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The Eternal Recurrence as Difference in Nietzsche's Metaphysics

Sinan Kılıç¹

Abstract

This article provides an analysis from the perspective of the difference for the doctrine of the eternal recurrence that is the essence of the Nietzsche's metaphysics. The general argument about this subject in the philosophy is that the eternal recurrence in the metaphysics of Nietzsche is the recurrence of the same; but, in this article it is argued that the eternal recurrence is the recurrence of the difference, not of the same. It is argued that the essence of eternal recurrence is like depending on the chance, becoming, and the dice throw because all of these terms are both related to the eternal recurrence and the difference; based on the perspective of ontology and the life, the will to power as depending on the eternal recurrence of the difference is explained. On the other hand, there are two different kinds of will to power in Nietzsche's ontology: the reactive will to power and the active will to power. As the reactive will to power does not approve eternal recurrence and creation of new ideas and values, the active will to power affirms the eternal recurrence of creating the new values, ideas and perspectives. In addition, every new idea and the perspective is to affirm the eternal recurrence as tragedy, therefore, the tragedy is explained as the eternal recurrence of difference. To sum up, this article analyses the eternal recurrence as the difference.

Keywords: Eternal recurrence, difference, the will to power, the active will to power and the reactive will to power and the tragedy.

Nietzsche'nin Metafiziğinde Fark Olarak Ebedi Tekrar

Öz

Bu makale, Nietzsche metafiziğinin özü olan "ebedi tekrar" doktrinin, fark perspektifinden

¹ Erciyes University, Faculty of Letters, Department of Philosophy, Assist. Prof. Dr. (Doktor Öğretim Üyesi). kilicsinan@gmail.com

bir analizini gerçekleştirir. Felsefede bu konu hakkındaki genel argüman şudur: Nietzsche metafiziğinde “ebedi tekrar” “aynının” tekrarıdır; fakat, bu makalede “ebedi tekrarın” “aynının” değil, “farkın tekrarı” olduğu savunulur. Bu perspektif ve argümandan hareketle makalede ilkin “ebedi tekrarın” özü, “oluş”, “şans” ve “zar atımı” üzerinden açıklanacaktır; çünkü bu terimlerin tamamı hem “ebedi tekrar” hem de “fark” ile ilgilidir. İkinci olarak, makalede ontoloji ve yaşam perspektifinden “farkın ebedi tekrarına” bağlı olarak “güç istenci” idesi açıklanacaktır. Nietzsche’nin ontolojisinde “güç istencinin” iki türü bulunur: “reaktif güç istenci” ve “aktif güç istenci.” “Reaktif güç istenci” yeni ideler ve değerler yaratmayı, “ebedi tekrarı” ve “farkı” olumlamıyorken; buna karşın, “aktif güç istenci” yeni değerler, ideler ve perspektifler yaratma olarak “ebedi tekrarı” ve “farkı” olumlar. Buna ilaveten, “ebedi tekrarda” her yeni ide ve perspektif ise trajedi olarak yaşamı olumlamaktır. Bu nedenle, makalede son olarak, trajedi olarak “farkın ebedi tekrarı” açıklanacaktır. Özet olarak, bu makale “fark” olarak “ebedi tekrar” kavramını analiz edecektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Ebedi tekrar, fark, güç istenci, aktif güç istenci, reaktif güç istenci ve trajedi.

I am the teacher of eternal return.

Nietzsche

Introduction

Nietzsche, known as the philosopher of eternal recurrence, is one of the most effective philosopher of continental philosophy, is called as.² It is argued that the eternal recurrence is the main problem of his philosophy because the whole concepts of his metaphysics is centred on the eternal recurrence that is the essence of Being. "What is the being?" "What is the one?" "What is truth?" are basic metaphysical questions needs to be answered to understand the eternal recurrence. But, in the philosophy, there are two different approaches to these questions which are the main questions of the history of metaphysics: the identity-absolute and the difference-becoming. In the first approach, the being, the truth and the one is absolute; therefore, they cannot be altered depending on time and space. For example, for Plato, being is the absolute idea, for Hegel it is the absolute Geist and for Kant it is the a priori categories. In these philosophies, the being is the absolute, the one and the identity. The essence of being is the identity that is always the same. In this perspective, being is truth and one is transcendence to the phenomenal things. Transcendence does not affirm the difference, the chance, the becoming. In terms of the second approach, the being, the truth, and the one is not the absolute, they can be altered depending on time, space and problems related. This kind of metaphysics is represented by Heraclitus, Duns Scotus, Spinoza and Nietzsche. For Nietzsche, the truth is not atemporal, it is constructed by a certain notion of temporality. Therefore, the truth of being is not the identity, it is becoming or the eternal recurrence that is the doctrine or the law of Being. It is the law of the change and the immanence to the life because in life everything changes. In the history of metaphysics, the first philosopher that affirms the eternal recurrence is Heraclitus who approves the becoming, the change, the play and the infinity. For Heraclitus the being is not the identity, it is the eternal recurrence. For Duns Scotus, who is the late scholastic philosopher, the being is the one and this one at the same time both individual and the universal. For Spinoza being is the one that can be altered in terms of individual beings, therefore, he claims that there are no absolute good and bad. If something enhances the body's power, it

