Appendix : Nietzsche and Jameson on Temporality:on the Axis of the Word[1]

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This paper is designed to make a synchronic and diachronic comparison between Nietzsche's view of temporality and that of Fredric Jameson's. For few will dispute the fact that Nietzsche played the role of a turning point for postmodernism, and that Jameson proved to be a master of postmodern theories. So it means a lot to compare these two theorists' view of time as well as how their temporality makes influence on the writing and interpretation of texts, respectively. In addition, postmodernism has long assumed the attitude of deconstructing and subverting logocentrism, which, though, might well serve as an axis to re-examine the two masters' temporality. The resulting insight is supposedly pioneering. In short, this study is briefly inclusive of Nietzsche's eternal recurrence, nihilism, overman, his deconstruction of text combined with its significant impact on hermeneutics. What's more, this paper also makes a distinctive survey of Jameson's signifier's deconstruction, nostalgia, and the breakdown of the signifying chain along with its influence upon writing. And logocentrism is indeed a maverick perspective of interpreting the two masters' dialogue on postmodern temporality.

Key Words: Nietzsche; Fredric Jameson; Postmodernism; Deconstruction; Temporality; the Word.

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從神學的角度初探尼采和詹明信的後現代時間觀

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摘要：本篇論文是就尼采及後現代理論大師詹明信的時間觀作列比研究；而因後現代理論的啟蒙實係由尼采伊始，探討這兩者的時間對話及其對文本書寫的影響確繞深意。而因後現代理論對勞高斯(Logos; the Word) 堅採解構態度，由勞高斯的角度來分析探討尼采及詹明信的後現代時間觀不諦是另一種向度的思考，甚具先驅性。本文涵蓋尼采的永恆循環、虛無主義、超人理論及其對語言書寫的解構思維、對詮釋學的影響等。本文亦提出詹明信的意符解構、懷舊、及其斷裂的時間觀對書寫所造成的影響。在兩位大師的對話中，本文亦提出了勞高斯作對彼等思維的另類思考取向。

關鍵字詞：尼采、 詹明信、後現代主義、解構、時間觀、太初有道

I. Introduction

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (Gospel John 1: 1). The Word is the being of the absolute transcendental One, Who is beyond the limitation of time before the creation of the whole cosmos. The Word, however, was incarnated into flesh and came into being in this world. Since then, He had been limited to the temporality of the operation of the whole universe until His resurrection and ascension. In fact, with the creation of the world, the totality of Being/Dasein is subjected to the temporality of this earth. That's why Jesus the flesh of God is also destined to be limited to such temporality.

When in flesh, the Word is the manifestation of God. "No one hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath

declared him" (Gospel John 1: 18). The Word brought the being of God into light; He interpreted and explained the invisible God in heaven. Full of truth and grace, His intrinsic essence was so rich that four perspectives are required for its explanation—in fact, all four gospels are messages for transmitting the understanding/knowledge of God to the world. In other words, with His expression varying with diverse perspectives, the Word of God is the language of God, which serves to express the intrinsic matter of the transcendental One. Likewise, Being is language with various forms varying with time perspectives.

Sophocles put it, "Alas, we living mortals, what are we/But phantoms all or unsubstantial shades?" The Western metaphysical tradition is closely associated with the presence of the transcendental One. However, Nietzsche, "as a turning point toward the postmodernity," is outstanding for departing from the traditional metaphysics (Habermas 83). Does he, a life philosopher, also hold the time perspective of the ancient Greek, which can find expression in a line of Sophocles' poems? And how does his life essence, that it, being itself, find an outlet for its abundant richness?

The temporality of the ancient Greek might resound with the eschatology of Christianity. When the Word of God resurrected from the dead, He was with his disciples for about forty days until He ascended to heaven, at the same time leaving a promise, "this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner ye have seen him go into heaven" (Acts: 1: 11). The absence of the being of the mysterious transcendental God forms the temporality of the Christian world. Considering His absence He set up a Lord's table which reminded His disciples of His second coming. The expectation of the coming of God's kingdom makes a profound influence on Christians' attitude towards this world. They hold that since this earth is transitory and full of suffering, the expectation of the salvation of the whole cosmos is in the other world. This consciousness, for

example, is well illustrated in Dante's *Divine Comedy* and John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*.

