" the thought of eternal recurrence, Nietzsche seriously considered attending university level courses in natural science in order to find a natural-scientific way of grounding the thought of eternal recurrence. However, this is not the reason Heidegger gives for questioning the validity of Nietzsche's proof of eternal recurrence. He insists rather on the lack of validity of any possible scientific or empirical proof of a metaphysical concept (*Nietzsche*, Heidegger, Vol.2, p.107, Farrell-Krell translation). He certainly has a point, but this does not justify what at times seems like a constant dichotomizing of metaphysics and science. Indeed, we note that, when Heidegger describes science as *theoria* (see text "Wissenschaft und Besinnung" in *Vortraege und Aufsaeetze*), he takes a less severe stance and he usually recognizes the proximity of "ancient science" to metaphysics and does not outright dismiss the validity of that science, contrary to what he sometimes seems to be doing with respect to "modern science" and "technology"

What is more bothersome however is that Heidegger proposes a reconstruction of Nietzsche's proof of eternal recurrence solely in terms of metaphysical concepts and theses. (See Section 12 : Summary presentation of the Thought : Being as a Whole as Life and Force; the World as Chaos). Heidegger finds ample texts to justify his reconstruction. (He uses Nietzsche's *Nachlass* from 1881-1882.) However, his argumentation remains unconvincing. It is true that Nietzsche provides what he might have thought to be a physico-cosmological proof of eternal recurrence based on the argument of the state of equilibrium. I will discuss this Nietzschean strategy at length in

Section 3.3. However, this is likely a totally misled project despite the deep *existential* implications of the thought of eternal recurrence. Thus, we should be as merciless towards Heidegger if he metaphysically misconstrues or wrongly re-constructs the meaning of eternal recurrence as we are towards Nietzsche when he tries to ground the philosophical vision of eternal recurrence by doubtful appeals to the physical theories of his time.

1.3 Heidegger 's interpretation of Nietzsche's concept of truth and of his concept of justice

In the 1936-37 lecture course *The will to power as knowledge* Heidegger introduces the concept of Nietzschean justice. This thought is also dealt with in the essay *Nietzsche's metaphysics* where justice is raised to one of the five rubrics of Nietzsche's thought alongside the will to power, eternal recurrence, nihilism and *Uebersensch*. Heidegger claims that this thought is very important for Nietzsche and has preoccupied him since the early years of Nietzsche when he had taught the thinking of Heraclitus and the pre-Socratics (see Nietzsche *Nachlass*, *Early Philologica*, KSA I, 1870-1873). I accept Heidegger's claim that it is a worthwhile pursuit to enquire into the notion of justice as it is elaborated in the Nietzschean corpus. However I find that the raising of justice to a rubric in Nietzsche's thought is perhaps exaggerated. Nietzsche deals most clearly with the notion of justice when he writes about Anaximander's extant fragment in the text « Die Philosophie im tragischen Zeitalter der Griechen » (KSA I, 803 f.). I will quote Anaximander's extant fragment in full because I think it is very important for Nietzsche's understanding of time and of the pre-socratics :

...some other *apeiron* nature, from which come into being all the heavens and the worlds in them. And the source of coming-to-be

for existing things is that into which destruction, too, happens 'according to necessity ; for they pay penalty and retribution to each other for their injustice according to the assessment of Time', as he describes them in these rather poetical terms.

(Simplicius in Phy. 24, 17, fragment 110 in Kirk, Raven and Schofield, *The Pre-Socratic Philosophers*, 2nd edition).

The exact phrasing of this passage is still debated among the philologists of our time. It is not clear in this fragment whether it is Anaximander's or whether the fragment is a mere paraphrase that belongs to Simplicius or even Theophrastus. I do not feel qualified to treat of this question here. Nietzsche might have known about these debates given his training as a philologist but even this is not a claim that can be verified. I will be interested in using the exact statement that Nietzsche published of the extant fragment, namely :

Woher die Dinge ihre Entstehung haben, dahin muessen sie auch zu Grunde gehen, nach der Nothwendigkeit; denn sie muessen Busse zahlen und fuer ihre Ungerechtigkeit gerichtet werden, gemaess der Ordnung der Zeit.
(*KSA I*, 818, 10).

I think that what is going on in the essay text *Nietzsche's metaphysics* and in the 1936-37 course *The will to power as knowledge* in the section on truth and justice of that text is an essentialization by Heidegger of Nietzsche's moralism. We have to remember that for Nietzsche all metaphysical valuation was reducible to a claim about moral valuations. This is Nietzsche's generalized critique of metaphysics from the point of view of morality. Heidegger is implicitly interested in showing that Nietzsche is the last great metaphysician of the Western tradition. Insofar as he does this he must essentialize Nietzsche's thinking to a certain extent. This Heideggerian strategy is seen in the way he reads the will to power as the essence of beings. The fact that Heidegger thinks that justice is a very important Nietzschean category is shown by the fact that in the 1946 text

Nietzsche's metaphysics he conceives of justice as one of the five essential rubrics of Nietzsche's thought alongside the will to power, nihilism, the *Uebersensch* and eternal recurrence of the same.

The notion of justice is closely connected to Nietzsche's notion of truth. In the following, I will give an analysis of how Heidegger interprets Nietzsche's notion of justice in connection to the Nietzschean notion of truth. In the 1946 *Nietzsche's metaphysics*, under the rubric of justice, Heidegger begins by asserting that truth is a necessary value for the will to power²⁸. This is not the common Nietzschean coining of the phrase since Nietzsche would claim that truth is a necessary value for life. Heidegger argues that Nietzsche thinks the essence of truth in accord with the long familiar metaphysical definition of it as approximation of representation to the thing²⁹. The argument moves forward when Heidegger claims that adequation and revealing, *adequatio* and *aletheia* reign in Nietzsche's concept of truth as the still reverberating yet entirely unheeded resonance of the metaphysical essence of truth³⁰. Heidegger characterizes justice in three different ways, first by taking one of Nietzsche's aphorisms from 1884 that bears the title the Paths of freedom as :

A constructive, exclusive, annihilative mode of thought, arising from estimations of value : The supreme representative of life itself (xiii, 42, quoted by Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Volume 3-4 p.241, Farrell-Krell).

In a second characterization, Heidegger describes justice as :

Justice, as a function of the panoramic power that looks beyond the narrow perspectives of good and evil, and thus has a broader horizon of *advantage*- the intention to preserve something that is *more* than this or that person. (XIV, 80 this is Nietzsche quoted by Heidegger, *Nietzsche*,

²⁸ (p.235 in Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Vol.3, translation Farrell-Krell)

²⁹ (p.236, Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Volume 3-4, translation Farrell-Krell)

³⁰ (p.238, Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Volume 3-4, translation Farrell-Krell)

Volume 3-4, p.244, Farrell-Krell translation)

Finally, Heidegger makes use of a biographical/personal quote by Nietzsche in which he claims that :

It happened quite late in my life- I was already out of my twenties- that I discovered what is completely lacking in me : namely justice. « What is justice ? And is it possible ? And if it were not possible how would life be bearable » -I asked myself questions like this incessantly. It profoundly disturbed me to find, wherever I excavated within myself, no passions, only narrow perspectives, only my unthinking acceptance of whatever is alien to the very preconditions for justice : but where was lucidity (*Besonnenheit*) that arises from comprehensive insight (*aus umfaenglicher Einsicht*). (XIV, 385, f quoted by Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Volume 3-4, p.248, Farrell-Krell translation).

I will not analyze in detail the notion of justice anymore than I have up to now. It is sufficient to say as I have mentioned above that justice is not an obvious Nietzschean concept. Rather I view this as a Heideggerian strategy that has for a goal to essentialize Nietzsche the moralist. As such, I sympathize with this strategy since it seems to integrate and systematize Nietzsche in a very convincing way. Instead of having to consider Nietzsche as a metaphysician of the will to power, *Ueberschensch*, eternal recurrence and nihilism doubled up with a critical moralist *à la* La Rochefoucauld or Pascal, we get a single Nietzsche that integrates both aspects into one. However, there is a price to pay for this. There is a subtle elimination by Heidegger of Nietzsche's concept of life that is replaced by the concept of will to power. Heidegger has many issues *vis-à-vis* any biological concepts in Nietzsche. He rejects both Nietzsche's life philosophy (*Lebensphilosophie*) and his physiology of art as misled notions. Why he does that is not entirely clear. Was he trying to subversively de-nazify Nietzsche *vis-à-vis* Baumler or Rosenberg, or was he trying to advance his own philosophy of *Dasein* which was

undergoing a radical renovation at the time and which even at its best (i.e. most obviously human-subjective) in *Being and Time* could not clearly accommodate the notion of body and physiology? These are questions that cannot be answered here but that should be borne in mind when attempting to understand Heidegger's essentialization of Nietzsche.

The essentialization of Nietzsche occurs in many ways. Let us look at some decisive Heideggerian moves that inform his interpretation. First of all, truth is a necessary value for the will to power (and not life as Nietzsche would say). Second at the end of section 21 in the Will to power as knowledge, Heidegger claims that life itself is what at bottom Nietzsche calls justice. (p.149, Heidegger, Nietzsche, Volume 3, translation Farrell-Krell). This is again a distortion of the Nietzschean phrase which claims that at bottom life is nothing but the will to power (In a previous version of the last aphorism of *Will to power*, Nietzsche claims that at bottom life is nothing but eternal recurrence of the same³¹).

We have to keep at least these two distortions or interpretative moves in mind when we examine Heidegger's essentialization of Nietzsche. Another strategic decision can be observed in Heidegger's treatment of Nietzsche's notion of truth. Heidegger is at his most unconvincing here. In fact my claim is that Heidegger reduces Nietzsche's notion of truth to make Nietzsche the culminator of the Western tradition's thinking of

³¹ (Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Vol.2, p.163) Actually, Heidegger "massages" the text a bit since the previous version of *WM* aphorism 1067 reads as follows in KSA vol.14, p.727 as:

a ring of good will, turning ever about itself alone, keeping to its wonted way: this world, *my world*-who is luminous enough to look at it without wishing to be blinded? Strong enough to hold his soul up to this mirror? His own mirror up to the mirror of Dionysos? His own solution to the riddle of Dionysos? And were anyone able to do this, would he not have to do more in addition? To *plight his troth* to the the "ring of rings"? By taking the oath of his own *return*? By means of the will to will oneself once more and yet again? The will to will back all the things that have ever been? To will forward to everything that ever has to be? Do you know what the world is to me? And what I am willing when I will *this world*?-

truth as *adequatio*. We should seriously consider the fact that Heidegger is distorting Nietzsche's notion of truth in order to make room for his own concept of truth as *aletheia*. On this reading Heidegger is interested to make Nietzsche look like the most radical thinker of truth as representation and adequation. No matter how radical this Nietzsche is, he would still be according to Heidegger but the culminator of the western tradition's thinking of truth as adequation/representation and not the thinker of truth as *aletheia* or truth as the truth of Being.

We want to focus on the analysis of Heidegger's reconstruction of Nietzsche's notion of truth and how this is related to what Heidegger calls the concept of justice. In section 21 of *Will to power as Knowledge*, Heidegger claims the following :

The thought of justice already dominates Nietzsche's thinking in his early years. It can be historiologically shown that it dawned on him in his reflections on pre-Platonic metaphysics, especially that of Heraclitus. Yet the fact *that* precisely this Greek thought of justice, of *dike*, sparked in Nietzsche and continued to grow in his thinking in an ever more concealed and silent way, constantly igniting his thinking, has its ground not in the « historiological » work with the pre-Platonic philosophers but in the historical determination that the last metaphysician of the West obeys. (p.137, Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Volume 3, translation Farrell-Krell)

Let us take this as Heidegger's basic interpretative framework. A bit later on, Heidegger claims that there is no reference (in Nietzsche's published work) to the fact that, and the question of the extent to which the abolition of the metaphysical distinction between a true and apparent world forces us back into the traditional metaphysical essential determination of truth as *homoiosis* and at the same time into the interpretation of truth as justice³².

Heidegger goes on to sketch two alternatives in his interpretation of Nietzsche's

³² (p.138, Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Volume 3, translation Farrell-Krell)

notion of truth. One will start from the Nietzschean text and the second will have a look at how the Western tradition has conceived of truth and how this comes to a culmination in Nietzsche. Heidegger chooses aphorism 507 in the *Will to power* to ground his reading of Nietzsche's concept of truth. Since this is an important text I will quote it here in full :

The valuation « I believe that this is so » as the essence of truth. In valuations are expressed conditions of preservation and growth. All our organs of knowledge and our sense are developed only with regard to conditions of preservation and growth. Trust in reason and its categories, in dialectic, therefore the valuation of logic, proves only their usefulness for life, proved by experience not that something is true. That a great deal of belief must be present; that judgments must be ventured; that doubt concerning all essential values is lacking- that is the precondition of every living thing and its life.

Therefore what is needed is that something must be held to be true- not that something is true. The « real and apparent world », I have traced this antithesis. We have projected the conditions of our preservation as predicated of being in general. Because we have to be stable in our beliefs if we are to prosper we have made the real world a world not of change and becoming but one of being.

(p.276, *Will to power*, Kaufmann translation)

In his first approach to Nietzsche's notion of truth, Heidegger claims that Nietzsche understands truth as holding-to-be-true. But already in this notion of holding-to-be-true, Heidegger asserts that the traditional essence of truth gains ascendancy in Nietzsche's way of characterizing truth.³³ Heidegger then asks himself the question that if the true world of beings collapses and with it the distinguishability of a merely apparent world also, does not the most general essence of truth in the sense of *homoiosis* get pulled into this collapse³⁴. Heidegger answers this negatively. He arrives to the

³³ p.139, Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Volume 3, translation Farrell-Krell

³⁴ p.140, Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Volume 3, translation Farrell-Krell

conclusion that as *homoiosis*, truth must be what Nietzsche calls justice³⁵. In what is characteristic of Heidegger's own project and is not concerned with the interpretation of Nietzsche, the following claim is made :

Nietzsche's thought of « justice » as the formulation of truth in the extreme, is the final necessity and inmost consequence of the fact that *aletheia* had to remain unthought in its essence and the truth of Being unquestioned. The thought of « justice » is the occurrence of Being's abandonment of being within the thinking of beings themselves.
(p.141, Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Volume 3, Farrell-Krell translation)

Later on in the section on justice, Heidegger characterizes justice as being essentially linked to life as its ground and possibility. Here again, we are faced with an important interpretative decision. Heidegger wants to connect justice and life together in such a way that justice takes the place of the will to power.

In this connection, Heidegger claims that with the insight into the essence of justice as the essential ground of life, the aspect is fixed in which alone it can be decided whether, how and within what limits Nietzsche's thinking is biologicistic³⁶. In his effort to identify will to power and justice, Heidegger claims that the notion of will to power as a field of energies and forces is misled. To try to understand the will to power in this way is a mistake in Heidegger's opinion. This blinds one to the essential connection between will to power and justice. That Heidegger is trying to bring out this connection is evident from the passage that I have discussed above that I will now quote in full.

According to the constitution we characterized, justice is the ground of possibility and necessity of every kind of harmony of man with chaos, whether such harmony be the higher one of art or the equally necessary one of knowledge. Commanding explanation and poetizing transfiguration are « right » and just, because life itself at bottom is what

³⁵ (p.141, Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Volume 3, translation Farrell-Krell).