² Eternal recurrence and eternal return, both of them, are used in the translation of Nietzsche's books, but there are some differences between them, therefore, I prefer to use the recurrence (Wiederkehr) instead of the return (Wiederkunft) in this article. The difference between them is that the return means going back and finish the movement, but the recurrence means another repetition of a singular and a universal event. Return is closed to start again, but the recurrence is opened to start again and again.

is good; if it does not enhance the power of body it is bad. After Spinoza, Nietzsche considers the idea of eternal recurrence in most different ethical, scientific, personal, and metaphysical perspectives. In this article, the problem of eternal recurrence will be discussed from metaphysical point of view with reference to difference. It is argued that the essence of eternal recurrence in Nietzsche's metaphysics is the difference, not the identity or the same. In the article, firstly, the eternal recurrence will be explained, secondly the essence of recurrence, which is the will to power, will be explained from the perspective of the difference-metaphysics.

1. The Eternal Recurrence as the Difference

What is the eternal recurrence? The eternal recurrence is the doctrine of Nietzsche's metaphysics. This doctrine is the essential and the main element in all of his thinking.³ The eternal recurrence is the essence of Being and the law of the being of beings. In other words, when question of "what is being" is asked to Nietzsche answers the question of being with reference to the eternal recurrence. The Being is the eternal recurrence which is the living, the suffering and the circling. It has neither the beginning nor the end, it affirms the world without the beginning and the end; it is the infinity, therefore, everything in the life has occurred more than once, may be even innumerable times. In this infinity, it is to affirm to the life no matter what happens in it. Therefore, *the doctrine of eternal recurrence in Nietzsche is an essentially ecstatic doctrine.*⁴ There are no old and new things, everything that has happened will occur again. For this reason, the eternal recurrence says that every pain and every joy and every thought in life must return infinitely. The birth and the dying return again and again; the pain and the joy return at the same cycles in the Being. On the view of eternal recurrence, you must wish to live again and again whatever you lived. You will go on doing whichever you did infinitely many more times, without changing anything. Therefore, the eternal recurrence is the highest affirmation in the life.⁵

The doctrine of "eternal recurrence," that is to say, of the unconditional and endlessly repeated circular course of all things-this doctrine of Zarathustra could possibly

³ Paul S. Loeb, "Identity and Eternal Recurrence", in *A Companion to Nietzsche*, ed. by Keith Ansell Pearson (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 172.

⁴ Alphonso Lingis, "Difference in the Eternal Recurrence of the Same", *Research in Phenomenology*, 8(1978), 77.

⁵ Alexander Nehamas, "The Eternal Recurrence", *The Philosophical Review* 89, 3(1980), 351.

already have been thought by Heraclitus. At least stoa, which inherited almost all its fundamental ideas from Heraclitus, shows traces of it.⁶

But every repetition is a different repetition because eternal recurrence is related to three main terms of recurrence: chance, becoming, and multiplicity. Multiplicity opposes the ontology of the same or the identity, or the truth in the philosophy of Nietzsche⁷ because the multiplicity is the difference. Firstly, the eternal recurrence is the recurrence of difference because it affirms the chance. What is the chance? The chance is the dicethrow and the law of the dicethrow is the chance. For Zarathustra, all things prefer to dance on the feet of chance,⁸ which is the affirmation to the eternal recurrence, and the eternal recurrence is the affirmation of the dicethrow, the affirmation of the necessity, the numbers which bring together all the parts of chance.⁹ According to Nietzsche, some Ancient Greek philosophers affirm the chance because they think that the chance is the essence of being. For example, in the philosophy of Anaxagoras since the nous and the chance are the identities, they cannot be considered without thinking the other. *Anaxagoras appreciated in the nous just the very quality of being a thing of chance, a change agent, therefore, a being able to act unconditioned, undetermined, guided neither by causes nor by purposes.*¹⁰ In this perspective, the dicethrow is to affirm the chance, the life and the becoming and the necessity. The necessity is the return of the chance; if it were not to be the chance, then the eternal recurrence of difference would not be possible because the essence of recurrence is to play the game to success something in the life. For this reason, *to know how to affirm chance is to know how to play.*¹¹ To affirm the play and the dicethrow is to affirm the difference in the beings because every good player knows that at the every dicethrow comes with the different numbers, even if you are good player, you cannot win the game every time, but in spite of this reality, good players continue to play. But, the bad players do not affirm the chance, therefore, when they lose the game, they may not continue to play because they always want to win, but when they do not win, they do not continue the game. In this perspective, sometimes people can win a game and another time they can lose it. The life is the play and

⁶ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols and Other Writings*, trans. Judith Norman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 3.

⁷ Alenka Zupancic, *Nietzsche's Philosophy of the Two* (London: The MIT Press, 2003), 13.

⁸ Keith Ansell Pearson, "The Eternal Return of the Overhuman: The Weightiest Knowledge and the Abyss of Light", *Journal of Nietzsche Studies*, 30(2005), 16.

