

Living, Destroying, Creating:
The Overcoming of *Ressentiment* in Nietzsche and Socrates

Eric Chesterton

Senior Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the Degree of
Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy
At Haverford College

Advisors: Dr. Kathleen Wright and Dr. Joel Yurdin

April 22, 2011

Contents

Abbreviations // iii

Acknowledgments //iv

Introduction // 1

Overview // 4

Ressentiment and Why it Needs to be Overcome // 7

Ressentiment // 7

Socrates' Alleged *Ressentiment* // 10

Nietzsche's Alleged *Ressentiment* // 12

Why We Need to Overcome *Ressentiment* // 14

Poets of Our Lives: Overcoming *Ressentiment* // 17

(The Sheep,) The Camel, the Lion, and the Child // 17

The Species of History Practiced by the Lamb, Camel, and Lion // 20

The Self as a Work of Art: Moving from Lion to Child // 23

The Child: The Acceptance of the Eternal Recurrence // 26

Socrates' Artistic Overcoming // 29

From Lion to Child: Nietzsche's Overcoming // 36

Conclusion // 41

Bibliography // 44

Abbreviations

Nietzsche

A	<i>The Antichrist</i>
BGE	<i>Beyond Good and Evil</i>
BT	<i>The Birth of Tragedy</i>
EH	<i>Ecce Homo</i>
EN	<i>Writings from the Early Notebooks</i>
GM	<i>On the Genealogy of Morality</i>
GS	<i>The Gay Science</i>
NW	<i>Nietzsche contra Wagner</i>
PP	<i>The Pre-Platonic Philosophers</i>
TI	<i>Twilight of the Idols</i>
UM	<i>Untimely Meditations</i>
WP	<i>The Will to Power</i>
Z	<i>Thus Spoke Zarathustra</i>

Other

NP	Gilles Deleuze, <i>Nietzsche and Philosophy</i>
----	---

Acknowledgments

For their patience and guidance while I frequently changed the focus of this paper, I must thank my two readers, Kathleen Wright and Joel Yurdin. They gave me the proper amount of guidance that both allowed me to explore my ever-changing ideas and maintain the level of focus and direction necessary for this project.

I am thankful to Kathleen Wright for being available for frequent meetings and allowing my topic to change significantly even after the draft of the paper. Her understanding of the growth and development essential to writing an undergraduate thesis has allowed me to end up with a thesis I was excited to write. Having now finished this paper, I have begun to see that suggestions she was offering back in the fall—which I thought were tangential at the time—were, in fact, essential to this current project. It must have been enjoyable for her to watch me struggle with solidifying a theme for this project when she had been suggesting it to me all along.

Joel Yurdin shaped the direction of this paper more than, I imagine, most second readers usually do. During my meeting with him about the draft I submitted, he suggested the possibility of the dialectic being both reactive and active as well as destructive and creative. This suggestion began the process that led to this thesis as it currently is. In the later stages of the project, he also helped me see a variety of distinctions I had failed to make and helped me articulate those distinctions clearly.

I must also thank two other professors who inspired this project. Stephen Salkever I thank for enriching my reading of Plato and philosophy in general as a zetetic, rather than dogmatic, pursuit. In his class on Thucydides and Plato's *Laws*, I feel that I really first came into my own as a writer and philosopher. His inspiration, I think, is reflected throughout this project. I must also thank Joshua Ramey for teaching a wonderful course on Deleuze and Guattari. Reading Deleuze profoundly changed my reading of philosophy. Deleuze's influence, I believe, resonates throughout this paper in ways beyond my numerous references to *Nietzsche and Philosophy*. Without Joshua's excellent teaching, I would have been unable to penetrate Deleuze's writing and this project would have suffered as a result.

Lastly, I would like to thank everyone that has had to listen to me vent or struggle with this project. I'd like to thank, especially, Enzo Sentuti for getting me excited about my project. His positive reaction to my project really raised my morale when I was still lost. I'd also like to thank my parents and my brother for listening to my ideas and supporting me throughout this process.

Introduction

Why so soft, so submissive and yielding? Why is there so much denial in your hearts? so little destiny in your gaze? ...And if your hardness doesn't want to flash and cut and tear things apart: how will you ever be able to join me in – creating? All creators are hard. And you will need to find it blissful to press your hand on millennia as if on wax...to write on the will of millennia as if on bronze, - harder than bronze, nobler than bronze. Only the noblest is completely hard. Oh my brothers, I place this new tablet over you: become hard!

Friedrich Nietzsche
Twilight of the Idols, “The Hammer Speaks”

Throughout his writing, Nietzsche attempts to forge a deep connection between philosophy, art, and life. He believes that in order for human beings to live the best lives, they must constantly be engaged in a process of creating, thinking, and doing. It is only in tending to all three of these aspects that we can overcome ourselves and be in a position to declare a complete affirmation of existence. From the earliest pages of his first published work, *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche is attentive to the interconnectedness of the philosophic and artistic enterprises in service of life. He writes, “a person with artistic sensibility relates to the reality of dream in the same way as a philosopher relates to the reality of existence: he attends to it closely and with pleasure, using these images to interpret life, and practicing for life with the help of these events”(BT, 1). Both artist and philosopher, then, attend to reality in order to interpret and practice for life. Similarly, in the last words of his final writing, *Nietzsche contra Wagner*, Nietzsche writes in a section adapted from *The Gay Science*:

Oh, those Greeks! They knew how to *live* ...And isn't this precisely what we are coming back to, we daredevils of the spirit who have climbed the highest and most dangerous peak of current thought and looked around from up there, looked *down* from up there? Are we not just in this respect – Greeks? Worshippers of shapes, tones, words? And therefore – *artists*? (NW, Epilogue, 2)

Once again, art, living well, and philosophy are seen as interdependent. This has important consequences for how we practice philosophy, who we consider as an artist, and how we approach our own lives.

One of the important tasks of this new conception of philosophy is to combat forces that

prevent us from living as best we can. For Nietzsche, this means living lives which we can affirm and with which we can express satisfaction. One of the predominant forces that prevent us from living lives that we would want to affirm is Christian or slave morality. In *On the Genealogy of Morality*, Nietzsche identifies the sickness of *ressentiment*—the main force behind the slave morality--, which prevents us from leading the type of active lives that allow us to affirm our existence. *Ressentiment* removes the possibility of artistic creation because it is characterized by an inability to act, an ability which is required for the creation of something new. Instead, everything for the man of *ressentiment* is reaction.

In order to live well, then, human beings must find some way to overcome this reactive sickness of *ressentiment*. Nietzsche believes that the key to overcoming *ressentiment* is by opening up a space for creation. In this sense, philosophy takes up a task of destruction. It must say 'no' to the values and beliefs that arise out of *ressentiment* in Christian morality in order to remove the burden of duty that comes along with this morality and stifles individuality. This destruction, therefore, opens up a space in which an individual can become who he is and create new values. It is within this space that philosophy assumes a creative or artistic role. To affirm our existence and be satisfied with ourselves, it is not enough to be free from external burdens of duty, rather, we must become selves who are worthy of our affirmation. To do this, we must approach our characters as works of art or literature; we must “be the poets of our own lives”(GS, 299). This entails a process of both examining the self and styling it into a coherent character. It is only after one has fashioned a coherent self that he is capable of affirming himself in the most active and positive sense; he must take ownership of his entire self, both his strengths and his weaknesses. It is for reaching this stage of affirmation that philosophy must be intimately connected with both art and living.

In the context of this overcoming of *ressentiment*, Socrates can provide us with an example of the two-fold nature of philosophy as both destructive and creative. Socrates, in his use of the dialectic as a method of examining the arguments and opinions of his interlocutor, appears to engage almost exclusively in this destructive task of philosophy. Especially in the earlier dialogues, such as the *Euthyphro*, Socrates seems to be afflicted with the disease of *ressentiment* since his only apparent aim is to tear down the opinions of his interlocutor, leaving him humiliated and defeated. However, Socrates reveals elsewhere that the dialectic can also have a creative use. This creative application of the dialectic, Socrates suggests to some of his interlocutors, can be used to make them more virtuous people. Moreover, in the *Phaedo*, in the days before he is put to death, Socrates applies this dialectic to himself and begins the project of giving style to his character. This understanding of Socrates' use of the dialectic provides us with a framework for understanding Nietzsche's model for overcoming *ressentiment*.

Further, this understanding of Socrates as a figure engaging in the challenge of overcoming *ressentiment* allows us to gain an appreciation for the affinity Nietzsche felt with Socrates. Nietzsche wrote in his notebook from the summer of 1875, "I must confess that *Socrates* is so close to me that I am almost always fighting a battle with him"(EN, 6, 3). Throughout his work, Nietzsche, like Socrates, attempts to give style to his character and become a literary figure. Although he was not the author of his own literary character, Socrates, of course, becomes a literary character in Plato's dialogues. Nietzsche becomes the author of his own literary character in *Ecce Homo*. Therefore, this reading of Socrates as a figure caught in the struggle to overcome *ressentiment* provides us with both a richer understanding of the Socratic elenchus or dialectic and an example of the development one must undergo in order to overcome *ressentiment*.

Overview

I will begin by exploring Nietzsche's concept of *ressentiment* as developed in *On the Genealogy of Morality*. I present it as a development that occurs as a non-acted reaction to an external stimulus. This reaction, instead, takes the form of a devaluing or negating of the values of a stronger or nobler type. It is only by this method of devaluing the strength of an 'other' that the man of *ressentiment* can affirm himself and find his existence tolerable. This, for Nietzsche, is not a true, positive affirmation, but, rather, a reactive and self-deceptive affirmation. Next, I will present arguments for how both Socrates and Nietzsche could be seen as suffering from *ressentiment*. The Socratic elenchus of the early dialogues seems to have no other purpose than the rejection of the arguments of Socrates' interlocutors and the humiliation of the interlocutors themselves. In this sense, Socrates expresses his *ressentiment* in that he has to devalue or humiliate his opponent in order to achieve some victory or affirmation for himself. Similarly, we can view the Nietzsche who tears down Socrates in *The Birth of Tragedy* and Christian morality in the *Genealogy* as expressing his *ressentiment*. In those critiques, Nietzsche seems to reject or devalue those subject to the critique without positing or creating new values in their place. In my later discussions of Socrates' and Nietzsche's overcoming of *ressentiment*, I will reject these views and attempt to show Socrates and Nietzsche as engaged in a process of overcoming.

