Φιλοσοφια
Volume 26, 1: 2025

RAGE AND THE FORMATION OF THE SELF: IDEAS FROM NIETZSCHE AND SLOTERDIJK

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In this essay I seek to highlight the emotive capacity lost in nihilism through the recuperation of the self in the possibility of rage without resentment. I do so by positing rage (Zorn, thymos) as an initial step towards vulnerability via Nietzsche's Death of God and Sloterdijk's cynical reason. Nietzsche's critique of the ascetic priests is followed by his admiration for their (albeit erroneous) capacity to direct emotions at their will. This emotive ability is especially important when one is led to one's loneliest loneliness as found in the eternal return. The experience of release from these hollow ideals sparks a rage within each that propels one initially towards life-affirmation yet later to danger. In a similar vein, Sloterdijk characterizes reason as cynical due to pseudo-enlightenment. Breaking free from erotic (in contrast to thymotic) desires presents a possibility to experience rage without resentment, a rage that propels one to be vulnerable to existence and meaning-creation. I present this rage after realizing the bankruptcy of one's (former) ideals as the tapping of the thymotic aspect which propels one towards life-affirmation.

Keywords: life-affirmation, Nietzsche, rage, Sloterdijk, Thymos

INTRODUCTION

In this essay, I seek to highlight the emotive capacity lost in nihilism through the recuperation of the self in the possibility of rage without resentment. I do this by presenting such an emotion in Friedrich Nietzsche's characterization of the Death of God to underscore the will to power as life's interpretative tool to create meaning for oneself and, more so, to open oneself to danger. It is a danger that is unconfronted in the experience of modernity's cynicality, living under the shadow of the dead God. What I do here is twofold: (1) I present the death of God and underscore rage in the realization of the emptiness of one's idols to signify a departure from nihilism towards what I consider as an ethics of danger. (2) I then present Sloterdijk's characterization of cynical reason as a contemporary appropriation of Nietzsche's considerations to stress the possibility of using rage without resentment to create meaning for oneself. Through this structure, I likewise present affinities between these two philosophers concerning the formation of the self via its affective capacity.

EMOTIONS AND THE FORMATION OF THE SELF

I begin this essay not with Nietzsche's ire of the ascetic ideals but his praise of them. In particular, the ascetic priests earn his applause for they, "actually [belong] to the really great *conserving* and *yes-creating* forces of life" (Nietzsche 2006, 88). This requires some clarification. The ascetic priests are a part of Nietzsche's mythical account of the masters and the slaves, a difference between the two starkly understood through their psychic ability, the capacity to discharge one's emotions at will (Nietzsche 2002a, 152; 2006, 5, 12, 15, 34). The masters are considered as such because of their natural, i.e., unhindered valuation of existence as good and bad, whereas the slaves are reactive in theirs for the sheer weakness in their determination. We are more familiar with Nietzsche speaking ill of these preachers because of their stark aptitude in channeling the emotions, directing them against those who are strong enough, i.e., the masters who are considered evil in the slave valuation. This is best found in the equation of the ascetic priests as "preachers of death" whose ultimate pontification surrounds an escape from this life (Nietzsche 2002b, 32). However, his praise of them comes in through their capacity of directing one's will (especially those of another). The ascetic priests, according to him, are strong-willed in committing themselves wholeheartedly to the ideal that they preach.

The masters are not praised by Nietzsche since the way they live their lives is simply a manifestation of their strong-willed capacity. This is though not the same for the ascetic priests who emulate the psychic disposition of the masters yet in a reactive sense. Here, we notice a fork between the approaches. In the Third Essay of *On the Genealogy of Morality*, Nietzsche (2006, 68) supplies what the ascetic ideals mean from several respects:

> With artists, nothing, or too many different things; with philosophers and scholars, something like a nose and sense for the most favourable conditions of higher intellectuality [Geistigkeit]; with women, at most, one more seductive charm, a little morbidezza on fair flesh, the angelic expression on a pretty, fat animal; with physiological causalities and the disgruntled (with the majority of mortals), an attempt to see themselves as 'too good' for this world, a saintly form of debauchery, their chief weapon in the battle against long-drawn-out pain and boredom; with priests, the actual priestly faith, their best instrument of power and also the 'ultimate' sanction of their power; with saints, an excuse to hibernate at last, their novissima gloria cupido, their rest in nothingness ('God'), their form of madness. That the ascetic ideal has meant so much to man reveals a basic fact of human will, its horror vacui; it needs an aim –, and it prefers to will nothingness rather than not will. […]

What these ideals mean varies among people, yet we can discern two modes of approaching them. They can serve to stimulate a particularly affirmative way of living, as the expenditure of one's power, or oppositely as an ushering towards one's death. Gilles Deleuze (1983, x; 2001, 72) reads this distinction as two modes of life, manifested as active (conquest and subjugation) and reactive (adaptation and

regulation) forces. We see here a typology in Nietzsche's master-slave tug in terms of the quanta of forces or symptoms in the context of their qualities or modes of living, two ways of making differences between the affirmative mode of the masters and the negative of the slave (Bolaños 2014, 14). The master, in contradistinction to the slave, naturally affirms himself, while the latter reacts to the initial valuation of the master because of any lack of alternative valuation (Ridley 2006, 86).

What separates these ascetic priests from the rest of the slaves is their full commitment to the ideal that is tied with the capacity to discharge emotions at will. This is even more amplified by the ascetic priest's ingenious use of emotions, notably shame, to redirect the respect and emotional conditions of each person, thereby influencing the rest of the slaves (Conway 2024). These preachers have a firm conviction that their rhetoric captivates the masses to adhere to the same ideal, that the 'self' emerges in them, and conversely, that guilt is internalized. In Nietzsche's (2006, 20) account, the ascetic priests' captivating rhetoric directed this particularly when resentment turned creative and birthed (reactive) values. These reactive values are what give meaning to the slave's life, a life with a vengeful gaze towards the masters, obedient to the dictates of the ascetic priests who pontificate the God of the evaluative standard of good and evil (in contradistinction to the masters' good and bad). The ascetic priests, Nietzsche continues, are those who pontificate the internalization of the forces to create the soul (Owen 1995, 99-100). The craft of these ascetic priests is forging meaning in life geared towards an ontological other, i.e. eternal salvation, contrasted to an immanent reality. This, for him, results in a loathing and even negation of the present life. He specifies this in passage 20 of the third essay of the *Genealogy*. Nietzsche (2006 103-104) writes:

> [T]he ascetic priest has insouciantly taken into his service the whole pack of wild hounds in man, releasing now one, then another, always with the same purpose of waking man out of his long-drawn-out melancholy, of putting to flight, at least temporarily, his dull pain, his lingering misery, always with a religious interpretation and 'justification' as well.

The crux of the ascetic priests' authority is their relation to the ascetic ideal and their craft of channeling the various emotions, passions, and effects within each to a form of spite for life. Nietzsche (2006, 85) emphasizes this by saying that the ascetic priests' "*right* to exist stands or falls with that ideal." They remain relevant to society as long as the ideal stands. This for Nietzsche reinforces a decadent, reactive life in which God stands as a culturally conditioned idea "resulting from the becoming reactive of forces" since the people "have repressed their very own active expressions" (Bolaños 2014, 37). This great ability of the ascetic priests is what earns Nietzsche's ire in spite of his praise. He considers them the despisers of the body and the preachers of death because, through their preaching, God's greatness is measured against man's imperfection, God's life against man's death (Nietzsche 2002b, 22-24, 31-32).[1]