⁹ Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson (London: Continuum, 1993), 186.

¹⁰ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy and Other Writings*, trans. Ronald Speirs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 160.

¹¹ Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 26.

the world of Zeus;¹² in addition, the life is becoming and flux that is the essence of being, the becoming and flux are the essence of eternal recurrence as difference. For this reason, the chance is to affirm the becoming.

Secondly, the eternal recurrence is recurrence of the difference because it is becoming that is to affirm the difference. The becoming is the only reality that is the chaos and the multiplicity in the eternal recurrence of Being and it is the endless becoming. Therefore, the becoming and the eternal recurrence are the identity because the becoming cannot be thought without eternal recurrence, and the eternal recurrence cannot be thought without becoming. What is the essence of the becoming? The becoming is the difference from self and is the name of changing of being. In terms of becoming there is not absolute truth and idea, everything is a becoming, the purpose of being and event cannot be known by the human being because everything can start and finish as endlessly, it is infinity.¹³ Time is eternal and infinite,¹⁴ and time is becoming. For this reason, in the view of becoming, becoming is to affirm the eternal recurrence of difference. In addition, there are three devices of becoming: dance, laughter and play. *Dance affirms becoming and the being of becoming; laughter affirms multiplicity and the unity of multiplicity; play affirms the chance and the necessity of chance.*¹⁵ The multiplicity of being firstly was affirmed by Heraclitus. Heraclitus says that everything is becoming: *I see nothing but becoming.*¹⁶ Because everything is the becoming, the absolute truth and the absolute knowledge are impossible.¹⁷ In contrast, the becoming means non-existence in the metaphysics of Parmenides who says that changing belongs to the senses, but in thought is not possible because in thought everything is one that is not be changed. Conversely, in the metaphysic of Heraclitus, the becoming can be understood by the senses. *Ration*

¹² Rose Pfeffer, "Eternal Recurrence in Nietzsche's Philosophy", *The Review of Metaphysics* 19, 2(1965), 289.

¹³ Infinity is related to the time. There is a synthetic relation in time as present, past and future. Therefore, becoming and the eternal recurrence should be thought with the synthesis; a synthesis of time and its dimensions, a synthesis of diversity and its reproduction, a synthesis of becoming and the being which is affirmed in becoming, a synthesis of double affirmation. Time cannot be said to introduce any qualitative difference among recurrences, and eternal recurrence is not be imagined as an infinite number of cosmic cycles succeeding each other in some absolute linear time. For Nietzsche, time is just a series of those moments, it follows that time itself is destroyed, re-created and repeated along with everything else. Paul S. Loeb, "Identity and Eternal Recurrence", in *A Companion to Nietzsche*, ed. Keith Ansell Pearson (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 181.

¹⁴ Pfeffer, "Eternal Recurrence in Nietzsche's Philosophy", 277.

¹⁵ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy and Other Writings*, trans. Ronald Speirs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 18.

¹⁶ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Early Greek Philosophy and Other Essays-The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche Volume Two*, trans. Maximilian A. Mügge (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1911), 98.

¹⁷ Philip J. Kain, "Skepticism, and Eternal Recurrence", *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 13, 3(1983), 366.

*makes us falsify the testimony of the senses. The senses are not lying when they show becoming, passing away and the chance.*¹⁸ Therefore, becoming is the immanent of life, not transcendence. The eternal recurrence as becoming is to affirm to the multiplicity of the life. *In the eternal recurrence, transcendence is replaced by immanence, pure reason by existence.*¹⁹

Thirdly, the eternal recurrence is the recurrence of difference because it is the multiplicity. The multiplicity is the difference of one thing from another thing and despite of these differences, the multiplicity is the name of unity of beings. For this reason, the multiplicity is to affirm the being as the unity of difference. In the multiplicity of being, the difference becomes the unity of the becoming, the chance and the dice throw. And finally, the eternal recurrence is the recurrence of the difference because it is the will to power.

1.1. The Will to Power

The eternal recurrence and the will to power belong together,²⁰ therefore, the eternal recurrence cannot be conceived without the will and the will to power, and the eternal recurrence is infinity will that comes back to itself eternally. On this view, it can be said that the eternal recurrence is the essence of the Being but the will and the will to power are the essence of all beings. In other words, the will is eternal, whatever you want, you wish it again and again as eternally. The person always should say that I will it again. In addition, the will that is to be free²¹ is the main point of the eternal recurrence. While the words of eternal recurrence are the becoming, the chance, the dicethrow, the words of the will to power are the willing, the reactive power and the active power. In other words, the eternal recurrence is the recurrence of willing and the will to power. *Will to power, in its essence and according to the inner possibility, is the eternal recurrence of the same.*²² here, the same is the difference because the recurrence of the same is the will to power but the will to power is not always the same will to power, it can be altered depending on the different perspectives and consciousness. For example, it can be the reactive will to power or

¹⁸ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols and Other Writings*, trans. Judith Norman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 98.

¹⁹ Pfeffer, "Eternal Recurrence in Nietzsche's Philosophy", 283.

²⁰ Walter Kaufmann, *Nietzsche - Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, Fourth Edition, 1974), 308.