³⁶ (p.145, Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Volume 3, Farrell-Krell translation)

Nietzsche calls justice.
 (p.149, Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Volume 3, translation Farrell-Krell)

This paragraph clearly shows what Heidegger is up to. When he transforms Nietzsche's saying that life itself is at bottom will to power (or eternal recurrence of the same) into the saying that life itself at bottom is what Nietzsche calls justice, he is operating a distortion. By linking justice to will to power and claiming that in their essence these two concepts are the same and then linking these two concepts to the concepts of life and being, he has effectively essentialized Nietzsche the moralist into Nietzsche the metaphysician. There are problems with this view, but it is beyond the scope of this section to discuss them. For now, I will remark that the quote that I gave at the beginning of the section and according to which for Nietzsche « life » is merely another word for Being is highly problematic. For Nietzsche life and will to power are linked to becoming. Becoming is more essential than being. Heidegger himself claims that in articulating the term « will to power », Nietzsche found a new name for becoming. So the question that has to be answered by a critical reading of Heidegger's Nietzsche interpretation is how the transformation of the will to power as the essence of life and of becoming into the will to power as the Being of beings can occur without causing a great distortion to Nietzsche's thought.

1.4 Heidegger's interpretation of Nietzsche's concept of nihilism and his appropriation of that concept.

We now have to examine in detail Heidegger's interpretation of Nietzsche's notion of nihilism. This discussion is rather complex since it is here that Heidegger's

criticism of Nietzsche begins to take off. This happens chronologically later in Heidegger 's lecture courses since this critique is based on the lecture given in 1940 entitled *European Nihilism*. In fact Heidegger believes that Nietzsche does not and cannot think nihilism through.³⁷ This is the case because Nietzsche does not have a clear view of the history of Western metaphysics and its forgetfulness of Being. The discussion of nihilism is complex because it is difficult to draw the line between the way Nietzsche conceives nihilism and the way Heidegger appropriates that notion for his own purposes. Thus I will limit my discussion to Heidegger's re-construction of Nietzsche's thought as much as I can.

Heidegger focuses most of his discussion of nihilism on Nietzsche's related concepts of will to power and value-positing. Nihilism is the historical fact that the highest values have lost their value, i.e. humanity can no longer see them as a source of meaning and order. But nihilism is more than a simple historical event. It is not something that happens as the French or American revolutions are said to occur. Rather nihilism is the inner law of history : its logic so to speak.³⁸ Here it must be specified that history is understood by Heidegger as the history of Western metaphysics. This history seems to be composed of diverse epochs of Being to which correspond what he calls fundamental metaphysical positions.³⁹ There is a relationship between the actual concrete history of peoples, their institutions, laws and societies and the various epochs

³⁷ (Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Vol.4, Nihilism as determined by the history of Being, p.204, Farrell-Krell translation)

³⁸ This is Heidegger's historicization of nihilism, Nietzsche might agree to a certain extent with this interpretation but he might also see concrete historical events such as the French Revolution (the rise of the slave morality) as concrete manifestations of nihilism.

³⁹ The history of western metaphysics is not identical with the history of Being which is made up of the various epochs of Being. The history of Being functions as a kind of genealogy of the history of metaphysics that points out what has been left unsaid and unthought in the history of metaphysics because that history presupposes as its background an understanding of Being and of the way it gives itself over to

that make up the history of Being.

Heidegger singles out Plato and his theory of Ideas as the originator of the history of Western metaphysics. The values of the Good, the Beautiful and the Just are posited at the inception of the history of metaphysics in the form of the Platonic Ideas. The positing of the Good, the Beautiful and the Just as of supreme importance for life occurs through the identification of many instances of the unique Idea of Good, Beautiful, Just in various sensible objects. The Good,..., the Just, are thus affirmed in terms of their univocal supersensible character as against the multiplicity of their concrete sensible instantiations or embodiments. Thus for Heidegger, Plato identifies being as the One. He is seen as the originator of metaphysics with the inception of the concept of being as Uniqueness (Oneness, Univocity).

Heidegger gives an interpretation of Nietzsche's inversion of Platonism. Heidegger believes that for Nietzsche all metaphysics is a variation on Platonism⁴⁰. The inversion of Platonism begins with the claim that the *fundamentum* for the institution of new values is no longer the supersensible realm as opposed to the sensible realm of concrete embodiments but rather the will to power. The discussion of the will to power is intricate and I have already alluded to it in the previous section of this essay. What is new in this section on Nietzsche's concept of nihilism is that the will to power acts as a condition of beings :

When will to power dares to acknowledge itself as the fundamental trait of

man in the diverse epochs of its manifestation.

⁴⁰ Every metaphysics is a 'system of value-estimations' or, as Nietzsche says morality 'understood as the doctrine of the relations of supremacy under which the phenomenon 'life' comes to be-' (*Beyond Good and Evil*, Section 19)

beings, everything must be assessed in terms of the question of whether it enhances will to power or diminishes and hinders it. As the fundamental trait of beings, will to power conditions all beings in their being.
(Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Vol.3, Sec.3, p.202, Farrell-Krell translation)

The will to power is the principle of a new institution of values. This new institution is a transvaluation of all the values that held sway precedently. One should not minimize the radicalism of such a claim. What Nietzsche is after, is an absolute *tabula rasa*. In a way he wants to be through with the past and the values of the past in order to liberate human beings and prepare them for a radically new dawn⁴¹. According to Heidegger, it is precisely in the radical character of the transvaluation that the fulfilled essence of nihilism lies (as opposed to a Hegelian semi-transvaluation of platonic-Christian values that is best illustrated in Hegel's concept of mediation (*Vermittlung*)).

To understand the Heideggerian appropriation of nihilism we must look at the criticism inveighed by Heidegger against the way Nietzsche understands nihilism. To use Heideggerian language Nietzsche does not think through the essence of nihilism. The main reasons for Nietzsche's inability to think through the essence of nihilism are the following : 1) According to Heidegger, Nietzsche does not overcome the thinking of Being as representedness (Sein als Vorgestelltheit⁴²) 2) in Nietzsche's thinking the difference between the essence of truth and Being collapses. This is the case because Nietzsche is still operating within the horizon of truth as adequation-representation.

⁴¹ The usage of the term "*tabula rasa*" may be objected to in the context of Nietzsche's project. The expression has too many Enlightenment connotations according to some commentators. Nietzsche is not a revolutionary in this sense but rather a gradualist who sees the self-overcoming of historical entities like the *imperium romanum* as occurring over hundreds of years. I agree with these commentators that Nietzsche does not seek revolutionary upheavals such as the French revolution. However, it is not clear that a right wing, authoritarian revolution might not be favored by him at times. And it is fairly clear that what I am referring to as a spiritual, inner revolution in the realm of life-values is acceptable to Nietzsche.

According to Heidegger, Nietzsche does not realize that all his questioning is made possible as against the notion of truth as *aletheia* and within the horizon of the question of Being. 3) In Nietzsche's thought Being is reduced to a value through the metaphysics of the will to power. 4) Nietzsche does not extricate himself from the metaphysics of subjectivity but merely completes it through his metaphysics of the will to power. In this, the relationship to Descartes is telling : Heidegger tries to show that Nietzsche is a hyper-Cartesian. According to Heidegger, Nietzsche merely replaces Descartes' methodological prioritizing of inner awareness with a new methodological principle : the body :

The method is decisive. That Nietzsche posits the body in place of the soul and consciousness alters nothing in the fundamental metaphysical position which is determined by Descartes. Nietzsche merely coarsens it and brings it to the edge...
(Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Vol.4, Sec.17, p.133, Farrell-Krell translation)

The first claim I have made above, that Nietzsche thinks being as representedness is mainly expounded in Section 17 of European Nihilism : Descartes' Cogito Sum (Volume 4 of Heidegger's Nietzsche lectures). The notion of representedness is a complex and subtle one. It is tied to Heidegger's entire reading of the history of Western metaphysics. I will only discuss this concept insofar as it clarifies Heidegger's understanding of Nietzsche. To quote Heidegger :

Representedness as beingness makes what is represented possible as the being. Representedness (Being) becomes the condition of the possibility of what is represented and presented-to and thus comes to stand ; that is the condition of possibility of the object.
(Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Vol.4, Sec.26, p.174, Farrell-Krell translation)

The concept of Being as representedness is particularly difficult because it bridges many

domains. The main thing that is happening in Section 17 is an attempt by Heidegger to place Descartes' epistemological principle in a historical context. Thus Heidegger gives a historico-epistemological account of the *cogito sum*. This account derives its importance from the fact that Descartes' principle is crucial to an understanding of what Heidegger considers to be modernity's entanglement in re-presentational thinking. It is Heidegger's belief that Nietzsche does not escape this entanglement any more than any other modern thinkers (including Hegel). Representedness and the understanding of Being as representedness consist in the fact that :

That to which everything is referred back as to an unshakable ground is the full essence of representation itself, insofar as the essence of Being and truth is determined by it, as well as the essence of man, as the one representing, and the nature of the definitive standard as such.
(Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Vol.4, Sec.17, p.114, Farrell-Krell translation)

This referring back consists in a double movement since there is a referring back to the full essence of representation itself as mentioned above as well as a referring back to that which is actually responsible for doing the representing : the I or subject. This is the case :

Because the me is implied in *cogitare*, because the relation to the one representing still belongs essentially to representing, because all representedness of what is represented is gathered back to it, therefore the one representing who can thus call himself I is the subject in an emphatic sense, is, as it were, the subject in the subject, back to which everything that lies at the very basis of representation *refers*. (my italics)
(Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Vol.4, Sec.17, p.114, Farrell-Krell translation)

Heidegger claims that Nietzsche has misunderstood Descartes' position and that his understanding of truth and subjectivity is still very much indebted to Descartes. The nature of what Nietzsche describes as the will to power is somehow still indebted to Descartes' positioning of the locus of knowledge within the subject :

What is happening here ? Nietzsche refers the *ego cogito* back to an *ego volo* and interprets the *velle* as willing in the sense of will to power, which he thinks as the basic character of beings. But what if the positing of this basic character became possible only on the basis of Descartes' metaphysical position ? Then Nietzsche's critique of Descartes would be a misunderstanding of the essence of metaphysics.
 (Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Vol.4, Sec.19, p.129, Farrell-Krell translation)

Heidegger takes particular offense at Nietzsche's claim that when individuals engage in logic or speculative philosophy, the concept of substance that is used is derived from the subject-concept and not the other way around. (« The substance-concept a consequence of the subject-concept : not the reverse! ») (*WM*, 485 from the year 1887 quoted by Heidegger).

Historically, the subject has been developed from the Aristotelian concept of substance, through a scholastic-Cartesian development. But Nietzsche is articulating something about logic and grammar when he is making this substance originate in the concept of the subject⁴³. Heidegger argues that Nietzsche's notion of perspectival truth only apparently overcomes the traditional notion of truth as adequation-representation. Heidegger's argument is rather obscure at this point. He claims that since Nietzsche believes that truth is a necessary error (« Truth is the kind of error without which a certain kind of living being (namely man) could not live. The value for life ultimately decides. » (*WM*, 493, quoted by Heidegger) and that truth is the foundation of logic, then logic should stem from the will to truth. But because Heidegger finds a quote in which Nietzsche claims precisely the opposite (« Logic does not stem from the will to truth » *WM*, 512, from the year 1885 quoted by Heidegger), he believes that he is entitled to claim that Nietzsche's concept of truth as vital error and illusion is based on the

⁴³ (see Michel Haar in La maladie native du langage in *Nietzsche et la métaphysique*)

traditional concept of truth as adequation of knowledge with things and reality.

Heidegger gives a pithy summary of his understanding of Nietzsche's position :

When Nietzsche says that the concept of the « I » and thus the « subject » is an invention of « logic », then he must have rejected subjectivity as « illusion », at least where it is claimed as the basic reality of metaphysics.

(Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Vol.4, Sec.19, p.133, Farrell-Krell translation)

In what follows, I will give an account of Heidegger's reading of Plato and Kant, in the context of his Nietzsche lectures. This account is necessary because Heidegger establishes a connection and historical continuity between Being as *agathon* (Plato), Being as representedness (Descartes-Kant) and Being as value (Nietzsche).

Heidegger claims that there is a connection between the platonic *agathon* and thinking in values. But thinking in values is only possible on the basis of an understanding of Being as representedness. This understanding is indebted to Descartes. Heidegger's argument is given as follows: Plato had a concept of the idea that functioned as a condition that allows objects to be known. But above even the ideas lies *he tou agathou idea*, the idea of the Good. («*agathon, esti epekeina tes ousias prebeiai kai dunamei* » quoted by Heidegger from the *Republic*) Heidegger believes that the idea of the Good functions for Plato on an analogy with the objects of sight and the faculty of sight. In order to see the objects of sight, this faculty requires not only the objects themselves but also a third mediating factor. This factor is light, *to phos*.

Plato claims in the sixth book of the *Republic*, that *he tou agathou idea* functions in the same way as light does for sight for the ideas and the faculty of knowledge. We humans need something like the Good to orient our ability to know the ideas. The good functions not unlike light in that it allows our faculty of knowledge to know the ideas.

Thus according to Heidegger, the Good functions as making able, as a making fit for ... Insofar as it does, this already anticipates to a certain extent Kant's conditions of possibility of knowledge. Plato gives a decisive interpretation of Being as Idea and more precisely *he tou agathou idea* which for Heidegger represents the Idea of ideas.

Moreover, by giving Being priority in the sequence of knowledge (i.e. in the process of knowledge, Being as Idea is what allows beings to be known and in this respect it comes *before* beings), Heidegger believes that Plato has prepared the way for Kant's theory of knowledge.

Ultimately however, Kant is the one that brings about to completion the thought of Being as representedness. This happens through his emphasis on the fact that the conditions of possibility of the objects of experience are the same as the conditions of possibility of experience in general. (« The conditions of the possibility of experience in general are at the same time conditions of the possibility of the objects of experience » A158, B197, *Critique of Pure Reason*) But from this there is only one step to conceiving Being as representedness. This is the case because according to Heidegger :

The highest basic principle of Kant's metaphysics says that the conditions of the possibility of representing what is represented are also –that is to say, are nothing else but –conditions of the possibility of what is represented. They constitute representedness... The basic principle says : Being is representedness.
(Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Vol.4, Sec.26, p.175, Farrell-Krell translation)

The gist of Heidegger's argument as to how Being is reduced to value for Nietzsche can be found in a 1944-46 treatise published under the title *Nihilism as determined by the history of Being*. Heidegger begins by claiming that Nietzsche's

metaphysics constitutes nihilism proper.⁴⁴ According to Heidegger, nihilism proper still operates within the horizon of the history of metaphysics. Although it claims to have liberated itself from the principles of the beyond and transcendence, nihilism proper does not clearly express the essence of nihilism.

This is the case because within the mode of thinking of nihilism proper, the concept of nihilism itself is only thought from the point of view of value⁴⁵. From the point of view of nihilism proper (which represents Nietzsche's position), nihilism is simply the devaluation of the highest values. Furthermore Nietzsche sees as pressing the task of overcoming nihilism. However, this task of overcoming nihilism is to be undertaken through a revaluation of all values with respect to the principle of creation of all values called the will to power. It is here that Heidegger inveighs his strongest criticism against Nietzsche's metaphysics for in his opinion, Nietzsche has misunderstood the way out of nihilism. It is the desire to overcome nihilism through the creation of new values in terms of an enhancement of the will to power that covers over the real nature of nihilism :

For it is precisely in the positing of new values from the will to power, by which and through which Nietzsche believes he will overcome nihilism that there is nothing to Being itself which has now become a value.
(Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Vol.4, p.203, Farrell-Krell translation)

Heidegger argues that Nietzsche understands overcoming as revaluation and this understanding is couched in an understanding of the will to power as the principle of all

⁴⁴ (Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Vol.4, p.202, Farrell-Krell translation). Later on Heidegger will make a generalization and claim that metaphysics as such is nihilism proper.