From this reading, a cheeky query arises in another of Nietzsche's texts. He asks us, "Perhaps we moderns are merely not healthy enough to be in need of Plato's idealism?" (Nietzsche 1974, 333). An initial reading of the ascetic ideal makes an individual associate asceticism with something to be utterly avoided, and so it is rather

peculiar how the ascetic ideal or the psychic disposition of the ascetic priests in their fervent pontification can be worthy of admiration. We can rephrase this sentence as '*Perhaps we moderns are merely not healthy enough to be in need of asceticism?*' Perhaps, Nietzsche retorts, we who live through modernity have misunderstood how God, truth, religion, or even asceticism should be in service of life rather than the other way around (Sadler 1995, 118; Bolaños 2021, 100-103). Sloterdijk (2013b, 33) reminds us that the Greek *áskesis* means "exercise." This etymological root highlights how Nietzsche esteems ascetic practices in contradistinction to how these, which especially from the vantage of Christianity, are considered as the "perfections" of human existence best manifested through the counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience. These – Nietzsche constantly reminds us – have systematically been used for a hostile approach to life via the body's negation and the soul's salvation (Nietzsche, 2006, 77-81; 2009, 175-177).

What asceticism is able to redirect is the flow of *thymos*. Notably, *thymos* is the root of *agon* (conflict, struggle), a cornerstone in Nietzsche's view of the human person up to his political conception.[2] The Greek *thymos* (θυμός) is translated in English as *rage* and in German as *Zorn*.[3] *Thymos* has a peculiar place in Greek literature, especially with the incantation of the rage of Achilles that opens the *Iliad* (Homer, 2006, 6; Sloterdijk 2010, 2ff.) In philosophical literature, two instances are notable in Plato's writings, the allegory of the chariot in *Phaedrus* and the characterization of the soul in *the Republic*. In the first account, Socrates (Plato) likens the soul to a charioteer and his two horses; *thymos* is juxtaposed to *eros* and is presented as that which does not falter when guided by reason (*logos*) (Plato 2002, 28; McGibbon 1964, 56). *Thymos*' importance here is obvious as it maintains its course under the control of reason, and for this, the *thymos* of the Guardians in Plato's *Republic* is educated not just in physical training but also in poetry and music (Plato 1968, 376e; Hobbs 2000, 12). Such a type of education is vital for the cultivation of society's Guardians (more widely known as the Philosopher-Rulers). This is very relevant for them because it is the part of the soul – besides reason and desire – that corresponds to anger or indignation. It "responds to suffering from injustice, be it our own or that of others" for "spiritedness knows when we have less than we deserve, or is capable of understanding this when it is explained by *logos*" (Rosen 2005, 158; Wenning 2009, 90-91). The thymotic part of our soul seems to temper the desire if aligned to reason, as the *Phaedrus* points out. This also highlights *thymos'* secondary, i.e., auxiliary role in the City of Justice as the Guardians have their Auxiliaries, those able to support the rulers' principles (Plato, 1968, 414b, 440d, 458c). However, this secondary status is not to be understood as a mere inferior element. Mario Wenning (2009, 91) provides an excellent observation:

> In some situations, though, thymos is neither a potential auxiliary of reason nor a form of recklessness, but it settles conflicts between reason and desire. Thymos is a second-order desire that potentially helps reason to suppress foolish desires when reason by itself fails.

We approach *thymos* with caution and reverence as it signifies an outburst of anger with a puissant ability for change, standing between reason and desire, not as a

lukewarm part but as a balancing figure. We are led to see that *thymos* "is not simply a raw drive, but is responsive to rhythm, mode, and beauty. It is also highly susceptible to — indeed partly formed by — social and cultural influences, particularly its society's heroes" (Hobbs 2000, 12). This raw energy is enthralled by the stronger figure—ideally the intellect in Plato's presentation, but similarly by a psychologically dominant force if we turn to Nietzsche's context.

Nietzsche's own take on this can be noticed in his admiration of the thymic conviction in exemplary characters throughout history. This strength is juxtaposed to a palpable decadence in the various domains of experience:

> …anger [Zorn] at the fact that all the arts and sciences have been choked and deluged by an unheard-of dilettantism, philosophy talked to death by mind-bewildering babble, politics more fantastic and partisan than ever, society in full dissolution, because the custodians of ancient morality and custom have become ludicrous to themselves and are striving to stand outside morality and custom in every respect (Nietzsche 1996, 157).