After showing why *ressentiment* is something we need to and should want to overcome, I turn to the three metamorphoses of the spirit that Nietzsche presents at the beginning of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. I argue that these three metamorphoses—the camel, lion, and child—all represent different stages in the overcoming of *ressentiment*. In addition to these three stages, I add the stage of the herd animal or lamb that Nietzsche discusses in the *Genealogy* as a representation of *ressentiment*. The process of overcoming *ressentiment*, then, begins in the

metamorphosis of the lamb into the camel. It is here that an active willing begins, although that willing has not yet turned creative. The next stage—the stage of the lion—is where critique and the destructive task of philosophy occur and the spirit says 'no' to the burdens and duties that weigh on the camel. His critique is distinct from the negation that is carried out by the man of *ressentiment* in that the lion's critique destroys so that creation may follow, whereas the critique of *ressentiment* destroys creation so that that which exists may remain. This destructive no-saying does not allow the lion to create, but opens up freedom for future creation.

It is in the space of freedom opened up by the destruction of the lion that life can be lived artistically. The way we live in this free space determines whether we are able to give the highest affirmation of our lives by willing the eternal recurrence. In Book IV of the *Gay Science*, Nietzsche calls us to 'give style' to our characters (GS, 290) and be the poets of our lives (GS,299). It is this type of literary and artistic care for and fashioning of the self that, I argue, allows us to move from the destruction of the lion to the playful affirmation of the child. Through this process of living poetically and becoming who one is, one comes to the realization that who he turns out to be is dependent on every moment of that becoming. Because of this realization, when he achieves a coherent and satisfying self, he is able to take ownership of all aspects of his character and will the eternal recurrence.

Lastly, I turn to Socrates' and Nietzsche's attempts to overcome *ressentiment* and practice an active, artistic, and affirmative philosophy. In the case of Socrates, we see the dialectic as the destructive tool of the lion-type that examines the self as well as the culture and values around oneself. Socrates, through the dialectic, effectively becomes the critic of his times and examines his own life. Toward the end of his life, as portrayed in Plato's dialogues, Socrates begins to give style to his character when he composes poetry in the *Phaedo*. In addition, Socrates takes

ownership of his decisions in life that led to his being put to death. However, he falls short of taking ownership of his entire character and willing the recurrence of his weaknesses as evidenced by his attempt on the last day of his life to engage in 'popular art' (61a). Nietzsche goes farther than Socrates in his overcoming of *ressentiment* in that he is able to affirm all aspects of his life and completely fashions himself as a literary character. He achieves this through writing many books and, ultimately, reflecting on them in *Ecce Homo* to reveal the presence of a coherent character driven by a single taste throughout all of those works. By looking at the ways in which both Socrates and Nietzsche overcome *ressentiment* and attempt to fashion themselves into beings capable of affirming their entire existence, we can understand the connection Nietzsche wants to make between philosophy, art, and life. It is only a life lived artistically and philosophically that is capable of affirming itself completely.

***Ressentiment* and Why it Needs to be Overcome**

Ressentiment

In the first essay of *On the Genealogy of Morality*, Nietzsche introduces the concept of *ressentiment* as the catalyst of the slave revolt in morality.

...the slaves' revolt in morality occurs when *ressentiment* itself turns creative and gives birth to values: the *ressentiment* of those beings who, denied the proper response of action, compensate for it only with imaginary revenge. ...slave morality says 'no' on principle to everything that is 'outside', 'other', 'non-self': and *this* 'no' is its creative deed. This reversal of the evaluating glance – this *essential* orientation to the outside instead of back onto itself – is a feature of *ressentiment*. ...its action is basically a reaction. (GM, I, 10)

The first feature Nietzsche associates with *ressentiment* is that it occurs in a type of person who is “denied the proper response of action”. It is in this sense that *ressentiment* is a characteristic of the weaker type. *Ressentiment* occurs after an individual sustains some sort of injury, but it does not occur in every victim of harm. Instead, as Max Scheler notes, it can only occur when powerful emotions are combined with physical or psychological impotence:

Ressentiment can only arise if these emotions are particularly powerful and yet must be suppressed because they are coupled with the feeling that one is unable to act them out – either because of weakness, physical or mental... (48)

That *ressentiment* arises in cases when an individual is unable to act, either physically or mentally, in response to some sort of external stimulus is why it is associated with the weaker types. Psychologically, the man of *ressentiment* is characterized by an incapacity to forget (NP,115), where forgetting is “an active ability to suppress, positive in the strongest sense of the word”(GM, II, 1). Thus, *ressentiment* occurs most prominently in a type of man that is doubly weak in both his physical impotence and his incapacity to actively forget.

The psychological weakness of the man of *ressentiment*, leads us to its second characteristic. This characteristic is captured best by Brian Leiter when he associates it with a

“special kind of festering hatred and vengefulness” (204). It is important to stress that this festering of hatred is part of the man of *ressentiment's* reaction to a harm done to him. That this is the phenomenological character of his reaction is captured in the etymology of *ressentiment*, which Deleuze identifies: “If we ask what the man of *ressentiment* is, we must not forget this principle: he does not re-act. And the word *ressentiment* gives a definite clue: *reaction ceases to be acted in order to become something felt (senti)*” (NP, 111)¹. Realizing that he is unable to respond actively with force equal to the force that injured him, the man of *ressentiment's* revenge becomes a feeling of resent directed toward his injurer.

Because he is unable to forget the harm done to him, and the feeling of resent and desire for revenge are unable to be satisfied, a third feature of *ressentiment* emerges to ease this festering of emotions. This is the reversal of the evaluating glance in which evaluation is oriented outward rather than onto the self in order to devalue the other.² *Ressentiment* devalues and negates the strength of the stronger type and allows the man of *ressentiment* to see himself as good. This eases the festering of resent, because it is transformed into a feeling of superiority over the “evil” noble.

Nietzsche illustrates the absurdity of this mode of valuation that devalues strength and affirms weakness through his discussion of the lambs and the birds of prey (GM, I, 13). Here, Nietzsche says that there is no reason to blame the birds of prey for carrying off smaller lambs. When the lambs declare the birds of prey 'evil' and whatever is least like the bird of prey 'good'

¹ “Re-acting” is the response of the active type. Here, he responds to an action against him with another action. The man of *ressentiment*, however, fails to respond with an action. Instead, he responds reactively by means of a feeling within himself or a devaluing of the values of an ‘other’.

²This is one of the central differences Nietzsche uncovers between the slave morality and the noble morality. In the noble morality, the nobles first affirm their values and deem them “good”. They only seek out an opposing “bad” in order to affirm themselves more fully. Their valuation begins with the self before turning outward. The slaves, however, cannot actively affirm their own values. They must first seek out an opposing, “evil” type and devalue their existence through labeling it “evil” in order to affirm themselves as “good”. This is an essentially reactive method of valuation; the self is only affirmed after an ‘other’ is devalued.

they do place blame on the birds of prey for carrying off the lambs because, presumably, they could have held themselves back. Based on this valuation, the lambs are able to declare themselves 'good' because they succeeded in holding themselves back from expressing their strength to harm others. Nietzsche declares this assumption that a force can be restrained or otherwise controlled an absurdity:

It is just as absurd to ask strength *not* to express itself as strength, *not* to be a desire to overthrow, crush, become master, to be a thirst for enemies, resistance and triumphs, as it is to ask weakness to express itself as strength. (GM, I, 13)

Deleuze characterizes this as a “*fiction of a force separated from what it can do*”(NP, 123). This fiction, for Nietzsche, is brought about by a seduction of language, “which construes and misconstrues all actions as conditional upon an agency, a 'subject'”(GM, I, 13). According to this fiction, a subject is separate from his action; he either could have acted or restrained himself from acting. “Moreover it is thought that more (abstract) force is needed to hold back than is needed to act” (NP, 123). By means of this fiction, the man of *ressentiment* can view his weakness and non-activity as an expression of his strength in holding himself back from acting. It is in this moment that *ressentiment* becomes a value-creating force

Ressentiment, therefore, can be characterized by four moments of development. First, a strong type injures or harms a man of the weaker type who is unable to respond actively through either physical strength or forgetting. Next, because of his inability to forget, the reaction of the weaker man becomes something that *he* feels and that festers because it cannot be actively released. Third, the man of *ressentiment* devalues and negates the values of his stronger injurer by holding him blameworthy for his expression of strength. He is able to blame the other for his actions because he believes that the stronger type could have held back his expression of strength (fiction of a force separated from what it can do). Lastly, the man of *ressentiment* takes this

devaluation and blaming a step further and holds himself praiseworthy for withholding his strength. It is, therefore, only on the basis of devaluing an 'other', 'non-self' that the man of *ressentiment* can see himself as good instead of miserable and weak.