⁴⁵ To what extent is thinking in values and Nietzsche's emphasis on *Wertsetzung* related to the capitalistic notion of value and commodity, Marx's notion of surplus value etc. Is there a connection between technology, capitalism and thinking in values ? Or is the term value as Nietzsche uses it purely political-moral-psychological ?

valuation. Because of this Heidegger claims that Nietzsche does not call into question value thinking itself (Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Vol.4, p.203, Volume 4, Farrell-Krell translation). For Heidegger, Nietzsche's metaphysics is essentially limited since it does not allow what is most worthy of questioning, Being, to come to the fore. Nietzsche's metaphysics does not allow us to understand Being as Being.

This amounts to saying that (and this can be argued elsewhere in connection with Heidegger's notion of the essence of nihilism) Nietzsche does not attain what Heidegger calls the essence of nihilism which is the fact that in the history of metaphysics there is *nothing* (Nichts) to Being itself : put otherwise western metaphysics (which culminates in Nietzsche's metaphysics) never thinks or asks about Being (Sein) itself but remains entangled in the question of the being (das Seiende). Elsewhere and perhaps in connection to this, Heidegger claims that the will to power understood as thinking in values does not let Being be⁴⁶.

Nietzsche's understanding of nihilism is essentially incomplete since it reduces Being to a value. Thus Heidegger can make the claim that

Nietzsche's understanding of nihilism is not an overcoming of nihilism. It is the ultimate entanglement in nihilism.
(Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Vol.4, p.203 , Farrell-Krell translation)

The essence of nihilism becomes a part of Heidegger's philosophical project in an effort to trace the history of how it is that there is nothing to Being. The discussion of the essence of nihilism is quite intricate. Furthermore, I do not think that it explicitly sheds light on Heidegger's interpretation of Nietzsche but is rather a development of Heidegger's own project. Thus I have not discussed this notion in detail, but have limited myself to

⁴⁶ "Wenn jedoch der Wert das Sein nicht das Sein sein laesst, was es als das Sein selbst ist, ..."
(Heidegger, *Holzwege*, S.239, Klostermann, 1963)

the parts needed to clarify Heidegger's reading of Nietzsche.

1.5 Heidegger's interpretation of Nietzsche's concept of the *Uebersch.*

Heidegger's interpretation of the *Uebersch.* is connected to the way he interprets the notion of the will to power. The concept of the will to power is seen as the completion and consummation of metaphysics. This is the case because subjectivity conceived as the will to power reaches what Heidegger calls its unconditioned (*unbedingte Subjektivitaet*) state. In this context, Heidegger has developed what he calls « *vorstellende Vernunft* ». This will tie in with his reading of the *Uebersch.* Heidegger sees a development that begins with *Vorstellung* (representation) and ends with the will to power. According to Heidegger, Nietzsche accomplishes the « *Vollendung der unbedingten Subjektivitaet* ». This completion or exhaustion of subjectivity occurs through a move from *Vorstellung* (representation) to *Vernunftswille* (rational will) to will to power. Finally, it is the completion of unconditional subjectivity in the form of the will to power that lays the ground for the necessity of the *Uebersch.* In Heidegger's words :

The consummate subjectivity of will to power is the metaphysical origin of the essential necessity of the 'Uebersch.'⁴⁷.
(Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Vol.3, Sec.5, p.225, Farrell-Krell translation)

It is not clear however, how the move from *Vorstellung* to *Vernunftswille* happens. What is certain is that the shift occurs at more than one level. Since the transition is not so easy to follow, I will give a close reading of the section of the essay

⁴⁷ Die vollendete Subjektivitaet des Willens zur Macht ist der metaphysische Ursprung der Wesensnotwendigkeit des « Ueberschens ». (Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Vol.2,S.302)

Nietzsche's metaphysics that treats of the *Uebersch*. Heidegger begins by asserting that man possesses a mastery of beings in virtue of the special relation to Being that is his own. Second, Heidegger claims that the *Uebersch* is the human being that comports himself toward Being as both will to power and as eternal recurrence. Heidegger also asserts that the *Uebersch* is the pure exercise of the will to power. He is what allows history to be seen both from point of view of revaluation of all values and within the basic delineaments of classical nihilism. The notion of *Uebersch* is related to the notion of will which becomes essential in modernity :

The universal though not exhaustive concept of *Uebersch* means primarily the essence of that mankind which thinks of itself in a modern way that is to say, wills itself.
(Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Vol.3, Sec.5, p.217, Farrell-Krell translation)

But the notion of *Uebersch* also pertains to classical nihilism as the expressly willed negation of the previous essence of man (Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Vol.3, Sec.5, p.217, Farrell-Krell translation). This negation of the previous essence of man negates reason and in so doing is considered to be nihilistic by Heidegger. Heidegger also characterizes the nihilistic negation of reason with respect to *animalitas* and the body. According to Heidegger, by putting an enormous emphasis on the phenomenon of the body, Nietzsche plays an essential role in the history of Western metaphysics. He gives an interpretation of modern man in terms of *animalitas*. According to Heidegger, this distinguishes him greatly from Hegel whose whole system was focused on the discussion and elaboration of the *rationalitas* of man. What Nietzsche characterizes as animality is :

the body bodying forth, that is replete with its own overwhelming urges. The name body identifies the distinctive unity in the constructs of domination in all drives, urges and passions that will life itself. Because animality lives only by bodying it is as will to power.

(Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Vol.3, Sec.5, p.218, Farrell-Krell translation)

Alternatively, Heidegger interprets the nihilistic negation of reason in terms of the concept of representation. He begins by giving a historical account of the notion of representation and its relationship to the concept of subject. There is indeed a radical change with respect to the ancients and primarily with respect to Aristotle in the meaning of the word subject. For Aristotle a subject was merely something of which a property could be predicated. In the sentence : « the house is blue » the word « house » is subject from a grammatical point of view. The object the word « house » designates is also subject according to Aristotle's metaphysical terminology. Now, for us moderns (in the sense of Descartes. Nietzsche, Heidegger and even Hegel would not necessarily agree with Descartes), the object designated by the word « house » is not a subject but an object. Furthermore it is only an object insofar or in virtue of the fact that it can appear as such to a human subject.

With the evolution of the notion of subject, the related concept of representation changes as well. The active, modifying aspect of representation comes to the fore. Representation becomes a criterion for what is allowed as perceivable for a human subject :

Representation comes to be the tribunal that decides about the beingness of beings and declares that in the future only what is placed before it in and through representation and thus is secured for it may be considered a being.

(Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Vol.3, Sec.5, p.219, Farrell-Krell translation)

Furthermore, there is an expansive aspect to representation that impels it to always expand its scope. Heidegger claims that there is an intrinsic striving to representation

that makes it strive to transform everything that is perceivable by a human subject into something that can be accounted for in terms of representation⁴⁸.

What Heidegger is sketching in this section on the *Uebersch* is the twofold movement that transforms representation and the subject into the notion of will to power. The tensions in both the notions of representation and the subject give us a hint that at the bottom of these notions there is a more fundamental phenomenon : what Nietzsche has identified as the will to power. Heidegger seems concerned to show that both the notions of representation and the subject evolve in the history of the metaphysics preceding Nietzsche and culminate into Nietzsche's notion of the will to power. This evolution is sketched by Heidegger as follows.

The faculty of representation (*Vorstellung*) is transformed by Nietzsche into calculative value-positing (*rechnendes Wertsetzen*). Representation becomes a tool that allows the will to posit values⁴⁹. Insofar as the will can represent entities or objects it experiences its own power because it is able in a manner of speaking to put the world together. But this putting the world together is seen itself as a function of the value that it has for life, i.e. whether it enhances life's intensity or diminishes it. Thus, representation shifts from being the primary feature of reason as Kant saw it (at least in one possible interpretation of his philosophy) and becomes subordinated to the *Wertsetzung* of the will to power.

It is worth noting that for Heidegger, the identification by Nietzsche of the will to power as the more fundamental phenomenon lying at the basis of the concepts of representation and the subject does not necessarily mean that Nietzsche has overcome

⁴⁸ (Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Vol.3, Sec.5, pp.221-222, Farrell-Krell translation)

⁴⁹ (Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Vol.3, Sec.5, p.224, Farrell-Krell translation)

those notions. This is especially observable when Heidegger emphasizes that Nietzsche thinks the absolute and consummate subjectivity of the will to power. Thus, the moment of subjectivity has not been stripped away from the will to power as some Nietzsche interpretations might claim but only radicalized and absolutized :

Fulfillment here means that the extreme suppressed possibility of the essence of subjectivity becomes the essential center. Will to power is therefore both absolute and –because inverted- consummate subjectivity. Such consummation at the same time exhausts the essence of absoluteness.⁵⁰

The transition to the notion of Uebermensch is made in terms of the notion of consummate subjectivity. Because man possesses the ability to will and to posit values and because these abilities are inherently related to the notion of consummate subjectivity man becomes the receptacle, in a manner of speaking, of consummate subjectivity :

Man, because he *alone* is in the midst of beings as such and as a whole as a *representational, valuative will*, must extend to consummate subjectivity the abode of its pure essence.⁵¹

Man, as the being that represents and posits values is conceptualized as the embodiment of the consummate subjectivity of the will to power. But the notion of man is itself radicalized when it is thought of in terms of the will to power. As the pure exercise of the will to power, man becomes what Nietzsche calls the *Uebermensch* :

As the supreme subject of consummate subjectivity he [the Uebermensch] is the pure powering of the will to power.⁵²

⁵⁰ (Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Vol.3, Sec.5, p.225, translation David Farrell-Krell)

⁵¹ (Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Vol.3, Sec.5, p.226, Farrell-Krell translation)

⁵² (Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Vol.3, Sec.5, p.226, Farrell- Krell translation)

This radicalization of the concept of man into *Uebersch* is also characterized by Heidegger as follows :

Not only does he (the *Uebersch*) draw away from and beyond the human essence as it has been heretofore, but, as the reversal of that essence he surpasses himself at the same time to what is absolute for him, that is, to the entirety of beings, the eternal recurrence of the same. (Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Vol.3, Sec.5, p.226, translation Farrell-Krell.)

This passage seems to imply that man becomes the *Uebersch* thus going beyond or overcoming man as he has historically existed by transcending the experience of nihilism through the thought of eternal recurrence. Thus, the *Uebersch* is the man that realizes that each and everyone of his actions no matter how contingent is necessary and imbued with meaning.

What seems to differentiate the *Uebersch* from previous man is the realization that necessity, historical and existential, is his own doing. He realizes the divinity that is potentially present within himself. As Nietzsche puts it :

All the beauty and sublimity we have bestowed on real and imaginary things I wish to reclaim as the property and product of man –as his fairest apology. Man as poet, as thinker, as god, as love, as power : O with what regal liberality he has lavished gifts upon things so as to impoverish himself and make himself feel wretched ! His most selfless act hitherto has been to admire and worship and know how to conceal from himself that it was he who created what he admired .
(Nietzsche quoted by Heidegger)⁵³

Heidegger comments this passage by raising the question as to the potential humanization of beings that seems to be implied in the passage. He claims that this humanization is only apparent and that what is thought through the *Uebersch* is rather a reversal and de-humanizing of what was hitherto taken as humanization.

⁵³ (Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, p.228, Vol.3, Farrell-Krell translation)

(Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Vol.3, Sec.5, Farrell-Krell translation)

Heidegger's reading of the *Uebersch* sees that concept as essentially connected to the notion of eternal recurrence :

At the time of the most luminous brightness, when beings as a whole show themselves as eternal recurrence of the same, the will must will the *Uebersch*; for only within the prospect of the *Uebersch* is the thought of eternal recurrence to be borne »

(Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, p.227, Vol.3, Farrell-Krell translation)

It is only according to the perspective opened up by the concept of *Uebersch* that the thought of eternal recurrence becomes bearable. This is the case because the overcoming, the going beyond that is intrinsic to that thought must find a focus, an embodiment in the world and not in a 'beyond' as was the case in previous religious and metaphysical systems.

But why should this focus, embodiment, be the *Uebersch* ? It is because as Heidegger puts it, he is the pure exercise of the will to power. For Nietzsche, the depth of eternal recurrence lies in the fact that it brings transcendence back into the immanent world⁵⁴. It can be said that the thought of eternal recurrence inverts platonism. The locus of the inversion is placed within the *Uebersch*. This is the case because of the selective, transformative nature of the thought of eternal recurrence. The difficulty of such a thought makes a selection as to *who* is capable of thinking this thought. It only allows the high-minded, the noble nature to absolutely affirm his apparently absurd and contingent existence through the affirmation of the recurrence of every single act-experience as necessary. The weak, the sickly, the proponents of the slave morality are

⁵⁴ (cf section on 3.3 The forgotten link between eternal recurrence of the same and the concepts of freedom and transcendence)

those who succumb or are themselves transformed and transfigured into something higher when faced with the possibility of the return.

But this logic needs of necessity a culmination, a peak and mountain-top, a what-for and *Wozu*. This is provided by the *Ueberschensch*. The *Ueberschensch* seems to provide a stable direction and goal towards which eternal recurrence can progress. It provides a goal that is not the Christian-Platonic beyond. The *Ueberschensch* seems to be an ideal (no matter how loathsome this word might be for Nietzsche) that man can strive for in the immanent and concrete world and thus is part of Nietzsche's struggle to invert Platonism.

The *Ueberschensch* is in my opinion another way in which Nietzsche seeks to think self-transcendence and in this it is essentially linked to the notion of eternal recurrence. If the will to power abolishes the transcendence of the supersensible and reduces everything to the plane of immanence, then the *Ueberschensch* preserves the possibility of transcendence albeit in a purely horizontal, non-vertical scheme. On the one hand the *Ueberschensch* is the inheritor of the bourgeois-socialistic notion of progress in that it posits a form of teleology within the essence of man : man can improve himself, he can go beyond his immediate, historical and social predicament and reach a finality or an *eschaton*. On the other hand the *Ueberschensch* is inherently tied to the notion of the malleability of man that is made possible through modern science. Man is capable of manipulating himself and nature around him : he can split the atom, understand and manipulate his own genetic code, manipulate (and perhaps create) his moods through the applications of psycho-pharmacological medication and drugs.

This constant transformation of the essence of man also corresponds to the notion

of *Uebersch*. Modern man, whose inner teleology leads to the *Uebersch* has no essence. He can « choose » and « design » himself through technology. Technology is the pure exercise of the will to power enacted by the *Uebersch*. Because he is both preservation-negation and enhancement of the essence of man, the *Uebersch* embodies the essence of modern technology. In the movement from man to *Uebersch*, technology frees man to be himself in an infinite act of self-choosing and self-transformation. This act is infinite because it is tied to the infinite possibilities opened up by modern science and technology. This is the case because there is no end in sight to the evolution of the sciences and technology. It is true that man is becoming increasingly dependent on technology and that anything that does not fulfill the technological model becomes excluded. It could be thought that technology rather enslaves man instead of freeing him to achieve his infinite potential. This is the totalizing feature of technology : it conceives of Being univocally only with respect to beings. It does not let us understand ourselves or does not allow beings to be revealed in other modes than its own mode of revealing. It obliterates the relation to the divine as transcendence. As Heidegger writes, the divine itself has been reduced to a mere *causa* in the chain of causes (“Gott kann im Lichte der Kausalitaet zu einer Ursache, zur *causa efficiens* herabsinken.” “Frage nach der Technik”, *Vortraege und Aufsaezte*, S.30. « God seen in the light of causality can fall to the level (rank) of a cause, of the *causa efficiens*. » my translation). Its dignity and mystery are reduced to the fact that it « causes » and « creates » Creation and its creatures. The idea of the divine, moving itself, manifesting itself from within itself (self-moved and self-manifested) is incomprehensible from the point of view of the *Gestell* in which everything is understood

from the point of view of its utility and manipulability in the plane of immanence⁵⁵.