Upon first reading, one may conveniently conclude with the idea that Nietzsche is advocating a type of existence that banks on the two typologies of affirmation and negation, and that an ethics of affirmation as put forward by Deleuze and Bolaños is the totality of Nietzsche's enterprise against the nihilistic images in modernity. Yet, with a more critical approach, I would rather underscore how rage symbolizes the recognition of the threat of life's futility. It is scorn directed at the security that a (bankrupt) metaphysical ideal provides. I continue arguing this through the eternal return's challenge.

> What, if some day or night a demon were to steal after you into your loneliest loneliness and say to you: 'This life as you now live it and have lived it, you will have to live once more and innumerable times more […]'
>
> 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 possession of you, it would change you as you are or perhaps crush you (Nietzsche 1974, 273).

Anyone reading this might immediately focus on the first paragraph, but I wish to draw attention to the second paragraph. Nietzsche provides two responses of how either the thought of the return changes or destroys us, either you "throw yourself down and gnash your teeth and curse the demon" or "[answer] him: 'You are a god and never have I heard anything more divine!'" An affirmative response *a la* Nietzsche is the first, with the second presenting idolatry of the messenger of the eternal return. If one ought to realize the destruction of one's own hollow ideas, the proper response is not to treat the messenger as a new deity but rather to be enraged by the greatest weight of departing from one's godhead. Nietzsche challenges this eternal return as an epistemic-ethical challenge to reinvigorate that anesthetized aspect of our existence. He, in place

of the ascetic preachers, taps our thymotic part: *life is to be lived again! What meaning do you find in life?*

For this reason, I position this enraged attitude as not just part of an ethics of affirmation but rather of an ethics of being vulnerable to danger. Nietzsche presents the most obverse form of nihilism – *the eternal return* – as a thought experiment to exacerbate any idols remaining in one's mind, not to throw humanity into despair but arguably to push one toward an embrace of danger. Erika Kerruish (2009, 5) notes,

> One reason that emotions play a vital role in Nietzsche's account of the process by which bodily sensations are organised into a persisting, causal self is that emotions can be conceived of as responses to change. This means that emotions involve events over time; events that need not be actual but that can be potential.

Both physical and imaginary events forge the self. This is obvious for modern psychology and is a view similar to Nietzsche's (2006, 56-58) presentation of the soul's creation through the ascetic priests' relentless preaching of the internalization of guilt. Actual experiences or thought experiments contribute to the totality of each person, reminding one of her own auto-plasticity. How we are affected by thoughts and actions reverberate to a deeper level which propels us to choose for ourselves if we wish to negate or affirm life. However, to step away from this bifurcation, I would rather consider the effects of these in relation to freedom. This may be understood as a self that is free within the jurisdictions of the bankrupt ascetic ideals (God, as put forward by the ascetic priests) or alternatively, an autonomy that allows oneself to be vulnerable. I consider the former as sustained living according to the ascetic priests' rhetoric and the latter as reinvigorated *thymos* that uses rage to reject empty ideals and propel an individual to open herself to danger.

Once again, I argue that the highlight of the eternal return's challenge is not simply an affirmation of what has happened but rather an opening up of oneself to what can possibly still happen. Rather playfully, we notice that the section following section 341 of the *Gay Science* is entitled *incipit tragoedia* (lit. tragedy commences). Nietzsche has three *Incipit* formulations (*tragoedia*, *parodia*, and *Zarathustra*) of which arguably the character of Zarathustra serves as a model. Nietzsche (2005, 171) criticizes the movement of how the "real world" has become a myth – (1) an idea in Plato, (2) promised in Christianity, (3) an imperative in Kant, and (4) unattained and unknown in positivism – then strikes the chord through his admonition, "We have abolished the true world: what world is left?" and ends with a parenthetical mark "(Midday; moment of the shortest shadow; end of the longest error; high point of humanity; INCIPIT ZARATHUSTRA.)" Nietzsche frames the erroneous understanding of the "true world" but then figures this moment to be noon – the "end of the longest error" – when Zarathustra commences (*incipit*) his movement. Tragedy commences in realizing one's greatest error and moving away from it. However, rather cheekily Nietzsche warns us that this commencement of tragedy is the commencement of parody at the same time. "'*Incipit tragoedia*' we read at the end of this awesomely aweless book. Beware! Something downright wicked and malicious is announced here: *incipit parodia,* no doubt" (Nietzsche 2005, 33). The start of tragedy is at the

