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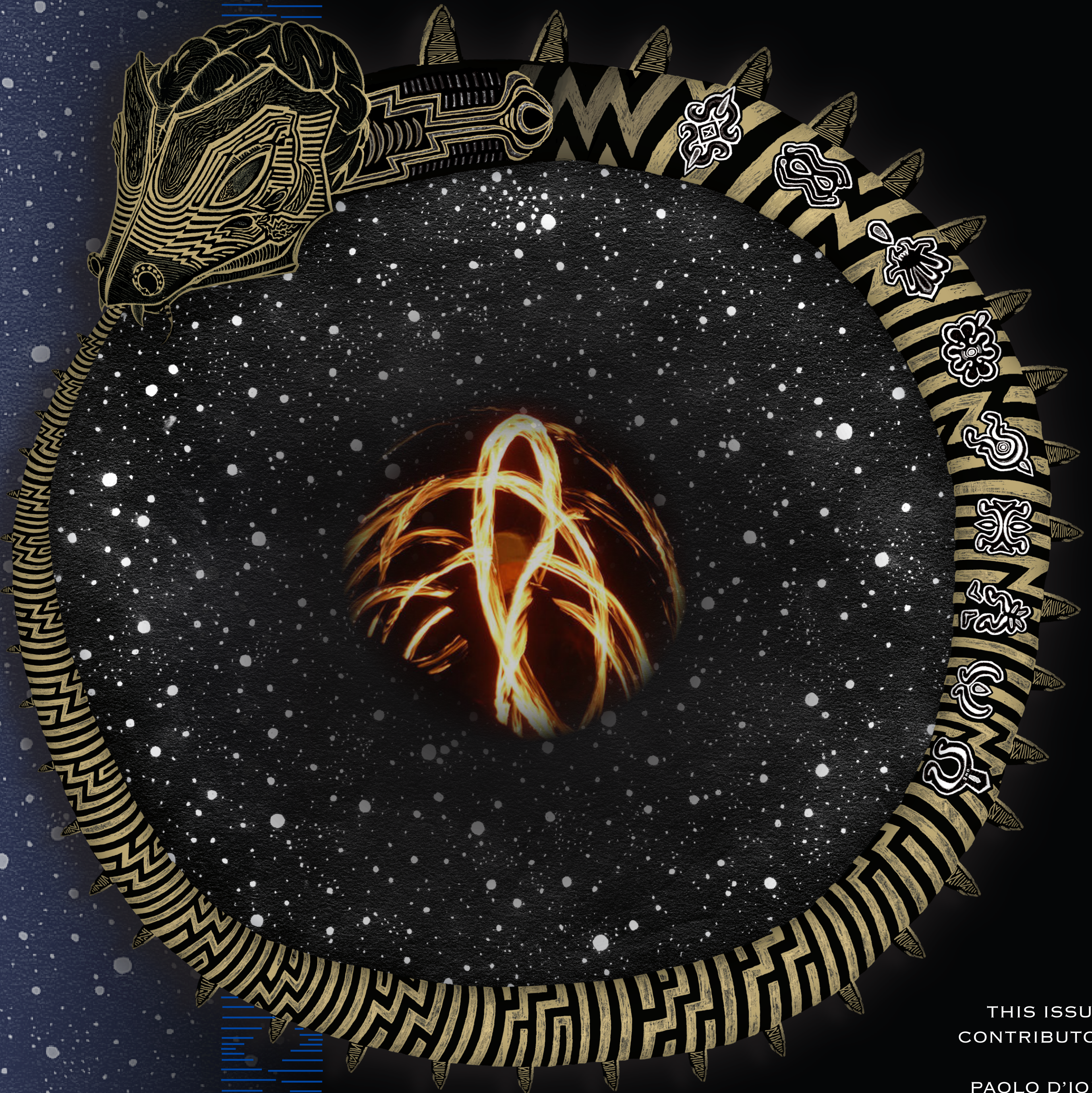

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To further practice reading as an art and to foster rumination, what Nietzsche believed "modern man" has not properly cultivated, *The Agonist* is seeking exegeses of Nietzsche's texts. "An aphorism, properly stamped and molded," Nietzsche urged, "has not been 'deciphered' when it has simply been read; rather, one has then to begin its exegesis, for which is required an art of exegesis" (GM: P §8).

The Agonist is interested in exegeses of individual aphorisms, bearing in mind that they fold into Nietzsche's entire corpus and are not entities that one can consider in complete isolation. We are particularly interested in exegeses of aphorisms from *Morgenröthe* and *Die fröliche Wissenschaft*, two of the more neglected books of Nietzsche's oeuvre, but welcome exegeses on all the published works as well as the *Nachlass*. In this act of ruminating on individual aphorisms within the orbit of Nietzsche's entire philosophy, we want to promote careful philological reading, the art of "reading well, that is to say, reading slowly, deeply, looking cautiously before and aft, with reservations, with doors left open, with delicate eyes and fingers" (D: P §5). If Nietzsche demanded for his work "only perfect readers and philologists," it is incumbent upon us to learn, as he insisted, to read him well. For a section strictly devoted to exegesis, we seek work that strives to fulfill this task.

"A book like this, a problem like this, is in no hurry; we both, I just as much as my book, are friends of *lento*" (D: P §5).

For all submissions of exegeses, the editors can be contacted at:

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The Agonist
A Nietzsche Circle Journal

Contents

ESSAY

The Eternal Return: Genesis and Interpretation
by Paolo D'Iorio — 7

TRANSLATION

Friedrich Nietzsche: "The Greek Music Drama"
translated by Paul Bishop — 48

EXEGESIS

'Méditerraniser': The Flight from North to South
by Martine Prange — 57

REVIEWS

The Time of Our Lives: A Critical History of Temporality
written by David Couzens Hoy
reviewed by Keith Ansell-Pearson — 64

Modernity in the Mirror:
Nietzsche's Economy: Modernity, Normativity and Futurity
written by Peter R. Sedgwick
reviewed by Frank Chouraqui — 67

The Will to Technology and the Culture of Nihilism: Heidegger, Nietzsche & Marx
written by Arthur Kroker
reviewed by Joseph La Sac — 74

The Inner Touch: Archaeology of a Sensation
written by Daniel Heller-Roazen
reviewed by Jill Marsden — 82

QUOTES

selected by Rainer J. Hanshe *and* Paul S. Loeb — 89

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ESSAY

The Eternal Return: Genesis and Interpretation*

by Paolo D'Iorio

1. Return of the Same?

Gilles Deleuze claims that "we misinterpret the expression 'eternal return' if we understand it as 'return of the same'," above all, he says, we must avoid "believing that it refers to a cycle, to a return of the Same, a return to the same," and further, he contends that *"It is not the same which returns, it is not the similar which returns; rather, the Same is the returning of that which returns, —in other words, of the Different; the similar is the returning of that which returns, —in other words of the dissimilar.* The repetition in the eternal return is the same, but the same in so far as it is said uniquely of difference and the different."[1] This interpretation, which was widespread in France and in the world, relies on one fragment by Nietzsche, and one fragment only. This fragment was published as "aphorism" 334 of Book Two of the non-book known as *The Will to Power*.[2]

It is worth mentioning that this so-called aphorism was put together by the editors of *The Will to Power*, who merged two posthumous fragments from 1881 in which Nietzsche compared his own conception of the eternal return of the same as a cycle taking place within time with Johannes Gustav Vogt's mechanistic conception, which involved (besides the eternal return in time) the eternal co-existence of the same in space. This dialogue between Nietzsche and Vogt is clearly visible in the manuscript not only because the

---

* This article first appeared in French in 2000 ("Nietzsche et l'éternel retour. Genèse et interprétation," in *Nietzsche. Cahiers de l'Herne* (Paris: l'Herne, 2000): 361-389.). A Brazilian edited version by Ernani Chaves was published in 2006 ("O Eterno Retorno. Gênese e Interpretação," in *Cadernos Nietzsche* 20, (São Paulo, 2006): 69-114. A second Brazilian translation by Ernani Chaves and Rosistera Pereira de Oliveira, extending upon the original French version, was published in 2007 ("Cosmologia e filosofia do eterno retorno em Nietzsche," in Scarlett Marton (éd.), *Nietzsche pensador Mediterrâneo*. *A recepção italiana*, ed. by Scarlett Marton (São Paulo: Discurso Editorial, 2007): 193-263). The present translation by Frank Chouraqui corresponds to the extended version and was revised by the author.

[1] See Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, tr. by Hugh Tomlinson (London: The Athlone Press, 1983), 48; Deleuze, *Nietzsche* (Paris: PUF, 1965), 41; and Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, tr. by Paul Patton (London: Continuum, 2004), 374.

[2] Among at least five different versions of *The Will to Power* available to Deleuze, he used Friedrich Würzbach's collection in its French translation by Geneviève Bianquis, published by Gallimard in 1935. In 1962, after the publication of the French version of the Critical Edition of Nietzsche by Giorgio Colli and Mazzimo Montinari, published by Gallimard, the publisher had, for good reason, stopped the re-edition of *The Will to Power* in order to make way for much more reliable texts. This made for a surprise when Gallimard itself re-edited the pocket version of this controversial text in 1995. For a history of this forgery, see Mazzino Montinari, "*La volonté de puissance n'existe pas*," edited and with an epilogue by Paolo D'Iorio (Paris: éditions de l'éclat, 1996).

author refers explicitly to Vogt's most important work (*Force: A Realistic and Monistic Worldview*) just before these two posthumous fragments as well as between them; but also because the text itself quotes some concepts and refers to some technical terms taken from Vogt's book in quotation marks, such as "energy of contraction."[3] Vogt declared that the world is made of one single and absolutely homogenous substance which is spatially and temporally defined, immaterial and indestructible, and which he called "force" (*Kraft*) and whose "fundamental mechanistic, unique and immutable force of action is *contraction*."[4] After reading this passage and highlighting some others in the margin of his copy of Vogt's book, Nietzsche takes his notebook M III 1 and writes the fragment quoted by Deleuze:

> Supposing that there were indeed an "energy of contraction" constant in all centers of force of the universe, it remains to be explained where any difference would ever originate. It would be necessary for the whole to dissolve into an infinite number of *perfectly identical* existential rings and spheres, and we would therefore behold innumerable and *perfectly identical* worlds COEXISTING [Nietzsche underlines this word twice] alongside each other. Is it necessary for me to admit this? Is it necessary to posit an eternal coexistence on top of the eternal succession of identical worlds?[5]

In the French version of *The Will to Power* used by Deleuze, the term "*Contractionsenergie*" is translated as "concentration energy" instead of "contraction energy," and the phrase "*Ist dies nöthig für mich, anzunehmen?*" is translated as "is it necessary to admit this" instead of "is it necessary for me to admit this?" and this does away with the whole meaning of the comparison. The effects of arbitrary cuts, of the distortion of the chronological order, of the oversights and approximations of the French translation of *The Will to Power* combined lead to the obliteration of the dialogue between Nietzsche

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[3] Cf. posthumous fragments 11 [308, 311, 312, 313] of 1881, on pages 126, 128, 130 of Notebook M III 1. I quote the Colli/Montinari edition (Friedrich Nietzsche, *Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe* (Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 1967-)) and use mostly the English translations published by Walter Kaufmann amending those translations in view of the German originals when deemed necessary. I refer to the Posthumous Fragments with the initials PF followed by the batch number (which is erroneously called "notebook" in the Cambridge translation), the fragment number between brackets and the year of writing. This method allows us to locate each fragment in a simple and easy way, in both the German original and in all translations of the Colli / Montinari edition.

[4] Johannes Gustav Vogt, *Die Kraft. Eine real-monistiche Weltanschauung. Erstes Buch. Die Contraktionsenergie, die letztursächliche einheitliche mechanische Wirkungsform des Weltsubstrates* (Leipzig: Hautp & Tischler, 1878), 655 p., the quote is on p. 20, with the hypothesis of the existence of some Contraktionsenergie discussed in detail on pp. 21, 26 and 27. Nietzsche's copy is kept at Weimar's Herzogin Anna Amalia Bibliothek de Weimar (accession number C 411). The fact that Nietzsche had access to this book in Sils-Maria in the Summer of 1881 at the time of his conception of the Eternal Return is confirmed by the letter to Franz Overbeck from August, 20-21st, in which the philosopher asks his friend to send him a number of books among which is Vogt's. Nietzsche pursues his dialogue with Vogt in PF 2[3] of 1882 and 24[36] of 1883-1884.

[5] Nietzsche, PF 11 [311] of 1881.

and Vogt and it looks as if Nietzsche were criticizing his own idea of the eternal return of the same as a cycle in this note scribbled in his notebook—which would make it an exception in his whole written work. Deleuze, whose entire interpretation relies on this sole posthumous note whilst ignoring all the others, comments: "The cyclical hypothesis, so heavily criticized by Nietzsche (VP II 325 and 334), arises in this way."[6] —In fact, Nietzsche was not criticizing the cyclical hypothesis but only the particular form of that hypothesis presented in Vogt's work. All of Nietzsche's texts without exception speak of the eternal return as the repetition of the same events within a cycle which repeats itself eternally.[7]

If Deleuze's interpretation holds that the eternal return is not a circle, then what is it? A wheel moving centrifugally, operating a "creative selection,"

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[6] Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 48. See also Deleuze, "Conclusions - sur la volonté de puissance et l'éternel retour," in *Nietzsche*. Actes du colloque de Royaumont du 4 au 8 juillet 1964 (Paris: Les éditions de Minuit, 1967), 284: "more precisely the notes of 1881-1882 explicitly oppose the cyclical hypothesis" and Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 7 and p. 372: "how could it be believed that he understood the eternal return as a cycle, when he opposed "his" hypothesis to every cyclical hypothesis?"

[7] These observations should guard those philosophers who intend to build their own interpretation of Nietzsche upon *The Will to Power*, as most scholars have done until a very recent period. In my postface to Montinari, 1996, I had also insisted that Deleuze's interpretation of the concept of the will to power too — which totally rests upon another posthumous fragment which contains a grave deciphering error — is, in sight of the correct transcription of the manuscripts, now untenable, especially with regard to the key concept of "internal will." In his *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 46-47, Deleuze explains: "one of the most important texts which Nietzsche wrote to explain what he understood by the will to power is the following: 'the *victorious* concept 'force', by means of which our physicists have created God and the world, still needs to be completed: an inner will must be *ascribed* to it, which I designate as will to power.' The will to power is thus ascribed to force, but in a very special way: it is both a complement of force and something internal to it [...] The will to power is thus added to force, but as the differential and genetic element, as the internal element of its production." Unfortunately Nietzsche's manuscript doesn't read *innere Wille* (internal will), but *innere Welt* (internal world). It is therefore impossible to declare that the will to power is "both a complement of force *and* something internal" not least because this would lead into a form of dualism of the kind that monistic philosophy strives to eliminate at all cost. Indeed, from a philosophical perspective, Wolfgang Müller-Lauter had already shown that the passage used by Deleuze seemed suspicious insofar as it contradicted a number of Nietzsche's other texts (see Müller-Lauter, "Nietzsches Lehre vom Willen zur Macht," *Nietzsche-Studien,* 3 (1974): 35 f.). A second glance at the manuscripts in the wake of the Colli-Montinari critical edition confirmed this analysis philologically. (Deleuze quotes the Würzbach collection, Book II, § 309, which has been published as posthumous fragment 36[31] from June-July 1885 in the Colli-Montinari critical edition; according to Wolfgang Müller-Lauter, this fragment does not justify any deciphering difficulty and we would therefore not be dealing with a deciphering mistake but with a conscious correction on Peter Gast's part, cf. Müller-Lauter, "'Der Willer zur Macht' als Buch der 'Krisis'," *Nietzsche-Studien*, 24 (1995): 258). For the sake of exhaustivity, let me recall that Deleuze explains his (unfortunately mistaken) view of the eternal return with reference to his (equally flawed) understanding of the will to power: "This is why we can only understand the eternal return as the expression of a principle which serves as an explanation of diversity and its reproduction, of difference and its repetition. Nietzsche presents this principle as one of his most important philosophical discoveries. He calls it *will to power*." (Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy* (1962), 45).

"Nietzsche's secret is that the eternal return is selective" says Deleuze:

> The eternal return produces becoming-active. It is sufficient to relate the will to nothingness to the eternal return in order to realize that reactive forces do not return. However far they go, however deep the becoming-reactive of forces, reactive forces will not return. The small, petty, reactive man will not return.
>
> Affirmation alone returns, this that can be affirmed alone returns, joy alone returns. Everything that can be denied, everything that is negation, is expelled due to the very movement of the eternal return. We were entitled to dread that the combinations of nihilism and reactivity would eternally return too. The eternal return must be compared to a wheel; yet, the movement of the wheel is endowed with centrifugal powers that drive away the entire negative. Because Being imposes itself on becoming, it expels from itself everything that contradicts affirmation, all forms of nihilism and reactivity: bad conscience, *ressentiment*..., we shall witness them only once. [...] The eternal return is the Repetition, but the Repetition that selects, the Repetition that saves. Here is the marvelous secret of a selective and liberating repetition.[8]

There is no need to remind the reader that neither the image of a centrifugal movement nor the concept of a negativity-rejecting repetition appears anywhere in Nietzsche's writings, and indeed Deleuze does not refer to any text in support of this interpretation. Further, one could highlight that Nietzsche never formulates the opposition between active and reactive forces, which constitutes the broader framework of Deleuze's interpretation. For some years, Marco Brusotti has called attention to the fact that Deleuze introduced a dualism that does not exist in Nietzsche's writings. To be sure, the German philosopher describes a certain number of "reactive" phenomena (for example, in the second essay of the *Genealogy of Morality*, § 11, he talks about "reactive affects" [*reaktive Affekte*], "reactive feelings" [*reaktive Gefühlen*], reactive men [*reaktive Menschen*]); but these are nonetheless the result of complex ensembles of configurations of centers of forces that remain in themselves *active*. Neither the word nor the concept of "reactive *forces*" ever appears in Nietzsche's philosophy.[9]

We would like to pause for one moment to cast a philosophical glance on Deleuze's interpretation as a whole.[10] In his portrayal of Nietzsche, Deleuze

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[8] Deleuze, "Conclusions - sur la volonté de puissance et l'éternel retour" (1967): 285; Deleuze, *Nietzsche* (1965): 37; Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy* (1962), 66; Deleuze, *Nietzsche* (1965): 38 and 40.

[9] Cf. Brusotti, "Die 'Selbstverkleinerung des Menschen' in der Moderne. Studie zu Nietzsches 'Zur Genealogie der Moral'," *Nietzsche-Studien*, 21 (1992): 83, 102, 103; Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy* (1962), 46-47 *passim*.

