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The eternal return of teaching in the time of the corporation

Abstract

This article addresses the new conditions under which teachers are making the choice to teach. Our core contention is that the reorganisation of schools according to the logic of the corporation, as described in Deleuze’s Postscript, is changing the flows and forces on the primary surface of ‘the classroom’. These changes block the usual movements of teaching to discipline, normalise and individualise, which was the role of the school as precursor to the factory. Blocked from repeating, or returning, teaching as it has always been done, teachers must actively re-will to teach; teachers cannot use order words to name themselves and direct flows and forces as they have usually been done. While many choices to teach will be undertaken, the most popular being that of choosing to teach toward the corporation, the repetition of teaching toward enclosed spaces becomes less compelling. Like Nietzsche’s Zarathustra, teachers, who have the courage to actively choose, face a new dawn in which teaching cannot be what it once was. In that moment they must choose to repeat that choice an infinite number of times, the choice of eternal return, and it is from here that new times might begin.

Keywords: teaching, eternal return, Zarathustra, Deleuze and Guattari, metallurgy, control society

Introduction

Calls for radical change to education in general, and teachers and teaching in particular, are not new. However, contemporary governance and policy reflect an amplification and intensification of change (or reform) agendas within which teaching finds itself. Using Deleuzian notions of the control society and eternal return, this paper argues that the flows and forces of the classroom are being re-shaped by the intensification of corporate logics that privilege competition, rankings and certain forms of closeness as agents for educational change. In this abstract machine, teachers are paradoxically being asked to embrace new mechanisms while repeating past teachings. However, the challenge for us is to find ways within this machine to uncode flows, release lines of flight and conceptualise teaching anew. To do this, we turn to Zarathustra and Deleuze’s reading of eternal return to suggest that one possible line of flight is that of a teacher whose indeterminacy, uncertainty and disruptive immanence is war machinic, where that focus is on challenging the order-word “teach” that binds many teaching acts to endless repetition.

A new concept is required due to the “darker and fiercer horizons that face us” (Roy, 2008, p. ix). Disciplinary institutions such as schools, which have traditionally functioned as places of enclosure, affecting normalisation as individualisation and marked surfaces (bodies, classrooms, knowledges), are adopting corporate and free-market ideology (Apple, 2005). These surfaces break down, or deterritorialise, as discourses around education shift to embrace economic and productive logics, which, as Hardt explains, “progressively” removes
the “distinction... between inside and outside” (1998, p. 140). One way to think of this is as change in the different intensities of certain ‘closenesses’; on the one hand the closeness of a particular notion of morality and care as affected by various disciplinary and religious logics, and on the other hand, the closeness of consumer to product, as affected by many newer, and increasingly compelling, corporate logics of education.

This is not to say that these corporate logics, which Ball (2003) describes as markets, managerialism and performativity, have not previously operated within educational surfaces. Schools have been using textbooks for decades; and using testing to bring about changes in classroom teaching that speak to business logics of efficiency has a long history (Callahan, 1964). Rather, the argument we make is that these logics have become increasingly compelling, or intensified, directing flows and forming desires through these surfaces in recent times. Many of the ‘reforms’ of schooling, such as testing, rankings, standards, new curriculums and new pedagogies aim to open, or make visible, the inside of the classroom, and, to an extent, the inside of the teacher and students whose interactions form classrooms.

Territories are constantly changing, shifting, as the “machinic assemblage of bodies, of actions and passions” meets the “collective assemblage of enunciation, of acts and statements, of incorporeal transformations attributed to bodies” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2005, p. 88). This interaction is affected “on a vertical axis, the assemblage has both territorial sides, or reterritorialised sides, which stabilize it, and cutting edges of deterritorialisation, which carry it away” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2005, p. 88). For example, teachers are called on to be professionals, while also being asked to accept “the role of deskilled technicians groomed to service the needs of finance capital and produce students who are happy consumers” (Giroux, 2012). Good teaching, as a specific sign of good sense, is changing in a way dominated by the “neoliberal governance of education itself”, as exemplified by the requirement that “educational institutions must make themselves auditable” (Connell, 2009, pp. 217-218). In education, this has led to global reform agendas that use policy and performative practices to reshape teachers’ work, and by extension, teacher subjectivities (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010). The imagination of good teaching is now dominated by corporatised notions of teacher effectiveness and quality (Connell, 2009; Clarke, 2012).