As a conclusion for this section I would like to draw attention to a last quote from Heidegger's reading of Nietzsche :

How would matters stand if, by means of a uniquely nihilistic reversal, man as he has been hitherto must first be transformed into the *Uebersch* and if [the] *Uebersch*, as the supreme will to power, should will to let beings be as beings⁵⁶.

This passage is important because it constitutes the beginning of Heidegger's critique of Nietzsche. According to him will to power as value-positing does not let Being (not beings but Being) be. ("Wenn jedoch der Wert das Sein nicht das Sein sein laesst, was es als das Sein selbst ist, ..." (Heidegger, *Holzwege*, S.239, Klostermann, 1963))

⁵⁵ This idea of self-manifestedness and self-revelation is what Heidegger has in mind when he talks about the concept of *phusis* and *phuein*. The paradox is that even technology can function as *phusis* but it is an exclusive and totalizing kind of *phuein* that characterizes the technological *epoche*.

⁵⁶ (Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Vol.3, Sec.5, p.228, Farrell-Krell translation)

2 Unity of eternal recurrence and will to power as articulation of Heidegger's concept of the essence of modern technology.

In this section I introduce what I take to be Heidegger's essential insight into Nietzsche's metaphysics: the thesis of the unity of the eternal recurrence and the will to power. Furthermore I will examine how this thesis allows Heidegger to develop a global understanding of how the essence of technology functions in the modern world.

The thesis of the unity of eternal recurrence and will to power is most clearly set out in a text from 1939 called the *Eternal recurrence of the same and the will to power*. This text made up the two concluding lectures to the Lectures. (*NI*, *NI I* and *NI II*) but was never delivered. The unity of the two concepts is also apparent in the essay *Nietzsche's metaphysics* and so this text will also serve as a basis for the construction of my reading.

2.1 Heidegger's thesis of the unity of the eternal recurrence of the same and the will to power.

There are clues that show us that the will to power and the eternal recurrence of the same are thoughts that are strongly connected for Nietzsche. A first clue can be found in aphorism 1067 of the *Will to power* in which Nietzsche affirms that « This world is at bottom will to power-and nothing else besides. » In an older version of this aphorism, Nietzsche had affirmed that this world is the world that he wills, the world of the eternal recurrence of the same. (For full reference see note 31) These clues tell us that Nietzsche himself considered these two concepts as perhaps the most important concepts of his philosophy. In the reception of Nietzsche's thought this unity (or this

relation of importance) that Nietzsche saw between the will to power and eternal recurrence has not always been respected. On the one hand, Bauemler⁵⁷ tried to completely deny the importance of the eternal recurrence of the same in Nietzsche's thought by denigrating it as a simple myth or an error on Nietzsche's part. On the other hand, Karl Loewith authored a study⁵⁸ in which he privileged the eternal recurrence of the same without making any deep metaphysical links between this concept and the will to power.

Heidegger's fundamental contribution to this debate is to have established that there must be a unity between the eternal recurrence and the will to power. I don't think this fact has really been contested in the literature after Heidegger's interpretation (except maybe in Derrida's reading of Nietzsche that is explicitly anti-Heideggerian and that refuses to see in the eternal recurrence of the same a thought that pertains to the totality of being). Deleuze also sees a profound link between the will to power and the eternal recurrence and this is perhaps a place where Heidegger has left his mark on the Deleuzian reading of Nietzsche.

I would like to critically examine now Heidegger's interpretation of the unity between the will to power and the eternal recurrence of the same. Heidegger's thesis about this unity is not explained very thoroughly in his Nietzsche lectures. In fact two quotes may be given to summarize Heidegger's interpretation of the unity of these Nietzschean concepts :

⁵⁷ (*Nietzsche der Philosoph und Politiker*, dritte Auflage, Leipzig, Phillip Reclam Verlag, 1931)

⁵⁸ *Nietzsche's philosophy of the eternal recurrence of the same* ; Translated by J. Harvey Lomax ; Foreword by Bernd Magnus. Berkeley ; London : University of California Press, c1997.

Will to power may now be conceived of as the permanentizing of surpassment, that is, of Becoming; hence as a transformed determination of the guiding metaphysical projection. The eternal recurrence of the same unfurls and displays its essence, so to speak, as the most constant permanentizing of the Becoming of what is constant.

(Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Vol.3, Eternal recurrence of the same and will to power, p.167)

In another quote Heidegger shows the unification that he operates between will to power and eternal recurrence of the same :

From the outset, the eternal recurrence of the same and will to power are grasped as fundamental determinations of beings as such and as a whole-will to power as the peculiar coinage of « what-being » at the historic end, and eternal recurrence of the same as the coinage of « that-being ».

(Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Vol.3, Eternal recurrence and will to power, p.168)

Heidegger does something like a genealogy of the *Was-sein* and the *Dass-sein* in the history of metaphysics (especially in Plato and Aristotle). If I understand Heidegger's position correctly, the will to power and eternal recurrence of the same constitute a unity because these two thoughts constantly refer both to being and becoming. Heidegger sometimes seems to want to identify the will to power with becoming and the eternal recurrence with being. But what allows Heidegger to affirm that will to power and eternal recurrence say the selfsame thing is the fact that there is a relation between the will to power, eternal recurrence and the permanentization of becoming. The account given by Heidegger here is not clear, if will to power seems to be sometimes identified with becoming, it also is the « Being of beings » according to Heidegger's reading. Eternal recurrence seems to be identified with being (« that everything recurs is the closest approximation of a world of becoming to a world of being » as Nietzsche puts it) but it is also an attempt by Nietzsche to unite Being and Becoming, action and reaction in a single thought. Thus we cannot clearly map becoming to will to power and being to

eternal recurrence. This would also be surprising since will to power corresponds to *essentia* and eternal recurrence to *existentia* and it seems that being and *essentia* and becoming and *existentia* should be paired together rather than the opposite. The only way to unify the two thoughts together seems to be afforded by noticing that they both refer to the permanentization of becoming.

2.2 Unity of eternal recurrence of the same and will to power as consummation of metaphysics and transformation into the essence of modern technology.

Heidegger says that philosophy has become cybernetics. (*The end of philosophy and the task of thinking*) It is plausible to think that according to him metaphysics in its ultimate transformation becomes technology and positive science. It becomes evident that what helps Heidegger think through the essence of modern technology is his reading of Nietzsche. For Heidegger, the will to power establishes perspectives from which an interpretation of the real becomes possible. These perspectives are established only in order to allow an augmentation and an overcoming of centers of force that had been established previously. But what is essential for Heidegger is that perspectives are established, stabilized and secure a point of view. It is only because of this securing preservation of the real (a securing that operates in an essential manner in the essence of modern science and technology) that the mastery and the overcoming of the real become possible. The will to power is thus essentially a condition of securing/preservation *and* enhancement. Technology preserves but only to stabilize a point of view from which it may develop an infinite and absolute intensification.

The will to power contains the eternal recurrence within itself because it is preservation and hence stabilization of the unstable *and* enhancement. Will to power

represents (*vorstellt*), eternal recurrence of the same stabilizes, positions and presents (*stellt*) beings and the real. The *Vorstellung* and the *Stellung* that is operated by both these concepts is unified in the notion of *Ge-stell*. Why is there metaphysical unification of will to power and eternal recurrence and not (metaphysical) identification ?

Science is according to Heidegger the theory of the real. Heidegger explains this definition by looking at the etymologies of theory and real. Heidegger is clear on the fact that ancient science understood as *theoria* is radically different from our modern science, but he does see a historic continuity between ancient science and modern science. The connection between Heidegger's reading of Nietzsche and his concept of technology is more clearly seen if we focus on his notion of *Seinsgeschichte*. The essence of technology is understood by Heidegger as an unconcealing destining (*unverbergendes Geschick*). The *Geschick* or the destiny is what sends and makes possible a mode of revealing and unconcealment. The essence of technology is a *Geschick des Seins*, a destining or sending of Being that reveals Being as *Gestell* or enframing.

It is Reiner Schuermann's⁵⁹ thesis that the will to power, the eternal recurrence of the same, nihilism, *Ueberschick*, justice and revaluation of all values although formally Nietzsche's concepts, materially articulate the essence of technology. On this reading, the preceding list of concepts are no longer Nietzschean concepts but Heideggerian categories. More specifically, they are the categories that correspond to the determinate epoch in which Being reveals itself as *Gestell*. More importantly, the categories are technological and retrospective. Schuermann claims that what he calls a categorial phenomenology is the best way to account for both the history of Being and

⁵⁹ *Heidegger on Being and acting : from principles to anarchy*, see Bibliography for full reference.

the analytic of *Dasein*⁶⁰. Schurmann's discussion is rather intricate and I only discuss his position here because he has most clearly articulated how starting from his Nietzsche reading, Heidegger has developed an interpretation of the essence of modern technology and I wish to distinguish my conclusions from his reading. Thus, I will focus on the aspects of Schurmann's discussion that are directly relevant to the thesis of the unity of the will to power and eternal recurrence of the same and to the claim that the will to power, nihilism, eternal recurrence, *Ueberschensch*, justice though speaking formally about Nietzsche, materially articulate the essence of modern technology. On the whole, I think that Schurmann is right in his claim that Nietzsche (read via Juenger, something Schurmann forgets to mention. Juenger provides Heidegger with the quasi-theological language of the sacral and salvific aspects of modern technology) allows Heidegger to find the vocabulary necessary to articulate the essence of modern technology. The question of who is more important between Nietzsche and Juenger for the development of Heidegger's concept of technology is perhaps not easy to answer if we absolutely seek to ascribe priority to one of those thinkers. It is perhaps simpler to think that Nietzsche and Juenger are complementary for Heidegger : one could be seen as the engine (Nietzsche) and the other as the fuel (Juenger) that aliment Heidegger's reading of technology.

In the details, I find Schurmann's analysis overly complex and do not think that this complexity always clarifies Heidegger's positions. My thesis is that the essence of modern technology and Heidegger's reading of Nietzsche are both thinkable in terms

⁶⁰ In order to show this, Schurmann analyzes the history of Being in terms of three kinds of categories : prospective categories, retrospective categories and transitional categories. The prospective categories are those of Eon, Physis, Aletheia, Logos, Hen and Nous. The retrospective categories have already been listed above. The transitional categories are ontological difference/world and thing, 'there is'/favor,

of the concept of representation. Representation is what is common both to Heidegger's interpretation of the unity of the eternal recurrence and will to power and to his reading of technology and modern science. Science is a theory of the real. Insofar as it is a theory of the real, science must represent the real. It must posit certain representations as stable. From these representations, advances can be made. Science and technology, just like the will to power, tries to enhance its representations, to make them more descriptive and more powerful. But in order to enhance, one must also be able to stabilize. This is where the eternal recurrence comes in as a condition of preservation of perspectives and representations. Eternal recurrence stabilizes perspectives and representations and will to power enhances them. But Heidegger (following Nietzsche) claims that the conditions of enhancement of life are always at the same time conditions of preservation. (*N II*, S.268, German version) Thus, the unity of the will to power and the eternal recurrence is what does the fundamental work necessary to help Heidegger articulate the essence of modern technology. In my opinion the other categories, nihilism, justice and *Ueberschensch* also play an important role but they do not form the core of Heidegger's argument.

The influence of Nietzsche's metaphysics on Heidegger was buttressed with his admiration and interest in the work of Ernst Juenger. Heidegger claims that he studied the *Totale Mobilmachung* in a reading group with Werner Broecker and « attempted to show how in them [in Juenger's *Arbeiter* and *Totale Mobilmachung*] an essential comprehension of Nietzsche's metaphysics is expressed, insofar as the history of the contemporary situation of the West is seen and foreseen in the horizon of this metaphysics. » (Die Selbstbehauptung der deutschen Universitaet/Das Rektorat 1933-

unconcealment/event of appropriation, epoch/clearing, nearness/fourfold, corresponding/thinking.

1934, p.24). Juenger's influence on Heidegger's notion of the essence of technology is present in the possibility of a sacrality, suggested by Juenger, that could be associated with technology. When Heidegger speaks of technology as the greatest danger but also as the saving power echoes of Juenger are heard in this quasi-theological way of articulating the being of technology. Juenger speaks of technology as of « the most decisive anti-Christian power » and, in general, it seems like he wishes to mix the three planes of organic, mechanic and theological discourse.

The worker (*Der Arbeiter*) is the main figure of Juenger's manifesto-like discourse. He is the shape (*Gestalt*) that embodies modern technology. Through the worker, total mobilization of the earth is achieved and the limits between war and peace are erased. As put by a contemporary Russian commentator, Alexandr Dughin⁶¹: "We are talking about a special type of modern man, which in a most critical experience of profane reality, being at the very heart of technocratic soulless mechanism, in the iron bowels of totalitarian war or hellish industrial labor, in the center of nihilism of the twentieth century, finds in himself a mysterious fulcrum, which takes him to the other side of "nothingness," to the elements of spontaneously awakened inner sacrality."

Dughin Alexandr, Date of access 17.09.2005,

<http://www.centrostudilaruna.it/dughinemstjuenger.html>. This sacrality is not shared by Heidegger if it is something conceived as emanating from human subjectivity. For Heidegger, the sacred and salvific aspects of the essence of technology come from the fact that it is a sending or destining of Being (*Geschick des Seins*) and only secondarily

⁶¹ Dughin is a difficult to circumscribe author. He has been characterized by some as a fascist, but he also has inclinations towards traditionalism, esotericism, millenarism and fundamentalism (including of the Islamic type). Thus, I dissociate myself from his most radical and extreme positions. I do think however that he has useful insight into the nature of Ernst Juenger's theories and writings.

from the fact that man as subject may receive or correspond to this unconcealing sending (*unverbergende Geschick*).

It is important to understand that for Heidegger technology is not a purely theoretical way in which Western man approaches being. In the epoch of technology, the gap between theory and practice has been transcended, deconstructed. When Being is grasped representationally, this constitutes a political way of being of Western man. The essence of modern technology is an essentially ambiguous phenomenon for Heidegger. (“Das Wesen der Technik ist in einem hohen Sinne zweideutig“, *Vortraege und Aufsaeetze*, S.29. « Then it appears to us that essence of technology is ambiguous in an elevated sense », my translation) Heidegger is opposed to the view that technology is a neutral power. However, he does not view it as something demonic or diabolical. For him, there could be a freeing aspect of the essence of technology. As he says : « On the contrary when we open ourselves properly to the essence of technology, we find ourselves caught, in an un hoped for way, in a liberating call. » (“Im Gegenteil: wenn wir uns dem Wesen der Technik eigens oeffnen, finden wir uns unverhofft in einen befreienden Anspruch genommen.” *Vortraege und Aufsaeetze*, S.29, my translation)

Heidegger develops an understanding of technology that rests on a phenomenological analysis of the instrumental and causal understanding of technology as a means. The four causes discovered by Aristotle : the final, efficient, formal, and material causes are found to have a deeper grounding in *poiesis*, production. But production consists according to Heidegger in bringing something forth from concealment into unconcealment. Production is thus grounded in unconcealment and the well-known concept of truth as *aletheia* that is associated to it by Heidegger. But what is

entirely original to Heidegger's analysis is his development of a vocabulary that allows him to understand the relation of the essence of technology to nature. This analysis rests heavily on the cognates *vor-stellen*, *stellen* and *be-stellen*. Science and technology attempt to represent nature and the real. This attempt at representation is never entirely successful because there is always something that cannot be made present in representation. This something is what Heidegger calls the *Unumgaengliche*.