[10] One may stress that Deleuze acted on a good intuition when titling his book *Nietzsche and Philosophy*. Indeed, it is definitely not "Nietzsche's philosophy": rather, it is "Nietzsche and Deleuze's philosophy" or "Deleuze and Nietzsche's philosophy" which this text deals with. For a sociological perspective on Deleuze's interpretation in the context of the French philosophy of the Sixties, let us refer to this page by Louis Pinto: "the invention of new paths, which results from improvisation rather than calculation, was neither obvious nor easy. For he

elaborates an extraordinary philosophy of affirmation and joy, which clears existence of all reactive, negative and petty elements. He strives to locate a mechanism that—unlike the negation of negation, which characterizes Hegel's (and Marx's) dialectic—would produce the "affirmation of affirmation" in the eternal return:

> The eternal return is this highest power, a synthesis of affirmation which finds its principle in the Will. The lightness of that which affirms against the weight of the negative; the games of the will to power against the labor of the dialectic; the affirmation of affirmation against that famous negation of the negation.[11]

Deleuze opposes the historical course of the Hegelian notion that confronts, struggles and finally dialectizes the negative and results in a consoling teleology leading to the triumph of the idea or the liberation of the masses with the centrifugal movement of the wheel, which simply ejects the negative. It is still a case of a consoling and optimistic teleology, which, instead of confronting the weight of history, the grief and the negative, makes it disappear in one centrifugal stroke of a magic wand. There is reason to worry that this be a case of repression, which, unable to dialectize or accept the negative, simply seeks to exorcise it in one gesture of "creative selection." But exorcism is a feat of magic and not of philosophy: it is unfortunately not enough to make the negative disappear. In all probability, the negative will come back with a vengeance.

In contrast to Deleuze's "affirmation of affirmation", which affirms only affirmation, Nietzsche conceives of the eternal return from a rigorously non-teleological perspective as the accomplishment of a philosophy strong enough to accept existence in all its aspects, even the most negative, without any need to dialecticize them, without any need to exclude them by way of some centrifugal movement of repression. It denies nothing and incarnates itself in a figure similar to the one Nietzsche, in *Twilight of the Idols*, draws of Goethe:

> Such a spirit, who has *become free* stands in the middle of the world with a cheerful and trusting fatalism in the belief that *only the individual is reprehensible*, that everything is redeemed and affirmed in the whole — he does not negate anymore. Such a faith however, is the highest of all possible faiths: I have baptized it with the name of *Dionysus*.[12]

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who was specialized in scholarly commentary, the passage through the authors was more or less unavoidable, but only a few of them lent themselves to innovation. Instead of presenting oneself as a downright creator, one rather had to locate the author through whom innovation was best secured. The discovery of a new thinker being an uncertain undertaking, requiring certain credentials, the original interpretation, creative or re-creative of a household philosophical name seemed at first more accessible to a young writer" (Pinto, *Les Neveux de Zarathoustra*. *La réception de Nietzsche en France* (Paris: Seuil, 1995), 161).

[11] Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy* (1962), 186.

[12] Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, "Skirmishes of an Untimely Man" § 49.

2. Zarathustra, the Master of the Eternal Return

All of Nietzsche's arguments for a detailed theoretical explanation of the eternal return are contained in a notebook written in Sils-Maria during the summer of 1881. In the published work, the content of the doctrine remains unchanged but it is presented by Zarathustra according to very different strategies and philosophical forms of argumentation. We will start analysing the public presentation of the eternal return before discussiong theoretical arguments in the third part of this article.

In the dramatic and dialogical structure of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, one needs to pay attention to the rhetorical progression that takes place between the moments where the thought of the eternal return is enunciated. Even more, we must pay attention to which characters announce the doctrine or which ones they announce it to. Nietzsche carefully stages Zarathustra's maturation process, his gradual assimilation of the eternal return and the effects that the doctrine has on the different human types to whom it is intended. Indeed, this is where lies the originality (and the force) of *Zarathustra*'s style over forms like the treatise or the traditional philosophical essay. While reading Nietzsche's aphoristic works—and even more so the manuscripts—one must pay attention to the dialogue that Nietzsche, in the wake of his readings, establishes with his philosophical interlocutors. While reading *Zarathustra*, one must in the same way pay continuous attention to the narrative context, to the role played by some characters and to the nuances a word adopts when enunciated by or to different characters. Hence the double question which we must bear in mind throughout our analysis of the role of the eternal return in *Zarathustra*: who speaks? who listens?

2.1 Speaking Hunchback-ese to the Hunchbacks

Zarathustra being "the master of eternal return," this doctrine pervades all four parts of the work. In certain passages, it is mentioned in an especially explicit fashion. I have chosen five such passages, which I would like to discuss briefly.[13]

The first passage dealing with the eternal return, even though Zarathustra is unable to mention it directly, is the chapter "On Redemption" from part two of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. There, Nietzsche opposes two conceptions of temporality and of redemption. On the one hand, the redemption which regards the transitory character of becoming as the demonstration of its original sin and valuelessness and seeks to liberate itself *from* timeliness in order to rejoin the immutable essence. On the other hand a conception of redemption *through* time that Zarathustra begins to lay out when he speaks

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[13] The most interesting and thorough reconstruction of the presence of the eternal return in *Zarathustra* is to be found in Marco Brusotti's beautiful book *Die Leidenschaft der Erkenntnis: Philosophie und ästhetische Lebensgestaltung bei Nietzsche von Morgenröthe bis Also sprach Zarathustra* (New York and Berlin: De Gruyter, 1997). The space available here does not allow me to engage this scholarly, fascinating and overall convincing interpretation.

of the will that wills "backwards" (*Zurückwollen*). Several intertextual keys point to Schopenhauer as the representative of the first, nihilistic redemption embedded in a spirit of revenge against time. Schopenhauer wrote that:

> In time each moment is, only in so far as it has effaced its father the preceding moment, to be again effaced just as quickly itself. Past and future (apart from the consequences of their content) are as empty and unreal as any dream; but present is only the boundary between the two, having neither extension nor duration.

Zarathustra however calls "mad" this Oedipal conception of temporality:

> Everything passes away, therefore everything deserves to pass away! 'And this is itself justice, that law of time that time must devour its children': thus did madness preach.

Schopenhauer spoke of the existence of an eternal justice and of the necessity to deny the will to live:

> The world itself is the tribunal of the world. If we could lay all the misery of the world in one pan of the scales, and all its guilt in the other, the pointer would certainly show them to be in equilibrium.
>
> After our observations have finally brought us to the point where we have before our eyes in perfect saintliness the denial and surrender of all willing, and thus a deliverance from a world whose whole existence presented itself to us as suffering, this now appears to us as a transition into empty *nothingness*.[14]

Zarathustra replies:

> No deed can be annihilated: so how could it be undone through punishment! This, this is what is eternal in the punishment 'existence': that existence itself must eternally be deed and guilt again! 'Unless the will should at last redeem itself and willing should become not-willing—': but you know, my brothers, this fable-song of madness!

Yet, this chapter does not focus solely on Schopenhauer but addresses an entire philosophical tradition that goes back to Anaximander, at least.[15] The first pages of the second *Untimely Meditation* bear the mark of such a tradition; there, the young Nietzsche speaks of the weight of the "*Es war*," the "it has been" which Zarathustra now intends to redeem through the active acceptance of the past. But even as his discourse now seems to lead

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[14] Cf. Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, tr. by E.F. Payne (New York: Dover, 1969), § 3, § 63, and § 71.

[15] In his lectures on *The Pre-Platonic Philosophers* as well as in the posthumous *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks* (§ 4), Nietzsche had precisely stressed this aspect of Anaximander's philosophy by likening it to Schopenhauer (cf. Nietzsche, *Les philosophes préplatoniciens*, ed. by P. D'Iorio and F. Fronterotta, tr. by Nathalie Ferrand (Combas: éditions de l'éclat, 1994), 22, 118, 123 and note 44 of p. 300).

him to enunciate the doctrine of eternal return, Zarathustra brutally interrupts himself:

> 'Has the will yet become its own redeemer and joy-bringer? Has it unlearned the spirit of revenge and all gnashing of teeth? 'And who has taught it reconciliation with time, and something higher than any reconciliation? 'Something higher than any reconciliation the will that is will to power must will—yet how shall this happen? Who has yet taught it to will backwards and want back as well?'—But at this point in his speech it happened that Zarathustra suddenly fell silent and looked like one who is horrified in the extreme.

Zarathustra fails to enunciate or even to name eternal return. And the hunchback (representing the scholar burdened by the weight of history and of his erudition) listened to him while covering his face with his hands because he already knew what Zarathustra was getting at. He responds: why didn't you say it? "But why does Zarathustra address us in a different fashion than he addresses his disciples?" And Zarathustra, regaining his good spirits after a moment's hesitation, replies: "But what is the surprise in this, with hunchbacks, surely, one must speak hunchback-ese." Still, the hunchback is well aware of the fact that Zarathustra not only lacks the strength to announce his doctrine to others, but even more, that he does not even manage to confide in himself:

> 'Good,' said the hunchback. 'And with students one may well tell tales out of school. 'But why does Zarathustra speak otherwise to his students—than to himself?—'

2.2 The Shepherd of Nihilism

After the chapter "On Redemption," where Zarathustra dares not expose his doctrine, the eternal return begins to be enunciated in part three of the work. In the first place, it is the dwarf who formulates it in the chapter "On the Vision and the Riddle." Facing the "gate of the instant" which symbolizes the two infinities that stretch towards the past and the future, the dwarf whispers: "all truth is crooked, time itself is a circle." The dwarf represents the spirit of gravity, and he embodies the herd morality, "the belittling virtue" which is the title of another chapter from part III. The dwarf can endure the eternal return without great difficulties because he has no aspirations; unlike Zarathustra he does not wish to climb the mountains that symbolize elevation and solitude. In two unpublished notes, from the summer and the fall of 1883, Nietzsche writes:

> The doctrine is at first favored by the ***rabble***, before it gets to the superior men.
>
> The doctrine of recurrence will first smile to the rabble, which is cold and without any strong internal need. It is the most ordinary of life instincts, which gives its agreement first.[16]

Hence, the content of the doctrine is the same, but whereas the dwarf can

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[16] Nietzsche, PF 10[44] and 16[3] 1883.

endure it (because he interprets it according to the pessimistic tradition for which "nothing is new under the sun"), Zarathustra, who is the "advocate of life" regards the eternal return as the strongest objection to existence, and as the rest of the dream suggests, he does not yet succeed in accepting it.[17] After the vision at the gate of the instant, the chapter is brought to an end by the enigma of the shepherd. Under the most desolate moonlight, in the midst of wild cliffs, Zarathustra glimpses at a shepherd who has a black serpent dangling from his mouth. The serpent represents nihilism, which accompanies the thought of eternal return, the condition by which one's throat is filled with all things most difficult to accept, all things darkest. Zarathustra, who cannot tear the serpent away from the throat of the shepherd, cries to him: "bite, bite!" The shepherd bites, spits the serpent's head into the distance, and, as if transformed, starts to laugh.

This is the anticipation and the premonition of what Zarathustra himself will have to confront, and which will still take him years and years. Only towards the end of part III are we told, in the chapter titled "The Convalescent," that he succeeded at last, even though he paid for it with eight days of illness. In that chapter, the eternal return is enunciated anew, this time by Zarathustra's animals, whereas Zarathustra himself is still lacking the strength to speak.

Deleuze has correctly identified the rhetorical progression between the different formulations of eternal return at work in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. Only, he interprets those differences as the expression of a shift in the content of the doctrine: as if Zarathustra was gradually realizing that the eternal return is in fact not a circle that repeats the same, but a selective movement which eliminates the negative.

> If Zarathustra recovers, it is because he understands that the eternal return is not this. He finally understands the unequal and the selection contained in the eternal return. Indeed, the unequal, the different, is the true reason of the eternal return. It is because nothing is equal, nor is anything the same, that 'it' recurs (Deleuze, "Conclusions — sur la volonté de puissance et l'éternel retour" (1967): 284).

Actually, if it is not Zarathustra who formulates his own doctrine, it is because he lacks the strength to teach it, even though he succeeds in evoking the thought of eternal return, using it as a weapon, and finally, in accepting

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[17] The difference between Nietzsche's eternal return and the cyclical theories of time established since the Ancient Times is precisely to be found in the new meaning of this doctrine in Nietzsche, where it becomes an instrument towards not a nihilistic deprecation of existence, but towards a stronger affirmation. Even if he did already know this doctrine beforehand, Nietzsche found out in the summer of 1881 in Sils-Maria for the first time that it did not necessarily involve a devaluation and a rejection of the ephemeral and that the return may even give back the seemingly ephemeral its value. Right after the revelation of this new sense of the return, Nietzsche wrote in his notebooks, in reference to *Ecclesiastes*' "nothing new under the sun" in Marcus Aurelius' reworking: "this Emperor constantly shows himself the ephemeral character of all things so that he will not grant them too much importance and remain *calm*. I experience the ephemeral in a wholly different manner—it seems to me that all things have far too much value to be considered to be so fugacious—to me it is like pouring the most precious wines and ointments into the sea" (PF 12[145] 1881). A few years later, whilst transcribing this fragment in a notebook, he added this revealing sentence: "and my consolation is that everything that once was is eternal: —the sea brings it back to the surface" (PF 11[94] 1887-1888).

it when he finally cuts off the serpent's head himself. As a result, the animals dutifully remind him of *his* doctrine, the one *he* must teach:

> For your animals know this well, O Zarathustra, who you are and who you are to become: behold—*you are the teacher of the eternal return*—that is now *your* fate [...]
>
> Behold, we two know what you teach: that all things recur eternally and we ourselves with them and that we have already been here an eternity of times, and all things with us.
>
> You teach that there is a Great Year of Becoming, a monster of a Great Year, which lust, like an hourglass, turn itself over anew again and again, that it may run down and run out ever new—
>
> —such that all these years are the same, in the greatest and smallest respects—such that we ourselves are in each Great Year the same as ourselves, in the greatest and smallest respects. [...] I come again with this sun, with this Earth, with this eagle, with the serpent, —*not* to a new life, or a better life or a similar life: —I come eternally again to this self-same life, in the greatest and smallest respects, so that again I teach the eternal return of all things."

Like the dwarf, and even more than him, the animals are not afraid of this doctrine for a simple reason: they are totally deprived of any historical sense. In the beginning of his second *Untimely Meditation*, "On the Uses and Disadvantages of Historical Studies for Life" Nietzsche had opposed the human with the animal. The animal is tied to the post of the instant, while the human is bound up and chained to the past and the weight of history. In the preparatory notes to this first section of the second *Untimely*, Nietzsche explicates the literary reference, which he conceals later, in the final text. The reference is to Giacomo Leopardi's *Night Song of a Wandering Shepherd in Asia*.[18] As a pessimistic poet, whom both Schopenhauer and Nietzsche were very fond of, Leopardi had represented human life as the life of a shepherd who, while in the desert at night, speaks to the moon about the valuelessness of all things human.

> My flock, you lie at ease, and you are happy,
> Because you do not know your wretchedness!
> How much I envy you!
> Not just because you go
> Almost without distress,
> And very soon forget
> All pains, all harm, and even utmost terror;
> But more because you never suffer boredom

These are the verses quoted by Nietzsche in his notebook, and which he paraphrases in the final text. It is the same shepherd we encounter again in Zarathustra's dream, the shepherd of pessimism and nihilism (the poem's

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[18] Cf. PF 29[97], 29[98], 30[2] of 1873-1874.

ending is "Whether in lair or cradle, / It may well be it always is upon / A day of great ill-omen we are born"), the shepherd whose mouth nihilism has choked and who must find the strength to spit it out.[19]

However, Zarathustra, who is the advocate of life, has understood that by having the strength to accept the eternal return, it is possible to fight pessimism. The rhetorical progression in the formulation of the eternal return does not signify that Zarathustra encounters different doctrines, but faces us with different ways to apprehend the doctrine of the eternal return, each one corresponding to different degrees of the historical sense. All of this becomes clearer in the rest of the formulations of the eternal return (which Deleuze ignores like many others).[20]

2.3 The Game of "Who to Whom"

Shortly after the chapter devoted to the convalescent, we find "The Other Dance-Song." There develops a parodic game based upon a little intertextual hint. Life says to Zarathustra:

> O Zarathustra! Please, don't you crack your whip so terribly! For well you know: noise murders thoughts, —and just now such tender thoughts are coming to me!

This suffices to evoke the figure of Schopenhauer, the archenemy of noise, who had represented the dreadful condition of the philosopher in the midst of the urban bustle, in this passage from *Parerga and Paralipomena*:

> I have to denounce as the most inexcusable and scandalous noise the truly infernal cracking of whips in the narrow resounding streets of towns; for it robs life of all peace and pensiveness. [...] With all due respect to the most sacred doctrine of utility, I really do not see why a fellow, fetching a chart-load of sand or manure, should thereby acquire the privilege of nipping in the bud every idea that successively arises in ten thousand heads (in the course of half an hour's journey through a town). Hammering, the barking of dogs, and the screaming of children are terrible, but the real murderer of ideas is only the crack of a whip.[21]

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[19] Cf. Giacomo Leopardi, *The Canti*, tr. J. G. Nichols (New York: Routledge, 2003): 96-97. Maurice Weyembergh, commenting on this passage of *Zarathustra*, even wrote that "the entire doctrine of the eternal return is a war machine, an antidote against the idea expressed in [Leopardi's] poem admirable last line: è funesto a chi nasce il dì natale" (Weyembergh, *F. Nietzsche et E. von Hartmann* (Brussels: Vrije Universiteit Brussel, 1977), 102).

[20] Deleuze repeatedly talks about two expositions of the eternal return in Zarathustra, cf. Deleuze, Nietzsche (Paris: PUF, 1965): 38, 39; "Conclusions — sur la volonté de puissance et l'éternel retour" (1967): 276, 283; *Difference and Repetition* (1968): 370: "In Thus Spoke Zarathustra, the question of the eternal return arises twice, but each time it appears as a truth not yet reached and not expressed: once when the dwarf speaks (III, "On the Vision and the Riddle"); and the second time when the animals speak (III, "The Convalescent")."

[21] Schopenhauer, *Parerga and Paralipomena*, tr. by E.F. Payne, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000): II, chap. XXX, On Din and Noise, p. 643. See also among Nietzsche's drafts for this chapter of *Zarathustra*: "against the noise—it beats thoughts to death" (PF 22[5] of 1883). This textual reference had already been used by Nietzsche in the first of his lectures *On the Future*

As regards the possibility of starting a new life, Schopenhauer wrote: "But perhaps at the end of his life, no man, if he be sincere and at the same time in possession of his faculties, will ever wish to go through it again. Rather than this, he will much prefer to choose complete non-existence" and: "If we knocked on the graves and asked the dead whether they would like to rise again, they would shake their heads."[22]

Eduard von Hartmann, Schopenhauer's pet monkey, drew an image quite typical of his philosophy from this passage. There, death asked a man from the average bourgeoisie of the time whether he would accept to live his life over again.

> Let's imagine a man who is not a genius, who hasn't received any more than the general education of any modern man; which possesses all advantages of an enviable position, and finds themselves in the prime of life. A man with a full awareness of the advantages he enjoys, when compared to the lower members of society, to the savage nations and to the men of the Barbarian ages; a man who does not envy those above him, and who knows that their lives are plagued with inconveniences which he is spared; a man, finally, who is not exhausted, not blasé with joy, and not repressed by any exceptional personal misfortunes.
>
> Let us suppose that death come and find this man and addresses him in these terms: "the span of your life is expired, the time has come when you must become the prey of nothingness. Yet, it is up to you to choose if you wish to start again—in the same conditions, with full forgetting of the past—your life that is now over. Now choose!"