The corporatised landscape of teaching is constructed within global reform agendas (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010) that increase distrust of teachers (Gale, 2006) and introduce greater external surveillance and auditing in/of classrooms (Thompson & Cook, 2014; Shore, 2008). This landscape is dominated by powerful corporate bodies, such as Pearson Education and Teach for America, and global policy experts, such as those in the OECD (Lingard, 2010; Ball, 2010), that/who promote the consumption of educational products by inducing flows that necessitate different returns of the teacher. While these affect discursive or signifying shifts in teaching that are both externalised and internalised by the teacher, the teaching event is
also changed. Teaching events are those “always ephemeral incidents, contingent on material circumstances, and full of action and motion and temporality. Unlike objects, events seem to gobble up space and time, taking up the flow of temporality and spilling out into surrounding space” (de Freitas, 2013, p. 581). These new intensities and altered flows that are forming and intensifying call forth new events that are new returns of teaching.

These new abstract machines of education, which privilege specific outputs and measures change what is being produced on this surface. Education works differently. These new returns of teaching in the classroom place less importance on flows that manifest (and induce) care for curriculum. Nor can they follow transcendent patterns of the good student at a particular stage of her/his development. These flow patterns are losing intensity, while other lines through which forces flow intensify. It is not a question of what needs to be known but one of using, even becoming, streams of indexation or evaluation (understood simply as the ascription of some value according to an index of valuation). Wallin argues that the “commodification of contemporary education is characterised by the often-valorised notions of perpetual becoming, interminable prolongation, and recommencement” (2010, p. 133). These notions signal new flows into and out of the classroom, new machines of commodification and changes, changes what can be spoken of teacher-teaching.

One example of this is the affect of new flows of surveillance through databases and accountability that opens the classroom as teachers constantly channel and facilitate a student’s willingness to swim in the sea of data (always affected by specific currents). In doing so, they prepare their students for testing and, more specifically, the test to come. The result is that the teacher no longer directs striated curriculum flows toward student bodies (teachers are not to ‘teach to the test’). In this instance, the disciplinary logic of care for individual students is being overlaid (or superimposed) by the produced desire to be responsive to the data generated.

The Corporatisation of the School

The school, like all disciplinary institutions and, indeed, society itself, is being overtaken by what Deleuze refers to as the corporation, but which we refer to corporate logics, or the logic of the corporation (in order to emphasise the noology in play). While Deleuze accepted Foucault’s account of the organisation of disciplinary societies as a series of sites of enclosure through which individuals pass, he was convinced that “we were leaving them [enclosed spaces of disciplinary society] behind” (1995b, p. 178). For Deleuze, the central expression in societies of control is the corporation.

The family, the school, the army, the factory are no longer the distinct analogical spaces that converge towards an owner-state or private power – but coded figures –
deformable and transformable – of a single corporation that now has only stockholders (Deleuze, 1995b, p. 181).

The corporation’s axioms overlay (or are superimposed on) the disciplinary traditions of the liberal democratic institution (Savat, 2009). Continuousness is one example. Disciplinary societies had termination points for each of their spaces (from family to school to factory – perhaps via barracks, prison or hospital – each of which finishes with its subjects at some point). In a disciplinary society “one was always starting again”, whereas in control societies “one is never finished with anything – the corporation, the educational system, the armed services being metastable states coexisting in one and the same modulation, like a universal system of deformation” (Deleuze, 1995b, p. 179).

The rise and ubiquity of the corporation, understood as a noology or way of thinking, means that all other ‘institutions’ gradually adopt corporate logics. For, “just as the corporation replaces the factory, perpetual training tends to replace the school, and continuous control to replace the examination, [which is]... the surest way of delivering the school over to the corporation” (Deleuze, 1995b, p. 179). When it came to the school system, Deleuze noted the emergence of “continuous forms of control, and the effect on the school of perpetual training, the corresponding abandonment of all university research, the introduction of the ‘corporation’ at all levels of schooling (Deleuze, 1995b, p. 182). Schools do not disappear but are reorganised or retooled and teaching is reconfigured within modulatory policy machines (Thompson & Cook, 2014), digital surveillance technologies (Bogard, 1996) and the increasingly performative cultures operating at all levels of education (Ball, 2003). Certain desires are encouraged, the desire for patterns that represent better numbers as evidence of the quality, and therefore linearity and recordability, of events overlays the care for individuals.