Socrates' Alleged Ressentiment

Based on readings of *The Birth of Tragedy* and *Twilight of the Idols*, it has been asserted that Nietzsche sees Socrates as a man of *ressentiment*. In the *Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche describes Socrates as the archetype of the theoretical man who destroys Greek tragedy through his emphasis on, or obsession with, reason. Before the advent of Socrates, Nietzsche saw tragedy as the height of Greek culture; Socrates, therefore, appears as a decadent monster who initiates the decline of Greek civilization. Socrates held art and tragedy to a standard based on reason that Nietzsche calls aesthetic Socratism--"In order to be beautiful, everything must be reasonable"(BT, 12). When Socrates, or Euripides—the mask through which the daemon of Socrates spoke (BT, 12)--held reasonableness as the measure of tragedy, tragedy appeared less beautiful. Since its first move is an outward evaluating glance, this can be seen as a devaluation characteristic of *ressentiment*. Unable to posit new values that would affirm themselves without the need for comparison to others, Socrates had to devalue tragedy through this act of judging based on reason. The first move of Euripides and Socrates is to devalue tragedy because it is unreasonable. Only after this powerful artistic and cultural force is devalued by measuring with this standard, can Socrates affirm that he and his values—the Forms—are good because they are both reasonable; Socrates is seen as good for engaging in rational thought and the Forms are held as good because they are knowable through reason. The genesis of the Socratic affirmation of reason, therefore, is the same as the man of *ressentiment's* affirmation of virtues such as humility and patience in that they both begin with a devaluing.

In the *Twilight of the Idols*, Nietzsche develops a strong association between dialectics and *ressentiment*. The dialectic overthrows noble tastes and allows the weak to rise to the top (TI, “The Problem of Socrates”, 5). He characterizes the dialectic as something chosen as a last resort and self-defense (TI, “The Problem of Socrates”, 6). The dialectic is, therefore, a tool of the weak to combat the greater strength of the nobles. When they are unable to overpower the stronger and are tormented by the festering feeling of hatred, the weak turn to dialectics as a last resort at satisfying this festering desire. In the next aphorism, Nietzsche describes how dialectical revenge works and seems to associate this type of revenge with Socrates:

- Is Socratic irony an expression of revolt? Of plebeian *ressentiment*? As the member of an oppressed group, did Socrates take pleasure in the ferocity with which he could thrust his syllogistic knife? Did he avenge himself on the nobles he fascinated? - As a dialectician, you have a merciless tool in your hands; dialectics lets you act like a tyrant; you humiliate the people you defeat. The dialectician puts the onus on his opponent to show that he is not an idiot: the dialectician infuriates people and makes them feel helpless at the same time. The dialectician *undermines* his opponent's intellect. - What? Is dialectics just a form of *revenge* for Socrates? (TI, “The Problem of Socrates”, 7)

In this portrayal of the dialectician, Socrates certainly appears to be a man of *ressentiment*. Through the tool of the dialectic, Socrates is able to take revenge upon his noble opponents without having to overpower them. The implication is that, without the dialectic at his disposal, Socrates would not be able to overcome his noble adversaries. The values inherent in the dialectic—the singular focus on reason and logical argumentation—effectively devalue the values of the opponent. The dialectic, like *ressentiment*, requires an object—the opponent and his argument to be refuted—and is essentially reactive since it needs the presentation of the object of examination to occur before the dialectic can be employed. Socrates employs the dialectic as a reaction to claims to knowledge expressed by his interlocutors. By associating the dialectic so strongly with Socrates, it is natural for many writers to conclude that Nietzsche sees

Socrates as a man of *ressentiment* who employs the dialectic as an outlet for his festering envy and anger to devalue his perceived opponents. This seems to occur in the *Euthyphro*, in which Socrates' interlocutor, Euthyphro, is on his way to court to prosecute his father for the murder of a slave. He claims to have a precise knowledge of piety and impiety (4e-5a) and Socrates proceeds to question him about these very things. Socrates subjects Euthyphro's definitions of piety to rational argument and rejects the various definitions he proposes. In the end, it seems that Socrates' elenchus, or examination, has left Euthyphro humiliated when he claims that he is “in a hurry to go somewhere” and rushes away from Socrates' questioning (15e). Euthyphro seems to be left in no better position with respect to virtue, knowledge, or piety than he was at the beginning of his examination from Socrates. Socrates says that he hoped to learn a definition of piety so that he could defend himself against his accusers in his own trial (16a). There is a sense, then, that, in the absence of an acceptable answer to the question “what is piety?”, the elenchus has no positive outcome. The only result is that Euthyphro has been refuted and humiliated by Socrates. It is the representation of the dialectic as a tool for refutation and humiliation that leads Nietzsche to suggest that Socrates may be afflicted with the disease of *ressentiment*.

Nietzsche's Alleged Ressentiment

Just as it can be argued that there are signs of *ressentiment* in Socrates' character in some of Plato's dialogues, it is reasonable to see Nietzsche as a man of *ressentiment* in his critiques of morality, Christianity and Socrates in, respectively, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, *The Antichrist*, and *The Birth of Tragedy* and *Twilight of the Idols*. In these texts there is an apparent similarity to the type of elenchus in which Socrates engages Euthyphro; Nietzsche tears down and negates Socrates, Christianity, and morality, but there is no clear upshot to the critique. After he rejects

these forces by exposing underlying or concealed motives or drives, he fails to provide the reader with some kind of answer or alternative mode of existence. Instead, the European, Christian, or Socratic is left feeling humiliated and defeated after reading Nietzsche's attacks. Without positing an alternative to the force rejected in them, these texts can come across as representative of Nietzsche's feeling of *ressentiment* and powerlessness when confronted by the powers of moral, religious, and philosophical traditions.

Another aspect of Nietzsche's apparent project in these three texts is, like the aim of the dialectic, to search for and expose the reasons for practices, beliefs, and traditions. In *Twilight of the Idols*, Nietzsche explains why putting reasons on display is not proper for the noble or honorable:

Before Socrates, dialectical manners were rejected in good society: they were seen as bad manners, they humiliated people. The young were warned against them. People were generally distrustful of reasons being displayed like this. Honourable things, like honourable people, do not go around with their reasons in their hand. ...Nothing with real value needs to be proved first. (TI, "The Problem of Socrates", 5)

By putting the reasons for European morality or rational thought on display, then, Nietzsche may be unfairly opening them up to devaluation. Their nobility is not at all derived from their reasonableness; rather, they do not need to be proved or justified. In a sense, their power and influence is proof enough for their existence. Nietzsche's polemics, in this view, then, hold their objects blameworthy for an aspect they cannot and should not be expected to control—the reasonableness of their existence. They do not need to be reasonable to be noble. Therefore, Nietzsche's insistence on exposing their reasons or motives is an attack characteristic of weakness and *ressentiment* since such an exposure is merely a tool of revenge against their force. In this way, it seems natural to argue, Nietzsche's project is significantly driven by his own *ressentiment*.

Why We Need to Overcome Ressentiment

I have shown so far that *ressentiment* is a characteristic of what Nietzsche labels the weak or reactive types. It is a felt reaction that occurs in the absence of a possibility of active reaction. Because the man of *ressentiment* is characterized by a prodigious memory, this feeling festers and grows whenever he remembers the unavenged injury done to him. In order to ease the tension of this festering, this sick man negates the values of his attacker and declares himself good by contrast. I have also presented arguments that suggest that both Socrates and Nietzsche were themselves afflicted with this sickness. Both seem, in their own different ways, to seek only to humiliate their opponents and devalue the reasonableness of their arguments. In the remainder of this paper, I will present Nietzsche's model for overcoming *ressentiment* that he develops most thoroughly in *The Gay Science* and *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. Once we have reached this understanding of what being free from *ressentiment* entails, I will return my focus to Socrates and Nietzsche in the context of their own overcomings of *ressentiment*.

Before we begin this project, however, we must first understand why *ressentiment* is something we should want to overcome. In the Prologue of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, we are presented with the image of the last man:

They abandoned the regions where it was hard to live: for one needs warmth...Becoming ill and mistrustful are considered sinful by them: one proceeds with caution...No shepherd and one herd! Each wants the same, each is the same, and whoever feels differently goes voluntarily into the insane asylum...One is clever and knows everything that has happened, so there is no end to their mockery. People still quarrel but they reconcile quickly – otherwise it is bad for the stomach. One has one's little pleasure for the day and one's little pleasure for the night: but one honors health. (Z, "Zarathustra's Prologue", 5)

This last man is the most advanced stage of the sickness of *ressentiment*. There is only one herd of people and no shepherd. No one distinguishes himself as strong enough to lead the herd and no one attempts to break from the herd. Everyone is the same. In other words, everyone is weak

because, otherwise, strength would express itself, since, as we saw, strength cannot help but express itself as such. The last men, then, are a group of undifferentiated and weak men of *ressentiment*. Moreover, this arrangement Zarathustra describes is their ideal environment—living life requires no overcoming of adversity; there is neither an excess of pain nor of pleasure. Everyone is decidedly and contentedly mediocre. What is at stake in overcoming *ressentiment*, then, is that, if we fail to overcome it, the human race will eventually become a herd of mediocre last men.

Nietzsche's Zarathustra, in his prologue, gives us a glimpse of what lies in store for those who completely overcome *ressentiment*. When Zarathustra enters the town after he descends from the mountains, he speaks to the people:

Behold, I teach you the overman... What is the greatest thing that you can experience? It is the hour of your great contempt. The hour in which even your happiness turns to nausea and likewise your reason and your virtue. The hour in which you say: 'What matters my happiness? It is poverty and filth and a pitiful contentment. But my happiness ought to justify existence itself!' The hour in which you say: 'What matters my reason? Does it crave knowledge like the lion its food?...'The hour in which you say: 'What matters my virtue? It has not yet made me rage. How weary I am of my good and evil! That is all poverty and filth and a pitiful contentment!' (Z, "Zarathustra's Prologue", 3)

The overman casts off the burdens of good-evil slave morality and disinterested rational thought. He recognizes that measuring himself against the standards of virtue and reason has made him weary and left him in a "pitiful contentment". Once he recognizes these things as little more than wearisome burdens, this overman becomes disgusted by them and feels "great contempt" toward them. In this hour of great contempt, the overman revalues happiness, reason, and virtue so that happiness justifies existence, reason becomes like a lion's craving for food, and virtue becomes a force that inspires rage. According to Nietzsche, this revaluation is the greatest thing one can ever experience. This contempt takes a form different from the devaluation that occurs

in *ressentiment*. Instead it takes the form of an active critique:

Critique is not a re-action of *re-sentiment* but the active expression of an active mode of existence; attack and not revenge, the natural aggression of a way of being, the divine wickedness without which perfection could not be imagined... (NP, 3)

To overcome *ressentiment*, then, is to be able to take up this active mode of existence and way of being. It is only after the overcoming of *ressentiment* that one can even begin to *imagine* perfecting the self. This active life, moreover, is a condition for affirmation (NP, 102). As we saw, affirmation is impossible for the man of *ressentiment*; he can only negate and devalue. The overcoming of *ressentiment*, then, is tantamount to becoming capable of affirmation. The remainder of this paper explores the process one must undergo in order to overcome *ressentiment* and prepare oneself to affirm his own existence in the highest, most active sense.