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of Our Educational Institutions: "You should know," said the younger man, turning to us, "that your noisy pastimes amount, as it happens on this occasion, to an attempt upon the life of philosophy" and in a reverse sense, it will be found in the third part of *Zarathustra*, "On the Virtue that Makes Smaller": "This is the new stillness I have learned: their noise about me spreads a cloak over my thoughts."

[22] Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, tr. by E.F. Payne (New York: Dover, 1969), vol. I, § 59, p. 324 and vol. II, chap. XLI, p. 465. This image is often used as the ultimate expression of pessimism and nihilism. It is found for example in Leopardi's short *Dialogue Between an Almanac Peddler and a Passer-by*: "PASSER-BY. Wouldn't you like to live those twenty years over again, and all your past years, beginning with the day you were born? / PEDDLER. Eh, my dear Sir, I wish to God I could. / PASSER-BY. But if you had to live exactly the same life all over again—with all its pleasures and all its pains? / PEDDLER. I wouldn't like that. / PASSER-BY. But what kind of life would you like to live over again? The life I've had, or a prince's, or who else's? Don't you think that I, the prince, or anyone else, would answer just like you, that having to live the same life over again, no one would want to go back to it? / PEDDLER. I think so. / PASSER-BY. You wouldn't go back either, unless you could in some other way? / PEDDLER. No, Sir; I really wouldn't (cf. Giacomo Leopardi, *Operette Morali. Essays and Dialogues*, tr. by Giovanni Cecchetti (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1983): 479 ff.). From century to century, from the pessimistic 18th century to the decadent literature of the 19th century, Nietzsche encountered this type of argument in other writers, and for example, in his copy of the *Goncourt's Diary*, he underlined this passage from the entry of May 1st 1864: "One would be at pains to find a man who would want to live their life over again. Hardly could we find a woman who would want to live her nineteenth year again. This is judgment enough for life." (cf. Edmond et Jules Huot de Goncourt, Journal des Goncourt. *Mémoires de la vie littéraire. Deuxième volume, 1862-1865* (Paris : Charpentier, 1887), 193; Nietzsche's copy, which bears the underlined passage, is kept at Weimar's *Herzogin Anna Amalia Bibliothek*, accession number C 550-a).

> I doubt that our man would prefer to start again the preceding life-play rather than enter nothingness (Eduard von Hartmann, *Philosophie des Unbewussten. Versuch einer Weltanschauung* (Berlin: Carl Duncker's Verlag, 1869): 534).

Nietzsche himself took over this image in his first public formulation of the doctrine of the eternal return from the famous aphorism 341 of the *Gay Science*. This time it is a demon that, having accessed the most remote of all solitudes, asked man whether he would live his life again, just as it was. In "The Other Dance-Song," Nietzsche plays at parodying Schopenhauer, Hartmann, and himself as this time it is not life, death, or a demon that brandish the eternal return as a dreadful scare-crow before the fortunate men, it is Zarathustra, desperate and on the brink of suicide, who announces the doctrine of eternal return to life. And he whispers it softly to her ears, through her beautiful blonde curls:

> Thereupon, Life looked pensively behind her and about her and said softly: "O Zarathustra, you are not true enough to me!
>
> You have long not loved me as much as you say you do; I know you are thinking that you want to leave me soon.
>
> There is an ancient heavy heavy booming-bell: at night its booming comes all the way up to your cave:—
>
> —and when you hear this bell at midnight strike the hour, between the strokes of one and twelve you think—
>
> —you think then, O Zarathustra, well I know, of how you wish to leave me soon!—
>
> "Yes," I answered hesitantly, but you also know that—" And I said something into her ear right through her tangled yellow crazy locks of hair.
>
> "You know that, O Zarathustra? No one knows that.— —"

The first time that Zarathustra announces his doctrine, he addresses life itself. At that very moment, the midnight bells start ringing, while Zarathustra dances around:

> *One!*
> O man! Take care!
>
> *Two!*
> What does deep midnight now declare?
>
> *Three!*
> I sleep, I sleep—
>
> *Four!*
> From deepest dream I rise for air
>
> *Five!*
> The world is deep

Six!
Deeper than any day has been aware

Seven!
Deep is its woe

Eight!
Joy—deeper still than misery:

Nine!
Woe says: now go!

Ten!
Yet all joy wants eternity

Eleven!
—Wants deepest, deep eternity

Twelve!

But what does this circular midnight song signify, held in this way between suicide and the dialogue with life? This question is elucidated by the last mention of the eternal return, in the last chapters of the fourth *Zarathustra*.

2.4 The Ugliest Man and the Most Beautiful Moment

The ugliest man, one of the superior men to whom the fourth part of *Zarathustra* is devoted, is the personification of historical sense. Consequently he is God's murderer and therefore, he understands how terrible history is and how unbearable the repetition of this series of meaningless massacres and vain hopes is.[23] The highest degree of historical sense implies the greatest difficulty in accepting the eternal return and this is precisely the task that Nietzsche appoints to the "feeling of humanity" in the superb aphorism 337 of the *Gay Science*:

> *The "humaneness" of the future.* [...] Anyone who manages to experience the history of humanity as a whole as *his own history* will feel in an enormously generalized way all the grief of an invalid who thinks of health, of an old man who thinks of the dreams of his youth, of a lover deprived of his beloved, of the martyr whose ideal is perishing, of the hero on the evening after the battle who had decided nothing but brought him wounds and the loss of his friends. But if one endured, if one *could* endure this immense sum of grief of all kinds while yet being the hero who, as the second day of battle breaks, welcomes the dawn and its fortune, being a person whose horizon encompasses thousands of years past and future, being then heir of all the nobility of all past spirit—an heir with a sense of

[23] The fact that the ugliest man represents the historical sense (the assassin of God) is confirmed in the drafts of Book IV of *Zarathustra*: "the ugliest man, who needs to give himself a historical setting (historical sense) and incessantly looks for a new costume: he wishes to make his appearance bearable and finally goes into isolation so as to avoid being seen—he is ashamed. (PF 31[10] 1884-1885), see also PF 25[101] 1884 and 32[4] 1884-1885).

> obligation, the most aristocratic of all nobles and at the same time the first of a new nobility-the like of which no age has yet seen or dreamed of; if one could burden one's soul with all of this—the oldest, the newest, losses, hopes, conquests, and the victories of humanity; if one could finally contain all this in one soul and crowd it into a single feeling—this would surely have to result in a happiness that humanity has not known so far: the happiness of a god full of power and love, full of tears and laughter, a happiness that, like the sun in the evening, continually bestows its inexhaustible riches, pouring them into the sea, feeling richest, as the sun does only when even the poorest fisherman is still rowing with golden oars! This godlike feeling would then be called—humaneness.[24]

Overhumanity, Zarathustra exclaims. "I am all the names in history,"

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[24] *The Gay Science* §337. Although many interpreters, (mostly under the influence of Martin Heidegger) consider *On the Uses and Disadvantages of Historical Studies for Life* fundamental to our understanding of Nietzsche's conception of time, it may be worth repeating here that this text belongs to the first period of Nietzsche's philosophy (according to a division established by Mazzimo Montinari at the beginning of his article: "Nietzsche-Wagner nell'estate 1878," in *Richard Wagner e Friedrich Nietzsche*, ed. by Enrico Fubini, *Quaderni di Musica/Realtà*, 4, (1984): 73-85; in French "Nietzsche contra Wagner: été 1878," in *Nietzsche. Cahiers de l'Herne*, ed. by Marc Crépon (Paris: l'Herne, 2000): 237-244). As such, the second *Untimely* presents positions that Nietzsche gradually abandoned and in which he did not believe even at the time of their conception. Indeed, in a backward glance of 1883, Nietzsche wrote that "Behind my *first period* can be found the mask of *Jesuitism*, that is to say, the deliberate belief in illusion and its forcible establishment as a *basis of culture*" (PF 16[23] of 1883), that is to say, the affirmation of this that we do not believe in as a way of preparing the advent of a new culture based, in turn, upon the illusion and beautiful lie of Wagner's operas. *The Birth of Tragedy* and the *Untimelies* are replete with Wagnerian terms and for example, the concept of "monumental history" is Nietzsche's appropriation of the concept of the "absolute" or "monumental work of art" as Richard Wagner had expressed it in *A Communication to my Friends*: "—The *absolute artwork*, i.e. the artwork which shall neither be bound by time and place, nor portrayed by given men in given circumstances, for the understanding of equally definite human beings,—is an utter nothing, a chimera of esthetic phantasy." Wagner, *Communication to my Friends*, trans. by William Ashton Ellis, 1994, in *The Artwork of the Future: Richard Wagner's Prose Works*, Vol. 1 p. 275. Wagner sought to oppose the monumental work of art, which was a creation of Alexandrine scholars dating from after the death of Greek art, and the trend, which leaves "the real human need" dissatisfied, with a living art "whose attributes present as great a contrast to the fancied monumental artwork as the living Man to the marble Statue." Wagner, 1994, p. 276). This does not cancel the fact that even in those works that belong to the Wagnerian period of Nietzsche can be found here and there—and in a fashion totally inconsistent with the general argumentative thread—certain anticipations on some themes and concepts that shall be developed and ripened later on, within Nietzsche's genuine philosophy, beginning with *Human, All Too Human*. The philosopher, well aware of having "given birth to centaurs" in his youth wrote in 1876 "In the *Untimely Meditations*, I granted myself, here and there, some exit strategies" (PF 17[36] of 1876), which I regard as an allusion to some thoughts belonging outside of the dangerous circle of ideas of his Wagnerian phase and already opened up to the future of Nietzsche's real philosophy. One of these exit strategies appears in this passage of the first paragraph of the second *Untimely* where Nietzsche, before building his general argumentative setup directed towards the non-historical and the supra-historical, writes: "The stronger the innermost roots of a man's nature, the more readily will he be able to assimilate and appropriate the things of the past; and the most powerful and tremendous nature would be characterized by the fact that it would know no boundary at all at which the historical sense began to overwhelm it; it would draw to itself and incorporate into itself all the past, its own and that most foreign to it, and as it were transform it into blood." (On the "generation of Centaurs" in the first phase of Nietzsche's philosophy, see *Centauren-Geburten*." *Wissenschaft, Kunst und Philosophie beim jungen Nietzsche*, ed. by Tilman Borsche, Federico Gerratana, Aldo Venturelli (Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 1994).

Nietzsche declares at the end of his conscious life, absorbed in the exaltation that shall lead him towards folly. Accordingly, the ugliest man (it is now his time to announce the doctrine) informs the superior men that "earthly life is worth living," in the second-to-last chapter of part IV: "One day, a feast in the company of Zarathustra was enough to teach me to love the earth. 'Is this life!' I shall tell death, 'well, once more!'" At this point, the old bell started sounding the hours at midnight, "the old midnight bell which had counted the heartbeats, the painbeats of your fathers" is another image that Nietzsche intends to be combining nihilism and all the woes of existence, and to whom Zarathustra opposes this reasoning, transforming and re-producing the Faustian sense of the instant:

> Did you ever say yes to a single joy? O my friends, then you said yes to *all* woe as well! All things are chained together, entwined, in love.
>
> —If you ever wanted one time a second time, if you ever said 'you please me, Happiness! Quick! Moment!' then you wanted it all back!
>
> —All anew, all eternally, all chained together, entwined, in love, oh! Then you loved the world—
>
> —you the eternal ones, love it eternally and for all time, and even to woe you say: "be gone, but come back!," for all joy wants—eternity!

The eternal return is the most radical response possible to theologies both philosophic and scientific, as well as to the linear temporality of the Christian tradition: in the cosmos of eternal return, there is no room for creation, providence or redemption. One is unable to either stop time or direct it: every instant flows away, but it is fated to return, identical, for better or for worse. *Who*, then, may have wished to live again the same life? Who is it that would relish in taking the arrow away from Chronos' hands and slipping the ring on the finger of eternity? Goethe looked for an instant that he could urge thus: "stop here, you are beautiful." Nietzsche, on his part, awaits a man who could declare to *every* instant: "pass away and return, identical, in all eternity!" This man is the overhuman, he is not an esthete, an athlete, or a product of some Aryan, slightly Nazi eugenics. He is he who can say 'yes' to the eternal return of the same on earth, while taking up the weight of history and keeping the strength to shape the future.

The notebooks indicate that this very reasoning applied to the individual Nietzsche, who had scribbled in the midst of his Zarathustrian fragments: "I do not want my life to *start again*. How did I manage to bear it? By creating. What is it that allows me to bear its sight? Beholding the overman who *affirms* life. I have attempted to affirm it *myself* —Alas." And shortly after, on another page, he replied to his own question thus: "The instant in which I created the return is immortal, it is for the sake of that instant that I *endure* the return."[25] Nietzsche, the man of knowledge, had attained the climax of his life at the very instant in which he had grasped the knowledge he regarded as the most

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[25] PF 4[81] and 5[1]205 of 1882-1883.

important of all. When, at the end of his life, he became aware of having attained this summit, he ceased to need an alter ego in order to affirm the life that forever returns and as a conclusion to the *Twilight of the Idols*, which are the very last lines published in his lifetime, he let these words be printed: "I, the last disciple of the philosopher Dionysus, –I the master of the eternal return."

3. Genesis, Inter-Textuality and Parody

Let us therefore return to this instant in which the philosopher is seized by his abysmal thought. In *Ecce Homo*, Nietzsche himself recalls the date and the birthplace of the *Zarathustra*, born out of the thought of the eternal return:

> I shall now tell the story of *Zarathustra*. The basic conception of the work, the idea of the eternal return, the highest formula of affirmation that can possibly be attained—belongs to the August of the year 1881: it was jotted down on a piece of paper with the inscription: '6,000 feet beyond man and time'. I was that day walking through the woods beside the lake of Silvaplana; I stopped beside a mighty pyramidal block of stone which reared itself up not far from Surlei. Then this idea came to me. (*Ecce Homo*, "Thus Spoke Zarathustra," §1)

This rendering seems to characterize the thought of eternal return as ecstatic hallucination, as inspired knowledge, as myth. Moreover, as we said, nowhere in his published works does one find any theoretical exposition of a doctrine that Nietzsche considered to be the apex of his philosophy, and which exerted in his mind a profound turmoil in the summer of 1881:

> Thoughts rose against my horizon, thoughts the likes of which I have never seen before—I do not wish to reveal anything about them, and maintain myself in an unshakeable calmness. [...] The intensity of my feelings makes me laugh and shiver at once—it happened already a number of times that I couldn't leave my room for the laughable cause that my eyes were inflamed—for what reason? Everytime I had in my walks of the day before, cried too much, and not sentimental tears, but tears of excitement, singing and raving, full of a new view which is my privilege above all the men of this time (Letter to Peter Gast, August 14th, 1881).

It is therefore not surprising that a large part of the Nietzsche scholarship has seen the eternal return as a myth, a hallucination, in any case as a paradoxical and contradictory theory, a construct of classical influences and reminisces of scientific doctrines wrongly understood. However, the critical edition by Colli and Montinari leads us to question everything again on this point as well as many others, and to leave behind the hermeneutical and philosophical enthusiasms in order to focus on more modest exercises in reading Nietzsche's text. Just like thoughts never surge from nothing, this text is not without context. The page inscribed with the thought of the eternal return is known to the scholarship, and has been abundantly quoted and even reproduced in facsimle. However, the notebook containing that page is largely ignored. This notebook does not register the stroke of lightning of an ecstatic

revelation. Instead, it contains a series of rational arguments in support of the hypothesis of the eternal return.

M III 1—such is the reference number of this in-octavo notebook kept in Weimar's Goethe-Schiller archives—is made up of 160 pages, carefully covered in about 350 fragments belonging (except for a few rare exceptions) to the period from the spring to the fall of 1881. It is a secret notebook. Nietzsche did not use its content in any of the published works (it contains only the preparatory versions of a few aphorisms of the *Gay Science* and two of *Beyond Good and Evil*). The reason is that Nietzsche intended to use its contents for a scientific exposition of the thought of the eternal return.[26] Given the fact that the arguments in support of the eternal return in the notebooks of the subsequent years all pertain to those first reflexions, we are faced with one of the rare cases in which Nietzsche's thoughts on a precise issue do not undergo any modifications.[27]

Yet, this notebook, however important and unused in the published works, fell victim to a series of editorial misfortunes and remained unpublished until 1973, when it was published integrally and in a chronologically reliable shape, while the editions anterior to Colli and Montinari's "do not allow one to form an opinion, however approximate, of this notebook and its specific character."[28] Before 1973, it was therefore near impossible, even for the most philosophically and critically perceptive readers, to understand exactly the theoretical formulation and organic links which unify this "posthumous thought" to the rest of Nietzsche's work. Only the chronological arrangement of the posthumous material offered by Colli and Montinari allows us to follow step

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[26] On August 14th, 1882, after the publication of the *Gay Science*, Nietzsche wrote to Peter Gast: "I've kept about one quarter of the original material (for a scientific treatise)."

[27] Colli and Montinari correctly wrote elsewhere that Nietzsche "had kept Notebook M III 1 with him for the entire final period of his creative activity" (cf. Colli / Montinari, 1972, p. 60). There is no doubt that the philosopher had the Notebook in his hands in the Fall of 1888, but it also bears signs of having been re-read in 1883, 1885 and during the Spring of 1888. For example in the letter Gast from September 3rd 1883, Nietzsche writes that he found again the first sketch of the eternal return. We can assert that there was another re-reading of this Notebook in the Summer of 1885 from the fact that PF 36[15] from 1885 is a reworking of PF 11[292, 345] of 1881, 36[23] from 1885 of 11[150, 281] from 1881, 35[53] from 1885 of 11[70] from 1881 and so on. Finally, the recapitulation of the doctrine in PF 14[188] of the spring 1888 is entirely derived from M III 1.