²¹ Keith Ansell Pearson, "The Eternal Return of the Overhuman: The Weightiest Knowledge and the Abyss of Light", *Journal of Nietzsche Studies*, 30(2005), 6.

²² Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche-Volume I*, trans. David Farrell (New York: Harper and Row, 1991), 231.

the active will to power and these powers can be altered depending on the different events and the different situations and the different wills. In this philosophy, since two things are not identical or even similar, the individuals cannot be known, therefore, all of the individuals is becoming and flux that is always new something.²³

In addition, the will to power is to accept that there are only chaos and multiplicity of beings,²⁴ instead of one, truth, identity, regularity and the universal law. In this perspective, the will to power is the multiplicity of the will that is the essence of the will to power. What is the willing? *The willing is a kind of state of feeling and is the multiplicity, and the consciousness of difference.*²⁵ The willing is to desire, to strive and to create. To sum up, the will to power is the essence of beings but there is not one kind of the will to power, there are two different complexes of the will to power: the reactive will to power as the negation of the eternal recurrence and the difference and the active will to power as the affirmation of the eternal recurrence and the difference. *Active power, the power of acting or creating, or commanding; reactive power, the power of obeying or of being acted; developed reactive force, the power of splitting up, dividing and separating; active force becomes reactive; the power of being separated of turning against itself.*²⁶ They are separated from the other force in terms of two ideas. One of them is, what would they do by the force? And the other is, what for would they want force? They have different quality and quantity. For example, as the active will to power is the affirmation of tragic life from the perspective of eternal recurrence as quality, the reactive will to power is the negation of tragic life from the perspective of transcendence ideas.

1.1.1. The Reactive Will to Power as the Negation of the Eternal Recurrence

The reactive will to power that is the negation of the eternal recurrence does not affirm the chance, the becoming and the dice-throw and the life. The reactive power is to judge the life from the Cartesian view. For this view, there are just one truth, necessary and absolute truth. Therefore, life on the reactive power is either good or bad; either beautiful or ugly, there is no multiplicity in life. If everything is good in life, the life is good, but if everything is not good, then the life is bad because it does not believe in the eternal recurrence of the bad and the good or the beautiful or the ugly. Therefore, the reactive power is the poison of life. The reason of the negation of

²³ Kain, "Skepticism, and Eternal Recurrence", 366.

²⁴ Kain, "Skepticism, and Eternal Recurrence, 370.

²⁵ Heidegger, *Nietzsche-Volume I*, 30.

²⁶ Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 63.

the eternal recurrence of the reactive power is the transcendence perspective that is to judge the life from the absolute knowledge, the absolute morality, and Christianity. The absolute knowledge opposes to the eternal recurrence of difference because it argues that the true knowledge cannot be altered according to time and space because the truth and the essence are the universal; but, for Nietzsche: *Truths are illusions of which we have forgotten that they are the illusion...*²⁷ On the other hand, the absolute morality judges the morality of the active will to power, which is to create the new virtues.²⁸ Consequently, the main feature of the absoluteness is to hate from the becoming, the eternal recurrence and the difference. It hates from the difference because *difference engenders hatred*.²⁹

This hatred produces the nihilism as the triumph of the reactive will to power. The reactive will to power causes the nihilism because of hating from the eternal recurrence and difference. The reason of hating from the eternal recurrence of the reactive will is the pain because the reactive will does not approve pain; it always wishes to be the same, but it is not possible for the law of the eternal recurrence because of the law of being or ontology. And as a consequence, it causes the nihilism that is to be triumph of the reactive power. Since the nihilism cannot create new things or values, it diminishes the value of life, the value of God and the value of producing. In this perspective there are three different kind of nihilism: the negative nihilism, the reactive nihilism and the passive nihilism. The common feature of all of them is to diminish to the value of life and the eternal recurrence. If life is judged from the highest values or is diminished from the transcendence values,³⁰ then this kind of consciousness is the negative nihilism. The negative nihilism depreciates the life from the perspective of absolute knowledge, absolute morality and Christianity. While the negative nihilism diminishes the life from the highest or transcendence values, in contrast, the reactive nihilism is to diminish from the value to the upper values or the highest values. In another word, the reactive nihilism denies the supreme or the highest values.³¹ The reason of the reactive nihilism is the faith in

²⁷ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy and Other Writings*, 145.

²⁸ The absolute idea demands three things from the philosopher. Firstly, the philosopher should seek the absolute essence or truth; secondly, philosopher tries to know the absoluteness with the transcendental categories, not with the sensation or the experience; and finally, the philosopher should think by a method such as dialectic and phenomenology.

²⁹ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1996), 213.

³⁰ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, trans. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Vintage Books, 1968), 9.