same time that of parody in that one realizes one's greatest error, one's greatest folly. What is tragic in this sense is parodic because the truths that one really esteemed have devalued themselves, and there is no one else to blame but oneself for reifying these perspectives to such a dogmatic position. Zarathustra's movement seems to be a reminder of this, particularly at the end of the Prologue of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* when, after burying the corpse of the tightrope walker in a hollow trunk, Zarathustra began going under (Nietzsche 2002, 16). Elsewhere we see his association of tragedy and parody in *incipit tragoedia* – the last section of the Fourth Book of *Gay Science* and the first part of the Prologue of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* – in which tragedy begins as Zarathustra, wanting to be human again, leaves his cave and returns to civilization (Nietzsche, 1974, 274-275). What Nietzsche does here in equating the three is that he posits Zarathustra as the end of humanity's recognition of a disjunct "true world" (Gooding-Williams 2001, 46). He introduces the Zarathustra event of this tragic-parodic realization as the pinnacle of the vulnerability, forecasted in the eternal return and exemplified, too, in the presentation of the *Übermensch* (Nietzsche 2005, 111).

I try to put forward how this Zarathustra event hints at rage's commencement. To discuss this further, I wish to draw attention to the last man's condition, which Zarathustra tries to provide a caricature of. I agree with Haroon Sheikh's (2008, 31) reading, following Francis Fukuyama, of the last man as a figure of the absence of this thymotic drive. The last man in Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* figures a life of utmost bliss. However, this understanding of happiness is forged because of the nonchalant experience of modernity. Mark Alfano (2018, 126) aptly captures this:

> [The last human] has no sense of wonder or curiosity to transfix him with rapt attention; instead, even his inquiries into love, creation, longing and the universe are accompanied by 'blinking'. The last man is overly familiar with people, things and concepts that should only be approached with reverence and terror.

The last human trivializes events that are opportune for revaluations and promotes the virtue that makes small (Nietzsche 2002, 133-137). This is a type of cowardice propelled by resentment but branded as a virtue, creating a life of mediocrity and envy, of making shallow, deep moments of life, and of being lukewarm in the face of passions. It is a flee from what is tragic. The last human stands as reason's inability to properly act according to one's environment, simply opting for damage control rather than attempting serious change, or better put, the absence of a *natural* engagement with one's situation. It is a life that has effaced the confrontation of forces within, that has silenced the various drives, that has resigned to "a new small happiness" with the word *new* simply an embellishment for the present just masked to *seem* new (Nietzsche 2002, 135). This last human stands as a reminder of the comforts offered by maintaining the current nihilistic condition.

This depiction of Nietzsche's last human being bears an uncanny resemblance to Peter Sloterdijk's cynical consciousness. From the last human beings, we turn our attention to cynical reasons, people who have become

> …borderline melancholies, who can keep their symptoms of depression under control and can remain more or less able to work. Indeed, this is the essential point in modern cynicism: the ability of its bearers to work—in spite of anything that might happen, and especially, after anything that might happen. The key social positions in boards, parliaments, commissions, executive councils, publishing companies, practices, faculties, and lawyers' and editors' offices have long since become a part of this diffuse cynicism (Sloterdijk 1987, 5).