Poets of Our Lives: Overcoming Ressentiment

As we have seen, the man of *ressentiment* is a type that Nietzsche wants to do away with. In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Zarathustra's speeches begin with a presentation of the three metamorphoses of the spirit: "how the spirit becomes a camel, and the camel a lion, and finally the lion a child" (Z, 16). These three metamorphoses are essential to our understanding of how Nietzsche thinks we can overcome *ressentiment* and become free spirits or Overmen. The metamorphoses begin with the spirit becoming the camel, who willingly takes on the heaviest burdens of duty. But, from what state does the spirit begin in its metamorphosis to the camel? Based on description of the herd animals in the *Genealogy* and *Beyond Good and Evil*, the camel seems to be stage immediately after the sheep of the herd. The camel is distinguished from the sheep by its solitariness. Then, the camel becomes a lion, who denies duty with a sacred 'no' in order to create freedom for the creation of new values. The lion, however, is not able to fulfill this creation of values; instead, only the child – the final metamorphosis of the spirit – can perform this sacred yes-saying of creation. These metamorphoses, together with the calls in the *Gay Science* that we give style to our characters (GS, 290) and be poets of our lives (GS, 299), provide us with a model of the life or type of character who is capable of overcoming *ressentiment*. Using this model, we will evaluate Socrates' and Nietzsche's attempts to overcome their own *ressentiment*.

(The Sheep,) The Camel, the Lion, and the Child

In the *Genealogy*, Nietzsche tears down what he sees as the European or Christian morality of the herd. The sheep of the herd are kept together by the ascetic priest who changes the direction of *ressentiment*. As the shepherd, the ascetic priest defends the sheep against themselves:

...he carries out a clever, hard and secret struggle against anarchy and the ever-present threat of the inner disintegration of the herd, where the most dangerous of blasting and explosive materials, *ressentiment*, continually piles up. His particular trick, and his prime use, is to detonate this explosive material without blowing up either the herd or the shepherd...the priest is the *direction-changer* of *ressentiment*. (GM, III, 15)

It is in the herd that *ressentiment* reaches its highest power of being directed against the self. The sheep, therefore, represents the ultimate man of *ressentiment*. The priest trains the herd to see the expression of the individual as immoral: “[h]igh and independent spirituality, the will to stand alone...are conceived to be a danger; everything that raises the individual above the herd...is called *evil*...” (BGE, 201). Thus, the good sheep stays in the shepherd’s herd and passively accepts and is obedient to the commands and laws of his shepherd. His self-directed *ressentiment* prevents the sheep from developing a will to stand alone because standing alone leaves one with only his own guilt. The herd, according to the shepherd, is the one savior from guilt and the hope of the future (BGE, 202).

The type of the camel represents a major break from the sheep. In the image of the camel, unlike the description of the slave or sheep, Nietzsche gives us a sense of the potential strength of an active manifestation of this spirit:

To the spirit there is much that is heavy; to the strong, carrying spirit imbued with reverence. Its strength demands what is heavy and heaviest. What is heavy? thus asks the carrying spirit. It kneels down like a camel and wants to be well loaded. What is heaviest, you heroes? thus asks the carrying spirit, so that I might take it upon myself and rejoice in my strength. (Z, 16)

The camel sees it as an expression of its strength to take on the onerous burden of the “thou shalt” in hope of entering the otherworldly realm of heaven. Like the man of *ressentiment*, who sees his non-action as an expression of the strength to “hold back” from acting, the camel views this weighing down as an expression of his strength. However, the camel distinguishes himself from this man of *ressentiment* in that he wills his burden; he “wants to be well-loaded” (Z, 16).

Further, the camel is able to perform an active expression of his strength. After taking upon itself all of these “thou shalt”, the loaded camel is able to hurry into the desert. Unlike the sheep whose obedience to the “thou shalt” weighs him down to remaining with the herd, the camel is able to stand alone with the burden of the same “thou shalt”. It is in his desert that the camel undergoes his metamorphosis into the lion.

Nietzsche describes the metamorphosis of the lion:

My brothers, why is the lion required by the spirit? Why does the beast of burden, renouncing and reverent, not suffice? To create new values – not even the lion is capable of that: but to create freedom for itself for new creation – that is within the power of the lion. To create freedom for oneself and also a sacred No to duty: for that, my brothers, the lion is required. To take the right to new values – that is the most terrible taking for a carrying and reverent spirit. Indeed, it is preying, and the work of a predatory animal. Once it loved “thou shalt” as its most sacred, now it must find delusion and despotism even in what is most sacred to it, in order to wrest freedom from its love by preying. The lion is required for this preying.
(Z,17)

The lion gains its freedom from duty by saying ‘no’ to the “thou shalt” that burdened itself when a camel. This no-saying of the lion is different from the no-saying of the man of *ressentiment*.

The man of *ressentiment* says 'no' to the noble values in order to devalue them to make himself look better in comparison. The 'no' of the lion removes a burden that restrains the expression of the self; its 'no' creates freedom for the self. While the lion, like the camel, is not capable of creating new values, it at least creates freedom from duty. This space of freedom is a necessary condition of possibility for the creation of values. This affirmation of the right to new values, the destruction of the despotism of “thou shalt”, is the most terrible affirmation for the spirit of the camel. As we saw in the *Genealogy*, the man of *ressentiment* needs the burden of duty and the fiction of an otherworldly life to give meaning to his life (GM, III, 28). The lion is presented here as a preparatory stage: he cannot create values, but does create the conditions for such a creation. The lion is a necessary bridge between the camel and the child. We would have no

hope of realizing the affirmative and creative power of the child were it not for the destruction and nay-saying of the lion. The lion fights the figures and conditions of *ressentiment* so that the next metamorphosis can be liberated from this regime.

The child arises through the next metamorphosis and is characterized by his lack of involvement with *ressentiment*:

Why must the preying lion still become a child? The child is innocence and forgetting, a new beginning, a game, a wheel rolling out of itself, a first movement, a sacred yes-saying. Yes, for the game of creation my brothers a sacred yes-saying is required. The spirit wants *its* will, the one lost to the world now wins *its own* world. (Z, 17)

Whereas the lion brought about the ending of the regime of *ressentiment*, the child heralds a new beginning. This new beginning is characterized by a perspectivism and each spirit winning its own world. The child only wants its will; it is not concerned with what any other spirit wills. Because of its exclusive focus on its own will and its own world, the child is able to admit of the different willings of multiple spirits as long as it wins its own world. The camel existed under conditions of a dogmatic “thou shalt” that held true as duty for everyone. The spirit of the camel did not have its own will; rather, it found itself subservient to external wills and, thus, was burdened by these externally imposed duties. The child, on the other hand, desires to affirm its own will. It must say 'yes' to its own will and its own world. To do this, it need not say 'no' to other worlds or other wills—it can admit perspectivism—but, fundamentally, it is characterized by the affirmation of the self.

The Species of History Practiced by the Lamb, Camel, and Lion

In the *Untimely Meditations*, Nietzsche introduces three species of history—monumental, antiquarian, and critical—which correspond to these stages in the metamorphosis of the spirit. Monumental history “pertains to [man]...as a being who suffers and seeks deliverance”(UM, II,

2). The person who tends to monumental history focuses on great achievements of past ages.

Because of its narrow focus on great achievements, whole segments of the past are forgotten and despised. The monumental form of history is also one the impotent take hold of:

For they do not desire to see new greatness emerge: their means of preventing it is to say 'Behold, greatness already exists!'...Monumental history is the masquerade costume in which their hatred of the great and powerful of their own age is disguised as satiated admiration for the great and powerful of past ages...(UM,II,2)

Just as the creation of values such as humility and patience is a disguised method of devaluing and despising noble values, monument history serves as a disguise for the hatred of nobility and great achievements in the present. It is, therefore, the lamb that practices this monumental history to keep everyone in the herd: the past has left us great things; therefore, there is no need for anyone in the present to distinguish himself from the herd by rising above it. Monumental history, thus, serves to stifle the expression of present greatness.

The next species of history is antiquarian, which “pertains to [man] as a being who preserves and reveres”(UM, II, 2). He who practices antiquarian history takes care of that which existed from old in order to preserve the conditions of his existence for the future generations. The problem with this mode of history, however, is that it has a very restricted field of vision. It only perceives one community, one people, one culture. As a result, it misses out on much of what exists, and “the little it does see it sees much too close up and isolated”(UM, II, 3). Therefore, “there is a lack of that discrimination of value and that sense of proportion which would distinguish between the things of the past in a way that would do true justice to them” (UM,II,3). It is here that we see the relation between the camel and antiquarian history; because the antiquarian historian is unable to discriminate and assigns each thing too much importance, he is likely, like the camel, to take on too much of a burden and be weighed down by it. Nietzsche reveals another limitation of antiquarian history and, therefore, of the camel that is

relevant to the overcoming of *ressentiment*:

...it knows only how to *preserve* life, not how to engender it; it always undervalues that which is becoming because it has no instinct for divining it...Thus, it hinders any firm resolve to attempt something new, thus it paralyses the man of action who, as one who acts, will and must offend some piety or other. (UM, II, 3)

We saw earlier that the camel, while able to exist under the burden of “thou shalt”, is unable to become or create something new. The camel does not attack any duty or commandment; instead, it only accepts and carries their burdens. In order to enhance life and be a man of action, a third species of history is necessary.