II. Examining Nietzsche's Eternal Recurrence

A. Echoed by Ecclesiastes

Nietzsche's "eternal recurrence" presents a challenge to the temporality of Christianity. Nietzsche is convinced that every event in the life of an individual, a people, a culture and in the cosmos itself is destined to repeated occurrence. And he maintains that an entire eternity has already elapsed up to the present instant. This notion is beautifully depicted in *Thus Spoke Zarathustras*:

> Everything goeth, everything returneth; eternally rolleth the wheel of existence. Everything dieth, everything blossometh forth again; eternally runneth on the year of existence. Everything breaketh, everything is integrated anew; eternally buildeth itself the same of existence. All things separate, all things again greet one another; eternally true to itself remaineth the ring of existence. Every moment beginneth existence, around every "here" rolleth the ball "there." The middle is everywhere. Crooked is the path of eternity (Nietzsche 244).

Cynically enough, Nietzsche's vision of temporality stated here is echoed by that of his abused Christianity. A verse in Ecclesiastes goes in this way, "The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun" (Eccles. 1: 9). Does the doctrine mean that all events are repeated endlessly in this world?

King Solomon further points out in Ecclesiastes that all things within temporality are vanity in vanity. All human plans or goals are meaningless in the history. All that men experience in this earth is the heaviest burden…"this sore travail hath God given to the sons of man to be exercised therewith. I have seen all

the works that are done under the sun; and behold, all is vanity and vexation of the spirit" (Eccles. 1: 13-14).

B. Nietzsche's nihilism and the heaviest burden

It is noted here that King Solomon's nihilism and "the sore travail," the two motifs resounding in Ecclesiastes, can find an affinity with Nietzsche's nihilism and "the heaviest burden." The people whom Nietzsche referred to as nihilists were the ones who neglected the present world and expected the other world. If men disregard the present world, they will not face this earth seriously. It follows that the "here-and-now" salvation will fall into impossibility. This is why Nietzsche considers temporality to be "eternal recurrence." For men can not redeem themselves without regarding this world. Furthermore, Nietzsche claims that men had to strive hard "to redeem the past and transform every "it was" into an "I want it thus" (Nietzsche 161). He urges men to remain faithful to the earth and not to believe in those who speak of other-worldly hopes (Kaufmann 321). But unfortunately, the conception of eternal recurrnce brings about "the heaviest burden" with it, as well. Imagine that the heaviest burden can be borne only by those who are satisfied with the whole process of their lives. For the eternal recurrence repeats not only the bright side of men's lives but also the dark side of theirs. Therefore, Nietzsche once asked a universal question in *Joyful Wisdom*—

> What if a demon crept after thee into thy loneliness some day or night, and said to thee: "This life, as thou livest it at present, and hast lived it, thou must live it once more, and also innumerable times; and there will be nothing new in it, but every pain and every joy and every thought and every sigh, and all the unspeakable small and great in thy life must come to thee again, and all in the same series and sequence (Nietzsche 270).

C. The overman

This long quotation is burdened to issue in Nietzsche's conception of the overman, which is expected to brighten the tragic side of Nietzsche's temporality. For the present salvation of the heaviest burden is realized through Faust's unbounded striving, or the endless improvement of the human soul in Kant's conception of immortality. The present salvation of the overman is proved to be the antithesis to the faith of the salvation in another world.

It seems that no one will dispute the fact that Nietzsche's temporality is an anit-movement of the eschatology of Christianity, which however is doomed to be deconstructed by the unconcealedness of the biblical truths. For it is the Misunderstanding/unconcealedness of the biblical truths that results in the ideology of eschatology.