Sloterdijk's enlightened false consciousness resounds life's reduction to reactivity, similar to how Deleuze (2001, 75) characterizes the nihilistic, decadent age as the *becoming-reactive* of forces, the triumph of reactivity over activity. We see here how *becoming-reactive* in this sense manifests the unity of being, a gravitational pull to the center (Sloterdijk 2010, 189). For Sloterdijk, *we* modern cynics have become reactive because of our approach to society, working instinctively following a herd mentality, of simply getting by and not questioning our immediate desires and reactions that are conditioned by a capitalist and nihilistic society. When Sloterdijk depicts modern rationality, we ought not to confuse its ancient Greek root (kynicism, *Kynismus*) with the modern presentation (cynicism, *Zynismus*). The latter characterizes contemporary society, while the former characterizes Greek society. This return to the root serves as an alternative enlightenment previewed with the cheekiness of Diogenes (Van Tuinen 2007, 277). The cynical sense of pseudo-enlightenment and apathy found in modernity reminds us of Nietzsche's view of the self as embodied, in that emotions play a vital role in actions. Each person is a constant tug of various forces and so how one acts is dependent not simply upon rationality but on how life is perceived. This tug though, following the hollowed ideal, vanishes in the desire to simply be safe and follow the overarching principle. This self, *qua* the amalgamation of various forces, has learned to become indifferent to one's surroundings while life has been tantamount to simply the preservation of a nihilistic culture despite objective signs of dysfunctionality. Through this type of engagement, we see the self-numbed and apathetic in confronting contemporary society.

It is honestly quite easy to get lost in the myriad of terms that characterize Nietzsche in particular and philosophy as a whole. In addition, the description of cynical reason's embodiments resounds in everyday life. This cynicality may be an unfortunate result of the eternal return as a paradoxical image of how affirmation is engulfed by contemporary slogans such as *#DailyAffirmation* that proliferate on social media which mistakes affirmation to be sheer bliss and the eradication of pain. If the result of the eternal return is a caricature of self-help pamphlets that unknowingly reiterate Nietzsche's (2005, 157) very words – "What doesn't kill me makes me stronger," what then surfaces with this is a cynical approach akin to moderation than a surplus of indulgence (Sloterdijk 2010, 16). To better contextualize this, we are drawn to Sloterdijk's distinction between *eros* and *thymos*. The former is a drive of desiring to have objects one currently lacks, things that are perceived to complete an individual, whereas the latter provides avenues for redemption, in the sense that an individual rearticulates a new grammar of expression which broadens what is expressed through the word *desire* (Sloterdijk 2010, 15-16, 191). The breeding of a species that is capable

of making promises is fully realized in today's credit system, which banks on the promise to pay the debt (Nietzsche 2006, 35; Sloterdijk 2013a, 50). Sloterdijk (1987, 127) posits that society in taming *thymos* has naturally caved in the *eros* despite the moniker of Enlightenment or rationality, resulting with "the incapacity to have the right rage at the right time, the incapacity to express, the incapacity to explode the climate of care, the incapacity to celebrate, the incapacity to let go."

It is for this reason that the demon in the eternal return chases the protagonist into her loneliest loneliness. Only there can she fully experience a sudden release from ontological strongholds, pontificating preachers, and the mindless herd. The eternal return serves as an enlightenment *qua* a second glance upon life, and "it is always the second look that is decisive because it overcomes the first impression" (Sloterdijk 1987, 53). The eternal return should rekindle not a *telos* of the Enlightenment, but a critical test of actual enlightenment (Huyssen 1987, xvi). It sparks in us a peculiar rage at the emptiness of our ideals. The eternal return seemingly stands as the tipping point if we become enraged at the bankruptcy of our idols and do something about it or simply be consumed by misery and sulk in further meaninglessness. Rage creeps in when one realizes that there is no eternal salvation for the faithful or perhaps the erotic desires of those in key social positions as Sloterdijk presented. One naturally becomes enraged when the future suddenly changes and one's life has totally been devoted to this ideal: no successful campaign for those in parliaments, commissions, and executive councils; no prized publication or case for publishing companies, practices, and faculties. Offices that maintain society's rational consensus – lawyers and editors – Sloterdijk says have been part of this cynic circle; the demon proclaims the emptiness of the reward.