In a control society “Individuals have become ‘dividuals,’ and masses, samples, data, markets, or ‘banks’” (Deleuze, 1995b, p. 180). Whereas in disciplinary societies enclosures served to mould individuals according to specific requirements, “controls are a modulation, like a self-deforming cast that will continuously change from one moment to the other, or like a sieve whose mesh will transmute from point to point” (Deleuze, 1995b, p. 179). The computer as database constantly evaluates the dividual’s new position like “floating rates of exchange, modulated according to a rate established by a set of standard currencies” (Deleuze, 1995b, p. 180). The continuous collection of data on teaching, such as through high-stakes testing, value added measures and continual re-accreditation, exemplify this dividuation. Teachers must understand and practise teaching in the context of auditable outputs assembled anonymously and at a distance from the classroom. Care for students’ knowledge (curriculum) as some concern for bodies close by, is represented, at best, through commodified measures or becomes meaningless and counter-productive (such as when schools focus attention only on the performance of those students who may improve test scores). It is not that teachers have stopped caring for their students; it is that this does
not register in databases measuring ‘quality’. Mercieca argues that these corporate ethics of standardisation and performativity infusing schools “give the teacher ‘permission’ to not get involved in the lives of students” (2012, p. 44). The challenge is to understand teaching in terms of forces, flows, and the ways teachers connect to children, despite the policy environment which aims to remove, or distance them. In other words, we need new theoretical weapons that enable the “teacher and students to ‘surpass’ the idea of themselves and the kind of life they live” (Mercieca, 2012, p. 44).

The classroom as surface

To explore the effects and affects of the logic of the corporation on the school in this paper, we conceive the classroom as a surface. This both reflects the topological character of Deleuzian theory (Thompson & Cook, In Press) and registers the character of the corporation as spirit or gas (Deleuze, 1995b). In a disciplinary system a classroom is understood as an enclosed and limited space; whereas in a control society a classroom can best be understood as a surface formed by streamlines or laminar flows (Savat, 2013, p. 175). Mechanisms on this surface combine to form machines that interrupt certain flows, release specific energies and operate with varying degrees of intensity. The ‘nature’ of the classroom is not given before this classroom is constituted but as it is constituted. Fixing our gaze on the classroom is a risky one, and we acknowledge the temptation to define it, set limits and codify or represent it as certainty. However, we use the term to designate the concrete space where virtual and actual flows, multiple temporalities (past, presents and futures) and events meet to produce and capacitate bodies and acts of enunciation. So ‘the classroom’ has to be continually made and remade as an event and is remade through the forces and flows that traverse the space to produce a territory.

‘The classroom’, then, is an event formed by and as specific interactions that bring “a change in intensity where the virtual and actual re-combine and the effects of this change multiply and proliferate the many futures of the situation” (de Freitas, 2013, p. 588). Furthermore, these events are relatively common at the molecular, albeit less common at the molar¹. The point is not that we seek events in the classroom, they are already occurring, and will continue to occur. Rather, it is that we seek to understand which events are being enabled, affected, made more likely within the current regime of signs, and what possibilities there are to affect new possibilities beyond that classroom. To paraphrase Deleuze, we think any classroom is defined “by its lines of flight, it flees all over the place, and it’s very interesting to try and follow the lines of flight taking shape at some particular moment or other” (Deleuze, 1995a, p. 171). In this, we see the potential of this theorising to

¹ This explains for us Deleuze’s comment in an interview with Negri that: “They say revolutions turn out badly. But they’re constantly confusing two different things, the way revolutions turn out historically and people’s revolutionary becoming” (Deleuze G., Control and Becoming, 1995a, p. 171).
“put education to work for its own undermining” (Pederson, 2012, p. 366). To do this, we must grapple with teaching and Deleuze’s eternal return.