But what is more relevant is that instead of being represented, nature is provoked (*herausgefordert*) and demands are made upon it. The essence of technology makes demands upon (*stellt*) and commits (*bestellt*) nature and the real. Nature becomes an inventory (*Bestand*) of objects that need to be stored, transformed, stockpiled and used up. The question arises of who is responsible for this stockpiling and provocation : is it man himself ? Heidegger answers the question in the negative. Man qua nature is much more a resource that can be stockpiled and used up for labor, production, genetic material, body parts... Heidegger's answer is rather that the problem of technology is of an epochal nature. We live in the epoch of the *Stellung* and of the *Gestell*. Being reveals itself, unconceals itself and beings in the process, in the unity of the *Gestell*.

3 Critique of philological and conceptual cogency of Heidegger's reading of Nietzsche.

This section is dedicated to probe the philological and conceptual rigor of Heidegger's reading by focusing on aspects of Nietzsche's thought that the Heideggerian reading has perhaps occluded or overshadowed. I would like to defend the thesis that Heidegger has perhaps made too little of the themes of freedom and transcendence in Nietzsche's thought.

3.1 Summary of Heidegger's Nietzsche interpretation from the perspective to eternal recurrence.

Heidegger commits certain important strategic decisions with respect to his interpretation of Nietzsche. These strategies have been analyzed and studied at length by various authors. The most violent thesis that Heidegger expounds with respect to Nietzsche is that Nietzsche does not overcome traditional metaphysics but only completes it. This thesis constitutes the essence of the Heideggerian position with respect to Nietzsche. It can be easily summarized by exhibiting a few strategic moves made by Heidegger. The first strategy consists in affirming that the will to power is the Being of beings.

This thesis is elaborated with more subtlety when Heidegger affirms that the will to power constitutes the *essentia* (the *quidditas*, the *Dass*) of beings and that the eternal recurrence of the same constitutes the *existentia* (the *quomodo*, the *Wie*). It is interesting to note that Heidegger seems to install a dialectic between will to power and the eternal recurrence of the same by associating them with the terms of *essentia* and

existentia. This merits a more detailed analysis and we shall return to it later. (See pp.86-87).

The next step in the Heideggerian interpretation consists in the establishment of a link between the will to power, the Being of beings and the concept of value. Heidegger affirms in the Word of Nietzsche : « God is dead » (*Holzwege*) that the will to power reduces Being to thinking in values. This thinking in values (*Denken im Werte*) would not, according to Heidegger, let Being be. The concept of value is connected by Nietzsche to the concept of life and to its conditions of preservation and enhancement. But this selfsame concept of value is related by Nietzsche to the will to power because it is only through the value-positings of the will to power that conditions can be posed that preserve and enhance life. What affirms life or negates it is always the will to power. However, Heidegger arrives at the conclusion already established in *1.4 Heidegger 's interpretation of the Nietzschean concept of nihilism and his appropriation of that concept*, that for Nietzsche the Being of beings and truth have become values.

Heidegger 's third interpretative moment comes in The word of Nietzsche : « God is dead » (*Holzwege*), when he connects the two preceding moments to the concepts of the *Ueberschensch* and eternal recurrence of the same. Thus what distinguishes man from *Ueberschensch* is the epistemology of the will to power. The *Ueberschensch* is aware that he is in his essence will to power and that the world, in its essence, is nothing else besides the will to power. But it is this cognitive disposition, this supplement of knowledge that distinguishes *Ueberschensch* from man and that prepares him to dominion over the earth. The *Ueberschensch* goes beyond humanity as it has existed up to now and disposes himself to global domination by affirming that his essence as well as the essence of beings is

nothing else besides the will to power.

Thus comes to the fore the third moment of Heidegger's Nietzsche interpretation : the suspiciously looking claim that Nietzsche does not overcome metaphysical subjectivity but rather affirms it in the strongest way that has yet been articulated in the history of metaphysics. According to Heidegger, Nietzsche would be more coherent than both Descartes and Hegel and also more radical in his affirmation of subjectivity by reducing it to pure willing. Let us forget for a moment Nietzsche's famous word according to which the metaphysical subject is nothing but a grammatical invention and let us take Heidegger's thesis seriously.

The *Ueberschensch* would be the one that according to his essence which is the will to power posits values that affirm or negate life. This would seem to imply an unbound subjectivism on Nietzsche's part. We must now examine the relationship between the *Ueberschensch* and the eternal recurrence of the same. Heidegger develops this link principally in Who is Nietzsches' Zarathustra but he uses similar arguments in *What is called thinking* (Lessons 9 and 10). In *What is called thinking*, Heidegger finally manages to think the essence of Nietzsche's thought of eternal recurrence of the same. Heidegger affirms that Nietzsche's essential thought is that of eternal recurrence⁶².

Heidegger concludes that Nietzsche's ultimate goal is to redeem man from the spirit of vengeance. This spirit of vengeance is in its essence metaphysical and not

⁶² On page 20 of the german edition of *Was heisst Denken* (Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1971), Heidegger writes: "Dieses Werk Nietzsches (Thus spoke Zarathustra, P.C.) denkt den einzigen Gedanken dieses Denkers: den Gedanken der ewigen Wiederkehr des Gleichen. Jeder Denker denkt nur einen einzigen Gedanken." We may think that this einzigen Gedanken corresponds to Heidegger's Sein but this is not certain. We have to contrast what Heidegger says in *WHD* with what he said in 1936 about eternal recurrence: "Nietzsches' gewaltiger Versuch Seyn und Werden gleich wesentlich in eins zu denken', 'in die Sackgasse der Lehre von der ewigen Wiederkunft' geraten sei. (Vortrag Europa und die Deutsche philosophie, 8.4.1936, quoted by Mueller-Lauter, *Nietzsche-Heidegger*, p.6, note 17).

affective and psychological and is understood by Nietzsche in relation to his concept of the eternal recurrence of the same. The spirit of vengeance is characterized by « the will's ill will against time and its « it was » (Des Willes Widerwille gegen die Zeit und sein « es war »).

By characterizing the spirit of revenge as this opposition of the will to the passage of time, Heidegger will reconstruct the argument of eternal recurrence in a totally original way by comparison to his treatment of this same concept in the Nietzsche courses of the 30s. I will try to reconstruct the Heideggerian argument. Heidegger begins by asserting that Nietzsche thinks the spirit of vengeance with respect to the Being of beings. In order to support this assertion, Heidegger examines the treatment of the Being of beings in German Idealism and in particular in Schelling. Heidegger insists on the fact that the word *Wille* does not signify or mean a capacity of the human spirit but that the will is related to the Being of beings. Heidegger then affirms that Leibniz with his notions of *perceptio* and *appetitus* already thought of Being as will.

The reconstruction of the « proof » of eternal recurrence is not conducted along the same lines as in the Nietzsche lecture courses of 1936-40. This time eternal recurrence is introduced through an examination of the concept of will and the way in which this concept is related to time. At a crucial moment in the reconstruction Heidegger introduces *telle quelle* Schelling's thesis according to which will is primordial being. This makes Heidegger's reconstruction difficult to defend. I am affirming this because it is well-known that Nietzsche was very opposed to the concepts of will and being at least in his mature works. However, we will follow here Heidegger's argument in order to better circumscribe and criticize it later. Heidegger begins by affirming that

the will becomes free with respect to what revolts it when it becomes free as will. This means that the will is free for the going in the becoming (for the movement that is associated with becoming), but the kind of going that does not stray far from the will but rather brings back what was gone (had left). This constitutes the first step in the reconstruction of the proof of the eternal recurrence of the same.

In a second step, Heidegger affirms that the will becomes free with respect to what is revolting in the « it was » (« Es war ») when this selfsame will wills the return of each « it was ». Furthermore, Heidegger affirms that the will wills its own eternity. But at this crucial moment in the argumentation, Heidegger introduces Schelling's thesis according to which the will is primordial being (in this claim of Schelling's that will is primordial being there is a direct reference to God as the primordial being), a thesis that Nietzsche does not share *prima facie*. Once this is done, Heidegger concludes with his own version of the eternal recurrence of the same, that is that « the primal being of Beings is the will, as the eternally recurrent willing of the eternal recurrence of the same » but also his own thesis according to which « The eternal recurrence of the same is the supreme triumph of the metaphysics of the will that eternally wills its own willing »⁶³.

Heidegger operates a "hegelianization" (or a "metaphycization") of Nietzschean concepts. First, he installs a dialectic between the will to power (*essentia*) and the eternal recurrence of the same (*existentia*). The will to power corresponds to an « immer mehr » understood as the essence of Being in the age of technology. This essence is thought indifferently as the essence of man and the essence of things : man is reified (Lukacs), thingified in the network of machine-economy but in the same way the *Gegenstand*

⁶³ (See reference in first part, section 1.3 Nietzsche's notion of eternal recurrence of the same and its connection to the will to power p.35 of this essay)

(object) is addressed, provoked and becomes *Bestand*, i.e. it is understood solely and exclusively as what can be used or manipulated by man in order to allow him to extend his planetary domination. Man himself becomes the resource that has the highest value. (See the texts Overcoming metaphysics and The question concerning technology.)

The dialectization and reduction to a unity of Nietzsche's thought is constituted by the fact that the real is stabilized in the face of the essential instability of the will to power through the eternal recurrence of the same :

Eternal recurrence of the same is the way in which the impermanent (that which becomes) as such comes to presence; it comes to presence in the highest form of permanence (in circling), with the sole determination of securing its possibility to be empowered...

The same that recurs has only relative stability and is therefore essentially unstable. Its recurrence however, signifies a continual bringing back into stability, that is, a permanentizing. Eternal recurrence is the most constant permanentizing of the unstable.

(Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Vol.3, p.212., Farrell-Krell translation).

That which becomes is the will to power and its constructs of domination

(Herrschaftsgebilde). That which is, is the eternal recurrence of the same.

Impermanence (becoming as will to power) is secured and stabilized in permanence (being as eternal recurrence of the same) so that from this stage of permanence a new becoming can ensue (a new will to power with new configurations of force and new enhancements of power)⁶⁴. Politically, regimes are established through struggles for power and they are then stabilized and permanentized through the rhetoric of eternal

⁶⁴ Guenter Abel (*Die Dynamik der Willen zur Macht und die ewige Wiederkehr*, 1984) reads the teaching of eternal recurrence as characterized by the fact that the world is considered from the point of view of becoming as opposed to being and that all existence (*Dasein*) cannot be devalued and does not need to be justified. For Abel, the thought of recurrence resolves all the renewed post-modern dualisms of gnostic metaphysics. Abel believes that a scientific proof of the thought of recurrence is not possible because a thought lies, in terms of horizon and world-opening prospect, before the possibility of empirical experience and theory development. However, he believes that the thought of recurrence must stand to scientific scrutiny and that it cannot be a mere existential fable.

recurrence.⁶⁵ Thus being and becoming are thought of as dialectical moments of each other in a way similar to Hegel. This Hegelianization and dialectization of Nietzsche's thought is an original insight of Heidegger's interpretation. The will to power and the eternal recurrence of the same are thus interpreted by Heidegger as being part of a dialectic and of a unity.

But Heidegger does not stop there his "dialectization of Nietzsche's thought". The will to power is not conceptualized by Heidegger as a play of forces and chaotic surfaces that tends only toward its own expansion and overcoming. For Heidegger, the will to power establishes perspectives from which an interpretation of the real becomes possible. These perspectives are established only in order to allow an expansion and an overcoming of the center of forces that was previously established. But what is essential for Heidegger is the fact that the perspectives are established, stabilized and secure a point of view. It is only because of this preservative securing of the real (a securing that operates essentially in the Being of technology and modern science) that the mastery and overcoming of the real becomes possible.

The will to power is thus essentially a condition of securing/preservation *and of* overcoming. But this characterization of the will to power can only remind us of the Hegelian *Aufhebung* although the emphasis is changed and what matters a lot more for Nietzsche is overcoming and expansion rather than preservation. In a similar way, the eternal recurrence is dialectized although in a non-explicit way by Heidegger⁶⁶.

Certain critics have remarked that the *Ueberschensch* might represent an

⁶⁵ See article by Don Dombowsky, *The Rhetoric of Legitimation*, in *Journal of Nietzsche studies*, Issue 14.

⁶⁶ (See my own interpretation of this concept in the section 2.3 *Critique of Heidegger's reading of Nietzsche: eternal recurrence of the same and the concepts of freedom and transcendence.*)

Aufhebung of man as he has existed up to the present.⁶⁷ As far as I know, Heidegger never speaks of *Aufhebung* when referring to the *Ueberschensch* or any other Nietzschean concept. Nietzsche himself uses the term *Ueberwindung* (overcoming) of man through the *Ueberschensch* (See *Thus spoke Zarathustra*, Prologue and first part). On the other hand, it is true that Heidegger dialectizes the *Ueberschensch* by interpreting him as the culmination of *rationalitas* that is attributed to Hegel into the *bestialitas* of *animalitas* attributed to Nietzsche. The *Ueberschensch* overcomes the rationality of absolute *Geist* (Spirit) but he also preserves it through the fact that he transposes Hegelian rationality into the body and into the biological. This transposition reverses the privileged position of the spirit in Hegel by that of the body in Nietzsche (See *Thus spoke Zarathustra* : The contempters of the body). The life-philosophy (*Lebensphilosophie*) for Heidegger is nothing else but the transposition of the unconditional subjectivity of German Idealism in the domain of the corporeal or the biological.

The absolutization and totalization of reason was already begun in Hegel's work since the body conceived as the last possibility of the spirit of thinking itself in its totality by absorbing its negative was already conceptualized at the end of Hegel's *Philosophy of Nature*. However, in Nietzsche's work the will is thought in a deeper and more radical way according to Heidegger since Nietzsche radicalizes the importance of the will by changing the emphasis from the rationality of *Geist* to the vitality of the body and of the

⁶⁷ (Diego Sanchez Meca, *Perspectivas actuales de interpretacion del Ueberschensch nietzscheano*, Publicado en ER. Revista de filosofia, Sevilla, no. 14, 1999/I) En primer lugar, la perspectiva constrictiva y reductora de la historia de la metafísica impone el punto de vista de que las ideas de Nietzsche se establecen sobre la base de una inversión-conservación (*Aufhebung*) de las posiciones metafísicas que le preceden inmediatamente en el tiempo, o sea, según Heidegger, de las de Hegel. El superhombre deberá entenderse, pues, como *Aufhebung* del pensamiento del sujeto absoluto de Hegel.

will to power. In Heidegger's own words :

In Hegel's metaphysics, the subjectivity of reason is elaborated to the point of its absoluteness. As the subjectivity of absolute representation, it of course acknowledges sensuous certainty and corporeal self-consciousness, but only in order to absorb them into the absoluteness of absolute spirit and thus simply to deny them any possibility of absolute preeminence. To the extent that in the absolute subjectivity of reason the extreme counterpossibility of the absolute and essential dominance of an independent, self-commanding will is excluded, the subjectivity of absolute spirit is indeed absolute, but still essentially incomplete. Only its inversion to the subjectivity of will to power exhausts the final essential possibility of Being as subjectivity.

(Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Volumes 3-4, p.225, Nietzsche's metaphysics)⁶⁸

Thus, according to Heidegger, subjectivity is absolute in Hegel's thought but because it suppresses (aufhebt) the bodily in the absolute knowledge of the spiritual, it does not allow an unconditional Wesensherrschaft (essential domination) of the will's commanding of itself out of itself. For these reasons Hegel's absolute subjectivity remains an incomplete subjectivity (unvollendete Subjektivitaet) and does not exhaust the final essential possibility of Being as subjectivity.