³¹ The uppermost values are categories. What is categories? This term is derived from the two concepts: categoria and agora. Agora means a public gathering of people as opposed to a closed council

the categories of reason.³² Since the reactive nihilism diminishes the upper values such as God and morality, it leads to passive nihilism. The passive nihilism says that everything is empty and meaningless, and it does not produce or create anything. In addition, the passive nihilism results from the pessimism and the pessimist person who always says that the *life is not worth anything, nothing is worth anything*.³³ These three kinds of nihilism cause the reactive consciousness that does not produce new values and they do not approve the chance and the becoming and the eternal recurrence of the difference in the Being. According to Nietzsche, this kind of nihilism can be overcome by the eternal recurrence³⁴ yes to life and difference. In addition, nihilism and the reactive will to power that opposes the recurrence of difference is controlled by four kinds of consciousness: the resentment, the bad consciousness, the ascetic ideal and the dialect.

The resentment is a result of the reactive will to power and it opposes to the eternal recurrence and difference because it does not affirm the becoming of the event. If the bad things happen in the life, the resentment consciousness does not forget it because the resentment does not affirm the bad things in its life. Therefore, the resentment consciousness is controlled by the memory not to forget anything; this kind of consciousness feels like everything is against itself and it tries to destroy the thing that is against to its will. As a result of this, the resentment hates the difference and the eternal recurrence of suffer and joy. The resentment consciousness is being full of the pain. When this pain is examined in terms of its results, it may cause the passive nihilism because of resentment to everything. Another important result is that the resentment consciousness does not want to take the responsibility of its behaviour, hence, the bad things that happen in the life is fault the of the other person or God or the life and thus, this kind of thought produces the passive nihilism. Since the resentment blames the other things because of the bad things, it is full of weakness and sickness. The weakness and the sickness of the resentment consciousness does not cause of these two things, these two things are the result of resentment. For example, Hegel's absolute Geist is the consciousness of the resentment because it turns to the outside of itself and it negates the outside.

meeting. Kata implies going from above to something below, a view onto something. Therefore, *catagorein* means that we reveal what it is and render it open. It comes into appearance and into the openness of publicity. Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche- Volume IV*, trans. Frank A. Capuzzi (New York: Harper and Row, 1987), 36.

³² Heidegger, *Nietzsche- Volume IV*, 47.

³³ Nietzsche, *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols and Other Writings*, 209.

³⁴ Karl Löwith, *Nietzsche's Philosophy of the Eternal Recurrence of the Same*, trans. J. Harvey Lomax (London: University of California Press, 1997), 56.

While the resentment consciousness blames the other things or persons because of the bad things in life, the bad consciousness blames himself because of the bad things. If the bad things occur in his life, in terms of resentment consciousness, they are because of the other persons, but in terms of bad consciousness, the reason of bad things in his life is his fault, therefore, while the resentment consciousness blames the other persons, the bad consciousness blames himself. For example, Socrates's daemon is the bad consciousness because it turns back to inside and it does not allow the tragic life to happen in life because daemon does not allow him to do it and daemon destroys the tragic life that is to affirm of the eternal recurrence. In addition, even the priest who produces the pain represents the bad consciousness of the resentment because the priest says that if bad things happen in your life, you should blame yourself because of your sins.

Another reactive will that does not approve the eternal recurrence is the ascetic ideal that does not create or produce any new things. The ascetic ideal is a specific kind of enjoyment, but it is not the enjoyment of Dionysus; it is an enjoyment from the different pleasure which is taken from the pain and the unhappiness or the melancholy or more pain and more pain. Since the pain and the suffering are the essence of the ascetic ideal, it is controlled by the reactive consciousness. In it, there is the prohibition of the enjoyment without the pain and the suffering. In here, because the enjoyment of sensation is the law of the other of Christianity, the joy of sensation becomes the guilt of life and are punished by the ascetic person by not eating or not laughing. For ascetic consciousness, the passion and the pleasure are not good for life and the law of God, therefore the law of God is the upper of the passion and the pleasure of sensation. The ascetic ideal expresses the sickness of the resentment and the complex of resentment. It is the denying to the self and the saint and the ascetic ideal represents the high levels of will to power.³⁵ The ascetic ideal turns against the life.³⁶ The construction of the ascetic ideal relates to the death of God because this kind of life concerns the life without God. The place of the death of God is the cross that Christianity was born. Therefore, when Nietzsche says that "God is dead", Lacan replies that God has always been dead on the cross.³⁷

³⁵ Kain, "Skepticism, and Eternal Recurrence, 371.

³⁶ Alenka Zupancic, *Nietzsche's Philosophy of the Two* (London: The MIT Press, 2003), 18.

³⁷ Zupancic, *Nietzsche's Philosophy of the Two*, 35.

Another reactive consciousness that does not affirm the eternal recurrence of the difference is the dialectic thought which argues that there is one truth, beauty and justice. Nietzsche opposes to this dialectic thought because of three reasons:

Firstly, it misinterprets sense because it does not know the nature of forces which concretely appropriate phenomena; secondly, it misinterprets essence because it does not know the real element from which forces, their qualities, and their relations derive; thirdly, it misinterprets change and transformation because it is content to work with permutations of abstract and unreal terms.³⁸

Based on such reasons, the dialectic thought negates the difference and the eternal recurrence because its essence is related to the truth and the opposite. It argues that there is one truth and this truth can be found by the dialectic thought that negates the opposite of truth that is believed by the dialectic thinker. The mistake of the dialectic perspective is that it assumes that the reality and the truth can be known by this method, but in the perspective of eternal recurrence it is not possible because the only reality is the eternal recurrence of the becoming and because of becoming as the law of the eternal recurrence, the absolute truth is not possible. Therefore, for Nietzsche the dialectic thought is the thought of the resentment. The slave's thought cannot consider without negating the other. In addition, it does not create the new values and thoughts.