In this construction, then, the classroom is less a static location than a moment where the two planes, or surfaces, of consistency and organisation intersect and interact to form territories. A territory “has two notable effects: a reorganisation of functions and a regrouping of forces” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2005, p. 320). This reorganisation and regrouping is fluid and dynamic, and constituted through the de- and re-territorialising planes of consistency and organisation. The plane of consistency is the “relations of speed and slowness between particles” that implies “movements of deterritorialisation” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2005, p. 270). The plane of consistency is continually engaging with the plane of organisation, which is “constantly working away at the plane of consistency, always trying to plug the lines of flight, stop or interrupt the movements of deterritorialization, weigh them down, restratify them, reconstitute forms and subjects in a dimension of depth” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2005, p. 270). Teaching, then, is a way of occupying the territory of the classroom, in response to the flows, couplings, and forces that move with varying speeds and slownesses across that surface. While these may be spatial, they must also be temporal, the teaching-event constantly moves between organisation and consistency, while also being produced through habits and memories of past and present teaching events (Thompson & Cook, 2014). Another way to approach the teaching event is, as Zemblyas suggests, recognising that it “has always been a game of knowing and unknowing, learning and ignorance” that requires a pedagogy of unknowing (2005, p. 140).

The important thing about the surfaces that form as the events and territories of the classroom this oscillation, between the speeds and slownesses of flows that capacitate bodies in various ways and legitimate various enunciative acts on the communicative surface, is that they are machinic. New machines, new logics, and more importantly, new intensities of old logics arrayed on the surface, form and reform. How can we understand this flux, what tools do we have to begin to map the ways that this surface works? In the following section, we present the idea of oscillation as central to beginning to map the affects of educational surfaces, in which new flows and forces emerge as corporate logics interact with pre-existing assemblages of teaching. This has the potential to produce both repetition and difference depending upon the machines at work as we discuss in later sections.

**Metallurgic Returns**

If we conceive the school to be a series of modern disciplinary events that continually re-founded a certain territory, then the classroom was, from the beginning, a surface produced by what we describe as metallurgic returns. The metallurgic return is the repetition of the Same movement, and one that we think mirrors that of Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of
the metallurgist. There are multiple ways of thinking teaching, and therefore the classroom, that are fundamental to the forces, flows and connections that form the teacher, student and classroom as a precursor to other institutions of enclosure. One of these noologies of the classroom reflects its place in the transitions from family to factory. It is a spatiality of preparation for a world of work. Another noology has the classroom as a space of interaction of bodies. It is a close-by state that manifests the qualities of haptic interaction. Both of these noologies operate in the disciplinary classroom and teaching becomes oscillation, an alternation between two drives or passions: one to instil knowledge, to mould or shape; the other to be with, to be close-by. It is not a case of extinguishing one drive and its passions for the other drive and its passions. Both movements must be performed for a disciplinary classroom to form, and it is a question of which prevails at some moment. As Smith points out, “when we talk about the ‘I,’ we are primarily indicating which, at the moment, is strongest and sovereign within us; my so called ‘self-identity’ is in fact a differential flickering from drive to drive” (2012, p. 327). Thus the I-teacher who adopts a close-by, haptic position and the I-teacher who adopts a transcendent, distanced or optic position is the same I-teacher, but one inhabited by a different passion or drive. In each moment a particular will is expressed against or over other wills and this becomes ‘I’. For “each of us has multiple perspectives on the world because of the multiplicity of our drives – drives that are often contradictory among themselves, and that are therefore in a constant struggle or combat with each other” (Smith, 2012, p. 326).

The crucial point is that both the movements of moulding and the movements of being close-by must be continually enacted; for the mould can only be introduced once the ore has been found and readied for that mould. In moving close to the student a teacher affects “passion and sincerity” that “will permeate the atmosphere of the class, the learning context and the subsequent educational practice” (Cole, 2011, p. 553). This affect does not determine the encounter with students, as it will meet “an undifferentiated plane in the educational context between the students that will draw in parts of their social lives and perhaps not actively involve the teacher” (Cole, 2011, p. 553). This produces a surface that functions with an ethico-spatial register that regulates how a teacher moves – or more precisely, what movement is possible within which space (Deleuze & Guattari, 2005). Only by moving close can the teacher fully enclose the student through normalisation as individualisation.

Teachers, in disciplinary spaces, have always moved between machines that lead them to acquire a sense of the ideal student (as the productive-disciplined student-toward-worker) and practices and affects in the classroom in face-to-face/body-to-body relations with students (Thompson & Cook, 2013). The close-by captivating confluences with students that occur as teaching are not the directive-machines that provide the mould that teachers are to reproduce. There is a balance, a series of oscillations between the close-by interactions with the students and the far-away machines of curriculum, policy and other normalising machines. There is also, as de Freitas suggests, a back and forth movement between past
and future, as each teaching event is “a moving and unravelling thread trailing off behind and ahead” (2013, p. 588). It is too easy to say that these are the macro and micro effects, because they interact, overlap and flow. The importance of this discussion is that teaching oscillates to induce flows that have previously resulted in a disciplinary classroom as a matter of course.