3.2 Analysis of philological and conceptual cogency of Heidegger 's reading of Nietzsche

When approaching Heidegger's reading of Nietzsche, it is important to state that Heidegger is mainly interested in Nietzsche insofar as he throws light on the rest of the western philosophical tradition and helps us to think through our own present historical

⁶⁸ In der Metaphysik Hegels wird die Subjektivitaet der Vernunft in ihre Unbedingtheit ausgearbeitet. Als die Subjektivitaet des unbedingten Vorstellens hat sie zwar die sinnliche Gewissheit und das leibliche Selbstbewusstsein anerkannt, dies aber nur um sie in die Unbedingtheit des absoluten Geistes aufzuheben und ihnen so jede Moeglichkeit eines unbedingten Vorrangs schlechthin zu bestreiten. Sofern in der unbedingten Subjektivitaet der Vernunft die auesserste Gegenmoeglichkeit einer unbedingten Wesensherrschaft des sich aus sich befehlenden Willens ausgeschlossen bleibt, ist die Subjektivitaet des absoluten Geistes eine zwar unbedingte, aber auch noch wesenhaft unvollendete Subjektivitaet. (Heidegger, *Nietzsche 2*, S.302, Nietzsches Metaphysik)

(historial: geschichtliche: Geschick) position.⁶⁹ As is so well put by Otto Poeggeler :

Die Frage, die Heidegger entwickelt, gilt vielmehr der Weise, wie Nietzsche sich in der Ueberlieferung des abendlaendischen Denkens haelt, wie sein Denken von dieser Ueberlieferung bestimmt wird und seinerseits sie bestimmt, mag Nietzsche das eigens erfahren und wissen oder nicht. (Otto Poeggeler, *Martin Heidedeggers Denkweg*, S.109)

The criticisms repeatedly leveled against Heidegger's Nietzsche are well-known.

Heidegger does not take seriously Nietzsche's critique of metaphysics. By essentializing the thought of the will to power as the Being of beings, Heidegger commits an extreme interpretative violence onto the Nietzschean text. When everything is weighed out, I believe these criticisms to be justified. Nietzsche does not only remain at the level of the beingness of Beings : there is an opposition by this thinker to all thinking of Being. This is the case because Nietzsche is Heraclitean (in a superficial way Heidegger might reply) and just as Hegel he thinks Being predominantly from the side of becoming. Heidegger might reply that this becoming is only that of beings and never that of Being. For his part, Nietzsche understands Being as a platonic fabrication. Heidegger identifies a quote in the Nietzschean corpus where this opposition to Being seems to be overcome :

[Rekapitulation] :

Dem Werden den Charakter des Seins aufzupraegen-das ist der hoechste Wille zur Macht. Zwiefache Faelschung, von den Sinnen her und vom Geiste her, um eine Welt des Seienden zu erhalten, des Verharrenden, Gleichwertigen, usw. Dass alles wiederkehrt, ist die extremste Annaehrung einer Welt des Werdens an die des Seins : Gipfel der Betrachtung.

Wille zur Macht, 617, Nietzsche Friedrich.

Recapitulation. To stamp Becoming with the character of Being- that is the supreme will to power. Twofold falsification, one by the senses, the other by the mind, in order to preserve a world of being, of perdurance,

⁶⁹ In *Sein und Zeit*, Heidegger makes a somewhat different usage of Nietzsche insofar as he refers to the latter's second untimely mediation. My claim is mainly directed at Heidegger's later reading of Nietzsche that begins with the Nietzsche lectures.

of equivalence, etc. That everything recurs is the closest approximation of a world of Becoming to one of Being : peak of the meditation.
(Quoted by Heidegger in Nietzsche 3, p.213, Translated by Farrell Krell)

But a single quote is not sufficient to overcome all of Nietzsche's effort to think becoming and the world of the *hic et nunc* in opposition to the world of Being. In this sense there is nothing perhaps so revealing as the text *How the true world ultimately became a fable*. I am giving the totality of the text because I believe it is essential to understand Heidegger's interpretation of Nietzsche :

1. The true world -- attainable for the sage, the pious, the virtuous man; he lives in it, *he is it*. (The oldest form of the idea, relatively sensible, simple, and persuasive. A circumlocution for the sentence, "I, Plato, *am* the truth.")

2. The true world -- unattainable for now, but promised for the sage, the pious, the virtuous man ("for the sinner who repents").
(Progress of the idea: it becomes more subtle, insidious, incomprehensible -- *it becomes female*, it becomes Christian.)

3. The true world -- unattainable, indemonstrable, unpromisable; but the very thought of it -- a consolation, an obligation, an imperative.
(At bottom, the old sun, but seen through mist and skepticism. The idea has become elusive, pale, Nordic, Königsbergian [i.e., Kantian].)

4. The true world -- unattainable? At any rate, unattained. And being unattained, also *unknown*. Consequently, not consoling, redeeming, or obligating: how could something unknown obligate us? (Gray morning. The first yawn of reason. The cockcrow of positivism.)

5. The "true" world -- an idea which is no longer good for anything, not even obligating -- an idea which has become useless and superfluous -- *consequently*, a refuted idea: let us abolish it!
(Bright day; breakfast; return of bon sens ["good sense"] and cheerfulness; Plato's embarrassed blush; pandemonium of all free spirits.)

6. The true world -- we have abolished. What world has remained? The apparent one perhaps? But no! *With the true world we have also abolished the apparent one*.
(Noon; moment of the briefest shadow; end of the longest error; high

point of humanity; INCIPIT ZARATHUSTRA. ["Zarathustra begins"]) Nietzsche, Friedrich, *Twilight of the idols*.

As Heidegger writes in his analysis of this paragraph, Nietzsche is aware that the abolition of Platonism must undergo an inversion but that this inversion cannot leave in place the two schemes of the sensuous and the supersensuous simply unchanged. It is the case that the transformation of the platonic scheme by Nietzsche must open new possibilities of thought but these new possibilities cannot remain under the scheme of the inversion of platonism. Nietzsche was aware that he was operating a transformation of the platonic scheme through his concept of inversion/transvaluation of values (*Umwertung aller Werte*). What Nietzsche was not aware of is that this abolition of the christian-platonic transcendence and its partial recuperation in the eternal recurrence of the will to power would constitute in a historical way the present position of the reign of the essence of technology. The *Gestell* and the *Bestand* are only thinkable through a confrontation with Nietzsche's thought .

The problem of christian morality and transcendence is related to the problem of the will to truth in Nietzsche. It is in this metaphysical will to truth that judgments of value originate. The will to truth has a christian origin according to Nietzsche : this will finds its origin in the christian value of honesty that gives birth to the intellectual rigor of the scientific and the over-evaluation of truth of the metaphysician. But Nietzsche commits certain distortions in his critique of the metaphysical in itself (*an sich*) or transcendence. He unites the platonic concept of truth and transcendence (the world of ideas) to christian psychology. Nietzsche operates a synthesis : according to his famous expression christianism is platonism for the masses. But in this synthesis Nietzsche unites

two different tendencies: the christian desire of transcendence, the belief in a beyond (the realm or kingdom of Christ) that could replace the *hic et nunc* and transcendence as it was conceived of by Plato that is starting from the ideas (the realm of ideas or of the intelligibles).

Nietzsche does not simply invert platonism as Heidegger seems to affirm sometimes : he operates a synthesis between platonism and christianity⁷⁰ in order to then attempt to invert that synthesis. But to understand Nietzsche's thought well, it must be seen that the critique of platonism and christianity cannot be uniform. Christianity attacks the life of the here-and-under by proposing a beyond capable of redeeming the injustices and iniquities suffered in the here and now. Nietzsche replicates that christianity is against life, that it devalues the life of the here and now, that it (christianity) is nihilistic because it posits values that de-value the life of the here-and-under in favor of a beyond. On the other hand, platonism posits the notion of truth that transcends the here and now. This truth of the ideas allows us, according to Plato to understand the life of the here-and-under. It is only by orienting ourselves towards the world of the ideas, a world that transcends our world that we can understand our own immanent world. This time, it is in the domain of the platonic epistemology that Nietzsche identifies nihilistic tendencies. According to him, it is necessary to understand the worldliness of our lower world starting from itself and without referring to transcending (and perhaps transcendental) entities such as the platonic ideas. (See commentary to the History of a fable above). Nietzsche thus accuses Plato in the same way as christianity of being nihilistic since the ideas are said by Nietzsche to be against life. Every time we attempt to understand the

⁷⁰ Perhaps this synthesis had already been operated by Augustine and by the historical embedding of of the language and concepts of Christianity with those of Platonism, but Nietzsche re-articulates the unity

lower world (the here-and-under, the *ici-bas*, the *Diesseitige*) starting from a transcending entity, we reduce the immanent potentialities of this lower world.

The physiological, animated potential of a living being can only be reduced if an attempt is made to understand it starting from the platonic idea. The platonic ideas are, in the same sense as the christian beyond against life. But a distinction must be made between the psychological nihilism of the christian and the epistemological nihilism of the platonist that Nietzsche seems to want to reduce to the same thing. Nietzsche also criticizes the overvaluation of the notion of the Good in the platonic and christian ethics. The values of altruism, of self-denial, charity and disinterest are not natural according to Nietzsche but rather against nature and against life. By being against the affects of force, cruelty and violence that take root in the will to power, the affects that are positively evaluated by the christian and platonic moralities are also accused of being nihilistic. The « bad » affects are at the origin of the bad conscience that I have already mentioned above. Nietzsche hopes to be able to overcome nihilism by , among other things, « naturalising » the bad affects and dissipating the illusion of conscience (in the sense of *Bewusstsein* and *Gewissen*) that exists by exhibiting the sub-stratum of the bad conscience and the bad affects that constitute this conscience (*Genealogy of morals*, second essay, last paragraphs).

The first criticism inveighed against Heidegger's conceptual reconstruction of Nietzsche is how to believe in an interpretative strategy that installs the will to power as the Being of beings whereas Nietzsche squarely rejects all thought of Being as a residue of metaphysics. The second criticism that can be leveled against Heidegger is a counter-

between Platonism and Christianity only to radically undo it.

criticism. Whereas Heidegger asserts that the will to power becomes will to will and only affirms nihilism which consists in the fact that in the history of metaphysics there is nothing to (with) Being, we can assert that Nietzsche had strong reservations with respect to the concept of will. Heidegger would thus be wrong in trying to reduce the will to power to the will of the metaphysical subject since Nietzsche had already rejected this possibility in his posthumously published writings on the will to power.

I will only refer to those paragraphs in the *Will to power* where this is most obvious (section 668 « ...There is no such thing as « willing », but only a willing something : one must not remove the aim from the total condition-as epistemologists do. «Willing » as they understand it is as little a reality as « thinking » : it is a pure fiction ...». section 671 « ... There is no such thing as « will »; it is only a simplifying conception of understanding as is « matter »... ». section 692 « ... My proposition is : that the will of psychology hitherto is an unjustified generalization, that this will *does not exist at all* that instead of grasping the idea of the development of one definite will into many forms, one has eliminated the character of the will by subtracting from it its content, its « whither ? »- this is in the highest degree the case with *Schopenhauer* : what he calls « will » is a mere empty word...). It is important to note that this lack of esteem for the will of the metaphysical subject is not new but that this critique of the metaphysical will goes back to *Human all too human*, runs throughout the Nietzschean corpus and is also very present in the *Genealogy of morals* and in *Beyond good and evil* to quote only some of the most important of Nietzsche's works. There is perhaps a bit of a lack of consistency on Nietzsche's part when one thinks that he allegedly intended to publish a book called the *Will (!) to power*. But Nietzsche repeats again and again that

the will to power is not a will (not a uniquely subjective-human will) as has been traditionally understood.

One has to be more precise at this particular juncture. Heidegger's criticism is subtle. He knows very well that the will to power does not represent for Nietzsche the will of an ordinary man. It is precisely this will that Nietzsche attempts to show is an illusion. But insofar as Heidegger understands the will as the Being of becoming, as another way of naming becoming for Nietzsche, he is right to affirm that the will to power is nothing else but the Being of beings. Furthermore, the reduction of the will to power to the technological will to will is only partially effectuated through a critique of the will to power. One must remember what Heidegger says with respect to the eternal recurrence of the same: « The eternal recurrence of the same is the supreme triumph of the metaphysics of the will that eternally wills its own willing ». It is through the unification (why is this not the same as an identification ?) of the eternal recurrence of the same and the will to power that Heidegger develops his critique of Nietzsche as a metaphysician of the will. As a lucid commentator has put it :

As Heidegger joined the will to power and the eternal recurrence of the same into one and the same thought he tried to « complete » Nietzsche's thinking and to end the Western project known as « metaphysics »⁷¹.

The will to power is the *essentia* (the *quidditas*) and eternal recurrence is the *existentia* (the *quomodo*). There is perhaps a ground to question the identification of scholastic concepts with Nietzsche's concepts. Heidegger does not clearly justify this identification as far as I know and it is a worthwhile investigation to try to understand

⁷¹ (Ernst Behler, *Nietzsche-Derrida, Derrida-Nietzsche, Confrontations*, 1991, Stanford University Press.)

why this identification should be accepted.

Heidegger had already investigated the distinction between *essentia* and *existentia* in one of his earlier lecture courses called the *Basic problems of phenomenology (BPP)*. The basic question that Heidegger is interested in is how a being that is created, *ente creato*, can have both essence and existence. If it is the case that for God, his essence corresponds to or is his existence, how does it stand with man (*Dasein*)? In *Being and time*, Heidegger had adopted the position that the substance of *Dasein* was existence. Heidegger wants to clarify what is meant by actuality (*actualitas*). What does it mean that something actual needs actuality in order to be yet that actuality is nothing (not an ens) actual?

Second, Heidegger would like to identify the origin of the distinction between *essentia* and *existentia*. He analyzes the Aristotelian distinction between *ousia*, *morphe* and *hyle* but concludes that the distinction between *essentia* and *existentia* cannot be simply traced back to these aristotelian distinctions. Heidegger wishes to point out that the distinction between *essentia* and *existentia* vanishes and is destroyed at the end of metaphysics. The problem is that such a distinction cannot be maintained in the wake of the being, which we ourselves are and which Heidegger calls *Dasein*. If the substance of *Dasein* is existence, Heidegger wants to characterize this word and concept as a productive-intentional comportment and not in the way that the medieval Scholastics understood *existentia*. When it comes to the whatness or *essentia* of *Dasein*, Heidegger again specifies that this term cannot apply to *Dasein*. Rather *Dasein* can be characterized by its “whoness” not by its “whatness”.

In the Nietzsche lectures, Heidegger claims that ontology is at the same time

theology. According to him the will to power should be thought ontologically as *essentia* whereas the eternal recurrence of the same should be thought theologically as *existentia*. Heidegger specifies that this theology is a negative theology that should be understood in the context of Nietzsche's word "God is dead". However, Heidegger ultimately does not explain the origin of the *essentia*-*existentia* couple claiming that its provenance must remain obscure. No concrete argument is given either for why we should accept the identification of will to power with *essentia* and eternal recurrence of the same with *existentia*. But insofar as the will to power and the eternal recurrence of the same form a unity, it could be surmised that in the Nietzsche lectures as well as in the BPP, the distinction is destroyed or vanishes. This destruction is part of Heidegger's project of overcoming traditional ontology, something he was doing as early as BPP, but that gains new urgency as Heidegger begins to see the culmination of Western metaphysics in Nietzsche's thought.

3.3 The forgotten link between eternal recurrence of the same and the concepts of freedom and transcendence.

In the following section, I will allow myself a reflection already announced in the first part of this essay to try to show that there is a freedom principle in Nietzsche's thought and that this principle is thought from the principle of the eternal recurrence of the same. We know that Heidegger thinks freedom in relation to the truth of Being and in relation to *aletheia*. On the other hand, Heidegger's critique of Nietzsche has not identified in the thought of eternal recurrence a way of thinking freedom. This seems to be a valid criticism to level against Heidegger. It is possible that this notion of freedom

might be unacceptable to Heidegger because it is still dependent on the metaphysical subject, but I believe that by exploring the notion of eternal recurrence of the same, I will also shed some light on the way Heidegger interprets this concept.