[28] Cf. Colli / Montinari, 1972, pp. 59-60. Even the first complete edition of M III 1 for the French and Italian publication of Nietzsche's works of 1967, was still chronologically unreliable. Montinari confessed failing to grasp which of the two layers (one written only on the left hand pages starting from the end of the notebook, and the other, which uses a different sort of ink and starts at the beginning of the notebook on the right-hand pages) was to be regarded as the earlier one. He admitted resolving to publish the fragments simply from beginning to end, therefore ignoring the two layers. However, seven years later, in 1973, he was in a position to publish the definitive German edition in which it was established that the layer written from the end to the beginning was older than the notes written in the reverse order. In 1982, the French translation was re-edited according to the new and definitive ordering of the material (*Le Gai Savoir. Fragments posthumes été 1881 - été 1882*, Edition revised and augmented by Marc B. de Launay, Paris, Gallimard 1982) and in the Preface, (p. 9) we are informed that Montinari solved the problem of the date of the two layers thanks to the "comparison of the ink used by Nietzsche's in M III 1 and that used in the letters written at the same period." The Italian edition has been revised by Mario

by step the relations between the occurrence of the hypothesis of the eternal return, the attempts at a rational demonstration attached to it, and the other lines of thought developed in the same period.[29]

3.1 Let us refrain from saying...

Let us open this notebook then, and instead of contemplating the first sketch of the eternal return on page 53, let us read what Nietzsche wrote in the very next page:

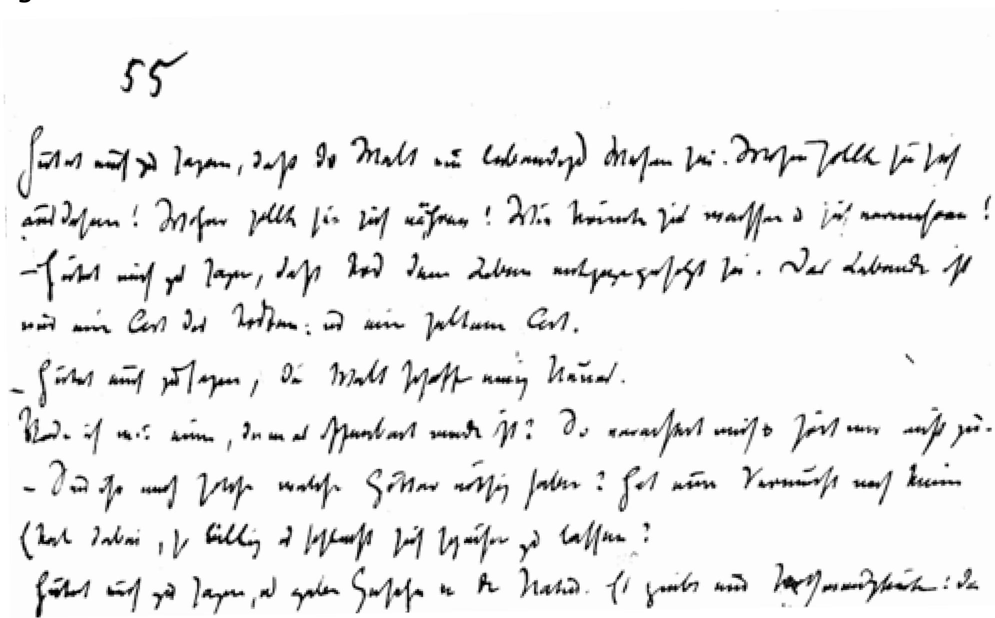


Figure 1: Notebook M III 1 of summer 1881, p. 49 (55 according to Nietzsche's numbering). Weimar, *Goethe- und Schiller-Archiv*.

> Refrain from saying [Hütet euch zu sagen] that the world is a living being. In what direction would it expand! Where would it draw its substance! How could it increase and grow!

Carpitella and Federico Gerratana according to the correct chronological order and enriched by a new revision of the text based upon the manuscript having allowed for a correction of the rare transcription mistakes.

[29] In the midst of thoughts about the eternal return we find at least two other thematic axes. On the one hand, the view of the world as a constant flux of forces without any goal, law, or rules of becoming. A *chaos sive natura* de-divinized and de-anthropomorphized which constitutes the "ontological substratum" of the whole of Nietzsche's reflexions. On the other hand, an ensemble of fragments of an anthropologico-sociological character, designing a path of liberation leading to the creation of superior individuals by way of a profound transformation of their instinctual structure. This transformation must be achieved by a practice of solitude and internal struggle towards the liberation from the ancient representations of the world and from the incorporated herd values. For an analysis of these thematic perspectives, see Paolo D'Iorio, *La linea e il circolo*. *Cosmologia e filosofia dell'eterno ritorno in Nietzsche* (Genova: Pantograf, 1995): 233-322.

— Refrain from saying that death is what is opposed to life. The living is but a variety of what is dead, and a rare one at that.

— Refrain from saying that the world continuously creates something new.

Do I speak like a man under the spell of a revelation? Then just keep from listening and treat me with scorn.

—Are you of the kind who still need gods? Doesn't your reason feel disgust at letting itself be fed in such a gratuitous and mediocre way?

Refrain from saying that there exists laws in nature. There are only necessities, and therefore there is no one to command, no one who transgresses."[30]

Apparently, it is a matter of a polemic against those who considered the world as a living being, unfolding through a recursive structure of speech: "Let you beware [*Hütet euch zu sagen*] ..." What does that mean? Why does Nietzsche turn against those who thought that the world is a living thing, and who is this warning sent to? And why is Nietzsche using such a rhetorical structure? And above all, what does it all have to do with the doctrine of eternal return?

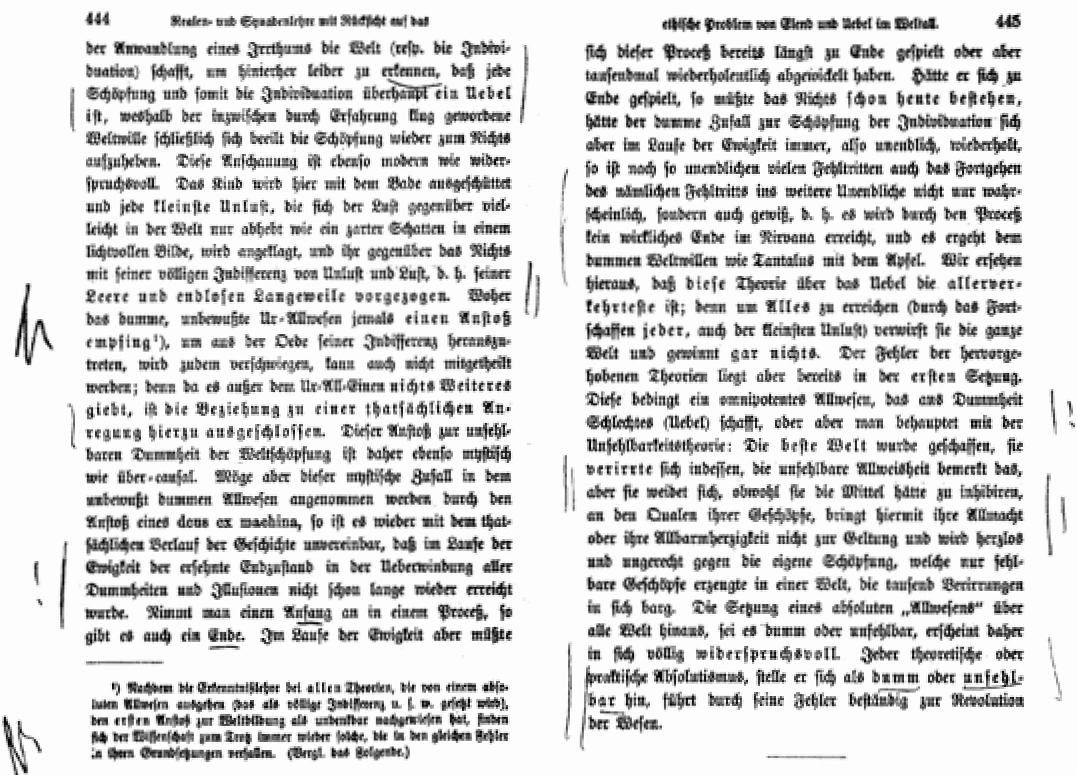
In order to address these questions, I think that one cannot dispense with addressing not only what Nietzsche wrote during that summer in Sils-Maria, but also what he was reading before and after the famous first sketch of the eternal return. One needed to move from the Goethe-Schiller Archive, where Nietzsche's manuscripts are kept, to the Duchess Anna Amalia Library of Weimar, where Nietzsche's personal library is kept, so as to retrieve the volumes that made up, in the summer of 1881, the portable library of this wandering philosopher. Reading these volumes all at once, while letting myself be guided by Nietzsche's hand-written annotations in the margins allowed me to appreciate that I was finding myself facing a larger debate which one needed to reconstitute and whose arguments and protagonists Nietzsche knew very well.

After the discovery of the two principles of thermodynamics began a debate about the dissipation of energy and the thermal death of the universe which framed the modern renewal of the debate between the linear and circular conceptions of time.[31] Scientists such as Thomson, Helmholtz, Clausius, Boltzmann and—by way of Kant, Hegel and Schopenhauer—philosophers such as Dühring, Hartmann, Engels, Wundt and Nietzsche have tried to address this problem by using the force of scientific argumentation and of

[30] The reference is to page 55 in Nietzsche's numbering, page 49 in the archive numbering. The central part of this text was published as PF 11 [142] of 1881 in the Colli-Montinari edition. The rest however, as a draft of Gay Science §109 was not published in the PF of Summer 1881, but only in the critical apparatus to the German edition of the Gay Science (KSA vol. 14, pp. 253 f.); here, the editorial choice to distinguish between preparatory sketches (*Vorstufen*) and posthumous fragments (*Nachgelassene Fragmente*) betrays its own shortcomings. On this problem, see Wolfram Groddeck, "'Vorstufe' und 'Fragment'. Zur Problematik einer traditionellen textkritischen Unterscheidung in der Nietzsche-Philologie," in *Textkonstitution bei mündlicher und bei schriftlicher Überlieferung*, ed. by Martin Stern (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1991), 165-175.

[31] For a complete reconstruction of this debate in its different phases, see Paolo D'Iorio, *La linea e il circolo* (1995), 27-182 and 365-371.

philosophical discussion. Whoever believed in an origin and a final end to the motion of the universe (be it in the physical form of the gradual loss of heat, or in the metaphysical form of a final state of the "world process"), relied on the second principle of thermodynamics or on the demonstration of the thesis of Kant's first cosmological antinomy. On the contrary, those who refused to admit a final state to the universe used Schopenhauer's argument of infinity *a parte ante*—according to which if a final state were possible, it should already have established itself in the infinity of time past—to propose henceforth a number of alternative solutions. Scientists would propose the hypothesis that energy could have re-concentrated after a cosmic conflagration, thus reversing the tendency towards dissipation. Those belonging to the monistic and materialistic tradition relied on the first principle of thermodynamics and on the infinity of matter, space and time, and regarded the universe as an eternal succession of new forms. A certain critical agnosticism was widespread among scientists and philosophers, oftentimes through a reaffirmation of the validity of Kant's antonymic conflict, this movement avoided to take a stand on specifically speculative issues. Other German philosophers, like Otto Caspari, or Johann Carl Friedrich Zöllner, had reintroduced an organicist and pan-psychical conception of the universe, investing atoms with the ability to escape any state of balance. Indeed, it is probably one of Otto Caspari's works, *The Correlation of Things* (*Der Zusammenhang der Dinge. Gesammelte philosophische Aufsätze* (Bleslau: Trewendt, 1881)), which awakened Nietzsche's interest for all things cosmological, in that summer of 1881, in Sils-Maria.



444 Realen- und Gnadenlehre mit Rücksicht auf das

der Anwandlung eines Irrthums die Welt (resp. die Individuation) schafft, um hinterher leider zu erkennen, daß jede Schöpfung und somit die Individuation überhaupt ein Uebel ist, weshalb der inzwischen durch Erfahrung klug gewordene Weltwille schließlich sich beeilt die Schöpfung wieder zum Nichts aufzuheben. Diese Anschauung ist ebenso modern wie widerspruchsvoll. Das Kind wird hier mit dem Bade ausgeschüttet und jede kleinste Unlust, die sich der Lust gegenüber vielleicht in der Welt nur abhebt wie ein zarter Schatten in einem lichtvollen Bilde, wird angeklagt, und ihr gegenüber das Nichts mit seiner völligen Indifferenz von Unlust und Lust, d. h. seiner Leere und endlosen Langeweile vorgezogen. Woher das dumme, unbewußte Ur-Allwesen jemals einen Anstoß empfing[1]), um aus der Oede seiner Indifferenz herauszutreten, wird zudem verschwiegen, kann auch nicht mitgetheilt werden; denn da es außer dem Ur-All-Einen nichts Weiteres giebt, ist die Beziehung zu einer thatsächlichen Anregung hierzu ausgeschlossen. Dieser Anstoß zur unfehlbaren Dummheit der Weltschöpfung ist daher ebenso mystisch wie über-causal. Möge aber dieser mystische Zufall in dem unbewußt dummen Allwesen angenommen werden durch den Anstoß eines deus ex machina, so ist es wieder mit dem thatsächlichen Verlauf der Geschichte unvereinbar, daß im Laufe der Ewigkeit der ersehnte Endzustand in der Ueberwindung aller Dummheiten und Illusionen nicht schon lange wieder erreicht wurde. Nimmt man einen Anfang an in einem Proceß, so gibt es auch ein Ende. Im Laufe der Ewigkeit aber müßte

[1]) Nachdem die Erkenntnißlehre bei allen Theorien, die von einem absoluten Allwesen ausgehen (das als völlige Indifferenz u. s. w. gesetzt wird), den ersten Anstoß zur Weltbildung als undenkbar nachgewiesen hat, finden sich der Wissenschaft zum Trotz immer wieder solche, die in den gleichen Fehler in ihren Grundsätzungen verfallen. (Vergl. das Folgende.)

ethische Problem von Elend und Uebel im Weltall. 445

sich dieser Proceß bereits längst zu Ende gespielt oder aber tausendmal wiederholentlich abgewickelt haben. Hätte er sich zu Ende gespielt, so müßte das Nichts schon heute bestehen, hätte der dumme Zufall zur Schöpfung der Individuation sich aber im Laufe der Ewigkeit immer, also unendlich, wiederholt, so ist nach so unendlichen vielen Fehltritten auch das Fortgehen des nämlichen Fehltritts ins weitere Unendliche nicht nur wahrscheinlich, sondern auch gewiß, d. h. es wird durch den Proceß kein wirkliches Ende im Nirvana erreicht, und es ergeht dem dummen Weltwillen wie Tantalus mit dem Apfel. Wir ersehen hieraus, daß diese Theorie über das Uebel die allerverkehrteste ist; denn um Alles zu erreichen (durch das Fortschaffen jeder, auch der kleinsten Unlust) verwirft sie die ganze Welt und gewinnt gar nichts. Der Fehler der hervorgehobenen Theorien liegt aber bereits in der ersten Setzung. Diese bedingt ein omnipotentes Allwesen, das aus Dummheit Schlechtes (Uebel) schafft, oder aber man behauptet mit der Unfehlbarkeitstheorie: Die beste Welt wurde geschaffen, sie verirrte sich indessen, die unfehlbare Allweisheit bemerkt das, aber sie weidet sich, obwohl sie die Mittel hätte zu inhibiren, an den Qualen ihrer Geschöpfe, bringt hiermit ihre Allmacht oder ihre Allbarmherzigkeit nicht zur Geltung und wird herzlos und ungerecht gegen die eigene Schöpfung, welche nur fehlbare Geschöpfe erzeugte in einer Welt, die tausend Verirrungen in sich barg. Die Setzung eines absoluten „Allwesens" über alle Welt hinaus, sei es dumm oder unfehlbar, erscheint daher in sich völlig widerspruchsvoll. Jeder theoretische oder praktische Absolutismus, stelle er sich als dumm oder unfehlbar hin, führt durch seine Fehler beständig zur Revolution der Wesen.

Figure 2: Otto Caspari, *Der Zusammenhang der Dinge*, pp. 444-445. Weimar, *Herzogin Anna Amalia Bibliothek*, C 243.

Nietzsche's copy of the book shows a great amount of underlining, especially in a passage from the chapter entitled "The Problem of Evil in Reference to Pessimism and to the Doctrine of Infallibility", of pages 444-445. Addressing Schopenhauer and Eduard von Hartmann's mystical pessimism according to which the world is the creation of a stupid and blind essence (which, after having created the world by mistake, comes to the realization that it had made a mistake and strives to return it to nothingness) Caspari stresses that it is nothing short of mystical to imagine that the world may have been born out of a an originary and undifferentiated state. Where would it have drawn the first impulse? But, continues Caspari, even if the world had received this first impulse from some *deus ex machina*, there is no doubt that, in the temporal infinity of past time thus far, it would have either attained the end of the process (but this is impossible because the world would then have ended), or it would be necessarily bound to repeat indefinitely this original mistake, and the entire process that accompanies it. But then, what is the process of the world? We must now take one more step back and understand further the process of the world according to von Hartmann.

3.2 Eduard von Hartmann: Avoiding the Repetition

Eduard von Hartmann's *Philosophy of the Unconscious* (1869)[32] offered a philosophical system based upon the minute description of a destructive world process, directed towards a final state. In Hartmann's view, the "unconscious" is a unique metaphysical substance made of the combination of a logical principle, the idea, and an illogical principle, the will. Before the beginning of the process of the world, pure will and the idea remained in an a-temporal eternity, free of willing or not willing to actualize itself. The will then decided, without any rational basis, to will. It then engendered an "empty will," full of volitional intention but deprived of any content (Hartmann calls this the "moment of the initiative"), and finally, when the empty will managed to unite with the idea, the process of the world commenced.

Ever since, the idea does nothing else than strive to correct the unfortunate and illogical act of the will. By way of the development of consciousness, it allowed human beings to understand the impossibility of reaching happiness in the sense of the full flourishing of the will to live. The history of the world therefore passed through the three stages of illusion until, having reached a senile state, it finally recognizes the vanity of all illusion and desires only rest, dreamless sleep and the absence of pain as the best possible happiness (Eduard von Hartmann, *Philosophie des Unbewussten. Versuch einer Weltanschauung* (Berlin, Carl Duncker's Verlag, 1869): 626).

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[32] The success of this work written between 1864 and 1867 was enormous and its author, of age twenty-seven at the time, enjoyed unexpected fame. The eleventh edition, published in 1904, contains the list of 103 titles of books, articles and reviews devoted to it. The twelfth edition came out in 1923 (cf. Weyembergh, *F. Nietzsche et E. von Hartmann* (1977), 4 and Gerratana, "Der Wahn jenseits des Menschen. Zur frühen E. v. Hartmanns-Rezeption Nietzsches," *Nietzsche-Studien*, 17 (1988): 391). In 1877, D. Nolen wrote at the beginning of his preface to the French edition: "The success of the book whose translation we now deliver to the French public may be regarded as the most important philosophical event in Europe of the last ten years."

At this stage, the idea, in its cunning, has accomplished its task: it created a quantum of "will to nothingness" which suffices to annihilate the will to live. The moment in which the collective decision will lead to the destruction of the whole universe is imminent and, when this grand day comes, the will shall return to the bosom of the "pure power in itself," it will be, once again, "what it was before any volition, that is to say, a will that can will and not will" (Hartmann (1869): 662). Hartmann hopes, of course, that at this point, the unconscious will have lost all will to produce that vale of tears again and to recommence again the senseless process of the world.

On the contrary, interpreting Schopenhauer's concept of will as a "not being able to not will," as an eternal willing creating an infinite process in the past and in the future, would lead one to despair, because this would suppress the possibility of a liberation from the senseless impulse of the will. But fortunately, says Hartmann, while it is logically possible to admit the infinity of the future, it would be contradictory to regard the world as deprived of a beginning and extending infinitely in the past. Indeed, if this were case, the present moment would be the completion of an infinity, which Hartmann explains in the third edition of his work, is contradictory. It is remarkable that in this "demonstration," Hartmann introduces (without mentioning his source and more importantly without stressing their antinomic context) the arguments used by Kant in his demonstration of the first cosmological antinomy. Kant's demonstration goes as follows:

> Thesis: 'The world has a beginning in time, and in space it is also enclosed in boundaries.' Proof: 'For if one assumes that the world has no beginning in time, then up to every given moment in time an eternity is elapsed, and hence an infinite series of states of things in the world, each following another, has passed away. But now the infinity of a series consists precisely in the fact that it can never be completed through a successive synthesis. Therefore an infinitely elapsed world-series is impossible, so a beginning of the world is a necessary condition of its existence, which was the first point to be proved (Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, tr. by R. Guyer and A. W. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998): B 454, p. 470).