D. Affected by the prejudicial knowledge of eschatology

Reviewing the text of Ecclesiastes will contribute to the unconcealedness of the biblical truths. After the nihilistic experiments of seeking his own satisfaction in this world, King Solomon turned to the transcendental One to gain a self-salvation. He declared that "remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them" (Eccles. 12: 1). Furthermore, by using sophisticated and beautiful metaphors, he urged men to look for the "here-and-now" salvation rather than the other-worldly one. For example, he advised men not to hesitate to remember the Creator; otherwise, "or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the gold bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken the street" (Eccles. 12: 6). These metaphors signify the condition of men's decaying bodies. As the following verse puts it, "then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it" (Eccles. 12: 7). Therefore we can see that the

Christian eschatology is a constructed mythology, which will be deconstructed by the unconcealedness of the biblical truths.

In fact, Nietzsche did not have an overall view of the Christian salvation. For on the one hand, the incarnated Word is absent, leaving his second-coming promise. However, on the other hand, the salvation of God is at hand, as St. Paul declares, "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6: 2). Thus, it can be proved that Nietzsche's prejudice was misled by the Catholic theology.

Although Nietzsche's eternal recurrence was partially based on his prejudicial knowledge of eschatology, it still profoundly affects the succeeding thinkers such as Heidegger, Bultmann, and Derrida. Because the prevalence of the influence of his temporality, I will discuss Being/Dasein, which finds expression in language.

III. Nietzsche's influence on the understanding of language

A. Nietzsche's influence on Heidegger's hermeneutics

Inheriting Nietzsche's philosophy, Heidegger tends to interpret Being/Dasein within the horizon conceived in temporality and historicality. Since one moment can become eternal, the here-and-now nature of time consciousness might affect the temporality of Heidegger's hermeneutics of Dasein. He considers the world in which we exist to be a perspective of understanding language, for the language is the house of being. Thus prestructure and lived experience enter into his realm of hermeneutics.

B. Nietzsche's influence on Bultmann's hermeneutics

Profoundly affected by Heidegger's existential philosophy, Bultmann's hermeneutics might be called existential hermeneutics. In *Jesus Christ and Mythology*, Bultmann deconstructs the conception of eschatology and stresses the here-and-now nature of his hermeneutics. It is indeed Nietzsche's temporality that affects his understanding of being/language.

C. Nietzsche's deconstruction of logocentricism

As Habermas points out, Nietzsche opened up the gate of postmodernity of which two paths were later traveled by Heidegger and Bataille. And the later-comers such Lacan and Derrida, succeeding Bataille and Heidegger respectively use a psychological method to unmask the emergence of a subject-centered reason, and pursue the rise of the philosophy of subject back to its pre-Socratic beginnings (Habermas 97). As mentioned earlier, Nietzsche's temprality led to Heidegger's interpretation of language within horizons/lived experience. Besides, it also contributed to Bultmann's deconstruction of eschatology and the construction of demythologizing, of which the here-and-now attribute suggests the influence of Nietzsche's stress on the present moment. In short, Nietzsche's emphasis on "the present moment " exerts an influence on the understanding of Logos. And when travelling into the later period of postmodernity, Nietzsche's philosophy cast a "dark shadow" on the temporality of postmodernity as well as its view of language/Logos. Nietzsche's declaration of the death of God/the Word resulted in the deconstruction of center, then bringing about the decentered subject.

For "In the beginning was the Word,…And the Word was God"(Gospel John 1: 1). And the being of the Word is the holding center by which all things exist, just as the hub holds together the spokes of a wheel (Col. 1: 17). According to Nietzsche, God was dead. In other words, the Word/Logos was decentered. And if this premise stands, the breakdown of Being in the temporality, that is, the breakdown of the

signifying chain will be predicted. In this way, St. Paul's cosmological view in Colossians is instrumental in bridging the gap between Nietzsche's declaration of the death of God and the temporality of postmodernity. And since Nietzsche's declaration, the prevailing phenomenon has not only marked the end of the subject-centered reason but conceived the postmodern temporality, which is well portrayed in Jameson's "Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism."