The last species of history “pertains to [man] as a being who acts and strives”, and Nietzsche calls it a critical use (UM, II, 2). The critical use of history brings the past before a “tribunal”, examines it, and condemns it. It demands a suspension of the noble trait of forgetfulness that, otherwise, helps one avoid *ressentiment*:

...this same life that requires forgetting demands a temporary suspension of this forgetfulness; it wants to be clear as to how unjust the existence of anything – a privilege, a caste, a dynasty, for example – is, and how greatly this thing deserves to perish. Then its past is regarded critically, then one takes the knife to its roots, then one cruelly tramples over every kind of piety. ...The best we can do is confront our inherited and hereditary nature with our knowledge, and through a new, stern discipline combat our inborn heritage and implant in ourselves a new habit, a new instinct, a second nature, so that our first nature withers away. (UM,II,3)

We see the destructive work of the lion clearly in this critical use of history. The task of critical history is to judge and destroy the past and our first natures while the task of the lion is to say 'no' to the “thou shalt” and, thereby, create space for the construction of new values. Critical history, however, does not stop at this destruction; its purpose is also to give ourselves a second nature or a new habit. In this way, critical history encompasses the work of the lion as well as that of the metamorphosis from the lion to the child.

The Self as a Work of Art: Moving From Lion to Child

But how does the lion transform his destructive and predatory acts into the affirmative and creative activity of the child? At the outset of Book Four of the *Gay Science*, Nietzsche expresses a wish to be above both *ressentiment* and doing battle with it:

I want to learn more and more how to see what is necessary in things as what is beautiful in them – thus I will be one of those who make things beautiful...I do not want to wage war against ugliness. I do not want to accuse; I do not even want to accuse the accusers. Let *looking away* be my only negation! And, all in all and on the whole: some day I want only to be a Yes-sayer! (GS, 276)

This passage seems to be written from the perspective of a lion who wants to complete his destruction and become a child. Nietzsche sees himself as one who both wages war against ugliness and accuses; he finds himself engaged in the destructive work of the lion. It is important to notice that Nietzsche does not view the destructive state of the lion as a reprehensible position. Rather, he realizes that it is necessary for affirmation:

When we criticize, we are not doing something arbitrary and impersonal; it is, at least very often, proof that there are living, active forces within us shedding skin. We negate and have to negate because something in us *wants* to live and affirm itself, something we might not yet know or see! - This in favour of criticism. (GS,307)

So, when Nietzsche says that he no longer wants to accuse and wage war against the ugly, he does not condemn these enterprises. In fact, he realizes the importance of criticism as a way of laying the groundwork for affirmation. However, he realizes that the lion, despite its prowess at waging war and criticizing, is limited in that it is not able to fully affirm life through creation of values. Thus, he wants to move beyond this stage and become a yes-sayer. The rest of Book Four tells us how to move beyond this lion-stage of war and accusation and become a child capable of saying the sacred 'yes'.

At various places in Book Four of the *Gay Science*, Nietzsche seizes the metaphor of life

as a work of literature and how we must assume an artistic stance toward our own lives.

Adopting an approach to our own lives that treats them as works of art or literature allows us to create something new insofar as we fashion ourselves and create values for our fashioned selves.

It is through the establishment of this self-stylized self that we become capable of affirming ourselves and our own lives. Before we can discuss in more detail what this artistic attitude toward our lives allows us to do, we must first understand what Nietzsche means by fashioning ourselves. First, it is described as an altering of our natures or characters:

One thing is needful. - To 'give style' to one's character – a great and rare art! It is practised by those who survey all the strengths and weaknesses that their nature has to offer and then fit them into an artistic plan until each appears as art and reason and even weaknesses delight the eye. Here a great mass of second nature has been added; there a piece of first nature removed – both times through long practice and daily work at it. ...For one thing is needful: that a human being should *attain* satisfaction with himself – be it through this or that poetry or art...(GS, 290).

In giving style to oneself, one accomplishes two things. First, he becomes more familiar with himself through surveying all the strengths and weaknesses he has to offer. In the beginning of the *Genealogy*, Nietzsche declares that the last thing we come to know is ourselves (GM, Preface, 1). Styling one's own character is a way by which he can come to know himself. Second, he comes to view both his strengths and weaknesses as art, and both delight him; he is able to be satisfied with all aspects of himself. In viewing ourselves as art, we want to “learn from artists while otherwise being wiser than they. For usually in their case this delicate power stops where art ends and life begins; *we*, however, want to be poets of our lives...” (GS, 299). To be a poet means to be both contemplative and creative:

[The contemplative man] calls his nature *contemplative* and thereby overlooks the fact that he is also the actual poet and ongoing author of life... As the poet, he certainly possesses a *vis contemplativa* [contemplative power] and a retrospective view of the his work; but at the same time and above all *vis creativa* [creative power]...It is we, the thinking-sensing ones, who really and continually *make*

something that is not yet there...(GS, 301)

Nietzsche wants us to extend the traditional scope of art so that it applies to life. Specifically, it applies to life insofar as we artistically fashion ourselves and author our lives. This fashioning of ourselves, as Nietzsche discusses in aphorism 290, is something that requires daily practice and hard work. In short, it is something that can only be accomplished through experience. We cannot transform ourselves overnight; rather, it is a process of experimentation with ourselves that occurs over time. A dialectic between contemplation and creation arises. As poets, we possess a creative power that allows us to continually make something that was not there before; we have an ability to transform or style our character. Along with this creation, however, is a contemplative or retrospective view of our artistic work on our lives. Here, we evaluate the character we have styled and recognize weaknesses to conceal or reinterpret. We then reenact our creative power to re-style these aspects in a never ending process of artistic adjustment to ourselves. All the while, we come to know and attain satisfaction with ourselves even though we recognize that our self will never be complete or exempt from this poetic dialectic.

Another way to think of this idea of giving style to one's character and being poets of our lives is as a kind of middle ground between two conflicting and problematic views about the self. The first view of the self sees it as a static entity that it is up to each individual to discover. According to this view, knowing the self increases the amount of truth we possess about the world and ourselves, but does not put us in any position to change our characters; "we are who we are". Nietzsche rejects this view from a purely epistemological ground, "'Truth' is therefore not something there, that might be found or discovered" (WP, 552). The second view, which Nietzsche also rejects, is that the self is absolutely undetermined and can be completely reinvented or created in a process of giving style to one's character. Those who give style to their

characters “survey all the strengths and weaknesses that their nature has to offer”, but then remove some aspects of that nature from their characters or add aspects to it (GS, 290). For Nietzsche, then, our fashioning of the self is limited to some degree by the choices we have already made, but these limits are not completely constricting. Nietzsche's view, rather, is that, while our 'natures' contain within them certain strengths and weaknesses, we, as poets of our lives, can conceal these weaknesses and develop our strengths or, even, attempt to develop those weaknesses into strengths. The important aspect is that it is “the forces of a single taste that rule[s] and shape[s] everything great and small – whether the taste was good or bad means less than one may think; it is enough that it was one taste!”(GS, 290). For example, take a professional violinist. At some point in her early childhood, she realized that she had some natural strength at playing the violin, but was not naturally good enough to play professionally. Recognizing this strength, she “gave style to her character” and developed her skills at the violin. In becoming more skilled at the violin, she, however, did more than develop a strength; she also became weaker in other aspects, such as playing basketball. In developing her strength as a musician, however, she is able to conceal this developing weakness. The musician becomes who she is because of all the decisions she has made in her life; each one strengthens some aspect of her character and, either directly or indirectly, weakens aspects of her character. Thus, in giving style to one's self, one is constrained by some underlying aspect of one's nature in terms of natural strengths and weaknesses, but is able to choose which aspects to strengthen and which to conceal or weaken. The best, or most coherent, self will be driven by a single taste and develop the influence of that single taste.

The Child: The Acceptance of the Eternal Recurrence

It is only through engaging in this process of fashioning ourselves and becoming the

poets of our own lives that we attain satisfaction with ourselves. This profound acceptance of life allows us to affirm the doctrine that Nietzsche believes ultimately puts an end to *ressentiment* and any other life-negating force—the eternal recurrence. Nietzsche describes the decision to accept the eternal recurrence:

What if some day or night a demon were to steal 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 again and innumerable times again; and there will be nothing new in it, but every pain and every joy and every thought and sigh and everything unspeakably small or great in your life must return to you...' Would you not throw yourself down and gnash your teeth and curse the demon who spoke thus? Or have you once experienced a tremendous moment when you would have answered him: 'You are a god, and never have I heard anything more divine.' If this thought gained power over you, as you are it would transform and probably crush you; the question in each and every thing, 'Do you want this again and innumerable times again?' would lie on your actions as the heaviest weight! Or how well disposed would you have to become to yourself and to life *to long for nothing more fervently* than for this ultimate eternal confirmation and seal? (GS, 341)

Here is the sacred yes-saying of the child: he accepts to weight of the eternal recurrence, the willing that one's life would repeat exactly the same. In willing this, one takes ownership of his entire self—both his strengths and his weaknesses. He recognizes that his weaknesses are, in a sense, products of his strengths and affirms them as such. Seen this way, affirming one's strengths and willing the repetition of the processes of developing them constitutes a simultaneous affirmation of one's weaknesses and everything that led to them. The eternal recurrence demands that we take ownership of our entire characters. We can only do this when we see ourselves as coherent characters; we have become who we are and continue to develop by the force of a single taste.