Hartmann knows Schopenhauer's critique of Kant's argument, which demonstrates that it is in fact possible and not contradictory to develop an infinity in the past from the present and that it is therefore not logically necessary to postulate a beginning of the world:

> The sophism consists in this, that, instead of the beginninglessness of the series of conditions or states, which was primarily the question, the endlessness (infinity) of the series is suddenly substituted. It is now proved, what no one doubts, that completeness logically contradicts this endlessness, and yet every present is the end of a past. But the end of a beginningless series can always be thought without detracting from its beginninglessness, just as conversely the beginning of an endless series can also be thought. (Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, tr. by E.F. Payne (1969): II, 494)

However, Hartmann objects that the regressive movement postulated by Schopenhauer is possible only in thought: it remains nothing more than an "ideal postulate" with no real object and which "does not teach us anything about the real process of the world that unfolds in a movement contrary to this backwards movement of thought" (Hartmann, *Philosophie des Unbewussten*, 3rd edition (1871): 772). Hartmann affirms that if unlike Schopenhauer one admits the reality of time and of the world process, one must also admit that the process must be limited in the past and therefore that there must be an absolute beginning. In Hartmann's mind, failure to do so would result in positing the contradictory concept of an accomplished infinity: "The infinity that from the point of view of regressive thinking, remains an ideal postulate, which no reality may correspond to, must, for the world, whose process is, on the contrary, a progressive movement, open up to a determinate result; and here the contradiction comes to light" (Hartmann (1871): 772). What really "comes to light" in this passage is the fact that Hartmann does not provide a demonstration but *a petitio principii*. Indeed, the concept of the world process analytically contains the concept of a beginning of the world. In all rigor, it is therefore impossible to demonstrate these concepts with reference to each other. Secondly, Hartmann's view that one is bound to accept the reality of the world process even if one rejects the ideality of Schopenhauer's time is mistaken. Hartmann believes that if time is real there must be a world process with both an absolute beginning and an absolute end. Without any justification, Hartmann jumps from Schopenhauer's negated time to oriented time.

With regard to the end of the world, Hartmann commits to the same fallacy because he uses the idea of progress to demonstrate the end of the world and ... vice versa. As a result, our philosopher absent-mindedly stumbles out of demonstration into mere postulation again: "If the idea of progress is incompatible with the affirmation of an infinite duration of the world stretching back into the past, and since in this past infinity, all the imaginable progress may have already happened (which is contrary to the idea of actual progress itself) we cannot assign an infinite duration into the future either. In both cases, one suppresses the very idea of progress towards a pre-determinate goal; and the process of the world resembles the labor of the Danaids." (Hartmann (1869): 637) Nietzsche quotes this passage as early as the *Untimely Meditation* on history (1874), and takes a stab at exposing the admirable dialectics of this "Scoundrel of all scoundrels," whose consistent arguments illustrate the absurdities intrinsic in any teleology.[33]

Hartmann's view is that the world process leads into a final state absolutely identical to the initial state. However, it follows from this that even as the cosmic adventures of the unconscious come to a close, we are still haunted by the specter of a new will and of another beginning of the world process. This exposes a serious internal flaw of Hartmann's system insofar as it jeopardizes the possibility of a final liberation from existence and suffering.

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[33] Cf. second *Untimely*, § 9 and PF 29[52] of 1873: "Hartmann is important because he kills, by his consistency, the idea of a process of the world."

This is why in the last pages of his work, "On the Last Principles," he painstakingly calculates the degree of probability of a reawakening of the volitional faculty of the unconscious. Insofar as the will is entirely free, unconditioned and a-temporal, the possibility of a new volition is left to pure mathematical chance and is therefore ½. Hartmann further stresses that if the will were embedded in time, the probability of the repetition would amount to 1 and the process of the world would be bound to begin again, in an eternal return which would completely preclude the possibility of a final liberation. Fortunately, this is not the case since—according to Hartmann's remarkable logic—the world-process develops through time, but the original will is outside of time. In fact, one may even affirm, along the lines of Hartmann's peculiar theory of probability, that every new beginning gradually reduces the probability of the next beginning: let *n* be the number of times that the will is realized, the probability of any new realization is ½ *n*. "But it is clear that the probability ½ *n* diminishes as *n* increases, in a way that suffices to reassure us in practice" (Hartmann (1869): 663).

3.3 Dühring and Caspari: Necessity and Rejection of the Repetition

We can now better understand the meaning of the polemic between Caspari and Hartmann contained in the pages 444-445 of *Der Zusammenhang der Dinge*, which I have mentioned above. There, Caspari took over the argument of the infinity *a parte ante* in order to claim that if a final state were possible, it should have already been reached in the infinity already past and all motion would therefore have come to a stop. Yet, such hasn't been the case, since the world is still in motion. Indeed, far from diminishing with every repetition, the probability of a new beginning is always equal to 1 and this will necessarily produce the repetition of the same process. Thus Hartmann's world process moves a circle instead of evolving towards one goal. But for Caspari this infinite circular movement represents the greatest ethical perversion and amounts in and of itself to a definitive refutation of the whole of Hartmann's philosophy. Here is a translation of the central passage of these two pages of Caspari's:

> Assuming that it be possible, by way of some *deus ex machina*, to suppose that this mystical event indeed existed at the heart of the stupid and unconscious essence of the world. It remains that this event would be incompatible with the effective unfolding of history and that in the course of eternity the highly desired final state where all stupidities and illusions are overcome has already occurred a long time ago. If one makes the hypothesis that in a process there is a beginning, then there also has to be an end. Consequently, in the course of eternity, this process must have already unfolded a long time ago or else it was repeated a thousand of times. If it had unfolded until the end, then nothing should be here today. If, on the contrary the stupid chance which engendered the creation of individuation repeated itself forever, that is to say to the infinite in the course of eternity, then, the continuation, after an infinite number of missteps, of the same missteps in the infinite future, is not only probable but assured. That is to say that through the process, one would not attain any true end in Nirvana, and that the stupid will of the world would be victim of the same thing as Tantalus with his apple. This demonstrates that this theory relative to evil in the world is the most

> absurd, since in order to posses everything (through the elimination of all suffering, down to the smallest), it rejects the whole universe and gains absolutely nothing (Caspari, *Der Zusammenhang der Dinge* (1881): 444-445).

Here, Caspari enters the polemic that opposed Eugen Dühring and Eduard von Hartmann, the most famous German philosophers of the time, with regard to the possibility of a new beginning of the world-process, after the final state.[34] In the "schematism of the world," a section of his *Cursus der Philosophie*, Eugen Dühring rejected the infinity of space and the regressive infinity of time, and he maintained only the possibility of the infinity of future times (Dühring, *Cursus der Philosophie als streng wissenschaftlicher Weltanschauung und Lebengestaltung* (Leipzig: Koschny, 1875): 82-83). However, once he had outlined the "real image of the universe", he had interrupted the construction of his system in order to sketch out the false image of the universe, which arises when "unreflective imagination projects an eternal play of mutations into the regressive infinity of time. It would seem possible that, just as we went from the originary undifferentiated state of movement and matter, one could, in the future, return to a state identical to the original state and—Dühring suggests, in an allusion to Hartmann—"there would even be a way of thinking, for which this coordination between the beginning and the end may appear greatly attractive" (Dühring (1875): 83). But if the world-process leads into a state identical to the original state, Dühring continues, Hartmann's probabilistic calculus is powerless to avoid any new beginning and the "absolute necessities of the real" warrant that an infinite repetition of the same forms must necessarily occur.[35] At this point, Dühring introduces an ethical objection, namely that this "gigantic extension of the temporal interval" would indeed lead mankind to a state of general indifference towards the future, and would sterilize its vital impulses: "it is obvious that the principles that make life attractive do not accord with the repetition of the same forms." (Dühring (1875): 84) Dühring therefore rejects Hartmann's philosophical system because it leads into an anti-vital view of the world that is, into a desolate repetition of the same during an infinite future. For Dühring, like for Caspari later, the eternal return of the same is the ethically undesirable consequence that makes Hartmann's philosophy altogether wrong, trivial and absurd. Dühring brings his charge to a close with a severe warning:

> Let us beware [*Hüten wir uns*], in any case, from such futile absurdities; because the existence of the universe, given once and for all, is not an indifferent episode between two nocturnal states, but the only solid and shining foundation upon which we could apply our deductions and previsions (Dühring (1875): 85).

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[34] Caspari already mentioned this polemic on pp. 283-287 of his *Zusammenhang der Dinge*, where he summarized the arguments of the two "dogmatists" regarding the necessity of a beginning of the world and their rejection of the infinite *a parte ante*.

[35] Let me stress in passing that Dühring, unlike Caspari, does not rely on the infinite *a parte ante* to bring out the necessity of the repetition in Hartmann's system. On the contrary, he sees Hartmann's system as the very product of this form of infinity. This may be explained by the fact that Dühring seeks to protect his own process of the world, his own teleology, from the destructive force of the argument from the infinite *a parte ante*.

On July 7th 1881,[36] Nietzsche had received in Sils-Maria Dühring's Course of Philosophy, which his sister had sent him. In his copy, he drew a line and an exclamation mark in the passage where Dühring warned us against the eternal return: *hüten wir uns*. The parody is in the making...

— 85 —

tionen verbürgte. Aus dem, was zählbar ist, kann auch nur eine erschöpfbare Anzahl von Combinationen folgen. Aus dem aber, was seinem Wesen nach ohne Widerspruch gar nicht als etwas Zählbares concipirt werden darf, muss auch die unbeschränkte Mannichfaltigkeit der Lagen und Beziehungen hervorgehen können. Diese Unbeschränktheit, die wir für das Schicksal der Gestaltungen des Universums in Anspruch nehmen, ist nun mit jeder Wandlung und selbst mit dem Eintreten eines Intervalls der annähernden Beharrung oder der vollständigen Sichselbstgleichheit, aber nicht mit dem Aufhören alles Wandels verträglich. Wer die Vorstellung von einem Sein cultiviren möchte, welches dem Ursprungszustande entspricht, sei daran erinnert, dass die zeitliche Entwicklung nur eine einzige reale Richtung hat, und dass die Causalität ebenfalls dieser Richtung gemäss ist. Es ist leichter, die Unterschiede zu verwischen, als sie festzuhalten, und es kostet daher wenig Mühe, mit Hinwegsetzung über die Kluft das Ende nach Analogie des Anfangs zu imaginiren. Hüten wir uns jedoch vor solchen oberflächlichen Voreiligkeiten; denn die einmal gegebene Existenz des Universums ist keine gleichgültige Episode zwischen zwei Zuständen der Nacht, sondern der einzige feste und lichte Grund, von dem aus wir unsere Rückschlüsse und Vorwegnahmen bewerkstelligen.

4. Ein universeller Zerstreuungszustand der Materie, der sich mit demjenigen der Gase vergleichen lässt, ist das Bild, zu dem eigentlich schon die Ionischen Naturdenker für die von ihnen gesuchte Urbeschaffenheit des Weltalls gelangt sind. Wenden wir uns aber von Anaximenes über mehr als zwei Jahrtausende hinweg zu den neusten Vorstellungen, so hat besonders seit der Mitte des 18. Jahrhunderts die Annahme eines Urnebels eine neue Rolle gespielt, indem die Gravitationsidee und daneben auch die Wärmeausstrahlung den Leitfaden bildeten, um aus der ursprünglich gasförmigen Masse die festen Gebilde entstehen zu lassen. Die zweite Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts ist aber in dieser Richtung mit einem neuen Hülfsmittel ausgestattet, indem die Erkenntniss der Wärme als einer molecularen Form der mechanischen Kraft und überhaupt die Einsicht in die Unveränderlichkeit des mechanischen Kraftvoraths gestattet, die Rückschlüsse auf die früheren Zustände des Universums weit bestimmter zu gestalten. Die Brücke, welche man zwischen Gravitation und Wärme geschlagen hat, und die Aussicht, in der exactesten Weise alle Formen der Naturkräfte auf ihre me-

Figure 3: Eugen Dühring, *Cursus der Philosophie*, p.85. Weimar, *Herzogin Anna Amalia Bibliothek*, C 255.

[36] Nietzsche subsequently re-read this work in the summer of 1885 (see the letter to Gast of July 23rd) and Dühring is also mentioned in 1884 and in 1888 with regard to the cosmological problem (PF 26[383] 1884—with Hartmann and Mainländer—and 14[188] 1888).

3.4 The Ass-Talk of Biological Atoms

Before we return to Nietzsche, it is worth recalling Otto Caspari's intention: he used the argument of the infinity *a parte ante*, in order to oppose another range of claims—scientific more than philosophical—which predicted the end of the world by thermal death. In 1874, he had published a pamphlet entitled *Thomson's Hypothesis of a Final State of Thermal Balance in the Universe Considered from a Philosophical Point of View*, in which he attacked the mechanistic and materialistic cosmologies of the time and opposed it with an organic and teleological vision of the totality of natural phenomena. In this pamphlet, Caspari described the universe not as a physical mechanism but as a great living organism or a "community of ethical parts." Since the dividing line between organic and inorganic had been abolished in principle by the recent discoveries of biology, Caspari tried to move from a vision of the organic as a machine to a vision of the cosmos as an organism. He therefore used the objections put forward by Robert Mayer, Friedrich Mohr and Carl Gustav Reuschle against Thomson, Helmholtz and Clausius, and above all he recalled the polemic of Leibniz against Descartes as a way to simplify and reduce the ongoing debate to his own view.

In his famous work entitled *On the Conservation of Force* (1847), Hermann von Helmholtz had divided the totality of the energy in the universe between potential energy and kinetic energy and affirmed the reciprocal convertibility of the two. In 1852, William Thomson pointed out that there exists a sub-ensemble within kinetic energy, heat, which, once it has been generated, is no longer entirely convertible into potential energy—or into any other form of kinetic energy. Considering that the (partial) reconversion of heat into labor is possible only in situations that present a disparity in temperature, and that heat tends to pass from warmer to cooler bodies by spreading on an even temperature level through space, Thomson concluded that the universe tends towards a final state where any energetic transformations, every movement and every form of life will cease:

> We find that the end of this world as a habitation for man, or for any living creature or plant at present existing in it, is mechanically inevitable.[37]

Caspari used the argument of the infinity *a parte ante* to oppose the prediction involved by Thomson's mechanism: "it is not difficult to show that the universe, which has existed in all eternity, would have already come to a state of total equilibrium of all its parts" (Caspari, *Die Thomson'sche Hypothese von der endlichen Temperaturausgleichung im Weltall, beleuchtet vom philosophischen Gesichtspunkte* (Stuttgart: Horster, 1874): IV). Hence, if every mechanism reaches a state of equilibrium and if the universe has not yet

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[37] Cf. William Thomson (Lord Kelvin), "On Mechanical Antecedents of Motion, Heat, and Light," in *British Association Report*, II, 1854, reprinted in *Mathematical and Physical Papers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1882-1911): II, pp. 37, see also Thomson, "On a Universal Tendency in Nature to the Dissipation of Mechanical Energy," in T*ransactions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh*, April 19th 1852, 20 (1850/1853), 3, pp. 139-142; reprinted in *Mathematical and Physical Papers*, I, pp. 511 ff.

reached it in the infinity of past time, it follows that the universe cannot be considered to be a mechanism, but a community of parts whose movements do not abide to a mechanical law but to an ethical imperative. Caspari's atoms (which bring to mind those in Leibniz's *Monadology*) resemble some sort of biological monads, endowed with internal states. For Caspari, every atom obeys the ethical imperative to participate in the conservation of the general organism and its movement does not only follow the simple physical kind of interaction but also an *a priori* law ensuring that thermal equilibrium, which is the unavoidable result of all purely mechanical interaction, is avoided:

> In order to resolve the difficulties mentioned earlier, we must return to Leibniz at least with regard to the possibility to conceive of atoms as biological atoms, that is to say, as a sort of monad, which on the one hand are obviously subject to real physical interactions, and on the other obey the law of internal atomic self-conservation. This law compels them to follow certain directions of the movement thereby preventing the formation of those tendencies of movement which, because of their unlimited growth, would lead the whole universe (considered purely mechanically), to a state of complete equilibrium of all its parts; a state to which the whole universe, once the ability to conserve motion has been exhausted in every one of its parts, would be condemned to forever (Caspari, *Die Thomson'sche Hypothese* (1874): V).

Therefore, the universe is not a watch in need of rewinding or some steam engine on the verge of a fuel failure. On the contrary, it is, says Caspari after Leibniz: "A watch that rewinds itself, comparable to the organism that seeks its own nourishment [...]. The universe is not in itself a pure, dead, mechanism. Leibniz, against Descartes exclaimed: 'No!' the universe is entirely made up of an independent force, which it does not draw from without" (Caspari, *Die Thomson'sche Hypothese* (1874): 8-9). In Nietzsche's copy, this last sentence received merely a marginal mark, but the last part of the preceding quotation is graced with a big "Esel" ("Ass") followed with two exclamation marks.

immer wieder im Wesentlichen zu den Streitigkeiten zurück, die Leibniz und Descartes miteinander von physikalischen und mathematischen Gesichtspunkten mit so großem Scharfsinn geführt haben. Daß wir nun diesen, wie oben angedeutet, in gewissem Sinne noch heute nicht ganz beendigten Streit völlig zu Gunsten Leibniz's entscheiden, kann vom naturphilosophischen Gesichtspunkte niemals zugegeben werden; denn die Erfindung des Princips der sog. prästabilirten Harmonie, ist, wie der Verfasser in einer früheren Arbeit ausführlich nachzuweisen sich bemühte, (vergl. hierüber Leibniz' Philosophie beleuchtet vom Gesichtspunkt der physikalischen Grundbegriffe. p. 159 ff.) zwar vom mathematischen Gesichtspunkte ein sehr geistvoller, aber in physikalischer Beziehung dennoch nicht anerkennenswerther Ausweg aus den gegebenen Schwierigkeiten. Denn mit Anerkennung einer solchen Harmonie sind die Grundgesetze der Wechselwirkung, der physikalischen Reibung und das Gravitationsgesetz u. s. w. nicht mehr erklärlich. Und dennoch sehen wir uns genöthigt, um die genannten Schwierigkeiten zu heben, wenigstens insoweit auf Leibniz zurückzukommen, daß wir die Atome zu sog. biologischen Atomen, d. h. zu einer solchen Art von Monaden erheben, welche einerseits zwar der realen physikalischen Wechselwirkung unterliegen, nebendem aber dem Gesetze einer inneren atomistischen Selbsterhaltung gehorchen, das ihnen vorschreibt, zugleich gewisse Normen der Bewegungsdirektion zu befolgen, durch welche die Summationen aller solcher mechanischer Tendenzen der Bewegung in größerem Maßstabe verhindert werden, die, unbeschränkt anwachsend, endlich das mechanisch angeschaute Ganze in die völlige Gleichgewichtslage aller Theile bringen würden, zu welchem Zustande das Universum alsdann, hinsichtlich seiner Selbsterhaltung der Bewegung in allen Gliedern erstorben, für immer und ewig verurtheilt wäre. (Vergl. zugl. des Verf. Ausführungen hierüber in der Zeitschrift „Das Ausland“ Jahrg. 1873 No. 31 p. 618 ff.) Bei dieser Gelegenheit möge zugleich daran erinnert sein, daß wohl Leibniz wie kaum ein anderer Forscher mit einer gleichen Berechtigung, auf's tiefste erkannte (was übrigens auch vorurtheilslos von hervorragenden Physikern der Neuzeit zugegeben wird, vergl. hierüber Helmholz: Handbuch der theoretischen Physik von Thomson und Tait B. I. Th. 2 p. 2 ff.), daß die Anschauungen der Mechanik zunächst nur dazu dienen sollen, Approximationen zu schaffen, durch welche es gelingt, tieferen Einblick in bestimmte gegebene Einzel-

Esel!!