D. The unconcealed aspect of the death of God

Before introducing Jameson's postmodern temporality, I have to reveal Nietzsche's declaration of the death of God in a dialectical way. In terms of the being of the Word, Nietzsche's declaration is somewhat paradoxical. For the Word has a double meaning in Greek; its translation can be either "Logos" or "Rema." In the beginning Logos preexisted with God and He was transformed into flesh within temporality. And then His crucifixion might result in the declaration of God's death. Actually, Logos was dead just as St. Paul held that "the letter/the dead Logos kills"(2 Cor. 3: 6). The death of the Word, however, has an unconcealed side, which can be considered a margin with the function of supplementing the insufficiency of Nietzsche's declaration. "For the preaching/the word of the cross is to them that perish, foolishness; but unto us which are saved, it is the power of God" (1 Cor. 1: 18). An unconcealed aspect of the Word is actually related to the living and diachronic nature of Rema, which is the metamorphosis of the dead Logos. For after the crucifixion of the Word, He was transformed into the living Word, that is, Rema, which in one sense broke the life-death cycle, exceeding the synchronic nature of temporality and rejuvenating His being within a diachronic temporality. Thus this accounts for Roman 10: 8, "But what saith it? The Word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the Word of faith, which we preach." Thus, it is inferred that just as he neglected the unconcealed salvation of this world in Ecclesiastes, so Nietzsche neglected or intentionaly disregarded the unconcealed aspect of the Word. Furthermore, I go on the assumption that the misleading

eschatology in some degree led to Nietzsche's inspiration of "eternal recurrence." Likewise, Nietzsche's unawareness of the nature of Rema might result in his declaration, which provided a wrong premise for the decentered subject in postmodernity and a critical insight to the explanation of Jameson's temporality.

Under Nietzsche's influence, Jameson raises the concept of "the breakdown of the signifying chain" to account for the decentered subject. According to Saussurean structuralism the function between Signified and Signifier is arbitrary. And once the one-to-one relationship between Signified and Signifier breaks down, we will have schizophrenia in the form of a rubble of distinct and unrelated Signifiers. This kind of linguistic malfunction may lead to the non-identity of the subject.

IV. Jameson's "the breakdown of the signifying chain"

A. The "deconstruction of expression"

In addition, the deconstruction of the subject affects the form of art and literary works as well. Jameson, for example, uses Van Gogh's well-known painting of the peasant shoes and Andy Warhol's "Diamond Dust Shoes" to illustrate the so-called "deconstruction of expression." He says that in Van Gogh's painting the initial raw materials are to be grasped simply as the whole subject world of agricultural misery, and of the whole rudimentary human world of the backbreaking of peasant toil. As Heidegger puts it, "there vibrates the silent call of the earth…" this kind of "hallucinogenic" feeling is called one of the main features of postmodernity. As for Warhol's "Diamond Dust Shoe," Jameson holds that nothing in this painting organizes even a minimal place for the viewer. And he calls this manifestation of "the waning of effect"—that is, "all effect, all feeling or emotion, all subjectivity, has vanished from the new image."

B. The nostalgia mode

Besides the two features, Jameson points out "the nostalgia mode" as another feature of postmodernity. Since historicity can not help approach the "past" through stylistic connotation, "pastness" is conveyed by the glossy quality of the image.

V. Writing, the expression of time consciousness

A. The stream of consciousness

In addition, the breakdown of the signifying chain has an influence on language and literary works. The change of temporality profoundly affects the forms of language, just as the shift of temporality undergoes the transformation of the Word.

Even though the intrinsic matter remains the same within different temporalities, their outer expressive forms change with temporalities, for writing itself can be seen as the reconstruction of time consciousness.

Nietzsche's "eternal recurrence," for example, contributed to the formation of the literary technique of stream-of-consciousness, which is primarily structural, "involving the chronological order of the presentation of a mind in flux and a careful consideration of narrative perspective" (Frye, 444). In fact, the interpretation of the stream-of-consciousness is closely associated with the synchronic or present-moment structure.

B. The schizophrenic writing

As for Jameson, he employs the concept of "the breakdown of the signifying chain" to explain the "schizophrenic writing" and the "reconstruction of real history."