Teachers have regularly faced a challenge of returning. For questions of what it is to be a teacher arise when teachers must link their inside (events, ethics, interactions) with the outside (logics of teaching, policy, overcoded representations, morality) associated with producing the ‘right’ kind of teaching through the immediacy of close-by interactions with students. In this, the teacher is like the metallurgist. Whereas the metallurgist follows the seams or flows of ore to produce metal implements, the teacher follows the flows on the planes of consistency and organisation with students that potentially produces events. The back and forth movement of territorialisation requires that the teacher/metallurgist is always having to actively choose.

Teachers, like metallurgists, are “in themselves double: a hybrid, an alloy, a twin formation” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2005, p. 415). This oscillation that produces events means that the classroom always contains possibilities (lines of flight) that have only been enhanced by the ways in which new (and old) forces and flows operate with altered and/or specific intensities and limits. The working to and fro between closeness and distance places teaching in constant flux. However, we would be foolish to allow this oscillative function to stand as some pining for a disciplinary past within these new machines. Rather, the question of what is possible, what is beyond the control should not privilege a return of the certainty, and indeed violence, of the disciplinary.

Also like metallurgists, teachers come under the control of the state while enjoying “a certain technological autonomy, and social clandestinity, so that, even controlled, they did not belong to the State any more than they were themselves nomads” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2005, p. 405). They may have been exposed to ordering but remained artisans who were “determined in such a way as to follow a flow of matter... The artisan is the itinerant, the ambulant. To follow the flow of matter is to itinerate, to ambulate. It is intuition in action” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2005, p. 409).

Teachers in the society of control must ask themselves new questions of return and in enacting and instantiating those self-interrogations as will to power return same as difference. They must find new ways to finish the sentences: “Teaching is...”, “Teachers are...”, Students are....”, and “Classrooms are...”. And teaching in classrooms will be affected anew. No longer able to care as they once had and to return their teaching in a classroom striated by the state, teaching in a control society is care for scores, for externalities. It is no longer care for students in the service of the state, but care for students’ scores in the service of the corporation as manifested by an “inexorable rivalry presented as healthy
competition” (Deleuze, 1995b, p. 179). This represents a “significant transformation” in the notion of care itself (Savat, 2013, p. 15; Stiegler, 2010).

**Eternal Return and the Teacher**

But metallurgic returns of the Same are not the only forms of return, and, for Deleuze fall short of Eternal Return. The teacher is choosing, but it is not a profound existential choice of a moment to be repeated forever. Flows associated with metallurgic returns were facilitated, energised and resourced (these might all be the same thing) in the disciplinary classroom. They are no longer facilitated, energised and resourced at the same levels in a classroom coming to manifest the logic of the corporation. New horizons face teachers. They can work feverishly to maintain the flows and repeat a bizarre caricature of metallurgic returns. Or they can choose otherwise. Teachers who have been used to working with and within the various striations that overlay and underpin the classroom may no longer be able to continue to teach as they have done previously. As a result of the effects of corporate logics in and as the classroom, teachers face a landscape unlike that for which they have been prepared and in which they are confronted with choices more direct and disturbing than those to which they are accustomed in a disciplinary society. This mean that the usual (lesser) moments in which the question “what am I doing teaching?” is becoming the question “who am I?”

The bringing forth of a moment of deeper choice requires an engagement with eternal return (a concept from Nietzsche that Deleuze deploys in a particular manner). This is not because teachers face eternal return for the first time, as their betweenness makes eternal return always in question. Teachers face eternal return in a corporate landscape, however, that make returning the same as the same (disciplinary copy) increasingly difficult and the attempt to manifest sameness becomes authentic and disruptive (i.e., simulacral) difference. ‘Good teaching’ has become coded through and within corporation-speak, rather than the disciplinary past; we hear references to value-added measures, efficiency, quality all understood within neoliberal reforming agendas that no longer requires teachers to manifest moulding.