Figure 4: Otto Caspari, *Die Thomson'sche Hypothese* (1874): V, Weimar, *Herzogin Anna Amalia Bibliothek*, C 379.

Indeed, after having read Caspari's first book, *The Correlation of Things*, Nietzsche went on to read his pamphlet against Thomson's hypothesis, as well as a series of studies, which he found discussed in *The Correlation of Things*. Nietzsche's writings and his readings indicate that, even before 1881, his level of awareness of cosmological problems was fairly broad.[38] However, it is during the summer of 1881, at the time when his idea of the eternal return "surges over the horizon," that Nietzsche devotes himself more intensively to these types of readings. In my opinion, the main source of these new reflections is precisely Caspari's *The Correlation of Things*, which Nietzsche's editor delivered to him in St. Moritz (see the letter to Schmeitzner of June 21st 1881). Caspari's chapter entitled "The Contemporary Philosophy of Nature and its Orientations," which is a study of Gustav Vogt and Alfons Bilharz's philosophy of nature, gave Nietzsche access to a presentation of the current state of cosmological debates as well as some bibliographical references. Further, in his letter to Overbeck of August 20-21st 1881, Nietzsche begged his friend to send him the following works, which he found mentioned in Caspari.

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[38] As early as 1866, Nietzsche found these problems discussed in a chapter of the first edition of Friedrich Albert Lange's *History of Materialism* (*Geschichte des Materialismus und Kritick seiner Bedeutung in der Gegenwart*) (Iserlohn: J. Baedeker, 1866). In his course on "the pre-Platonic philosophers" (1872), he had transposed Heraclitean becoming to the cosmic level, quoting the passage on Helmholtz from Lange's book, which was devoted to the dissipation of energy and taken from the famous lecture *On the Reciprocal Action of the Forces of Nature* (cf. Nietzsche, *Les philosophes préplatoniciens* (1994), 149, 313, who quotes Hermann von Helmholtz, "Über die Wechselwirkung der Naturkräfte und die darauf bezüglichen neuesten Ermittelungen der Physik" (1854, in *Vorträge und Reden*, (Braunschweig: Vieweg, 1896): I, 50-83), from Lange (1866), 388-389). In Strauss's *New and Old Faith*, which he read in 1872, Nietzsche found the template of a materialistic cosmology based upon the first principle of thermodynamics. During the same year, he could have found a model of an organistic solution to the problem of thermal death of the universe as well as a discussion on the conformation of space in Zöllner's book *On the Nature of Comets* (Johann Carl Friedrich Zöllner, *Über die Natur der Kometen. Beiträge zur Geschichte und Theorie der Erkenntnis* (Leipzig, Engelmann, 1872), 299 f. and 313 f.); Nietzsche had borrowed this work from the Basel library on November 6th 1872 and later, on March 28th 1873, on October 2nd 1873 and on April 13th 1874. On March 28th 1873 he also borrowed Friedrich Mohr's *General Theory of Motion and Force* (1869), where he had access to an in-depth analysis of the problems of the mechanistic theory of heat. Balfour Stewart's book was entirely devoted to *The Conservation of Energy* (1875) and Nietzsche acquired the German translation of it on January 20th and started a summary of it in Notebook U III 1, in the summer of 1875 (cf. PF 9[2]). As regards Kant's Cosmological Antinomy, Nietzsche found a detailed rejection of it in Schopenhauer (in the critique of Kant's philosophy of the appendix to *The World as Will and Representation* and in *Parerga und Paralipomena* (1851), I, § 13, pp. 98 f.). As I recalled above, Nietzsche had mocked the paralogisms with which Hartmann attempted to demonstrate the necessity of a world's end in the second *Untimely* (1874), § 9. Nietzsche could have encountered a critique similar to his own in Bahnsen who recalled at length the Schopenhauerian argument according to which "everything that could have happened in an infinite length of time must have already occurred long ago" before shedding light on Hartmann's *petitio principi* (Julius Bahnsen, *Zur Philosophie der Geschichte. Einer kritische Besprechung des Hegel-Hartmann'schen Evolutionismus aus Schopenhaurerschen Principien* (Berlin: Dunker, 1872), 82; Bahnsen's book was borrowed by Nietzsche in Basel on December 5th 1871, again on April 26th, and once more on March 5th 1872). Further, on May 26th 1875 Nietzsche had acquired Dühring's *Cursus der Philosophie*, which he pledged to read over the Summer (cf. PF 8[3] of 1875). The dates of Nietzsche's borrowings from Basel are taken from the catalogue published in 1994 by Luca Crescenzi, "Verzeichnis der von Nietzsche aus der Universitätsbibliothek in Basel entliehenen Bücher (1869-1879)," in *Nietzsche-Studien*, 23 (1994): 388-441.

I would like to ask you to buy me a few volumes in bookstores:

1. O. Liebmann, *The Analysis of Reality* [quoted by Caspari (1881) on pp. 215 and 223].

2. O. Caspari, *The Hypothesis of Thomson* (Stuttgart: Hörster, 1874) [quoted by Caspari on pp. 33 and 51].

3. A. Fick, "Cause and Effect" [Quoted by Caspari, in quotation marks, on p. 39 and as a "memorable work," on p. 51].

4. J. G. Vogt, *Force*, Leipzig, Haupt and Tischler 1878 [quoted by Caspari on pp. 28-29, discussed at length on pp. 41-48].

Liebmann, *Kant and his Epigones* [Quoted by Caspari on p. 58]. [...]

Does the Zurich reader's association (or the library) hold the "Philosophischen monatshefte"? I would need volume 9 from year 1873 [quoted by Caspari on pp. 80, 82 and 93] and also of year 1875 [quoted by Caspari in the same way, without volume number, on pp. 128 and 134]. Then the review *Kosmos*, volume I [quoted by Caspari on pp. 36, 51, 146, 180, 182, and 378].

Is there a complete edition of the Discourses by Dubois-Reymond? [quoted by Caspari on pp. 20, 420 and 486].

Nietzsche also requested Afrikan Spir's book, *Thought and Reality*, which he was used to re-reading periodically when dealing with speculative questions.[39] As soon as he received these books, he immersed himself in the reading of Caspari's pamphlet against Thomson and his first reaction, as we saw, was to call Caspari's hypothesis of biological monads supposedly able to warrant the conservation of movement "ass-talk." One encounters this reaction again in the margin to Caspari's writing, which is accompanied with a fragment from Notebook M III 1 ("The most profound mistake possible is to affirm that the universe is an organism. [...] How? The inorganic would be the development

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[39] On Nietzsche's readings of Spir in 1873, 1877, 1881, 1885, see D'Iorio, "La superstition des philosophes critiques. Nietzsche et Afrikan Spir," *Nietzsche-Studien*, 22 (1993): 257-294. One must note that Caspari's work contained, beyond a number of books that Nietzsche had no knowledge of and which he ordered from Overbeck, quotations and discussions of the cosmological passages from books he had already encountered, for example the works of Strauss, Hartmann, Dühring and Zöllner. On pages 101 and 116-117, for example, Caspari quotes the passage from Strauss's *The Ancient and New Faith* as well as a very nice example of an anti-teleological cosmology. In the study "Hartmann, Dühring et Lange, Philosophers of the Present," Nietzsche found a refutation of Hartmann's dogmatism and of Dühring on the question of the infinite *a parte ante* and of the origin of the world, along with the critique of Vaihinger. On page 256 and then on pages 423 ff., Nietzsche could also find a discussion of the form of Zöllner's four-dimensional space etc. With the addition of Proctor's *Our Point of View in the Universe* (Heilbronn: Henninger, 1877), Mayer's *Mechanics of Heat* (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1867), and Dühring's *Course of Philosophy*, we can obtain a picture of the themes and interlocutors Nietzsche talked of and with during his long walks near the lake of Sils and in the evening, at home, in the tranquility of the world's most fascinating place, in the middle of an "eternal heroic idyll" (cf. PF 11[24] of 1881, the letters to Gast of April 10th and April 16th 1881, the letter to Elisabeth Nietzsche of July 7th 1881, and the letter to Gast of July 8th 1881).

and the decadence of the organic!? Ass-talk!!"), which is followed by another fragment in all likelihood aimed at Caspari: "*Absolute equilibrium* is either in and of itself impossible, or the modifications of force enter into the cycle before any equilibrium, in itself possible, is reached. —Attributing to being the 'instinct of self-preservation'! Madness! And attributing to the atoms 'the striving towards pleasure and displeasure'!"[40]

On August 26th, Nietzsche wrote a new plan for a book on the eternal return in M III 1 entitled "Noon and Eternity" (PF 11 [195]). Nietzsche takes over his cosmological reflexions in the very next fragments. There, he pursues his constant dialogue with Caspari and develops a harsh critique of his organicism. Caspari pointed out that Democritus' atomistic theory—which, in Dante's formulation, "sets the world on chance"—is either a hidden teleology or a theory contradicted by the experience (Caspari, *Der Zusammenhang der Dinge* (1881): 124). Indeed, Caspari contends that a world governed by chance, which had succeeded in avoiding the state of maximum equilibrium so far, could not be called totally blind; on the contrary it must have been directed by some form of teleology. If conversely no teleological principle were guiding it, then it should already have reached this state of maximum equilibrium and of motionlessness. In this case, however, the world would still be motionless, and experience demonstrates that the opposite is the case.

Nietzsche refers to these arguments in the posthumous fragment 11[201] when he writes that organicism is a "hidden polytheism," and a modern shadow of God. There, he directs the objection of infinity *a parte ante* against Caspari: if the cosmos could have become an organism, it would have done so by now.

> In the modern scientific realm, what corresponds most to the belief in God is the belief in the whole as an organism: this disgusts me. Turning what is absolutely rare, unspeakably derivated, the organic, which we perceive only on the crust of the earth into the essential, the universal, the eternal! This is humanization of nature all over again! And the monads, which, taken together, would form the organism of the universe are nothing but hidden polytheism! Endowed with foresight! Monads, which would be able to prevent certain possible mechanical results such as the balance of forces! This is phantasmagorical! If the universe could ever become an organism, it would already have become one.

But, Caspari insists, what then is it that has been preventing the attainment of a state of equilibrium so far (and will always prevent, since a temporal infinity has already unfolded by now) if not the intentionality of atoms? If in infinity "*all the possible combinations must have taken place*, it follows that

[40] The first fragment quoted was only published in the critical apparatus to the German edition of the *Gay Science* (KSA vol. 14, p. 253), the other is PF 11[265] of 1881. Attributing internal states and a sense of self-preservation to atoms is one of the foundations of Caspari's philosophy. Such positions were fairly widespread at the time, for example in Zöllner, Fechner, and Fick. See Caspari (1881), be it only on pp. 126-127, 287, 344, 347, 422, and 441. Nietzsche, as early as PF 11[108], which is anterior to the idea of the return, writes resolutely, with a likely reference to Caspari: "there is no self-preservation instinct!"

even the combination that corresponds to the state of equilibrium must have taken place and this contradicts *the facts of experience*" (Caspari (1881): 136). In his copy of the book, Nietzsche traced two lines on the side of this sentence, and he specifically addresses this objection in fragment 11[245] of 1881. There, he draws a distinction between the configurations of force that are merely possible and those that are real. For him, the balance of forces—that is to say, thermal death—is one of the *possible* cases, but since it has never been and never will be attained, it is not a *real* case.

> If a balance of forces had been attained at any moment, this moment would still be going on: therefore, it never happened. The present state *contradicts* this proposition. Supposing that a certain state rigorously identical with the present state had, one day, existed, this supposition *is not* refuted by the present state. As one of the infinite possibilities, it *is necessary* that the present state had been given anyway, since until now an infinite period of time has already unfolded. If equilibrium were possible, it must have occurred; and if the present state has *already* taken place, then so too the one that preceded it as well as the one preceding that one. Therefore it has already taken place a second time, a third time and so on. And likewise it shall take place again a second time, a third time. Innumerable times forwards and backwards. This amounts to saying that all becoming occurs within a repetition of an innumerable number of absolutely identical states. [...] The immovability of forces, their equilibrium is a conceivable case, but it has not occurred. As a result the number of possibilities is greater than the number of realities. —The fact that nothing identical recurs may be explained not thanks to chance, but only thanks to an intention infiltrated within the essence of force. Indeed, supposing an enormous amount of cases, the random occurrence of the *same combination* is more probable than the same combination never recurring.

Now we can go back to the page that follows the first sketch of the eternal return, which triggered our analysis. As we remember, it began with the warning: "Let you beware (*Hütet euch zu sagen*) that the world is a living being." Things have now become clearer: *Hüten wir uns* is the phrase which Eugen Dühring uses at the end of his refutation of Eduard von Hartmann's system of the world, a system which he regarded as anti-vitalistic *because* it led logically to the repetition of the identical. Dühring wrote: "Let us beware from such futile absurdities." Organicism is Otto von Caspari's answer to the problem of the dissipation of energy, of the thermal death of the universe and of all sorts of teleologies. Against Dühring, against Hartmann, but also against the extension of the second principle of thermodynamics to the universe, Caspari contends that the world will never be able to attain the final state because it is made up of some sort of biological atoms. Nietzsche supports Caspari in his critique of teleology, and the arguments he uses against the final state of the universe coincide with Caspari's. However, he still regards organicism as the worst form of anthropomorphism, a hidden polytheism and rejects it with all his might. Nietzsche uses a parody of Dühring's phrase "*Hüten wir uns*" ("Let us beware") in order to ridicule and refute at the same time Caspari's organicism, Thomson's mechanism, Hartmann and Dühring's world process and other false interpretations of the universe. He also uses this debate to develop his arguments in favor of his idea of the eternal return of the same. A reading of some of the other fragments from Notebook M III 1 confirms that this is not a matter of chance but a subtle intellectual game. Nietzsche writes:

Let us beware [*hüten wir uns*] to assign an *aspiration*, a *goal* of any kind to this cyclical motion, or to regard it according to our needs as *boring*, *stupid*, etc. Undoubtedly, the supreme degree of unreason manifests itself within it just as much as the contrary: but we could not judge it according to this fact, *neither* the reasonable *nor* the unreasonable are predicates that could be attributed to the universe. —Let us beware [*hüten wir uns*] from regarding the *law of this circle* as having *become*, according to the false analogy of the cyclical movements taking place *within* the ring: there has not been first some chaos and then progressively a more harmonious movement, and finally a stable circular movement of all forces. On the contrary, everything is eternal, has not come once into existence. If there had been chaos of forces, the chaos itself used to be eternal and recurred in every circle. The circular course has no resemblance with *what has become*, it is the original law just as well as the *quantum of force* is the original law, without exception or transgression. Every becoming is inside of the circular motion and of the quantum of force. Therefore, making reference to the becoming and transitory circular movements, for example, the stars, or the ebb and flow, the day and the night or the seasons in order to characterize the eternal circular motion pertains to a false analogy (FP 11[157] of 1881).

Let us beware [*hüten wir uns*] from teaching our doctrine like some sudden religion! It must infiltrate slowly, it requires the investment and fecundation of entire generations—in order to become a tall tree whose shadow shall stretch over all future mankind. What are the two millennia through which Christianity maintained itself! (FP 11[158] of 1881).

The quantum of force in the universe is *determinate* and not "infinite": let us beware [*hüten wir uns*] from such conceptual extravaganza! Therefore the number of situations, modifications, combinations and developments of this force is doubtless enormous and practically "*immeasurable*," but in any case this number is determinate and not infinite. On the other hand, the time in which the universe exerts its force is infinite. That is to say, that force is eternally identical and eternally active: —until the present instant an infinity has already taken place, that is to say that all possible developments must *have already taken place*. Consequently, the present development must be a repetition and therefore both this that was born from it and this that shall be born from it and so on both forwards and backwards. Everything has taken place an innumerable number of times because the overall situation of all forces always recurs (FP 11[202] of 1881).

Let us beware [*hüten wir uns*] from believing that the universe would possess a tendency to acquire certain forms, that it aspires to be more beautiful, more perfect, more complex! This is mere anthropomorphism! Anarchy, ugliness, shape—are irrelevant concepts. In mechanics there is no imperfection (FP [205] of 1881).[41]

[41] See among others PF 11[201] 1881 already quoted and the other draft of aphorism 109 of the Gay Science on page 18 of M III 1 (published in KSA, vol. 14, p. 254). As regards textual correspondences, it is worth noting that Nietzsche takes over the title of Caspari's book in PF 11[148], which is the first exposition of the eternal return after the first sketch and a preparation to the famous aphorism 341 of the Gay Science: "And then you will find yourself finding again every preparation and every pleasure, every friend and every enemy, every hope and every error, every leaf of grass and every sunbeam, the entire correlation of all things [*den ganzen Zusammenhang aller Dinge*]."

This last sentence seems to grant mechanism an edge over organicism, and indeed, Nietzsche regards the mechanistic vision as more plausible and less anthropomorphic than organicism. However, faced with the two major cosmological models of his time, the mechanistic model and the organic model, Nietzsche wishes to return its polymorphous, proteiform, unstructured and chaotic character to nature of which the perfectly non-theological and non-teleological theory of eternal return is the strongest seal. This is the first of the "new battles" which come to whoever is aware of the consequences of the death of God: take any antropomorphism away from nature. In the preparatory papers, the third book of the *Gay Science* is entitled "*Gedanke eines Gottlosen* / Thoughts of a Godless One." Aphorism 109 of this book, which immediately follows the famous aphorism against the shadows of God, summarizes masterfully Nietzsche's relations with the main tendencies of cosmology in his time. It is entitled: "*Hüten wir uns...*":

> 109. *Let us beware.* — Let us beware of thinking that the world is a living being. Where should it expand? On what should it feed? How could it grow and multiply? We have some notion of the nature of the organic; and we should not reinterpret the exceedingly derivative, late, rare, accidental, that we perceive only on the crust of the earth and make of it something essential, universal, and eternal, which is what those people do who call the universe an organism. This nauseates me. Let us even beware of believing that the universe is a machine: it is certainly not constructed for one purpose, and calling it a "machine" does it far too much honor. Let us beware of positing generally and everywhere anything as elegant as the cyclical movements of our neighboring stars; even a glance into the Milky Way raises doubts whether there are not far coarser and more contradictory movements there, as well as stars with eternally linear paths, etc. The astral order in which we live is an exception; this order and the relative duration that depends on it have again made possible an exception of exceptions: the formation of the organic. The total character of the world, however, is in all eternity chaos—in the sense not of a lack of necessity but of a lack of order, arrangement, form, beauty, wisdom, and whatever other names there are for our aesthetic anthropomorphisms. Judged from the point of view of our reason, unsuccessful attempts are by all odds the rule, the exceptions are not the secret aim, and the whole musical box [*Spielwerk*] repeats eternally its tune which may never be called a melody—and ultimately even the phrase "unsuccessful attempt" is too anthropomorphic and reproachful. But how could we reproach or praise the universe? Let us beware of attributing to it heartlessness and unreason [*Herzlosigkeit und Unvernunft*] or their opposites: it is neither perfect nor beautiful, nor noble [*edle*], nor does it wish to become any of these things; it does not by any means strive to imitate man. None of our aesthetic and moral judgments apply to it. Nor does it have any instinct for self-preservation or any other instinct; and it does not observe any laws either. Let us beware of saying that there are laws in nature. There are only necessities: there is nobody who commands, nobody who obeys, and nobody who trespasses. Once you know that there are no purposes, you also know that there is no accident; for it is only beside a world of purposes that the word "accident" has meaning. Let us beware of saying that death is opposed to life. The living is merely a type of what is dead, and a very rare type. Let us beware of thinking that the world eternally creates new things. There are no eternally enduring substances; matter is as much of an error as the God of the Eleatics. But when shall we ever be done with our caution and care? When will all these shadows of God cease to darken our minds? When will we complete our de-deification of nature? When may we begin to "*naturalize*" humanity in terms of a pure, newly discovered, newly redeemed nature?