He asserts that with the breakdown of the signifying chain, "the schizophrenic writing is reduced to an experience of pure material Signifiers, or in other words of a series of pure and unrelated presents in time" (72). The effect of unrelated present moments leads to the broken and fragmented phenomena of isolated Signifiers, which account for schizophrenic fragmentation, which is the fundamental aesthetic nature of the schizophrenic writing. As for "real history," namely the historical novel, it is discussed in terms of Plato's conception of the "simulacrum"—the identical copy for which no original one has ever existed. History is thereby modified by the function of language and is essentially a fiction of language.

C. The influence of time consciousness on language

Besides, as mentioned earlier, Nietzsche's temporality affected Heidegger's and Bultmann's hermeneutics. Under the influence of Nietzsche, they are inclined to interpret Being/Dasein in terms of present moments: Heidegger's concept of horizon can be considered a confinement of relative temporalitly and historicality, while Bultmann's concept of demythologizing is conceived in Nietzsche's deconstruciton of eschatology and his this-worldly salvation. And the hermeneutics of postmodernity is closely associated with the postmodern temporality. Just as Jameson points out, the linguistic malfunction between Signifier and Signified breaks the hermeneutic circle via time. "If we are unable to unify the past, present and future of our biological experience or psychic life" (72). Meditating on the definition of the "hermeneutic circle" by Schleiermacher, we can see that understanding is a basically referential operation, and that understanding forms itself into systematic unity, or circles made up of parts (Palmer 87). With the breakdown of the signifying chain, the "postmodern hermeneutics" is thereby undergoing a revolutionary change. With its diachronic, and spatial attributes, the postmodern hermeneutics might lead to the fragmentation and pastiche of postmodern literary forms as well as the schizophrenic, decentered subject.

VI. Conclusion

In conclusion, first I would like to point out that my deconstruction of Nietzsche's premises of eternal recurrence serves as a margin supplement of his insufficient view of Dasein. Besides, the unconcealedness of the biblical truths might function as another perspective for the examination of the logic of Nietzsche's temporality. Just as the Apollonian reason and the Dionysian imagination can coexist in harmony, so the concealedness and unconcealedness of the biblical truths might form an ambivalent stimulus for Nietzsche's imagination and reasoning. Thus, paradoxically eschatology and the death of the Word are worthy of being brought into a clear examination to see whether they are true in the content of the Bible. The unconcealdeness is expected to inspire the dialectics. Second, it is also worth mentioning that the understanding and the expressive form of language vary with the perspective of temporality. The metamorphosis of the Word through time sphere has a similarity with the transformation of literary forms and language understanding in postmodernity. The Word in the past eternity was first transformed into flesh within temporality, and then exceeded the limitation of temporality by transforming Himself into a living Rema. The same principle of transformation can be applied to the understanding and expression of language. For Nietzsche's temporality led to the here-and-now characteristic of Heidegger's and Bultmann's hermeneutics. And at the same time it contributed to the literary technique of the stream of consciousness. And with the change of temporality, the postmodern hermeneutics is instrumental in accounting for the fragmentation and pastiche of literary forms as well as the decentering of subject. Third, it is noted that Nietzsche's temporality stresses present moments while Jameson's temporality stresses unrelated present moments. And it is reasonable to assume that Jameson's temporality is closely related to Nietzsche's anti-logocentricism. For the cosmological survey of both Nietzsche's and Jameson's temporality is helpful for the understanding of Dasein, which finds a house in language. Finally, I would like to point out that the contrast between Nietzsche's temporality and Jameson's is also

helpful for the distinction between modernity and postmodernity. In case the technique of the stream of consciousness marks modernity, Nietzsche's temporality may be considered in the realm of modernity. Thus, it is inferred that the difference between Nietzsche's temporality and Jameson's might be regarded as one of the contrasting points between modernity and postmodernity. Actually, it is a spark which Nietzsche enlightened along the path towards postmodernity. And it is also the monument for the death of the Word, which has been continuing His universal journey towards the New Jerusalem where temporality will cease to function in the singing of saints and angels.

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