Another criticism that I would like to raise is related to Nietzsche's analysis of platonic morality. Heidegger does not deal with this Nietzschean concept explicitly but culpability (*Schuld*),⁷² compassion and pity (*Mitleid*) are essential for any interpretation of Nietzsche. Here we are touching upon moral psychology. Nietzsche thought that this psychology had once more and particularly thanks to him become the path to fundamental questions :

[...] that psychology shall once again be recognized as the queen of the sciences, for whose service and preparation the other sciences exist. For psychology is once again the path to the fundamental problems.
(Nietzsche, Friedrich, *Beyond good and evil*).

The problem is that human psychology has a direct impact upon ontology. In fact, any ontology that aspires to the truth must occupy itself with human psychology (understood as the care for the soul) or at least with the onto-psychological experience that man has of God. This way of seeing things might allow us to reconcile Nietzsche and Heidegger. But it is clear that Heidegger's reservations towards psychology and psychologism are in conflict with Nietzsche's philosophical vision.

Nietzsche's analysis of human psychology is operated through a critique of the historical phenomenon of Christian morality. The discussion of nihilism is also developed starting from this critique. Nietzsche operates what he calls a genealogy of morals. Nietzsche's great struggle is to liberate humanity from the straits and bounds of Christian morality also described as the morality of pity in his language. The meaning of

⁷² In *Who is Nietzsche's Zarathustra*, Heidegger does deal with the concept of revenge (*Rache*) but he does

the eternal recurrence of the same is to free man from his existential culpability. Man is guilty in virtue of the finitude of his existence. He owes something to himself in virtue of the fact that he possesses a future : he is, ek-sistant, but he has to become. He is torn in his fundamental state of ek-sistant between the past and the future : he must in a certain way co-exist between the two temporal extremes of the past and the future. There seem to be two variants of Nietzsche' thought on guilt : an ontological one and an existential one. This articulation of Nietzsche's thought on guilt can be seen in a polemic that occurs between Nietzsche and St.Paul. St.Paul conceives of human weakness as of something that can serve democratic ends or something that can allow a new species of nation-founding : the construction of the first universal Church of man. Men are all small, guilty, weak and pitiful in front of Christ. But this is precisely what unites these men : suffering, the feeling of weakness is what brings them closer to one another, unifies them and annuls the order of rank (the Nietzschean *Rangordnung*) that exists between them.

Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world ?For after that in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe...not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble *are called* : But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen; yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are : that no flesh should glory in his presence.
(*Paul, I Corinth. 1,20 sqq*, quoted by Nietzsche in *The Antichrist*, section 45).

The polemic between Nietzsche and St.Paul is even more virulent : it plays itself out at the level of the creation of the self. It has been asserted (Hanna Arendt in *Life of the*

not mention *Schuld* or *Mitleid*.

Mind) that St. Paul has discovered the interiority of the subject through his reflections on the weakness of the human will (Paul calls this will *proairesis*). Paul might have discovered human inwardness, but this inwardness is built upon a substratum of suffering. Through suffering a depth is attained that constitutes the essence of human conscience (in the sense of *Gewissen*). Suffering is the historical moment of the return to itself of self-consciousness to put it in Hegelian terms. Through the necessary overcoming of suffering, the human self becomes self-conscious. Naturally, Nietzsche would not agree with this interpretation. For him, the healing of suffering and of guilt comes from an interpretation or re-direction of the feeling of guilt, [a] re-direction that is effected by the ascetic priest (*Genealogy of morals, Third essay*). It is the re-direction of the feeling of guilt and culpability towards the inside (inwardly) that gives birth to the bad conscience that is in turn the sub-stratum of the self. In this way, through the notions of ontological guilt and punishment, the ascetic priest gives birth to the human self. Nietzsche accuses St. Paul of having given birth through his heightened evaluation of cruelty to the self as it is known in the modern world.

This heightened evaluation of cruelty in Paul goes through what Nietzsche calls *Verinnerlichung* or interiorization/introjection. What we call the spirit or the soul has come to be or evolved through this concept of *Verinnerlichung*. The inner world had existed, according to Nietzsche, as if suspended between two membranes and this world would have started to expand, gathering depth, breadth and height at the same time as the inner discharge was inhibited (*Genealogy of morals, Third essay*). What Nietzsche describes in the *Genealogy of morals*, is the birth of conscience understood as self-consciousness (*Bewusstsein*) and as moral conscience (*Gewissen*) (*Genealogy of*

morals, second essay,16).

Has Nietzsche understood well the Paulinian-Christian concept of freedom and is this concept really nihilistic as Nietzsche seems to affirm it ? The futurity of the Christian eternal life must be contrasted with the *hic et nunc* of Nietzschean immanentism. According to Paul, the Christian is freed for the future by the abolition of death. The absence of death, resurrection with/in Christ, opens up a horizon that adds another dimension to the life of immanence (*l'ici-bas* or *Diesseitigkeit*). But this is not necessarily nihilistic as Nietzsche seems to affirm it. The Christian can affirm that he is allowed to live his life of immanence more fully since he does not have to worry about the *Sein-zum-Tode* of his *Dasein*.

Nietzschean freedom is thought in part if not thoroughly in opposition to the Christian concept of freedom but this freedom is also similar to the Christian one. What is common to both these notions of freedom is the idea of transfiguration-transformation. Eternal recurrence is a repetition of the immanence that is lived *ici-bas* but through this repetition a transfiguration is operated. Christian freedom is elaborated only through the idea of a transfiguration of the immanent *ici-bas* and not through a repetition of the Nietzschean instant⁷³. Seen from this perspective, can one say that the eternal recurrence of the same is metaphysical and thus nihilistic (this time in terms of Heidegger's understanding of the term nihilistic) as Heidegger seems to affirm it in *Was heisst Denken* (the conference course) since it is still dependant upon the notions of subject and will ? What recurs is the experiences of a subject and this subject must *will* the return. How must a notion of freedom be constituted so that it is not metaphysical in the second

⁷³ (for the Christian-Paulinian concept of freedom see Bultmann, *New Testament Theology*, Vol.1, Part 2, Section D and especially sub-section 40)

Heidegger's understanding of this term ? According to us, Heidegger's notion of Being and *aletheia* are insufficient to think through human freedom. It is well-known that Heidegger wrote abundantly on freedom as the writings *Vom Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit (On the essence of human freedom)* and *Vom Wesen der Wahrheit (On the essence of truth)* testify. Yet, we do not find that these writings provide a satisfactory approach to the concept of freedom. We believe freedom must be thought through and starting from man without falling back on the notions of metaphysical subject and will.

Heidegger himself seems to have criticized Nietzsche for his immanentism. This immanentism that seems to install the will to power as technological will-to-will is elaborated starting from the concepts of life and position of values. It is not clear whether Heidegger had fully overcome this Nietzschean immanentism as early as *Being and Time* (since the philosophy expounded in that text sought to preserve certain transcendental moments) but it is clear that the rest of his philosophy after the thirties (and especially in the *Beitraege zur Philosophie*) is an effort to recover a transcendence that, according to Heidegger, Nietzsche's philosophy had partially annihilated. As an excellent Heidegger commentator has put it :

This alone suggested that it was Christianity once again that challenged the thought of this man (Heidegger, P.C.) and held him in suspense; it was once again the old transcendence and not the modern worldliness (Diesseitigkeit) that spoke through him⁷⁴.

Thus, value-positing is definitely criticized by Heidegger in Nietzsche's word : God is dead when Heidegger asserts that thinking in values does not let Being be (das Denken

⁷⁴ Gadamer Hans-Georg, *Heidegger's ways* : Being, Spirit, God

im Werte laesst nicht das Sein sein). The concept of life (*Leben*) is highly problematic and seems to succumb to Heidegger's critique of Nietzsche's biologism. This is not clearly indicated in Heidegger but it must be retained that the openness of Being and truth as *aletheia* elaborate a Heideggerian transcendence. There is no doubt that Nietzschean immanence or immanentism is aimed at by Heidegger when he criticizes the will-to-will, the *Gestell* and the *Bestand*. The Being of technology is already articulated by Nietzsche according to Heidegger and this Being is conceptualized starting solely from immanence. As a brilliant Heidegger commentator has put it :

...as Heidegger makes Nietzsche's words his own, he substitutes , within the ' history of Being ' the contemporary technological moment for the Nietzschean moment (...) the evidence for it is to be found throughout Heidegger's texts on Nietzsche : they speak formally about Nietzsche but materially about technology as the closing field in the history of presence, as ' the release of being into machination', but they do so with the help of the vocabulary taken from Nietzsche⁷⁵.
(Schuermann Reiner, *Heidegger on Being and acting : from principles to anarchy*, p.182.)

Only what can be disposed of as the standing reserve (*Bestand*), what can be encircled, circumscribed and manipulated becomes visible in our *Weltbild*. Everything is reduced to a resource and it is only as manipulable resource that everything becomes visible and worthy of interest. Man is a resource, a human resource, almost on the same level as petrol and electricity⁷⁶.

We can perhaps affirm that Heidegger does not give an accurate portrayal of Nietzsche's philosophy as such. But he might be right in seeing in him the completion of metaphysics. The fact that Heidegger does not completely do justice to Nietzsche's

⁷⁵ Heidegger also develops his vocabulary about technology through the intercourse with Ernst Juenger's works (*Der Arbeiter*, *Die totale Mobilmachung*) which he was reading with some of his students in the early 30's at Freiburg University. See below p.97

⁷⁶ See Overcoming metaphysics. Man is the supreme resource because he is the most malleable one.

philosophy has been clearly brought out in the interpretation that has been proposed by Wolfgang Mueller-Lauter. According to Mueller-Lauter⁷⁷, Heidegger essentializes Nietzsche's thought of the will to power. In his opinion there are wills to power. Mueller-Lauter's reading is very interesting and along with Gilles Deleuze he has perhaps provided the most important critiques to Heidegger's reading of Nietzsche. The Deleuzian and Mueller-Lauterian readings are characterized by different interpretations of the will to power. Heidegger sees in the will to power the culmination of metaphysical rationality. This culmination happens in two different ways: on the one side from Plato and on the other side from Hegel.

Mueller-Lauter's position is that in Nietzsche the metaphysical will-to-will sees itself and posits itself as a total will but that at the same time this will is referred to a multiplicity of wills to power that decenter the will to power as a purely metaphysical principle. Thus, metaphysics destroys itself from within metaphysics in Nietzsche's thought according to Mueller-Lauter. But this thesis does not take into account what makes Heidegger's reading so interesting : the idea of a continuity in metaphysics from Hegel to Nietzsche which I have argued for in the second part of my paper, the inversion of absolute subjectivity (Hegel) into the consummate subjectivity of the will to power (Nietzsche). An additional aspect of Heidegger's Nietzsche reading is the continuity established from Plato to Nietzsche . This continuity is shown by Heidegger's convincing argument that in the history of Being Plato's ideas are transformed into Nietzsche's values.

Thus Heidegger's reading is brilliant because it inserts Nietzsche's thought in the

⁷⁷ In *Nietzsche's philosophy of contradictions and the contradictions of his philosophy*, for full reference see Bibliography.

context of the Western tradition which according to Heidegger is completed by Nietzsche. However, his interpretation does not read Nietzsche only from within Nietzsche's text and conceptuality as Mueller-Lauter seems to do at times.

3.4 Critique of Heidegger's reading of Nietzsche

It is this my opinion that the thought of the eternal recurrence of the same represents an effort by Nietzsche to think through human freedom. But we know that Nietzsche did not think much of the freedom of the will because it depended on a philosophy of the will, a philosophy which in his opinion had no other goal but to chain and entrap man by making him responsible for moral acts. I believe however that any philosophy must come to terms with human freedom at the peril of losing its philosophical dignity if it does not do so. I thus allow myself a reflection already alluded to in the first part of this essay in order to try to show that there is a principle of freedom and transcendence in Nietzsche's thought and that this principle is elaborated starting from the concept of the eternal recurrence of the same. The concept of the eternal recurrence of the same represents a dialectic of contingency and necessity.

The thought of eternal recurrence allows each individual that is capable of this thought to understand his particular life as part of a greater totality, a cosmos (a *regnum* and an *ordo*). Every moment from which the life of an individual is constituted, including the most difficult moments (and perhaps these moments more than the others since they lead to the thought of eternal recurrence by producing the experience of nihilism) are felt and understood as necessary parts of the individual's self, of what he is and what he has become. The experiences of a subject return, recur and this occurs in

part in a manner independent from the volition of the subject : the stream of experiences returns. But there is also a subjective component that is associated to the thought of eternal recurrence, the « also wollte Ich es » (thus I willed it) that reverses the temporal flow and its « es war » (it was). A subjective will wants to reverse the experiences that contingently occur for the subject of this will and this will wills the necessity of these experiences by willing its return. But this is only possible if there is an identity between these two movements (the contingent current (flow) of experiences and the necessary and conscious will that reverses the contingency of the flow of experiences). In order to think these two movements together we cannot think them as essentially different one from another. There is a pre-supposed identity from the start between these two movements.

My interpretation of a concept of freedom in Nietzsche's philosophy is not conventional from a Nietzschean point of view and perhaps it would have been rejected by Nietzsche himself. I will spend quite a bit of time on quotes in the Nietzschean corpus that could validate my interpretation but I will also analyse the most striking texts that go against my interpretation. In my opinion the Nietzschean "system", if it is possible to speak in this fashion, does not possess a principle of transcendence. This might be perhaps very conscious and intended on Nietzsche's part, but it remains a great aporia of his system and he can legitimately be criticized from this perspective. By interpreting a dialectic « into » his concept of eternal recurrence of the same, I hope to be able to restore a form of transcendence necessary to balance out Nietzsche's thought. However, this transcendence is not something that I superimposed on the Nietzschean conceptuality and text : the transcendence I am referring to exists implicitly in these *loci*. It remains to

be resolved whether Nietzsche's *mens auctoris*, his intended meaning on the question of transcendence, is relevant to this issue or not. With Gadamer and Heidegger, we might want to say that the *Sache* of Nietzsche's text speaks of transcendence even if Nietzsche never had any intentions to do so.

I would now like to proceed to an analysis of certain key-passages that elaborate and explain Nietzsche's concept of eternal recurrence of the same. A first passage that is important is the following :

... the ideal of the most world-approving, exuberant and vivacious man, who has not only learnt to compromise and arrange with that which was and is, but wishes to have it again *as it was and is*, for all eternity, insatiably calling out *da capo*, not only to himself, but to the whole piece and play; not only to the play but actually to him who requires the play -and makes it necessary; because he always requires himself anew -and makes himself necessary.- -What? And this would not be *-circulus vitiosus deus ?*

Nietzsche, Friedrich, *Beyond good and evil*, 56.

It must be noted that if word « dialectic » is not mentioned, it is because Nietzsche possesses a negative evaluation of dialectic, mentions it only in a critical fashion and associates it to decadence and socratism. However the concept of necessity (necessary) is mentioned here. The ideal of the affirming man is closely linked to the concept of the *Ueberschensch* developed in *Thus spoke Zarathustra*.