Alexander Nehamas also makes the argument that acceptance of the eternal recurrence boils down to a complete acceptance of the self. He writes in *Nietzsche: Life as Literature*: "...a life that was different in any way would simply not be our life: it would be the life of a different

person. To want to be different in any way is for Nietzsche to want to be different in every way; it is to want, impossible as that is, to be somebody else” (156). To not accept the eternal recurrence, then, is to deny the self. To understand how Nietzsche makes this move, we must recall the idea of being poets or our lives and the dialectic of self-examination and creative styling. Nehamas writes:

What one is, then, is just what one becomes. ...To become what one is, we can see, is not to reach a specific new state and to stop becoming—it is not to reach a state at all. It is to identify oneself with all of one's actions, to see that everything one does (what one becomes) is what one is. In the ideal case it is also to fit this into a coherent whole and to want to be everything that one is: it is to give style to one's character; to be, we might say, becoming. (191)

If the self is constituted by the processes of becoming that it undergoes, any change in the process of becoming would lead to the constitution of a different self. To will to live the same life innumerable times again, therefore, amounts to the same thing as willing the existence of one's self. If one were to deny the eternal recurrence because he wanted to go back and change a decision or action earlier in life, he would deny his life and his self because changing one decision or action alters the becoming and development of his life. In other words, to deny the eternal recurrence is to deny who we have become. In willing the eternal recurrence, then, one accepts the task to become (or continue to be) a poet of his own life who constantly, through daily work and attention, styles his character to become who he is. This process constitutes an active affirmation of life; it declares that this life is worth the dedication of endless styling and self-examination.

To sum up, then, *ressentiment*, captured in the metaphor of the sheep or herd animal, is overcome in the stages presented in *Zarathustra* of the camel, the lion, and the child. Nietzsche makes a clear link between destruction and creation, no-saying and yes-saying. He says that we negate because something within us wishes to affirm itself (GS, 307), and “whoever must be a

creator always annihilates” (Z, 43). Looking at the metamorphoses of the spirit at the outset of *Zarathustra*, the sacred No to duty of the lion must precede the sacred Yes of the child. This insistence leads Deleuze to conclude, “sovereign affirmation is inseparable from the destruction of all known values, it turns this destruction into a total destruction” (NP, 176). This total destruction, however, is only a destruction of reactive forces, “reactive forces are denied, all forces become active”(NP, 176). In the *Gay Science*, Nietzsche suggests, through his insistence that we add style to our characters and become poets of our lives, that something needs to occur after negation in order for us to affirm. After we tear down the “thou shalt” of burdensome duty, we must exercise that newly available freedom to fashion ourselves into something capable of self-affirmation. Therefore, Deleuze's “total destruction” is what opens up the space of freedom in which we can bring about and adopt active values. We do this by engaging in life poetically, insofar as poetry is a duality of contemplation and creation. Through this, we become who we are and recognize that our self is constituted by our becoming. It is this recognition that allows us to, like the child, will the eternal return of the same. Through this affirmation, *ressentiment* is ultimately destroyed as this world and this life are wholeheartedly accepted.

Socrates' Artistic Overcoming

In the discussion of *ressentiment*, we saw that in the early dialogues of Plato, Socrates' use of the dialectic was a tool of the man of *ressentiment* to humiliate his opponent and undermine his intellect (TI, 164). He appeared as a man with no weapon other than the dialectic, which he employed to devalue others via their opinions and arguments. The dialectic, in the early dialogues, does not appear to aim at a greater purpose. However, in the middle dialogues, the dialectic begins to take on a double purpose. Whereas in the early dialogues, the dialectic is used to tear down the arguments of Socrates' interlocutors, in the middle dialogues, Socrates

reveals that the tearing down that occurs in the early works³ is only one side of the complete dialectical process. At the end of the *Theaetetus*, after he has rejected all three of Theaetetus' attempts to define knowledge, Socrates says,

And so, Theaetetus, if ever in the future you should attempt to conceive or should succeed in conceiving other theories, they will be better ones as the result of this inquiry. And if you remain barren, your companions will find you gentler and less tiresome; you will be modest and not think that you know what you don't know. This is all my art can achieve—nothing more. (210bc)

So, although Socrates has torn down all of Theaetetus' opinions about knowledge, the process has prepared him for future attempts at inquiry. The negative dialectic, then, rather than simply leaving Theaetetus defeated, provides him with a freedom that enables him to better engage in an inquiry into either knowledge or any other subject that he chooses. It is in this sense of tearing down that Nietzsche writes, “Socrates becomes the critic of his times” (PP, 145). To follow the metaphors of overcoming from *Zarathustra*, the negative dialectic is the destructive tool of the lion, clearing away the accepted opinions and values so that the freedom to posit and create new ones is born.

It is in this freedom to create that the second, positive side of the dialectic comes into play. Within the above passage from the *Theaetetus*, Socrates suggests that the dialectic provides a path toward knowing the self. The negative dialectic has enabled Theaetetus to not think that he knows what he does not know. It seems that some kind of inward examination is necessary in order to discover what one knows and does not know. In the *Theaetetus*, we are presented with only the suggestion of a positive dialectic, but it isn't until the *Phaedo* that we see its effects.⁴ At

³I will call this “tearing-down” dialectic of the early dialogues the “negative dialectic”. As we will see in the next paragraph, it has a corresponding, positive side that I will refer to as the “positive dialectic”.

⁴It might be suggested that the difference between these two forms of the dialectic is not so much their constructive or destructive powers but, rather, their internal or external orientation. Would it not be more appropriate to refer to the “external dialectic” and the “internal dialectic” instead of the “negative” and “positive” dialectics? I think the passage I cited from the *Theaetetus*, 210bc, suggests the possibility of a negative internal dialectic, which is characterized by tearing down false ideas about oneself. For example, Socrates, prior to his attempts at poetry, may

the beginning of the *Phaedo*, Socrates reveals to his friends that he has been attempting to satisfy the bidding of his conscience to “practice and cultivate the arts”(60e). In this attempt, Socrates is confronted by himself and forced to understand it. First, he tries to compose poetry in honor of a god, but realized that this poem was more of an argument than a fable. Through this, he realized that he was not a good “teller of fables”(61b) and, instead, took Aesop's fables and put them into verse. Socrates engaged in a practice of stylizing his character; he engaged in the dialectic between contemplation and creation that Nietzsche describes in the *Gay Science*. Socrates considered the stylings he made and the weaknesses in his character that existed in order to continue to style himself.

Through giving style to his character, however, does Socrates ever move beyond the lion stage of destruction and freedom to the child stage of a profound satisfaction and affirmation of life? The negative dialectic certainly carries out the destructive work of the lion in that it opens up freedom for a styling of the self or a conceiving of new knowledge. The question remains whether Socrates' positive dialectic can lead to the affirmation of life that Nietzsche's child achieves. In the *Phaedo*, Socrates seems to accept the theory of recollection, which asserts “that for us learning is no other than recollection. ...we must at some previous time have learned what we now recollect. This is possible only if our soul existed somewhere before it took on this human shape. ...the soul is likely to be something immortal” (72e-73a). The recollection thesis asserts that the soul is immortal and that, even after the death of the body, it persists and retains knowledge collected throughout life even when it becomes re-embodied. The new body that possesses that soul has a vague recollection of what the soul came to know in previous bodies, but does not have uninhibited access to this knowledge. By accepting this thesis, it seems that

have thought that he would be a good teller of fables. In the process of engaging in this inward dialectic, however, he was confronted with the fact that he is not a very good teller of fables and, as a result, had to tear-down that previous opinion of himself.

we would avoid the nihilism brought about by the belief that the purpose of life is to reach a world greater than this one upon death because the soul is, ultimately, fated to return to inhabiting a physical, earthly body. Recollection avoids this nihilism by directing the focus to the cultivation of one's own soul:

It is right to think then, gentlemen, that if the soul is immortal, it requires our care not only for the time we call our life, but for the sake of all time, and that one is in terrible danger if one does not give it that care. ...now that the soul appears to be immortal, there is no escape from evil or salvation for it except by becoming as good and wise as possible, for the soul goes to the underworld possessing nothing but its education and upbringing. (107cd)

Recollection, therefore, directs virtue toward this life and the cultivation of the soul, which will reappear in the apparent world after the death of the body. This repetition of the existence of the soul, then, seems like it could have the same psychological effect as the eternal recurrence in that both demand cultivation of some aspect of oneself in the present life.

However, accepting the recollection thesis does not carry the same weight as affirming the eternal recurrence. While the recollection thesis may avoid the nihilism inherent in the positing of otherworldly forms and seems to amount to a cosmological account similar to the eternal return, it does not contain the aspect of willing that is essential to the eternal recurrence. This willing of the repetition of the “it was” is the sign of being well disposed toward life: “the question in each and every thing, 'Do you want this again and innumerable times again?' would lie on your actions as the heaviest weight! Or how well disposed would you have to become to yourself and to life *to long for nothing more fervently* than for this ultimate eternal confirmation and seal?”(GS, 341). The weight of the eternal recurrence is that one must take ownership of all aspects of himself—both weaknesses and strengths—because one's weaknesses are just as central an aspect of who one is as his strengths. In fact, often, one's weaknesses arise as the result of focusing on developing specific aspects of one's character at the expense of others.

Therefore, to affirm both one's strengths and one's weaknesses is to affirm the entire process of becoming who one is and to be satisfied with the self to the extent that one would will the exact repetition of that constitutive process. Recollection does not entail this ownership of the self. It provides impetus for future cultivation of the soul rather than an affirmation of one's soul as it is and has become.