There is no use in going back to the "let us beware" which returns ceaselessly and structures this aphorism. I would only like to stress some of the other textual indicators, corresponding to the German terms in brackets, which reveal the strong degree of intertextuality of this text and testify of its relation with the cosmological debate of its time. Nietzsche uses the term *Spielwerk,* "a music box mechanism." In this context, it is both an allusion to the eternal return and to the term *Räderwerk*, which means cogwheel and was used constantly by Caspari in his rejection of Dühring's schematism of the world. As regards the insensitivity and the unreasonableness of the universe, a sketch of this aphorism, on page 74 of M III 1, explicates once more the reference to Hartmann and Caspari.

> Let us beware of deprecating the value of existence by the mere fact that we place 'callousness' [*Herzlosgigkeit*], the absence of pity, unreason [*Unvernunft*], the lack of noble feelings [*Mangel an edlem Gefühl*] etc.—as the pessimists do [here Nietzsche has Hartmann in mind], but at bottom, the monadists too [like Caspari, with his biological monads] etc. We must figure the fully mechanical and unreasonable universe of matter in such a way that it cannot be affected by any predicate of aesthetical or moral value. —It does not want anything, it neither wants to become more perfect nor more beautiful, nor more noble etc. —Caspari, p. 288, shamefully invokes the "dissuasive sentiment" [*abmahnenede Gefühl*]![42]

Nietzsche is referring to page 288 of *The Correlation of Things*, which follows immediately Caspari's critique of Dühring and Hartmann's systems:

> Whoever calmly observes these cosmic edifices as they are represented by Dühring and Hartmann, must confront the feeling that in the world itself plays a very important role indeed. It is exactly this sentiment [*Gefühl*] which dissuades [*mahnt*] in a clear voice and pushes them to part ways with this so-called unconscious divinity which builds worlds without being able to renounce them out of compassion, and at the same time dissuades him [*mahnt*] from conceiving the universe and its parts like a communist state, governed in the most insensitive way [*herzlosester Weise*], which throws all its members into chains and forces them to follow in unisono, now deprived of any sense of individuality, the Moloch of some insensitive mechanism [*gefühllosen Räderwerkes*]."[43]

Nietzsche starts from a narrow polemic between those who appeared as the great philosophers of his times and succeeds to draw an image of the universe as "*chaos sive natura*" (as he called it in a parody of Spinoza) still relevant to this day. For him, it is foremost a matter of making mankind aware of its own structuring and creative force, which was at the root of all the qualities successively "found again" in nature. In aphorism 300 of the *3*, he writes: "Did Prometheus have to *fancy* first that he had stolen the light, and then pay for that—before he finally discovered that he had created the light *by*

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[42] In the manuscript, this fragment follows PF 11[265] of 1881 quoted above.

[43] Caspari uses the term *herzlos* very frequently (five times on p. 287, twice on p. 288, then p. 445, etc.), on p. 287-288 we find also *gefühllos*, three times *werthlos* and *edle Gefühl* on p. 287.

coveting the light, and that not only man, but also the *god*, was the work of *his* hands and had been mere clay in his hands? All mere images of the maker—" This aphorism clarifies the ending we can find in the drafts of aphorism 109: "Prometheus has still not broken free from its vulture!" that is, he has not yet discovered the human origin of his images of the universe.

The analysis of the manuscripts shows us how Nietzsche succeeded in assembling, condensing, and sometimes summarizing in one word or play on words the result of a whole debate which has now fallen into utter oblivion but which, reconstructed thanks to the analysis of his manuscripts and reading, helps us understand the genesis and the meaning of the eternal return. The philosophical interpretation cannot afford to overlook this genetical analysis. But to perform it we shall avoid using compilations of posthumous fragments and fake works such as *The Will to Power*. On the contrary, we shall favor a reliable edition like Colli and Montinari's and, above all, we shall return to the study of his manuscripts, his library, his reading. Otherwise, as we have demonstrated in the case of one of the most famous and brightest interpreters of Nietzsche, we will never escape the vicious circle of misinterpretations.

4. Epilogue: the cyclical time of Ludwig Boltzmann.

After experiencing the vision of the eternal return which, as we saw, rests upon an argumentative structure determined by the echoes of the scientific and philosophical debates of the times, Nietzsche had considered devoting ten years to the study of the physical sciences. He wished to complete his training and acquire the intellectual tools that would enable him to ground his doctrine more securely and to return to philosophical writings as the master of eternal return. This project failed, most of all because of the Lou von Salomé "affair," and of the adventures of the "trinity" formed with Paul Rée. On the verge of suicide, the philosopher took up the path of writing, created his double, Zarathustra, and gave a dramatic exposition to the eternal return as part of a great tragedy of knowledge, which is at the same time a fierce parody of all sacred books. This form of presentation is not incompatible with an exposition of the eternal return from the point of view of a philosophy of nature or physics. Nietzsche regarded it as preliminary and talked of Zarathustra as the antechamber of his philosophy.

As a conclusion to this study, I would like to stress that the controversies about the thermal death of the universe continued independently of Nietzsche's philosophy throughout the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century and that the final scientific solution to the problem of the thermal death is to be found in Ludwig Boltzmann's statistical theory of thermodynamics, even if this fact is rarely emphasized sufficiently.

Boltzmann's theory belongs to the third phase of the debate on thermodynamics and cosmology. The publication of Thomson's brief paper "On a Universal Tendency in Nature to the Dissipation of Mechanical Energy" of 1852 signals the beginning of the scientific controversies on the problem of the dissipation of energy and opened the first phase of the debate, which was announced in the *Reflexions on the Motor Powers of Fire* by Sadi Carnot and whose conclusion is represented by Clausius's recapitulative article on the

concept of entropy in 1865.[44] The second phase started in 1867 when, at the forty-first congress of German scientists and doctors, Clausius gave a lecture on "The Second Principle of the Mechanistic Theory of Heat," where he applied the results of his research on thermodynamics to the universe. It is true that in his famous lecture of 1854, Helmholtz had already presented the cosmic consequences of the second principle, but Clausius' contribution had a strong impact on German culture. This is because in this lecture he robustly rejected the possibility to consider the universe as an eternal and self-renewing circle, an *ewiger Kreislauf* in which force and matter are in constant transformation, as was heretofore affirmed by the materialism of the scientists and philosophers, and he did so in the name of the second principle of thermodynamics. In this way, the debate on the principles of thermodynamics gained great importance in European Culture starting in 1867.[45]

In the two first phases, it is Thomson's mechanism that predicts the thermal death of the universe. In the third phase, on the contrary, the meaning of the term mechanism changes radically.[46] In accordance with the apocalyptic climate of this period dominated by the "rebirth of idealism," the "overcoming of scientific materialism" and the "bankruptcy of science", the mechanistic paradigm which had accompanied the birth of modern science became challenged on account of the second principle of thermodynamics.

According to the theorem of the quasi-periodicity of the motions of mechanical systems demonstrated by Poincaré as part of the problem of the three bodies (1890), a mechanical system must evolve according to a quasi-periodical movement and consequently it must always return—sooner or later—to the initial state.

An easily established theorem informs us that a limited world obeying solely the laws of mechanics shall always pass through a state closely similar to its initial state. On the contrary, according to established experimental laws (supposing we grant them absolute value and wish to push their consequences to the end), the universe is directed towards a final state, which once it is attained, it shall not be able to escape. In this final state, which shall be like a sort of death, all material bodies shall be at rest at the same temperature.[47]

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[44] Sadi Carnot, Réflexions sur la puissance motrice du feu et sur les machines propres a développer cette puissance (Paris: Bachelier, 1824); Rudolf Clausius, Über verschiedene für die Anwendung bequeme Formen der Hauptgleichungen der mechanischen Wärmetheorie, lecture at the Züricher naturforschenden Gesellschaft on April 24th 1865, in Abhandlungen über die mechanische Wärmetheorie (Braunschweig: Vieweg und Sohn, 1867), II, 1-44.

[45] Hermann von Helmholtz, Über die Erhaltung der Kraft. Eine physikalische Abhandlung, in Wissenschaftliche Abhandlungen (Leipzig: Barth, 1882), I, 12-75; Rudolf Clausius, Über den zweiten Hauptsatz der mechanischen Wärmetheorie (Braunschweig: Vieweg, 1867), 1-17.

[46] As a symbolic step for the start of the third phase we can quote Henri Poincaré's article on "Le mécanisme et l'expérience," Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale, I (1893), 534-537. The texts of history of science, which speak of cosmic extension of the second principle of thermodynamics and of thermal death, mechanism and eternal return, usually use this terms in the sense they have in this third phase.

[47] Cf. Henri Poincaré, "Sur le problème des trois corps et les équations de la dynamique,"

Poincaré's theorem seems therefore incompatible with the second principle of thermodynamics, which predicts a unidirectional movement of all natural phenomena until the whole universe is brought to a total standstill. Wilhelm Ostwald and the entire energeticist school of thought contended that the principles of thermodynamics were fundamentally new, and could not be re-incorporated to traditional physics and that they should serve as a basis for a new science that regards the qualitative diversity of energy and its tendency to degradation as its axioms. Against energeticism and in an effort to bring entropic phenomena back into the theoretical framework of mechanism, Ludwig Boltzmann introduced the concept of probability in physics, not as an instrument of calculation, but as an explicative principle. In Boltzmann's statistical thermodynamics, the increase of entropy assumed by Clausius is re-interpreted as an increase in molecular chaos. As a result, it becomes possible to explain mechanistically the evolution of closed systems endowed with increasing entropic value, without it committing us to granting absolute value to the second principle of thermodynamics. Moreover, one no longer needs to fear the thermal death of the universe insofar as the state of equilibrium will in principle never be complete, but rather will be attained only statistically, leaving open the possibility of fluctuations towards less probable states.

Boltzmann's critics remarked that this hypothesis involved two paradoxes called the objection of reversibility (*Umkehreinwand*), and that of repetition (*Wiederkehreinwand*). I shall only address here the second one since it coincides with the theory of the eternal return. Based on Poincaré's theorem quoted above, Ernst Zermelo objected to Boltzmann that his model of the universe suggested that after a finite (if admittedly very long) time the system would return to its initial position. In his first response to Zermelo, Boltzmann avoids committing himself directly to cosmological questions and he only observes that, in the case of concrete thermodynamic systems, the time of recurrence may be extremely long. For example, in normal conditions of pressure and temperature, one-centimeter cube of gas requires $10^{10^{10}}$ years to reach a molecular configuration identical to the original one! However, following a response by Zermelo, Boltzmann wrote a new article where he outlines a cosmological picture that he will re-use later in his conclusion to his famous *Lectures on Gas Theory*.[48]

In this cosmological picture, Boltzmann considers the universe as a closed system with constant entropy, within which some fluctuations occur, creating islands of negative entropy. Our solar system originates in one of these fluctuations. As Clausius correctly pointed out, the entropy of our solar system increases constantly as the solar system gets closer to the state of chaos and

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Acta Mathematica, 13 (1890): 1-271; Wilhelm Ostwald, "La déroute de l'atomisme contemporain," *Revue générale des sciences*, November 15th 1895, p. 953 f.; Ferdinand Brunetière, La renaissance de l'idéalisme (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1896); see H.W. Paul, "The Debate over the Bankrupt of Science," in *French Historical Studies*, 2 (1968): 299-327.

[48] Cf. Ernst Zermelo, "Über einen Satz der Dynamik und die mechanische Wärmetheorie," *Wiedemann Annalen*, 57 (1896): 485-494; Ludwig Boltzmann, "Zu Hrn. Zermelos Abhandlung 'Über die mechanische Erklärung irreversibler Vorgänge'," *Wiedemann Annalen*, 60 (1897): 392-398; Boltzmann, *Vorlesungen über Gastheorie* (Leipzig: Barth, 1895 and 1888).

of the thermal death of the rest of the cosmos. However, in other zones of the universe, some new fluctuations and new islands appear, so that thermal death is never generalized. Here we are given a grand cosmic image, in which the solar system and the sparkle of life that was lit on planet earth are only a fluctuation of order from within a dominant entropic tendency. Life, and the order on which it is based are exceptions, transitory forms taking place in the realm of the shapeless, they are islands of the cosmos that will soon be re-absorbed into chaos. According to Poincaré's theorem, our island will have to be reborn, to develop and die innumerable times in a strictly identical fashion. This happened an infinite number of times during the past eternity and it shall take place again an infinite number of times in the eternity to come.

In this framework, the problem of time acquires a particular aspect. For the cosmos as a whole, there is no privileged direction of time. The universe is in a thermodynamic equilibrium and the two directions of time are indistinct, just like "high" and "low" in space. But in each world, a witness is still able to define the past and the future according to entropic evolution:

> One can think of the world as a mechanical system of an enormously large number of constituents, and of an immensely long period of time, so that the dimensions of that part containing our own "fixed stars" are minute compared to the extension of the universe; and times that we call eons are likewise minute compared to such a period. Then in the universe, which is in thermal equilibrium throughout and therefore dead, there will occur here and there relatively small regions of the same size as our galaxy (we call them single worlds) which, during the relative short time of eons, fluctuate noticeably from thermal equilibrium [...]. This method seems to me to be the only way in which one can understand the second law—the heat death of each single world—without a unidirectional change of the entire universe from a definite initial state to a final state. [...]
>
> Obviously no one would consider such speculations as important discoveries or even—as did the ancient philosophers—as the highest purpose of science. However it is doubtful that one should despise them as completely idle. Who knows whether they may not broaden the horizon of our circle of ideas, and by stimulating thought, advance the understanding of the facts of experience? [...]
>
> Very well, you may smile at this; but you must admit that the model of the world developed here is at least a possible one, free of inner contradiction, and also a useful one, since it provides us with many new viewpoints. It also gives an incentive, not only to speculation, but also to experiments (for example on the limit of divisibility, the size of the sphere of action, and the resulting deviations from the equations of hydrodynamics, diffusion, and heat conduction), which are not stimulated by any other theory.[49]

Boltzmann accepts the "paradox" of recurrence—that is, the eternal return of the same—as a legitimate consequence of the probabilistic conception of thermodynamics. It may be rejected for ethical reasons, it may be stored away as an abstract speculation or dismissed along with other cosmic fantasies, but it cannot be rejected on the basis of any rigorously scientific viewpoint. ◆

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[49] Boltzmann (1898), II, § 90, p. 256-259, *Lectures on Gas Theory*, tr. by Stephen G. Brush (New York: Dover, 1995), 477-448.

TRANSLATION

"The Greek Music Drama"

translated by Paul Bishop, University of Glasgow

Translator's Introduction

In 1870 Friedrich Nietzsche, fresh from his appointment in April 1869 as Extraordinary Professor of classical philology at the University of Basel, gave two public lectures in the Basel Museum. The first, delivered on January 18th 1870, was entitled "The Greek Music Drama"; the second, a fortnight later, was entitled "Socrates and Tragedy."[1] Nietzsche's ambition in these lectures was twofold: he was sketching out ideas that were to find definitive expression in *The Birth of Tragedy*, published two years later, and seeking to intervene in the cultural politics of the age by implicitly lending support to Wagner, an unspoken but unmistakeable presence in the lectures. In a letter from this period, Nietzsche indicated his awareness that his approach to tragedy was a pluridisciplinary one: "Scholarship, art, and philosophy are growing together in me to such an extent," he told his friend, Erwin Rohde, "that if nothing else I shall give birth to centaurs."[2] An earlier part of this letter reflects Nietzsche's passionate commitment to ancient Greece and his almost existential sense of loyalty to Greek culture—as well as his elevated notion of academic life:

> Every day I get to like the Hellenic world more and more. There is no better way of approaching close to it than that of indefatigably cultivating one's own little self. The degree of culture I have attained consists in a most mortifying admission of my own ignorance. The life of a philologist striving in every direction of criticism and yet a thousand miles away from Greek antiquity becomes every day more impossible to me. I even doubt if I shall ever succeed in becoming a proper philologist. If I cannot succeed incidentally, as it were, I shall never succeed.[3]

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[1] For the original text of these two lectures, see *KSA* 1, 513-549 and *KGW* III.2, 3-22. This translation is based on "Das griechische Musikdrama", in *Gesammelte Werke* [Musarion-Ausgabe], ed. Richard Oehler, Max Oehler, and Friedrich Chr. Wurzbach, 33 vols (Munich: Musarion, 1920-1929), vol. 3, *Die Geburt der Tragödie; Aus dem Gedankenkreis der Geburt der Tragödie*, *1869-1871*, pp. 169-87 (for ease of reference pagination has been retained in square brackets); also in *Werke* [Großoktavausgabe], ed. F. Koegel, 19 vols (Leipzig: Neumann, 1895-1897; 2 edn, 1899-1913), vol. 9, pp. 33-52.

[2] Nietzsche to Erwin Rohde of late January and 15 February 1870 (KSB 3, 95).

[3] KSB 3, 94; Selected Letters of Friedrich Nietzsche, ed. Oscar Levy, trans. Anthony M. Ludovici (London and Garden City, NY: Heinemann, 1921), pp. 62-63.

Arguably the most important aspect of his first lecture on the Greek music drama is Nietzsche's insistence on the relevance for modernity of the ancient conception of tragedy; or rather on the possibility of its relevance being rediscovered. For his lecture is, as Silk and Stern noted, "a public lament over the inability of citizens of the modern world to respond to life as 'whole beings,' above all in the sphere of art,"[4] and behind the argument about the *Gesamtkunstwerk* or "total work of art" lies a plea for a richer, fuller mode of life, one in which, in contrast to the Cartesian tradition and to the denigration of the body in Western philosophy in general, we undertake to recuperate the total economy of the body and become more holistic beings.