The next important mention of eternal recurrence is made by Nietzsche in his *magnum opus*, *Thus spoke Zarathustra* (The vision and the riddle) :

« Observe, » continued I, « this Moment ! » From the gateway, This Moment, there runneth a long eternal lane backwards : behind us lieth an eternity. Must not whatever can run its course of all things, have already run along that lane ? Must not whatever can happen of all things have already happened, resulted and gone by ? And if everything have already existed, what thinkest thou, dwarf, of this Moment ? Must not this gateway also -have already existed ? And are not all things closely bound

together in such wise that this Moment draweth all coming things after it ?
 Consequently - - itself also ? For whatever can run its course of all things,
 also in this long lane outward –must it once more run!- And this slow
 spider which creepeth in the moonlight, and this moonlight itself, and
 thou and I in this gateway whispering together, whispering of eternal
 things –must we not all have already existed ? -And must we not return
 and run in that other lane out before us, that long strange lane –must we
 not eternally return ? » -
 Nietzsche, Friedrich, *Thus spoke Zarathustra*, The vision and the riddle.

Here, Nietzsche seems to want to reconstruct the experience of recurrence in a scientific manner (reference to the knot of causality), although this is implicit. In a similar way, I have reproduced in the first part of my essay the quasi-scientific reconstruction that Heidegger gives of eternal recurrence. In his *Nachlass* Nietzsche seeks to give scientific arguments for his thesis of the eternal recurrence of the same. This mainly in the group of aphorisms known under the title *Will to power* and that were put together by Elisabeth Foerster-Nietzsche. (Sections 1062, 1063, 1064, 1066)

Another place where Nietzsche makes an allusion to the eternal recurrence of the same is in the section called The convalescent in *Zarathustra*. Nietzsche writes :

Everything goeth, everything returneth; eternally rolleth the wheel of existence[Being]. Everything dieth, everything blossometh forth again; eternally runneth on the year of existence [Being]. Everything breaketh, everything is integrated anew; eternally buildeth itself the same house of existence [Being]. All things separate, all things again greet one another; eternally true to itself remaineth the ring of existence [Being]. Every moment beginneth existence [Being], around every 'Here' rolleth the ball 'There'. The middle is everywhere, crooked is the path of eternity.
Thus spoke Zarathustra, The convalescent, second section.

It is interesting to note that the language used in this text is purely poetical and mythological with references to the wheel, the ring and the house of Being. Nietzsche seems to be articulating a mystic vision where 'Here' and 'There' magically and fluidly inter-mingle. There is clearly no attempt to ground eternal recurrence scientifically in

this passage as is the case with some of the passages in *Zarathustra*. Another important passage can also be found in The convalescent:

“Eternally he returneth, the man of whom thou art weary, the small man”-so yawned my sadness, and dragged its foot and could not go to sleep...-“Ah, man returneth eternally ! The small man returneth eternally !” Naked had I once seen both of them, the greatest man and the smallest man: all too like one another-all too human, even the greatest man ! All too small, even the greatest man ! -that was my disgust at man ! And the eternal return also of the smallest man ! That was my disgust at all existence.

Thus spoke Zarathustra, The convalescent, second section.

This passage is important because it poses the problem of the return of the ‘small’ man which, can also be read as the “last man”. The return of the last man poses the problem of the transformative nature of the thought of eternal recurrence. If it is the case that every man who experiences the eternal recurrence is transformed through this experience, then isn’t it paradoxical to claim that the last or small man returns also, integrally ?

Another passage in The convalescent goes as follows:

For behold, O Zarathustra ! For thy new lays there are needed new lyres. Sing and bubble over, O Zarathustra, heal thy soul with new lays: that thou may bearest thy great fate, which hath not yet been any one’s fate ! For thine animals know it well, O Zarathustra, who thou art and must become: behold, *thou art the teacher of the eternal return*, -that is now thy fate ! That thou must be the first to teach this teaching-how could this great fate not be thy greatest danger and infirmity. Behold, we know what thou teachest: that all things eternally return, and ourselves with them, and that we have already existed times without number, and all things with us. Thou teachest that there is a great year of Becoming, a prodigy of a great year; it must, like a sand-glass, ever turn up anew, that it may anew run down and run out:- So that all those years are like one another in the greatest and also in the smallest. And if thou wouldst now die, O Zarathustra, behold, we know also how thou wouldst then speak to thyself:-but thine animals beseech thee not to die yet! Thou wouldst speak and without trembling, buoyant rather with bliss, for a great weight and worry would be taken from thee, thou patientest one!- ‘Now do I die and disappear’ wouldst thou say, and in a moment I am nothing. Souls are as mortal as bodies. But the plexus of causes returneth

in which I am intertwined,-it will again create me! I myself pertain to the causes of the eternal return. I come again with this sun, with this earth, with this eagle, with this serpent-*not* to a new life, or a better life, or a similar life: I come again eternally to this identical and selfsame life, in its greatest and its smallest to teach again the eternal return of all things,- To speak again the word of the great noontide of earth and man to announce again to man the Superman.

Thus spoke Zarathustra, The convalescent, second section.

What is important in this passage is the acknowledgement by Zarathustra's animals that he is the teacher of the eternal recurrence. This recognition is essential. Zarathustra is by essence the teacher of the eternal recurrence, of the same and the announcer of the coming of the *Uebersensch*. This passage seems to imply that there is no transformation or transcendence that occurs through the thought of recurrence since we come again "not to a new life, or a better life, or a similar life, ...but to this identical and selfsame life".

It is interesting to note that it is the animals that are speaking in this passage and not Zarathustra himself. Another important passage on eternal recurrence can be found in the *Gay science*, aphorism 341, where Nietzsche writes:

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

eternal confirmation and seal ?
Gay Science, Section 341.

This passage that has the form of a fable or a myth, is similar to the one in *Zarathustra* in which Zarathustra must confront a dwarf that he carries on his shoulders. But in *Zarathustra*, the confrontation with the dwarf is interrupted by Zarathustra's recollection of a scene from his youth. Again this passage seems to speak against a transformative nature of the doctrine of recurrence. On the one hand "This life as you now live it and have lived it, you will have to live once more and innumerable times more; and there will be nothing new in it, but every pain and every joy and every thought and sigh and everything immeasurably small or great in your life must return to you- all in the same succession and sequence-even this spider and this moonlight between the trees, and even this moment and I myself..." but on the other hand "If this thought were to gain possession of you, it would change you, as you are, or perhaps crush you ", so it does seem like the thought of recurrence produces a change in the one who is capable of thinking it and experiencing it.

Another place in the Nietzschean corpus that elaborates on the concept of eternal recurrence can be found in the text of the aphorisms anthologized under the title *Will to power* (*WP* from now on). Aphorisms 1053 to 1058 (in the Kaufmann translation that is based on the 1901 edition) describe the eternal recurrence as a prophecy and a cultural and political principle. According to Nietzsche, it is the "great cultivating idea" (1056.1884). It is a pessimist teaching and a mode of thinking that is close to ecstatic nihilism (1055.1885) that allows the destruction of decadent and degenerate races. The doctrine of recurrence permits the implantation in what is degenerate and wants to die, a nostalgia for the end. Nietzsche sometimes compares the doctrine of eternal recurrence

to a hammer that could confront Europe and that could determine if its will "wills" destruction: "Prevention of reduction to mediocrity. Rather destruction !"(1054. 1885-1886). It is clear that for Nietzsche, on top of being a moral and scientific (and perhaps ontological and metaphysical) teaching, the eternal recurrence of the same also possesses a political aspect: "Foundation of an oligarchy above peoples and their interests: education to a universally human politics. Counter-part of Jesuitism."(1057. 1883-1888)

I reject in principle attempts to prove eternal recurrence in a scientific manner, because according to me, Nietzsche attempts to prove eternal recurrence by having recourse to the erroneous argument according to which a cosmic state of equilibrium is unattainable. But, this unattainability of a state of equilibrium is far from being a certainty of actual astrophysics. For this science, the universe is a problem (it is either expanding or contracting, but it could also be at rest) and it is not clear whether in principle a state of equilibrium could not be reached. My second reason for rejecting the scientific proofs of recurrence are related to the first. When Nietzsche attempts to prove scientifically the eternal recurrence of the same, he makes affirmations (such as that state of equilibrium of the universe or the finite and infinite character of a force) about physical nature or matter.

However, the ontological nature of the universe is a domain of expertise about which philosophers cannot, for the most part, express themselves in a credible manner

(this does not exclude the clarification and reflexion on the nature of modern scientific discoveries but what I am claiming is that philosophers can no longer « discover » the nature of their theories without referring to the empirical data and the

theories elaborated by modern physics) faced with the « progress » that has been achieved in the domains of the natural sciences and in modern technology.⁷⁸ Nietzsche starts from a hypothesis about the structure of human experience and then presupposes that he can find proofs for this hypothesis in the physical nature of the universe. It is this method of proceeding that I call « erroneous ». It's a fact, however, that Nietzsche had not invented the thought of eternal recurrence. This thought existed already in a primitive way in Heraclitus (in a form called *ekpyrrosis*) and in Auguste Blanqui. What is more the hypothesis of eternal recurrence is rumored to have been discussed in contemporary scientific milieux surrounding Nietzsche or immediately following after him (See book by Abel Rey, *La physique et l'éternel retour*, 1928).

There seems to be a contradiction between freedom and the will to power. However, it is possible to show that the will to power is not necessarily opposed to the concept of freedom. Nietzsche affirms (in the *Genealogy of morals*) that what he calls the will to power is another way to name « the feeling of augmenting power ». It is clear that for Nietzsche there will occur an augmentation in freedom only if there is an augmentation in power. Contrary to this, we would like to affirm that there is an augmentation in power only if there is an augmentation in freedom. According to our interpretation, the will only becomes stronger if it wills the eternal recurrence and this same will only wills the eternal recurrence if it *fre*es itself to will a greater power as will to power. Freedom and power would be at least co-originary according to this

⁷⁸ One could argue that at Nietzsche's epoch, philosophers still dabbled in natural science and that his ventures and speculation in the natural-scientific domain are not out of place. But in my opinion this argument does not really stand in the context of an attempt to prove eternal recurrence scientifically. Eternal recurrence of the same would have to be valid like a physical law like Newton's laws of motion or Einstein's relativity but it is clear that Nietzsche wants eternal recurrence to be a thought or a human experience first and that the attempts to prove recurrence come afterwards. It is for this reason that his attempts to prove eternal recurrence of the same scientifically are not convincing.

conception. The will thus has to free itself in order to will the eternal recurrence of the will to power and it is only through this liberation that will attains its essence and that the will to power is united to eternal recurrence.

CONCLUSION

Nietzsche's greatness is to have liberated metaphysics from its submission to morality. By unhinging the link established by Plato between the metaphysical object and the moral object, Nietzsche historicizes both morality and metaphysics. If for Nietzsche the withdrawal of faith in morality is done out of morality (*Daybreak*, Preface, Section 4), it does nonetheless follow that his critique dissolves both domains: the metaphysical and moral. If Nietzsche detaches the metaphysical from the moral, he only does this to re-establish the priority of the moral over the metaphysical. This movement of detachment and re-founding is both antagonistic and dialectical. This dialectic, without being formal, is important. This is the case because it is our thesis that the Heideggerian reading of Nietzsche depends on the fact that Heidegger sees in Nietzsche a great dialectician (as well as a great metaphysician). Heidegger identifies dialectical connections in Nietzsche's metaphysics, mainly between the will to power and eternal recurrence, as we have attempted to show. However, the inversion of Platonism is accomplished through the evacuation of the platonic dialectic between being and becoming and good and evil. We take issue with Heidegger's claim that Nietzsche's inversion of Platonism through the sole affirmation of becoming is nothing but an entrenchment in Platonism. Nietzsche does not only affirm the precedence of becoming over being, he also "deconstructs" or "destroys" the difference between being and becoming as a careful reading of the *History of an error* shows ([“]The true world -- we have abolished. What world has remained? The apparent one perhaps? But no! *With the true world we have also abolished the apparent one.*[«])

Nietzsche explicitly pronounced himself against the dialectic and the dialectical

method as a form of Socratism and of decadence. As we have argued earlier, we agree that there is something of a dialectic between the moral domain and the metaphysical domain in Nietzsche's thought but this is not where Heidegger has located his interpretation of the dialectic in Nietzsche's thought. Instead Heidegger has dialecticized the thoughts of the will to power and eternal recurrence and has reduced them to a unity and a totality. Heidegger's dialectization of Nietzsche's thought must be understood as a strategy to reduce Nietzsche to Hegel (and to Plato) and to step beyond those thinkers. When Heidegger claims that Nietzsche inverts and completes the unconditioned and absolute subjectivity of German Idealism (and of Hegel), this reading is motivated by an attempt to read a continuity between Nietzsche and Hegel, only to better overcome what Heidegger believes to be their common, radical subjectivism. But this unbounded subjectivism also corresponds to an epoch in Heidegger's history of Being, the epoch of the *Gestell*. It has been argued (Reiner Schuermann) that the rubrics of Nietzsche's thought singled out by Heidegger (will to power, eternal recurrence of the same, Ueberschensch, nihilism, justice) are indeed technological categories and that, although formally speaking of Nietzsche, materially they articulate Heidegger's views on the essence of modern technology. On the whole we agree with this assessment. We believe, however, that Heidegger's appropriation of the Nietzschean language for his own purposes has left out important elements of Nietzsche's thought on freedom and transcendence. On the one hand the eternal recurrence of the will to power cannot be conceived without a freedom to will this recurrence. Thus on this reading freedom would be the middle term between will to power and eternal recurrence. On the other hand for Nietzsche, transcendence is not completely separated from immanence but is achieved

through repetition and transfiguration.

Thus, the Heideggerean move of dialecticizing Nietzsche's thought is not in itself convincing when it attempts to interpret Nietzsche's philosophy, but it does make sense from the perspective of Heidegger's own philosophical project. Nietzsche was the great antipode of Hegel. But Nietzsche cannot be correctly reduced to Hegel if we take into account that in Hegel the metaphysical and the moral object are still powerfully intertwined. For Hegel, knowing is still willing the good, and *Spirit* is only a higher rationality that has integrated in a deeper way both the practical and the pure reason of Kant. Nietzsche has transcended this Hegelian position and knowing for him is not knowledge of the good or knowledge of the true but is knowledge "beyond good and evil".

Nietzsche is also Plato's great antipode. But if Heidegger's thesis with respect to Nietzsche's inverted Platonism were correct, we would have to find in Nietzsche's thought an inverted dialectic: one that argues from being to becoming instead of from becoming to being. Instead of this, Nietzsche "destroys" and "deconstructs" the binary poles of the dialectic and thus unhinges the possibility of the dialectic itself. It may be argued that Nietzsche attempts to preserve one pole of the dialectic, that of becoming over and above the other pole and in this sense he merely inverts Platonism as Heidegger has attempted to show. There are elements of this in Nietzsche's thought when he claims that only a world of becoming exists and that the world of being, as true world, is a fabrication, but we believe that ultimately Nietzsche is not naïve enough to merely replace being with becoming. As shown in the *History of an error* when the true world (being) disappears, the apparent world (becoming) disappears as well. In fact, as argued

by Heidegger, Nietzsche attempts to find a new language to replace that of being and becoming because these distinctions empty themselves of content at the end of metaphysics. The fact that the will to power and the eternal recurrence of the same cannot easily be identified with being or becoming but that they rather oscillate between these two concepts is a proof of this assertion. The unity of the will to power and the eternal recurrence depends on their *relating* to being and becoming (and to the *permanentization* of becoming), alternatively in similar and then in differentiated ways.

Thus on the whole, even though it is a brilliant attempt to systematize Nietzsche, we must reject the ultimate conclusions of Heidegger's engagement with Nietzsche. Heidegger has not so much provided us with an accurate picture of Nietzsche as he has used Nietzsche to find his own vocabulary and articulate his own great concepts of *Gestell*, the essence of modern technology and the history of Being.

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