Perhaps the dying Socrates, in accepting the ruling of the jury in the *Apology* and refusing offers to help him escape prison in the *Crito*, takes ownership of his entire self and wills the exact repetition of every moment of his life. In the *Apology*, after he has been found guilty, Socrates declares that he would be unable and unwilling to stop giving speeches and talking to Athenians in the marketplace:

Perhaps, then, someone might say, "By being silent and keeping quiet, Socrates, won't you be able to live in exile for us?"...I say that this is to disobey the god and that because of this it is impossible to keep quiet. ...this even happens to be a very great good for a human being—to make speeches every day about virtue and the other things about which you hear me conversing and examining both myself and others—and that the unexamined life is not worth living for a human being...This is the way it is, as I affirm, men. (37e-38a)

Even threatened with the possibility of death, Socrates affirms who he is and (stubbornly) expresses his will to continue his way of life. However, he seems to stop short of willing the eternal recurrence of his life. He does not will the repetition of every aspect of his life; rather, he only wills the recurrence of his current self and his current way of living. The eternal recurrence, as we have seen, requires that one take ownership of and will the recurrence of all aspects of one's life and self.

Similarly, in the *Crito*, Socrates refuses Crito's offer to help him escape from prison into exile. He justifies his refusal in the same way he has justified everything in his life—through reason and arguments:

I, not only now but always, am such as to obey nothing else of what is mine than that argument which appears best to me upon reasoning. The arguments that I spoke in the past I am not able to throw out now that this fortune has come to pass for me. Instead, they appear rather alike to me, and I venerate and honor the same ones I did before. (46b)

Even faced with death, Socrates affirms reason and his past arguments. He recognizes that, even though these past arguments have caused him to be sentenced to death, they are essential to who he has become, and to turn back on them or negate them would be to reject his own self. In this sense, by accepting death, Socrates affirms who he has become; he affirms reason and wills its continuation as his “value” even if it means he must die because of it. He seems to will its recurrence in that he would not be able to reject all the previous arguments he spoke.

While it seems that Socrates does will the recurrence of his strengths—reason, argument, the dialectic—it seems that he would not will the recurrence of weaker aspects of his character, such as his neglect of “popular art”. With death approaching, Socrates begins to doubt whether he has led the best possible life and practiced the highest kind of art. He scrambles to compose poetry in the hope of satisfying his dream that may be bidding him to do so. Is it possible that the dying Socrates was compelled to reject his life and will that he had “practice[d] and cultivate[d] the arts”(60e) sooner? At the very least, he seems to doubt who he has become and the self he has fashioned to an extent that he would attempt to modify it immediately before death. His dying words also indicate that he was unsatisfied with himself. “We owe a cock to Asclepius”(118a). Socrates declares life to be a sickness with death as its cure; “even Socrates had had enough”(TI, “The Problem of Socrates”, 1). That he viewed life as a sickness suggests that he would not will the repetition of every moment of his life. Socrates was unable to become the child and affirm the eternal recurrence.

So, where does this leave Socrates in terms of the metamorphoses of the spirit? We just

saw that Socrates was unable to achieve the satisfaction with himself that would make him capable of affirming the eternal recurrence, so he clearly has not reached the stage of the child. Socrates, also, does not seem to be a camel. He does not take on external burdens of duty simply because they are the burdens the heroes carry. As he says in the *Crito*, he obeys nothing other than what appears best to him through reason(46b). Similarly, Socrates cannot be seen as the herd animal since he makes a profound break with the herd and questions the values that the rest of the herd or Athenians accept. We are left with Socrates as a lion. In the early dialogues, Socrates tears down the arguments of others and of Greek society, leaving his interlocutors in a state of *aporia*. The elenchus that ends with *aporia* is Socrates' tool of destruction of values, but this destruction of values opens space for a creation of values. In the *Euthyphro*, for instance, Euthyphro attempts to justify his definition of piety and his decision to bring his father to trial for murder by appealing to the gods. Every time Euthyphro attempts to justify his definition of piety by relating it to the gods and stories about the gods, Socrates rejects it and steers him in a more secular, rational direction. Socrates' version of piety is not governed by gods, but, rather, by reason. By demystifying the gods, Socrates forces Euthyphro to think freely and independent of a sense of duty to the gods. In that his primary role, on the surface, is to say “no” to popular beliefs, the problem of Socrates is the same as the problem of Zarathustra:

The psychological problem apparent in the Zarathustra type is how someone who to an unprecedented degree says no and *does* no to everything everyone has said yes to so far, - how somebody like this can nevertheless be the opposite of a no-saying spirit...(EH, “Thus Spoke Zarathustra, 6)

The difference between the two, however, is that Zarathustra actually comes to affirm the eternal recurrence and even becomes the teacher of it while Socrates engages in the same degree of destruction but not in the ultimate yes-saying. It is not that Socrates only says no; he affirms reason and the dialectic until the end of his life and in some ways gives style to his character. In

fact, he gives style to his character to such an extent that he becomes an archetype of the theoretical man (BT, 15). Thus, in some ways he engages in a personal dialectic of examination and creation, but does not fully fashion a self that he finds satisfactory and, thereby, finds himself in the middle of the metamorphosis from the lion to the child.

From Lion to Child: Nietzsche's Overcoming

As we saw in the first section of this paper, it seems like a plausible view that writings such as *On the Genealogy of Morality*, *The Antichrist*, and the discussions of Socrates in *The Birth of Tragedy*, reflect Nietzsche's *ressentiment* toward the various powerful cultural and philosophical forces he confronts in those works. According to this view, Nietzsche is confronted with the power and force of the figures of Socrates, Christ, and the priest and feels powerless or weak in comparison. Because of his weakness, he can only affirm himself by devaluing or rejecting the more powerful. Those three texts, according to the view that Nietzsche felt *ressentiment*, represent that reactive moment of devaluing in order for one to appear better by comparison.

However, as we have seen in the discussion of the process of overcoming *ressentiment*, another, decidedly active type of negation comes about because “there are living, active forces within us shedding skin. We negate...because something in us *wants* to live and affirm itself...”(GS, 307). This is the destruction of the lion that wants to create space for freedom and creation. Thus, Nietzsche, reflecting on the *Genealogy* in *Ecce Homo* writes of its place in his development, “there was not *counter-ideal* [to the ascetic ideal]--until *Zarathustra*. - I have been understood. [*On the Genealogy of Morality* is] a psychologist's three crucial preparatory works for a revaluation of all values”(EH, “The Genealogy of Morality”). Each essay destroys a fundamental aspect underlying morality—*ressentiment*, bad conscience, and the ascetic ideal,

respectively—and, although the *Genealogy* does not explicitly posit a new table of values or a new morality, its tearing down of the accepted Christian or European morality clears a space in which other moralities can be created and accepted. The same process of negation that is preparatory for creation occurs in the *Antichrist* and *The Birth of Tragedy*. In the *Antichrist*, Nietzsche calls Christianity “the *one* great curse, the *one* great intrinsic depravity, the *one* great instinct for revenge for which no expedient is sufficiently poisonous, secret, subterranean, *petty* – I call it the *one* immoral blemish of mankind”(A, 62). Nietzsche problematizes the Christian morality that is so widely accepted as being an absolute good by identifying it with depravity and revenge. This revelation serves to open up space in which values other than Christian values can be adopted; it frees us from the dogmatism of Christianity. Similarly, in the *Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche attacks the image that Socrates and rational thought brought about the height of the Greeks. Instead, Nietzsche attempts to show that Socrates and the advent of rationality led to the demise of the real apex of Greek culture—tragedy (BT, 12). In tragedy, everything is deified and affirmed, regardless of whether it is good or evil (BT, 3). With Socrates, however, for something to be considered beautiful it must pass the test of the dialectic; it must be reasonable (BT, 12). Nietzsche, through his critique of Socrates and rationality as the destroyers of tragedy, reveals that another method of viewing the world is equally, if not more, capable of making life affirmable. By tearing down Socrates, Christianity, and the “slave” morality, Nietzsche removes the burden of these ways of thinking or valuing. Without this burden, he and others can begin to create new values and give style to their characters in their own way.

Deleuze recognizes this dual nature of critique as both aggressive and affirmative, negative and positive:

turning thought into something aggressive, active and affirmative. Creating free men...Fighting the *ressentiment* and bad conscience which have replaced thought

for us. Conquering the negative and its false glamour. Who has an interest in all this but philosophy? Philosophy is at its most positive as critique, as an enterprise of demystification. (NP, 106)

While I believe Nietzsche would disagree with the statement that philosophy is at its *most* positive as critique⁵, Deleuze definitely captures the distinctly positive and active character of Nietzsche's critiques. We also saw this element in the Socratic elenchus; Socrates' reduction of his interlocutors to a state of *aporia* is precisely a creation of free men. In the *Euthyphro*, Socrates attempts to free Euthyphro from his sense that the gods are the measuring stick for all human values. By tearing down the mystification of the gods, the Socratic elenchus fights a mystification that has replaced thought. In demystifying, Socrates frees Euthyphro to think; this creation of freedom through critique is the positive outcome of philosophy. In the same way, Nietzsche performs this task of the lion when he fights the *ressentiment* he sees in Christian morality and deification of rational thought that begins with Socrates. This aggression or apparent reaction against these “thou shalt”, turns out to be strongly active and, potentially, affirmative in its creation of free men and the opening of space for thought.⁶

So, Nietzsche clearly performs the destructive and preparatory work of the lion in the *Genealogy*, *Antichrist*, and *Birth of Tragedy*, but is he able to move on to the stage of the child and will the eternal recurrence? As we saw in the discussion of moving from the lion to the child, a process of giving style to one's character must occur before one can become satisfied with himself and affirm the eternal recurrence. Nehamas rightly suggests that this giving style occurs

⁵From the argument I present for the overcoming of *ressentiment*, I would argue that Nietzsche sees philosophy as being at its most positive when it is directed toward giving style to one's character. While Nietzsche certainly wants to emphasize the connection between destruction and creation, he still emphasizes philosophy as a creative, artistic enterprise. In the three metamorphoses of the spirit, the creation and affirmation of the child is valued higher than the destruction of the lion. Creation, therefore, is the most positive task of philosophy.