We are compelled to confront our cynicality and decide for ourselves. This opens us to a peculiar type of vulnerability for "we feel that something about our lives is missing or unfulfilled" (Remhof 2018, 195). The eternal return makes one vulnerable to the past, to the inability to change what has transpired, yet at the same time also to the future, i.e., I can be hurt once again should I continue this type of reactive living. This futural vulnerability opens us to the possibility of changing ourselves in a radical sense: "So we are necessarily strangers to ourselves, we do not comprehend ourselves, we have to misunderstand ourselves" (Nietzsche 2006, 3). The eternal return prompts a rage directed at how life has been lived to signify the start of a creative process of creating meaning for oneself outside of the reactive morality. This vulnerable experience is Nietzsche's hour of great contempt. This hour is the advent of the *Übermensch*, during which the emptiness of the last human's virtue is realized (Nietzsche 2002, 5-6). Nietzsche (2002, 25) reminds us of rage's perniciousness: "each of your virtues is greedy for the highest. It wants your entire spirit, to be its herald; it wants your entire strength in rage, hatred and love." The virtue that makes small is filled with resentment as dictated by the ascetic priests, but Nietzsche (1996, 227) wishes to use rage to purge such an impure motive. The virtue that makes small, that dominates over others is a rage coupled with resentment. Rage must be used to purge such an intention. Rage must be firstly directed at oneself, at how cynical one has become, at how nihilism has been allowed to take center stage. Only then can it serve as a basis for affirmation in a vulnerable sense, and can vulnerability overcome mere affirmation. Likewise, it is this very practice that shows us how rage may be found

without resentment—rage directed at how one has been living one's life should not be accompanied by resentment since this would also be aimed at oneself. It would be pathological to be resentful of oneself. This resent-less type of rage at oneself ought to purge us of the nihilistic conditions we put ourselves in; however, the delay of such outburst is a sign that we still need to be exacerbated through Nietzsche's challenge of the eternal return.

CONCLUSION

In this essay, I tried to draw certain affinities between Nietzsche and Sloterdijk, situating rage with the announcement of God's death and the heralding of our idols' hollowness. This prompts us to understand the formation of ourselves through our own vulnerability, which is a result of the rage that we first bring to ourselves. These affinities are to direct our attention to the formation of the self through the strong affective drive after the death of God, breaking free from one's cynicality. The proclamations of Zarathustra and the madman were laughed at because, as I presented, the virtue that makes small has hardened their audience to simply accept what is accustomed, what is easy. Nietzsche wishes to break the old tablets of morality; he presents the *Übermensch* as a novel image of life and seeks humanity to entice itself with this type of meaning-creation. Doing this, Nietzsche provides us with an epistemic-ethical challenge in the eternal return to exacerbate us to realize in our solitude what values we uphold. The essentiality of one's loneliness here sheds light on one's capacity to live beyond the herd and, importantly, away from the dictates of the ascetic priests. These priests play a central role in the formulation of a perspective filled with resentment because of their craft in preaching a life of moderation and contemplation that, as I showed, Nietzsche traces as the beginning of the slave morality. Their skillful rhetoric enables them to divert one's thymotic drives towards resentment rather than into evaluation and creation. Through this, life's meaning is interpreted as reactive, nihilistic, and decadent.