In contrast, the eternal recurrence does not seek the absolute truth, the eternal recurrence creates the new values and the ideas and to create the new values is the law of the difference because every new value and idea is the difference. For instance, Zarathustra walks in different ways to come to the truth.³⁹ For this reason, the eternal recurrence that is to be the difference is the thought of thoughts,⁴⁰ and it is the active will to power that is the difference.

1.1.2. The Active Will to Power as the Eternal Recurrence

The active will to power is the eternal recurrence of difference because the active will to power demands to create the new and different values independent of reactive will to power or the old values. Since the active will to power tries to reach out of its power, its main characters are possessing, dominating, and become different. In contrast, the reactive will to power is eager to be the same and if it is not the same

³⁸ Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 158

³⁹ Löwith, *Nietzsche's Philosophy of the Eternal Recurrence of the Same*, 12.

⁴⁰ Heidegger, *Nietzsche-Volume II*, trans. David Farrell (New York: Harper and Row, 1984), 71.

it endeavours to destroy the new values and ideas or things. And the difference is a positive thing in the active thought, in the reactive thought it is a negative thing.

In addition, as the active will to power is the consciousness of the strong, the reactive will to power is the consciousness of the weak. The difference between the consciousness of weak and the strong is that as the consciousness of weak demands not to do any new or different thing, the consciousness of the strong demands to do the new or different things. In other words, since the strong consciousness always demands to overstep its border, it says that you should do it, but the weak consciousness says that you should not do it. In this perspective, since Socrates always says that you must not do your will, it represents the reactive will to power or the weak consciousness. In contrast, Spinoza says that if anything can be done by you and if it increases your power you should do it. Therefore, while Socratic perspective is the law of the weak consciousness, Spinoza's perspective is the natural law of the strong consciousness. The strong consciousness is to defend the new and different perspectives of life; however, the weak consciousness is to defend the old and the same values. In this perspective, the eternal recurrence is the repetition of the Strong's consciousness that affirms to create the new ideas of being. That is why, the eternal recurrence of the active will to power supplies to understand the being from the new perspectives. These new perspectives are the new ways of seeing and feeling the world and producing the new things from the new ideas.

In other words, to create the new ideas is to create the new world as the eternal recurrence, and this kind of life and consciousness are the highest affirmation of the life.⁴¹ The affirmation of life is to produce the new ideas and perspectives and to affirm the eternal recurrence and to approve the difference. This kind of thought is the pathos of life in the active will to power because the eternal recurrence is the pathos of the life to affirm the life that is the eternal recurrence of difference. In terms of the active will to power, the life is the becoming, not fixating and fixated truth, that is the highest values of life, which denies the chance and becoming, which has not the beginning and the end, there is only life as the active will to power to affirm the life. In this idea, the life is the active will that is to create and to enjoy. To create and to enjoy should be thought together, they belong together, because to create is to enjoy and to enjoy is to create in the life of the active will to power and they bring the power. The active will to power that increases the acting force of life results from the joy, in contrast, the power that decreases the acting force of life comes from the

⁴¹ Lawrence J. Hatab, *Nietzsche's Life Sentence* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 57.

pain in the life. For this reason, *everything that enhances people's feeling of power is good, everything stemming from weakness is bad.*⁴² The feeling of power in the eternal recurrence is the passion that is the essence of active will to power, and to create the new ideas is depended on this life passion. In this perspective, Nietzsche claims that creating and enjoying are the roots of the active life and to attack them is to attack the life.⁴³ To attack the creating power of the life gives rise to the collapse of the active will to power of difference.

The one main reason of declining of the active will to power and the eternal recurrence is Christianity, which is called as the religion of pity. The pity which is the poison of life is condemned to suffering because it is the consciousness of the poor that does not affirm the eternal recurrence of the active life, instead, it condemns the active will to power. The reason of pity is the upper values of Christianity such as God, the free will, the faith and the love for each other. This kind of upper values causes the pity and they are the decadence of the life because these ideas devalue the active will to power, in other words, since they devalue the life from the highest perspective, they are the negative nihilism and thus the poison of life. In this perspective, *every word coming from the mouth of the first Christian' is a lie, everything he does is an instinctive falsehood, all of his values, all of his goals are harmful, who hates, what he hates, these have values.*⁴⁴

As Christianity defends that there is one truth, the active will to power argues that according to new needs of life, the new values and ideas should be produced by the active will to power and this circle returns endlessly. In terms of the active power, the values are not the identity, they are the difference and multiplicity because there are not the absolute values like the pity, the free will and the God; the values can be created according to new needs of life. The person who creates the new values of new life's needs is the overman. The overman is the voice of the eternal recurrence and the active will to power. Zarathustra brings the new values and ideas of the overman or human being into the future. The new values of bringing of Zarathustra are the eternal recurrence of difference, the active will to power, Dionysus, and the tragedy because God is dead, and they are the new values for the human being of future. All these values, which are the active will to power and the eternal recurrence, are the

⁴² Nietzsche, *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols and Other Writings*, 4.