⁶Despite this strongly affirmative, creative, and active role of critique in the spirit of the lion, or in the practice of critical history, there remains the possibility of an “empty” critique that merely negates and devalues. This type of critique is apparent in monumental history and the devaluing of the man of *ressentiment*. This critique negates or rejects something new, active, or becoming in order to affirm something that is already in place. There is no new space opened up for creation; in fact, an attempt at creation is what is negated in this “empty” critique.

throughout Nietzsche's oeuvre and culminates in the writing of *Ecce Homo*.

One way of [becoming both a literary character and the author of that character] ...might be to write a great number of very good books that exhibit apparent inconsistencies among them but that can be seen to be deeply continuous with one another when they are read carefully and well. Toward the end of this enterprise one can even write a book about these books that shows how they fit together, how a single figure emerges through them, how even the most damaging contradictions may have been necessary for that figure or character...to emerge fully from them. (195)

Nietzsche gives style to himself through writing. By expressing the development of a seemingly contradictory yet coherent self, his books give style to his character. Perhaps this is why he wrote so many books in such a short amount of time—something within him demanded release and affirmation. The process of fashioning the self is not one that can be achieved through an infrequent and intermittent process; rather, it must be constantly practiced (GS, 290). Nietzsche achieves this constant practice of fashioning the self through the constant practice of writing books. If Nietzsche could realize this process of giving himself style only through writing, his frequent publication of books was necessary for his poetic becoming and creation of a character that he was capable of affirming.

So, like Socrates, Nietzsche engages in a process of becoming who he is through a stylization of his character. Unlike Socrates, however, Nietzsche is able to will the eternal recurrence of the “it was.” Even though he ultimately rejects any association between himself and scholars (GS, 381), in *Ecce Homo*, Nietzsche reflects and affirms his scholarly works, such as “Schopenhauer as Educator” in the *Untimely Meditations*:

Considering that my craft at that time was that of a scholar, and perhaps that I *understood* my craft, the brutal psychology of the scholar that suddenly emerges in the piece is not without significance: it expresses the *feeling of distance*, the profound assurance about what my *task* might be, what could only be a means, an *entr'acte*, a secondary project. It is clever of me to have been many things and to many places so I can become one thing, - can come to one thing. For a long time I even *had to* be a scholar. (EH, “The Untimely Ones”, 3)

Sure, practicing a scholarly craft for a time may have been a “side road” or “wrong turn” in Nietzsche's general trajectory, but it was not, therefore, useless or harmful to the following of that trajectory. Rather, these ‘wrong turns’ are a necessary part of one's character and, in some way, help give style to the self. Nietzsche had to make these wrong turns to discover what he was not; he needed to discover that the scholarly feeling of distance from matters with import in living one's life was an inappropriate profession for the affirmation he sought. In this sense, he had to be a scholar in order to let go of it as an alluring thing to become. In *Ecce Homo*, Nietzsche strongly wills the repetition of the “it was” when he writes, “I do not have the slightest wish for anything to be different from how it is; I do not want to become anything other than what I am” (EH, “Why I Am So Clever”, 9). His brief habits and occasional wrong turns have allowed him to become who he is. He can know he became who he was because he is satisfied enough with himself to affirm every aspect of the process that led to its development. In reflecting on his process of becoming through writing about his own books in *Ecce Homo*, Nietzsche is able to simultaneously present and recognize himself as a single, coherent figure. Upon this recognition, Nietzsche is able to achieve the greatest distance from and overcoming of *ressentiment*: he wills the eternal recurrence of the “it was”.

Conclusion

The main focus of this paper has been to connect the process of overcoming *ressentiment* with Nietzsche's claim that it is needful that we give style to our characters and be the poets of our own lives. As we saw the man of *ressentiment* is characterized by an inability to directly affirm himself. Instead, he must first devalue the traits of those stronger than him in order to then affirm his own. It is only when one approaches his life and character as a work of literature that can be crafted and modified that he can attain a level of satisfaction with his life such that he can will the repetition of every moment of it. In order to reach a space from which one can create, he must free himself from *ressentiment* through an aggressive, predatory destruction. This is the work of the lion stage of the spirit. Taking a look at the epigraph, it is this mixing of hardness and creativity that is necessary for one to both overcome *ressentiment* and become a human being capable of living a noble life. It is only this hard creator who can press his hand on millennia. This brings us back to the three uses of history Nietzsche identifies in the *Untimely Meditations*. It is those who heed Nietzsche's call to become hard that accomplish the great achievements that the users of monumental history admire. This is what it means to press one's hand on millennia; it means to achieve greatness and nobility. As we've seen throughout this paper, the only way to achieve such greatness is through fashioning ourselves as poets of our lives.

This model of overcoming *ressentiment* through an artistic fashioning of the self is one that is very personal for Nietzsche. We see that, throughout his writings, Nietzsche either attempts the destruction of a "thou shalt", i.e., *On the Genealogy of Morality*, *The Antichrist*, *The Birth of Tragedy*, or the creation of new values and new modes of being, i.e., *The Gay Science* and *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. This is why we cannot agree with Deleuze when he writes that

philosophy is at its most positive as critique (NP, 106). Nietzsche sees the philosophical enterprise, if it is to be artistic and serve life, as necessarily engaging both critique and creation. Therefore, the critique the philosopher practices must be of the proper kind so that creation can follow. Deleuze, I think, describes this type of thought best:

A thought that would *affirm* life instead of a knowledge that is opposed to life. Life would be the active force of thought, but thought would be the affirmative power of life. Both would go in the same direction, carrying each other along, smashing restrictions, matching each other step for step, in a burst of unparalleled creativity. Thinking would then mean *discovering, inventing, new possibilities of life*. (NP, 101)

In place of the reactive thinking of *ressentiment*, then, Nietzsche suggests to us the possibility of a life-affirming species of thought. Life and thought become inseparable, working in the service of each other for the sake of creating new possibilities of life.

In this task, Nietzsche feels closest to Socrates. Socrates, the first philosopher of life, places thinking in the service of life and, thereby, establishes the proper life as the purpose of thinking (PP, 145). The same positioning of thought in the service of life occurs in Nietzsche's conception of living as giving style to oneself. In this dialectic of contemplation and creation, thinking decidedly serves life and brings into existence new modes of living. Further, Nietzsche cannot be sure that this conception of thought was not present in Socrates. In the artistic Socrates of the *Phaedo*, he seemingly engages in this dialectic of contemplation and creation in his attempts at composing poetry. If Socrates had already achieved this type of thinking, Nietzsche has not achieved anything new with his alignment of philosophy, art, and life. This is the "problem of Socrates" Nietzsche grapples with; he is unable to definitively say that he created something that Socrates hadn't already invented. Nevertheless, it is in these parallel journeys of Nietzsche and Socrates to overcome *ressentiment* that the true importance, if not necessity, of engaging in a type of thought that combines philosophical criticism, artistic creation,

and a constant attentiveness to life emerges.

Bibliography

- Dannhauser, Werner J. *Nietzsche's View of Socrates*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1974.
- Deleuze, Gilles. *Nietzsche and Philosophy*. Trans. Hugh Tomlinson. New York: Columbia University Press, 1983.
- Evans, Daw-Nay. "Socrates as Nietzsche's Decadent in *Twilight of the Idols*." *Philosophy and Literature* 34.2 (2010): 340-347.
- Fruncillo, John. "The Development of Ressentiment in Nietzsche's Genealogy of Morals." PhD diss., New School University, 2007.
- Kaufmann, Walter. *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*. 4th Edition. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1974.
- Leiter, Brian. *Nietzsche on Morality*. London: Routledge, 2002.
- Nehamas, Alexander. *The Art of Living: Socratic Reflections from Plato to Foucault*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998.
- Nehamas, Alexander. *Nietzsche: Life as Literature*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985.
- Nehamas, Alexander. *Virtues of Authenticity: Essays on Plato and Socrates*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The Antichrist*. Trans. R.J. Hollingdale. New York: Penguin, 1968.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Beyond Good and Evil*. Trans. Judith Norman. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Ecce Homo*. Trans. Judith Norman. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The Gay Science*. Trans. Josephine Naukhoff. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Nietzsche contra Wagner*. Trans. Judith Norman. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. *On the Genealogy of Morality*. Trans. Carol Diethe. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The Pre-Platonic Philosophers*. Trans. Greg Whitlock. Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2006.

- Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. Trans. Adrian Del Caro. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Twilight of the Idols*. Trans. Judith Norman. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Untimely Meditations*. Trans. R.J. Hollingdale. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The Will to Power*. Trans. Walter Kaufmann and R.J. Hollingdale. New York: Random House, 1967.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Writings for the Early Notebooks*. Trans. Landislaus Loeb. Ed. Raymond Guess and Alexander Nehamas. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009.
- Plato. *Apology*. In *Four Texts on Socrates*. Trans. Thomas G. West and Grace Starry West. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998.
- Plato. *Crito*. In *Four Texts on Socrates*. Trans. Thomas G. West and Grace Starry West. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998.
- Plato. *Euthyphro*. In *Four Texts on Socrates*. Trans. Thomas G. West and Grace Starry West. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998.
- Plato. *Phaedo*. In *Complete Works*. Trans. G.M.A. Grube. Ed. John M. Cooper. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1997.
- Plato. *Republic*. Trans. Allan Bloom. New York: Basic Books, 1968.
- Plato. *Theaetetus*. In *Complete Works*. Trans. M.J. Levett, rev. Myles Burnyeat. Ed. John M. Cooper. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1997.
- Scheler, Max. *Ressentiment*. New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1961.