While many teachers will refuse eternal return for as long as they are able, at some point teachers have to do something else. Each must forcefully re-will her or himself to become another teacher. To do this they must manifest will to power, as this is crucial for the eternal return of teaching in a classroom within which important disciplinary striations have been smoothed by the corporation. For Deleuze, eternal return and will to power are “the two most fundamental concepts in the Nietzschean corpus” (2004a, p. 117). Will to power defines human being and is the motor of return.
This is significant because on any given day, across the Western world, thousands of teachers walk into their classroom and begin to teach. While we must not forget that there was teaching before there were classrooms or even teachers, each time a teacher walks into a classroom something particular happens, a particular moment of teaching is enacted. And while this teacher finds her/himself in this classroom, it is not for the first time and not for the last time. The questions that arise here concern what connects these moments of teaching. In the first instance, each of these teachers walking into each of these classrooms repeats what they have done before. They enact teaching as they understand it, and as they have been trained to understand it. ‘This teacher’ walks into ‘this classroom’ and her or his teaching begins, as it has begun before by this and every other teacher.

Life, according to Nietzsche, “must ever surpass itself” (Nietzsche, 1954, p. 125). It is a “will to procreation, or impulse towards a goal, towards the higher, remoter, more manifold” (Nietzsche, 1954, p. 125 emphasis in original). Will to power “is not simply a drive to survive—which would be better served by maintaining a state of equilibrium—but a drive to expand, to ‘go forth and multiply’, to become ever more numerous” (Keeping, 2012, pp. 77-8). Enacting will to power is recognising our responsibility for good and evil and making good and evil our good and evil. Choosing the ‘right’ thing to do now is to destroy the ‘right’ thing to do then. Choosing the ‘right’ way to teach now, is manifesting will to power. For “good and evil which would be everlasting—it doth not exist! Of its own accord must it ever surpass itself anew” (Nietzsche, 1954, p. 125). Thus, “he who hath to be a creator in good and evil—verily, he hath first to be a destroyer, and break values in pieces” (Nietzsche, 1954, p. 126).

Following Deleuze, the moment of eternal return requires an embracing of my fate and not passive acceptance of my fate (as some Nietzscheans would have it). In affirming my fate, amor fati, I embrace all that I have done in the past that leads to this moment of eternal return of the same as different. It is an active affirmative event. If the eternal return requires us to engage a will to do this forever, then it represents a profound existential moment (though not an individual moment). Eternal return requires active choosing and it is this active choosing in a landscape radically altered by the corporation that makes the return of the same as the same (copying) increasingly impossible for most teachers.

Once teachers recognise and embrace eternal return (as many are being forced to do), they have no choice but to re-will to teach in a manner that they will return infinitely. They must be creative, or as Mercieca has suggested, surpass the forces and flows that have typically designated teaching in order to embrace a “becoming-teaching” that requires new organisations of flows, forces and understandings of the limits of connectivity (2012, p. 46). “It is the thought of the eternal return that selects. ... The thought of the eternal return eliminates from willing everything that falls outside the eternal return, it makes willing a creation, it brings about the equation ‘willing = creating’” (Deleuze, 1983, p. 69). The principal question, though, is not one of the origins of the creativity that is affected as will to
power, but of its qualities and of its force. The crucial difference is between teaching that is willed with little force or intensity and that which is willed forcefully and with maximal intensity. “The eternal return is the new formulation of the practical synthesis: whatever you will, will it in such a way that you also will its eternal return” (Deleuze, 1983, p. 68). Another’s power, a recollection of some teacher from my past, may flow through a teacher’s body that affects it, but this must be done intensely to affect will to power and eternal return of my teaching (and not out of habit).

Even if eternal return implies recurrence, it only does so to deny the return of the Same, Similar or Identical. Each of these is of the past, whereas repetition as will to power and eternal return is of the future. It is of teaching’s future. It is a calling into the future, as a repetition that looks forward to future repetitions. In the end, or beginning, “what is produced, the absolute new itself, is in turn nothing but repetition: the third repetition, this time by excess, the repetition of the future as eternal return” (Deleuze, 1994, p. 90). Eternal return brings something “into being which cannot do so without changing nature” (Deleuze, 1994, p. 71). For teachers, this is a process of selecting as teacher, or teaching, and enacting this with force.