⁴³ Nietzsche, *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols and Other Writings*, 174.

⁴⁴ Nietzsche, *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols and Other Writings*, 47.

laws of the overman in order to understand the being and the life. The teacher of these new values is Zarathustra.

There is only one repetition repeating itself in infinity,⁴⁵ it is the eternal recurrence. The recurrence is the infinity, but every recurrence is the different repetition or cycle. Firstly, it should be said that the recurrence is the event depending on the time, for example, to born and to die is the infinity in the life and in the time, but every birth and death are the difference, to born and to die are the eternal recurrence of the same but every recurrence happens as a different event. If it were the cycle of the same, then the active will to power, which is to create the new events and the perspectives, could not be possible. But, Nietzsche affirms to create the new perspectives, values and ideas, for the new values and ideas are the necessary to be different, *to want to be in any way different is, on this view, to want to be in every way different*;⁴⁶ therefore, the eternal recurrence is the recurrence of the difference and the voice of Zarathustra. Zarathustra emphasis the self-overcoming.⁴⁷ The self-overcoming is infinite recurrence in the life of the Overman. For example, *...in the world, to want our self to be different is also to want everything in the world to be different*.⁴⁸

Zarathustra, who is the advocate of eternal recurrence⁴⁹, brings the new law of being that is the active will to power. Zarathustra's animals say that you are the teacher of eternal recurrence⁵⁰ because the eternal recurrence of the will to power is the cycle of life, the suffering and the circle. These are the new values of the life because it says that whatever you have done, you wish to do it again and again because this is the essence of the active will to power. The reason of the new values is murder of God by human being. "God died."⁵¹ Since God is dead, the old values and ideas are invalid anymore; therefore, the human being needs the new will and ideas that belong to the overman. Zarathustra says to the people in the marketplace: *I teach you the overman. The human being is something that must be overcome*.⁵² The overman that is the meaning of the earth is the voice of the eternal recurrence of will to power as difference, which is to produce new perspectives or virtues because the old values or the ideas

⁴⁵ Alexander Nehamas, "The Eternal Recurrence", *The Philosophical Review* 89, 3(1980), 332.

⁴⁶ Nehamas, "The Eternal Recurrence", 344.

⁴⁷ Nehamas, "The Eternal Recurrence", 341.

⁴⁸ Nehamas, "The Eternal Recurrence", 344.

⁴⁹ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, trans. Adrian Del Caro (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 177.

⁵⁰ Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 177.

⁵¹ Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 5.

⁵² Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 5.

that is bad conscience, the ascetic ideal and dialectic do not help the human being to understand the new world. In addition, these old values are the poison of the life of the eternal recurrence and the active will to power.

The overman triumphs over human being bridging between the human being and the overman. The overman is the new star of the human being which is something that must be overcome.⁵³ The overman, who is beyond of the human being, has the active will to power because he creates always different or new ideas and perspectives for himself. Therefore, he is the voice of the eternal recurrence and difference because of creating the new and different life perspectives, in addition, he produces the new feelings and sensation in the world. On this view, it can be said that since the overman's consciousness is the consciousness of the enjoyment and the pleasure of the eternal recurrence of the difference, his consciousness's essence is to forget and to create as the opposite of the bad conscience and the resentment that tries not to forget the bad things that happen in his life. Since the overman affirms to forget, he affirms the chance, the play, the laugh, the dance and *to dance is to affirm becoming and the being of becoming*.⁵⁴

Becoming as the eternal recurrence in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* is represented by three metaphors: the camel, the lion, and the child. These three metaphors are the becoming of the active will to power as ontologic and the eternal recurrence as the metaphysic. Putting it in a different way, they represent the transition of the eternal recurrence from one stage to another. In here, the camel represents the old values that does not solve any problem, instead of it, they devaluate the human being in life. The lion represents the new values of the overman and the active will to power. In other words, the lion is the active will to power that wants to create the new life feelings but cannot do it yet because of not forgetting the past; the lion as the spirit wants to take his freedom and to be master upon his life;⁵⁵ and in order to create the new things the spirit transforms into the child that represents the innocence and the forgetting that make the new ideas be created. To forget is to give life a chance, to forget is to affirm playing and the dicethrow in life, but all these things are possible in the active will to power as the eternal recurrence of the difference because to forget makes the new beginning possible in the life. It is the life of the nobleman. According to Nietzsche, *The noble person wants to create the new things and the new virtues; the*

⁵³ Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 159.

⁵⁴ Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 170.

⁵⁵ Löwith, *Nietzsche's Philosophy of the Eternal Recurrence of the Same*, 25.

good person wants the old values, and for old things to be preserved.⁵⁶ Therefore, the teacher of the eternal recurrence says that the world revolves around the inventors of new values.⁵⁷ And it is obvious that every new value is related to difference because without creating the new things the difference is not possible, therefore, to create the new values makes the world get differentiated from the perspective of the eternal recurrence.