Nietzsche's eternal return signifies a shackling of the reactive ontology. However, we may ask, if this is simply a presentation of the obverse state of things or even a disclosure of truth enough to change one's perspective? We are left with the scenario: cynical reason unable to realize the death of its idols, or even worse, cynical reason filled with resentment at life as a whole. Sloterdijk's cynical reason *qua* the enlightened false consciousness has toiled with the Enlightenment but has unsuccessfully learned from it. What Sloterdijk points to is a rage *qua* a driving force in society, "a rage free of resentment, a rage that successfully balances *eros* and *thymos*" (Wenning 2009, 90). This is what I sought to argue by tying together the eternal return and cynical reason. As cynical reason confronts the folly of its idol, the thymotic drive is given way than just the erotic principle. Rage without resentment takes form as a normative resource to thrust one to pick up self-directing principles for oneself and fight for them. It may be firstly experienced or realized as this becomes directed to oneself because resentment ought to be released in order for rage to be beneficial. Rage without resentment emerges as an emotive start for willingness to revalue one's existence and, through the course, continue holding on to them, which

stems from one's firm resolution grounded on the will to power. It is that creative capacity to not simply depend on other people for meaning in life but to actively create it for oneself and ultimately to open oneself up to the dangers of such conditions entail.

NOTES

1. Spread throughout the Bible are verses hinting at different ideals, yet I take the passage of the Washing of the Feet from the Gospel according to John to give definite content to Nietzsche's concept. (Jn. 13:12-14; 15:12-15, *NABRE*). In God becoming man – the creditor becoming the debtor – man's ideal has been established. Yet the example Christ gives is a peculiar reversal of roles. As master, he washes the feet of his disciples. The raising of this faulted (sinned, guilty) condition of man is a mark of a new standard to happiness, to remain constantly in his love and to abide in his teachings. Lastly, the ideal of morality has been set with the fulfillment of the Paschal Mystery (the suffering, death, and resurrection of Christ), which is the cornerstone of the Christian belief. That God loved man to the point of death raises the moral bar of man to "love others as I have loved you."

2. A primal discussion of this can be found in Nietzsche's first book, *The Birth of Tragedy*, containing this struggle between the Dionysian and the Apollonian spirits. Arguably, this struggle is likewise evident in a reconstruction of Nietzsche's political visions with particular emphasis on *Große Politik*. (Nietzsche 1999, 19; Drochon 2016).

3. The essentiality of rage presents itself as a relief from the yoke of accustomed morality, or better put, of non-thought. A short remark must be made, though. As rage (*Zorn*) evokes anger (*Wut*), these two must be differentiated. Although translatable to anger, *Wut* presents a mere irritation or discontent with a particular thing. *Zorn* stems from a deeper discontent. Thus, the apt translation of rage points to how there is a momentary burst of bent emotions within not as drastic as aggression but not as negligible as anger. In relation to this, an interesting point was raised by a reviewer of this article concerning the rise of populism with which I wish to engage. While I do agree that it is theoretically feasible to differentiate the two emotions and practically impossible, I would like to point out that the problem is not with simply the emotion of rage or anger but the resentment that accompanies these emotions. With the example of the rise of populism globally given by the reviewer, one may posit this question: are these really manifestations of rage or of simply anger or, an even weaker emotion, discontent? Rage is more extreme than anger—and such extremity is at times required in order to radically shift the focus onto something else, and concerning global populist figures, I am unsure if their elections really have been a demonstration of such rage-like response to liberal or elite democratic structures. The very democratic structures that allowed these 'radical' or 'populist' figures to become democratically elected ironically rely on enormous financial support; thus, arguments that present that they are truly from the margins or that their victory embodies the desires of the silent majority are theoretically weak. However, a step further from this critical remark is the underlying presence of resentment in both emotions. What I try to bring out through the affinities between these two philosophers is the necessity of such outbursts of emotion (rage) albeit *without* resentment, i.e., the malice that accompanies such negative emotions. Return to populism, what is evident is how the rise of populist leaders comes with the

eradication of liberal policies and, worse, the designation of a certain population as society's scapegoats; if indeed such populist leaders represent the marginalized, it is quite unthinkable that the marginalize would further marginalize other groups: illegal immigrants, a particular ethnic or religious group, or even people from a lower socio-economic status. With the foregoing, it therefore seems that in populism, these instances of anger or, should one wish to argue, rage are still accompanied by resentment, which I would argue both Nietzsche and Sloterdijk would detest.

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