This reminds us that will to power and eternal return concern intensities. Nietzsche’s “eternal return is taking us into a dimension yet unexplored: neither extensive quantity nor local movement, nor physical quality, but a domain of pure intensities” (Deleuze, 2004b, p. 122). As “the instrument and expression of the will to power”, the eternal return “raises each thing to its superior form, that is its nth power” and “eliminates ‘half-desires'” (Deleuze, 2004b, p. 125). The eternal return and will to power do not demand that one cease doing, to cease teaching for example, but to do whatever we choose to do to the nth degree. In being subjected to new forces, teachers must engage teaching with a heretofore lost intensity. (To do so, for us, requires attaining the speed of the nomad and actualise war machine.) It is to this future that we also look in this discussion of eternal return, will to power and teaching in the control society.

**Zarathustra and teaching**

If we follow Nietzsche’s story of Zarathustra’s returns we think this makes sense of the situation in which teachers find themselves and the choices that confront them. For us, Zarathustra performs two metallurgic returns before realising that the only way to be a teacher (of will to power, which is the highest truth) is to engage eternal return and make an active choice Different from every choice he has previously made. Nietzsche’s Zarathustra illustrates both the metallurgic movement and that movement that engages eternal return. The paradox for the contemporary teacher, who understands and is comforted within contours of the disciplinary apparatus of the school but is increasingly forced to encounter a new conception of teaching in a control society (replete with heightened intensities and a sense that their disciplinary care is under attack), mirrors the
experiences of Nietzsche’s Zarathustra. To us, Zarathustra expresses the hopes and frustrations of teaching, trying to understand change and engage ethically with a post-ethical (post-disciplinary) world. Zarathustra is a teacher, and in his journey we gain some tools to better understand teaching.

While he is up the mountain (the metallurgist is likely to be digging), Nietzsche’s Zarathustra discerns the coming of the Higher Ones. He descends to tell the nearby townsfolk of their future but they laugh at him and think him a fool. He has not connected. “But still am I far from them, and my sense speaketh not unto their sense” (Nietzsche, 1954, p. 15). He goes back up the mountain to, in our reading, reflect on his teaching practice. He realises that he must connect and seeks “living companions, who will follow me because they want to follow themselves” (Nietzsche, 1954, p. 17). He fails once more, however, when his companions become believers. Believers cannot become Higher Ones.

Zarathustra’s is a far more demanding mould than those teachers enact. He seeks self-made people. “Ye had not yet sought yourselves: then did ye find me”, he complains. He is forced to bid those who seek to learn from him to “lose me and find yourselves; and only when ye have all denied me, will I return unto you” (Nietzsche, 1954, pp. 82-83). While it is demanding, it remains for us available, as a result of the effects of the logic of the corporation on the classroom. The classroom is not what it once was. The teacher can’t simply return the old processes associated with moulding the future worker.

We note that leaving the classroom is the last of Zarathustra’s teaching movements. He comprehends his greatest sin and what he must do as a teacher to correct this. His greatest sin turns out to be “‘Fellow-suffering! Fellow-suffering with the higher-men!’” (Nietzsche, 1954, p. 368). This he must end by leaving; for he has his work to do. “This is my morning, my day beginneth: arise now, arise, thou great noontide!” — Thus spake Zarathustra and left his cave, glowing and strong, like a morning sun coming out of gloomy mountains” (Nietzsche, 1954, p. 368).

As Deleuze pointed out, Nietzsche did not finish Thus Spake Zarathustra and we do not know what was to become of its central figure (Deleuze, 2004a, p. 117). We note, however, that for Deleuze “the revolutionary problem today is to find some unity in our various struggles without falling back on the despotic and bureaucratic organization of the party or State apparatus” (Deleuze, 2004b, p. 260). This eternal return has the potential to help answer Deleuze’s questions: “who are today’s nomads, who are today’s Nietzscheans?” in the classroom (Deleuze, 2004b, p. 260).

**The challenge of Zarathustra**

So, now that the metallurgic return is blocked, the challenge of eternal return is for the first time real and the infinitive "to teach" and the order word "teacher" must be actively re-
willed, because teaching has to be actively re-willed Differently, due to effects of the logic of the corporation. The problem for teaching is that the usual practices for constituting the territory ‘teaching’ are beginning to function through different oscillations. Two affects are important. First, the corporation’s logic prevents the classroom from returning individualisation, which was hitherto its function. This diminution of normalising flows toward individualisation in the classroom and the intensification of dividuating flows mean that specific flows of the close-by have increased energy. Normalisation as individualisation required acting at a distance according to a transcendent model. It necessitated the return of an optic relationship in which students were positioned according to externally determined notions of the normal and normal progression. The second affect of the increased impact of the logic of the corporation in the classroom is that haptic teacher-student relationships are more likely to eventuate. This is significant, as Roy notes, because haptic space “is insurgent space, whose gradients are produced region by region, neighbourhood by neighbourhood, through connections, deterritorializations, intensities and observances” (2005, p. 32). Most importantly, for this discussion, haptic space “induces new becomings, and is reciprocally produced by such becomings” (Roy, 2005, p. 32). It is to the breaking of habits, or habitual returns, that we must now shift our attention, for it is here that the importance of eternal return in the classroom may be found.