In addition, to create the new ideas and values is the essence of the eternal recurrence as the tragedy, and the tragedy is the consciousness of the active will that is a creator.⁵⁸ And the active will to power is the principle of the new values.⁵⁹ In other words, the active will to power and the eternal recurrence produce the tragic life. On this idea, the eternal recurrence causes the tragedy.

1.2. The Tragedy as The Eternal Recurrence of the Difference

The tragedy is the essence of life, which is the eternal recurrence, because what has been happened in the life until now will repeat itself again and again, therefore, whatever you do, it will finish and start again as repetition. Zarathustra says that:

Everything goes, everything comes back, the wheel of being rolls eternally. Everything dies, everything blossoms again, the year of being runs eternally. Everything breaks, everything is joined anew; the same house of being builds itself eternally. In every instant being begins; around every here rolls the ball there. The middle is everywhere. Cooked is the path of eternity.⁶⁰

This recurrence is not the repetition of the identity or the same, it is the eternal recurrence of difference because every recurrence is a new repetition. For example, every birth and death are different; every life is different.

On the other hand, this kind of life is a tragic life that produces the Dionysian joy. Dionysus is to affirm the eternal recurrence of the bad and the good, the beauty and the ugly, the starting and the finish. This kind of thought is related to the multiple affirmations of life. The multiple affirmation is to affirm the suffering and the bad, they can be understood together because if there is the life, then the pain

⁵⁶ Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 31.

⁵⁷ Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 137.

⁵⁸ Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 112.

⁵⁹ Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche-volume III*, trans. Joan Stambaugh, David Farrell Krell, and Frank A. Capuzzi (New York: Harper and Row, 1987), 15.

⁶⁰ Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 175.

would be, and the suffering would be, because since the life is a tragedy it is not only laughing, joying and suffering. For this reason, Dionysus is the joy of the eternal recurrence. In the view of the Dionysus, there is not absolute truth or identity or the sameness, everything can be altered because the essence of being is the becoming. The life is singular and tragic; that is why, it is innocent, not blameworthy. The reason of life being blameworthy is the reactive consciousness because from the perspective of reactive consciousness the life always should be good; if it is not good instead of solving the problem of life, it is blameworthy.

Dionysus sustains the tragic life. Apollo rejects the tragic life. As Dionysus is the teacher of the eternal recurrence, Apollo is the teacher of the Socratic ethic because Socratic ethic does not permit the tragic events to happen in life because of Socratic daemon, who reconciles what is good and bad for Socrates. For this reason, while Socrates is an Apollo character, Heraclitus is the tragic character because he affirms the becoming. Unlike the eternal recurrence and the joy of life, the Socratic ethic judges life based on three main ideas: virtue, sin and knowledge. In other words, since life is not affirmed in itself, the life is judged from the view of these ideas and this kind of consciousness affirms the life when the events in the life are good. According to Nietzsche, Socratic ethic is the name of the death of the tragedy⁶¹ and the eternal recurrence of difference because Socrates is against the difference. He always seeks one truth. In contrast, tragedy evaluates the life from the perspective of multiplicity or the difference because on the view of the tragedy as the eternal recurrence of the difference the truth cannot be one, the truth is the multiplicity and it depends on the different perspective; and the perspectives can be always altered depending on the new events in the life. Therefore, the tragedy as eternal recurrence of difference is to say yes to life, *even to the strangest and the harshest problems*.⁶² The life is not only bad or only good, the life is the eternal recurrence of the difference of the same because in the life everything goes and comes back; the whole repetition is the eternal recurrence of difference. To sum up, the eternal recurrence as the tragedy is *the amor fati* that is the energy of life and difference and the amor fati desire eternal recurrence as the difference of everything.

⁶¹ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy and Other Writings*, 70. Tragedy has been dead three times until now: as the Socratic ethic, modern thought, and dialectic thought. These three ideas cause the pessimism in the life because of the reactive thought. Since they seek the absolute truth, they sick the life from these highest values. In contrast, for Nietzsche, there is only one absolute truth, and it is the art. The art is the highest task and the true metaphysical activity of this life because the art is the highest creative activity for the human being and it affirms the life in itself.

⁶² Nietzsche, *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols and Other Writings*, 109.

Conclusion

The eternal recurrence is the main concept of Nietzsche's metaphysics because the eternal recurrence is the doctrine of being and the life. The eternal recurrence is to affirm the life as the chance, the becoming and the dice throw. In this perspective, life is becoming, chance and the dice throw that affirms to play whether to win or not. In other words, the dice throw and the play is to create the new and the different perspectives, ideas and virtues. On the other hand, depending on the new ideas or virtues, the eternal recurrence is to be the repetition of difference because every recurrence as creating is a different repetition. In addition, the eternal recurrence is related to the will to power. There are two kinds of the will to power: The active will to power that affirms the infinity of the eternal recurrence as tragedy and the reactive will to power that does not affirm the eternal recurrence of difference, instead, it affirms the absolute truth, the sameness and Apollon. To sum up, the essence of the eternal recurrence is the difference because the difference is to affirm to the chance, the becoming, the dice throw and the creating.

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