There are no longer teachers and students, there are singularities, creative, unfettered and acentred, such that it manifests speed. To put it another way, teachers must change how they move so as not to induce a classroom of any type or configuration. It is not enough to ‘get close’ to the students – a frequent tactic that Foucault saw as a strategy of biopower played out in the classroom (Foucault, 1988) and which we understand in terms of normalising-individualising oscillations. Rather, the event that might be called teaching requires a letting go, an embracing of “unthought, non-identitarian potentials” (Wallin, 2011, p. 286). There is no easy movement for teachers trapped by the “natural inner movement” of the classroom (Jones, 1990, p. 74).

Nor is it enough to suggest that for teachers to embrace eternal return the classroom must go online or become ‘flipped’ by technology because they are still centred places – ordering and categorising still function. The teacher who embraces eternal return must let go of teaching and the name of the teacher. It is not possible, as some have suggested, to adopt pedagogy and curriculum practices as ‘nomadic’ while participating in and releasing flows as teaching through corporate logics. This must be a political act, the teacher embracing a line of flight “that delimits nothing, that describes no contour, that no longer goes from one point to another but instead passes between points (...) a mutant line of this kind that is without outside or inside, form or background, beginning or end” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2005, pp. 497-498). And this may be one possibility of Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of the war machine, that turns its disruptive potential onto the Oedipalised, certain and constrained flows contained in the order-word ‘teacher’. After all, as Wallin suggests:
the task of creating a pedagogical life is not that of occupying a ready-made plane or territorialising a new space in one’s name. Rather, the task of creating a life might be thought as one whereby we learn to occupy a plane in order to make it holey, that is, to introduce fractal contours upon its striated form, preparing the ground for emergence of a people yet to come (2010, p. 130).

Conclusion

The teacher is not alone in being confronted by and being afforded the possibility of embracing the future and the future of the future (in willing for a repetition that will be repeated, if not always in the same way, eternally). In the teacher we find at least one of those whose movements have been changed, even while staying the same, by the intensifications produced by the increasing effects of the logic of the corporation (we also find the doctor caught in the super-clinic and the politician trapped in the endless opinion poll). Joyful, exuberant and vibrant engagement (return) to a classroom made anew and made for a future embraced becomes possible. As do darker outcomes.

Works Cited


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1 Discursive formations and construction of good teaching have always been responsive to shifting social, political and economic imperatives (Jones, 1990). These have an effect on logics of regulation and registration (Connell, 2009), teacher education (Moore, 2004), and public perceptions of what constitutes becoming-teacher.

2 This, for Deleuze, ‘wrong’ interpretation is forcefully presented by Malabou (2010).

3 As Ward points out, “Deleuze seems to feel that a great deal is at stake in getting the interpretation of eternal return right” (Ward, 2012, p. 107). Central to this ‘right’ interpretation is Deleuze’s view that eternal return was not the “repetition of the identical... [but] evoked a process of transformation in which ‘reactive’ forces were eliminated...” (Ward, 2012, p. 101). Kerslake makes two vital observations in this context. Embracing my past, by understanding it as the past that I willed, necessitates that “the ‘I’ who wills the past must be different from the ‘I’ who took themselves to be determined by the past” (Kerslake, 2007, p. 36). This means that I cannot project an identical self into the future because “the eternal return implies the dissolution of the identical subject in the future as well. Eternal return implies that if I am going to re-will a previous action, I will only be able to do so by taking it as the act of another, someone with whom I can no longer identify myself” (Kerslake, 2007, pp. 36-7). We also concur with those who reject the view that Nietzsche adopted a determinist position that meant that *amor fati* must be love of one’s future fate. Nietzsche casts “fate in terms of that which was rather than that which must be” (Grof, 2003, p. 35).