During a visit to Tribschen with Rohde, Nietzsche—in a room, it has been suggested, in which a watercolour version of Genelli's painting of "Bacchus Among the Muses" was hanging[5] —read out part of his lecture on the music drama. Subsequently, on June 19th 1870 he sent a copy of his two lectures to Cosima Wagner who, on June 24th 1870, responded with the following comments about "The Greek Music Drama":

> How touched I am by the dedication of the two lectures you were kind enough to send me. Accept my warmest thanks for having vouchsafed me this great pleasure. I have now re-read the lecture on the music drama and can only repeat that I regard it as an invaluable vestibule to your Socrates lecture. I could have spared myself the most unnecessary agitation at the time of the first reading had I known by what a warm pulsing description of the Greek art works it had been preceded. Your broad-boughed tree is now rooted in the most glorious past, in the home-land of beauty, and proudly rears its head into the most beautiful dreams of the future. Many details which captivated and stimulated me even during your reading are now indelibly stamped upon my mind. For instance, your comprehension of creation and evolution, of the "Fanget an!" ["*Just begin!*"] in art[6] as well as in nature, and particularly, your views on the high consecration of the drama. Your thoroughly trenchant characterization of the chorus as a separate organism—an idea quite new to me—seems to me to furnish the only correct interpretation of the Greek drama. Moreover, the bold and striking analogy you draw between the religious dance of the chorus and the *andante*, and between the English tragedy (you mean, of course, the Shakespearian) and the *allegros* of Beethoven, has again demonstrated to me your deeply musical nature, and I think it is not improbable that this striking musical instinct, has given you the key to the innermost secrets of the Greek tragedy, to suffering instead of action —just as if a person had been led through the Indian religion to the philosophy of Schopenhauer.[7]

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[4] M.S. Silk and J.P. Stern, *Nietzsche on Tragedy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 191.

[5] See Silk and Stern, *Nietzsche on Tragedy*, p. 214. For further discussion, see Siegfried Mandel, "Genelli and Wagner: Midwives to Nietzsche's The Birth of Tragedy," *Nietzsche-Studien*, 19 (1990): 212-229.

[6] See *The Mastersingers of Nuremberg*, Act 1, scene 3.

[7] See Cosima Wagner's letter to Nietzsche of June 24th 1870, in Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche (ed.), *The Nietzsche-Wagner Correspondence*, trans. Caroline V. Kerr (London: Duckworth, 1922), pp. 55-56 [translation modified].

Two years later, when he published *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche had added a preface in which he dedicated that work to Wagner, and his *Birth* reprises a number of themes from "The Greek Music Drama."[8]

Looking back in a note written in spring 1884, Nietzsche claimed "*I have been the first to discover the tragic*," and that the Greeks, "thanks to their moralistic superficiality," had "misunderstood" it.[9] Yet "The Music Drama" anticipates precisely the later Nietzsche's definition of tragedy when, in *Twilight of the Idols*, he wrote: "The psychology of the orgy as an overflowing feeling of life and energy, within which even pain acts as a stimulus, gave me the key to the concept of the *tragic* feeling."[10] Because it is "affirmation of life even in its strangest and most difficult problems; the will-to-life becoming joyful through the *sacrifice* of its highest types to its own inexhaustibility" that Nietzsche at once qualifies as "Dionysian" and uses as "the bridge to the psychology of the *tragic* poet."[11] In an age when, as Rüdiger Safranski has put it, we live simultaneously in two worlds, one Apollonian, the other Dionysian—exemplified by travelling in the tube or jogging through the park (Apollo) whilst listening to music on an iPod (Dionysus)—[12] Nietzsche's text, presented as an exercise in philological aesthetics, already speaks to our condition in the way that his great work of cultural history, *The Birth of Tragedy*, expanded and developed.

What follows is a translation of Nietzsche's first lecture, accompanied with interpretative notes aimed at explaining references in his text and providing relevant explanatory material. Inasmuch as this text is, for the first time, being presented in English, it is a 'historic' translation, and as such it seeks to make good the comparative neglect of this essay in Nietzsche studies, at least in the English-speaking world, where it seems to have been largely neglected. Yet the essay leads the reader to the heart of Nietzsche's move from philology to philosophy, anticipating the central themes of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*.[13]

A note from the editor: The Agonist *will only be publishing an excerpt of this translation as a prelude to the forthcoming book version of the essay, which will be the first text published by Contra Mundum Press, the offshoot of* Hyperion: On the Future of Aesthetics*. Further news regarding the publication will be posted on the Nietzsche Circle web site.*

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[8] For further discussion, see Dennis Sweet, "The Birth of The Birth of Tragedy," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol. 60, no. 2 (April 1999): 345-359.

[9] See *KSA* 11, 25[95], 33 (cf. *The Will to Power*, §1029).

[10] *Twilight of the Idols*, "What I Owe to the Ancients" (§5); KSA 5, 160.

[11] *Twilight of the Idols*, "What I Owe to the Ancients" (§5); KSA 5, 160.

[12] Rüdiger Safranski, *Nietzsche: Biographie seines Denkens* (Munich and Vienna: Hanser, 2000), 97.

[13] For their comments on an earlier draft of this translation, I should like to thank Rainer J. Hanshe and Yunus Tuncel, while for advice on musicological aspects of Nietzsche's argument, I am grateful to Martin Dixon and Graham Whitaker.

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In our contemporary drama we do not find only memories and echoes of the *dramatic arts of Greece*: rather, its *basic forms* are rooted in *Hellenic* soil, from which they grow *naturally* or to which they are more *artificially* related. Only their *names* have become subject to numerous shifts and changes: just as medieval musicology retained the Greek diatonic scales, along with their names, but what the Greeks, for instance, called *Locrian* was known among the Church modes as "Dorian."[14] We encounter similar confusions in the field of dramatic terminology: what the Athenians called "*tragedy*" is

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[14] Nietzsche's identification of the Locrian mode with the Dorian mode glosses over the distinction between mode and scale, and the differences between the medieval and modern terminology. The main source for ancient Greek music theory is Aristoxenus of Tarentum, of whose writings (from the third century BCE) on harmonics and on rhythm various incomplete books survive, while later sources include (from the sixth century CE) Boethius's *De institutione musica* and (from the ninth century CE) Hucbald's *De harmonica institutione* and the anonymous treatise *Alia musica*. For further discussion of the Dorian mode, see one of Nietzsche's sources (see below), August Wilhelm Ambros's *Geschichte der Musik*, vol. 1, pp. 380-404; as well as Phillips Barry, "Greek Music," *The Musical Quarterly*, 5 (1919): 578-613, and the entries on "Mode" and "Scale" in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music*. Strictly speaking, the Locrian mode corresponds to the Hyperdorian mode, but Nietzsche's reference to the Dorian mode is strategic, in that Greeks believed in a link between music and character (Plato, *Republic*, 401 and 402; *Laws*, 659 c-659 e; Aristotle, *Politics*, 1340b). In the Laches, Socrates's eponymous interlocutor remarks that "the true musician" is "attuned to a fairer harmony than that of the lyre, or any pleasant instrument of music, for truly he has in his own life a harmony of words and deeds arranged—not in the Ionian, or in the Phrygian mode, nor yet in the Lydian, but in the true Hellenic mode, which is the Dorian, and no other" (188 d), and Socrates concurs that "the Dorian mode [...] is a harmony of words and deeds" (193 e); in the Republic, Socrates counsels avoidance of the Lydian, Mixolydian, and Ionian modes, but implicitly recommends Dorian or Phrygian modes for soldiers (398 d-399 c; Plato, *The Collected Dialogues*, ed. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press,

something which, if we had to find a term, we would call "*Grand Opera*"; at least, this is what Voltaire did in a letter to Cardinal Quirini.[15] By contrast, a Greek would recognize in our tragedy almost nothing corresponding to his tragedy; although he would certainly guess that the entire structure and fundamental character of Shakespeare's tragedy is borrowed from what he would call *New Comedy*.[16] In fact, it is from *this* source, after incredible stretches of time [170], that the Romanic-Germanic mystery- or morality-play, and finally Shakespearian tragedy, arises: in a similar way that, in its external form, the genealogical relationship of Shakespeare's stage to that of the New Attic Comedy cannot be overlooked.[17] Whilst we can recognize here a development that progresses naturally across the millennia, modern art has deliberately immunized itself against the real tragedy of antiquity, the works of Aeschylus and Sophocles.[18] What, today, we call *opera*, the distorted

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1963), pp. 132, 137, 643-44), while Aristotle in his *Politics* describes the effect of the Dorian as being able to produce "a moderate and settled temper" (1340 b; Aristotle, *Basic Works*, ed. Richard McKeon (New York: Random House, 1941), p. 1312). In Nietzsche's own time, Gilbert in Oscar Wilde's dialogue "The Critic as Artist" (1891) says of the overture to Wagner's *Tannhäuser*: "To-morrow, like the music of which Aristotle and Plato tell us, the noble Dorian music of the Greek, it may perform the office of a physician, and give us an anodyne against pain, and heal the spirit that is wounded, and 'bring the soul into harmony with all right things,'" perhaps alluding here to Plato's *Republic*: "Rhythm and harmony find their way to the inmost soul and take strongest hold upon it, bringing with them and imparting grace" (401 d; Collected Dialogues, p. 646). Wilde's character concludes: "What is true of music is true about all the arts. Beauty has as many meanings as man has moods. Beauty is the symbol of symbols. Beauty reveals everything, because it expresses nothing. When it shows itself, it shows us the whole fiery-coloured world" (Oscar Wilde, *Plays, Prose Writings, and Poems* (London: Dent; New York: Dutton, 1930), pp. 1-65 [p. 28]). Elsewhere, in *The Birth of Tragedy* (§2 and §4), Nietzsche uses the term Doric with reference to one of the four major tribes of ancient Greece, singling out Doric art as immortalizing "the majestic and rejecting attitude of Apollo" (*KSA* 1, 32), describing the music of Apollo as "Doric architectonic in tones" (*KSA* 1, 33), and calling the Doric state a "military encampment" of the Apollonian (*KSA* 1, 41). In 1888, Nietzsche returns to the problem of the drama and the Doric, noting in a footnote in *The Case of Wagner*: "The word *drama* is of Doric origin: and according to Doric usage it means 'event,' 'story,' both words in a hieratic sense. The most ancient drama represented the legend of a place, or the 'holy story' on which the foundation of a cult rested (—in other words, not something that is done, but something that happens: *drām* in Doric doesn't mean 'to do') (§9; *KSA* 6, 32; cf. *KSA* 13, 145[34], 235). A better understanding of the thinking and implications behind Nietzsche's equation of the Dorian and the Locrian remains a desideratum for further research, beyond the scope of this translation.

[15] See Voltaire's poem of 1751, addressed to Angelo Maria Quirini (1860-1755), an Italian cardinal and a member of the Academies of Science of Berlin, Vienna, and Russia. See Voltaire, Epître 81, "À Monsieur le Cardinal Quirini," in *Ouvres complètes de Voltaire*, ed. Louis Moland, 52 vols (Paris: Garnier, 1877-1885), vol. 10, pp. 357-58.

[16] Of the various periods of ancient Greek comedy, New Comedy, following the periods of Old Comedy and Middle Comedy, is associated with the writings of Menander, and Latin adaptations by Plautus and Terence.

[17] This constitutes Nietzsche's first use of the term *genealogisch*; in his later works, he will argue that the meaning of an object can be revealed by tracing its origin, which is uncovered by genealogy.

[18] Aeschylus (c. 525 to c.455-456 BCE) was considered by many (including A.W. Schlegel, in his *Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature*, lecture 6) to be as the creator of tragedy, and

image of the music drama of antiquity, has arisen through a direct mimicry of antiquity: without the unconscious force of a natural drive, but formed in accordance with an abstract theory, it has behaved like an artificially produced homunculus, as if it were the evil imp of our modern musical development. Those noble and scholarly Florentines to whom opera owes its origin at the beginning of the seventeenth century had the clearly articulated intention of renewing precisely *those* musical effects which music, according to numerous eloquent testimonies, had had in antiquity. It is quite remarkable! The first thought concerning opera already involved a striving for effect. Through such experiments the roots of an unconscious art nourished by the life of the people were cut off or at least severely mutilated. Thus, in France popular drama was displaced by so-called classical tragedy, in other words a genre that had arisen in a purely scholarly way and supposedly contained the quintessence of tragedy, without any admixture. In Germany, too, the natural root of drama, the Shrovetide play, has been undermined since the Reformation; ever since, the new creation of national form has hardly ever been tried, instead the models of foreign nations govern our thinking and writing. [171] The real obstacle to the development of modern art-forms is erudition, conscious knowledge and an excess of knowledge: all growth and development in the realm of art has to take place in deepest night. The history of music teaches us that the healthy progressive development of *Greek* music in the early Middle Ages was suddenly blocked and hindered in an extreme way when one used scholarship in theory and practice to return to the age of antiquity. The result was an unbelievable impoverishment of taste: [...].[19] This was "literary music," music to be read. What seems to us like an obvious absurdity may well have immediately appeared as such only to a few in the field I wish to discuss. I maintain that such well-known writers as Aeschylus and Sophocles are known to us only as librettists, as writers of lyrics; in other words, that we do not know them at all. While in the sphere of music we have long gone beyond the scholarly shadow-play of music to be read, in the sphere of poetry the unnaturalness of writing accompanying texts is itself so dominant that it requires considerable effort to tell oneself just how unfair we must be to Pindar, Aeschylus, and Sophocles, which is the reason why we do not really know them. If we call them poets, we mean writers of lyrics: but for precisely that reason we lose the insight into their being that we can only have if we present the *opera* to our mind's eye in a moment of imaginative power and in such an idealized way that we are granted an intuition into the music drama of

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Sophocles (c. 497-496 to 406-405 BCE) as one of its greatest exponents, For a recent discussion of the significance of tragedy in general, see Charles Freeman, *The Greek Achievement: The Foundation of the Western World* (New York: Viking, 1999).

[19] The Musarion and the *Großoktavausgabe* editions omit the following passage, which can be found in the *KGW* and *KSA*: "In the incessant contradictions between what had supposedly been handed down and one's natural sense of pitch one ended up no longer writing music for the ears, but for the eyes. The eyes were supposed to admire the contrapuntal dexterity of the composer. How was this to be brought about? The notes were coloured with the colour of things that were mentioned in the text; hence green, when plants, fields, vineyards, or crimson, when the sun and the light were mentioned" (*KSA* 1, 517).

antiquity. For, however distorted all its relations to so-called grand opera are, and however much it is a product of distraction, rather than composure, the slave of the poorest rhyming and unworthy music: however much everything connected with it is lies and shamelessness: nevertheless, there is no other means of understanding Sophocles than [172] to try to discern the original image in this caricature, excluding from thought in moments of enthusiasm all its distortions and deformations. That fantasy image then has to be carefully examined and, in its individual parts, held up against the tradition of antiquity, so that we do not over-Hellenize the Hellenics and invent a work of art that has never existed anywhere in the world. This is no small danger. After all, until recently it was considered to be an unconditional axiom of art that all idealistic sculpture had to be uncoloured, and that sculpture in antiquity did not permit the use of colour. Quite slowly, and encountering the resistance of all those ultra-Hellenists, it has gradually become possible to accept the polychrome view of ancient sculpture, according to which we should no longer imagine that statues were naked, but clothed in a colourful coating. Similarly, general approval is now given to the aesthetic principle that a union of two or more art forms cannot produce an intensification of aesthetic pleasure, but is rather a barbaric error of taste. But this principle proves above all the bad modern way we have become accustomed to, the idea that we can no longer enjoy as complete human beings: we are, as it were, torn into little pieces by absolute art-forms, and hence enjoy as little pieces—in one moment as human beings who listen, in another as human beings who see, and so on. Let us contrast this view with what the brilliant Anselm Feuerbach has to say about the drama of antiquity as a total work of art:[20]

> "It is not surprising," he says, "that a profound elective affinity allows the individual art forms to blend together again into an inseparable whole, into a new art-form. The Olympic Games brought the separate Greek tribes together into a political and religious unity: the dramatic festival is like a festive reunification of the Greek art-forms. [173] The model for this already existed in those temple festivals where the plastic appearance of the god was celebrated in front of a devout audience by means of dance and song. As there, so here architecture constituted the framework and the foundation, by means of which the higher poetic sphere is visibly separated from reality. We see the painter at work on the backdrop and all the charm of a bright display of colour in the magnificence of the costumes. The art of poetry has taken over the soul of the whole; but it has done so, not as a single poetic form, as in the worship of the temple, for instance, as a hymn. The reports of the Angelos and the Exangelos,[21] so important for the Greek drama, or of the actors themselves, lead us back to the epic. Lyric poetry has its place in the scenes

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[20] Anselm Feuerbach (1829-1880) was a German classicist painter, the son of the archaeologist and philologist Joseph Anselm Feuerbach (1798-1851) and the grandson of Paul Johann Anselm Ritter von Feuerbach (1775-1833), among whose other sons was the philosopher Ludwig Feuerbach (1804-1872).

[21] The figure of the "messenger" (*angelos* or *exangelos*) is exemplified in *Oedipus the King* by the first messenger, who announces the choice of Oedipus as their king by the people of Isthmus, and the second messenger, who narrates the death of Jocasta. For further discussion, see James Barrett, *Staged Narrative: Poetics and the Messenger in Greek Tragedy* (Berkeley, LA, and London: University of California Press, 2002).

> of passion and in the chorus, in all its various degrees from the unmediated outbreak of feeling in exclamations, from the most delicate blossoming of song up to the hymn and the dithyramb. In recitation and song, in the playing of the flute and in the rhythmic steps of the dance, the circle is not entirely closed. For if poetry is the innermost basic element of the drama, it is in its new form that it meets together with sculpture."[22]

Thus Feuerbach. What is certain is that, when confronted with such a work of art, we have first of all to learn how one enjoys as a complete human being: while it is to be feared that, confronted with such a work, one would take it to pieces, in order to be able to get it.[23] I even believe that if one of us were to be suddenly transported back to an Athenian festival performance, he would have the impression of being at an entirely strange and barbaric spectacle. This would be the case for many different reasons. In the bright light of the daytime sun, without the mysterious effects of evening and the stage lighting, in dazzling reality he would see an enormous open space [174] full to bursting with people: everyone's gaze would be directed towards a crowd of men below, wearing masks and moving in a wondrous way, and a few superhumanly sized puppets, marching up and down a long, thin stage in slow, regular steps. For what else, other than puppets, would we call those beings, standing on high heels or on *cothurni*, with giant-sized, gaudily painted masks in front of their faces and covering their heads, their chests and bodies, arms and legs padded out and filled with stuffing in an entirely unnatural way, hardly able to move, weighed down by the burden of a trailing cloak and massive headgear? At the same time, these figures have to speak and to sing through the wide open mouth-holes as loudly as possible, in order to be understood by an audience of more than 20,000 people: to be sure, an heroic task, worthy of a marathon fighter. Our wonder will become even greater, however, when we realize that an individual actor-singer has to recite across a ten-hour period some 1600 verses, among them at least six larger and smaller sung set-pieces. And all this in front of a public that unforgivingly punished every slip of pitch, every incorrect emphasis — or did in Athens where, as Lessing put it, even the rabble had a fine and delicate sense of judgement.[24] What concentration and exercise of human forces, what protracted preparation, what seriousness and

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[22] Anselm Feuerbach, *Der vatikanische Apollo: Eine Reihe archäologisch-ästhetischer Betrachtungen* [1833], 2nd edn (Stuttgart and Augsburg: Cotta, 1855), pp. 282-83; translated by Paul Bishop. According to Giorgio Colli's and Mazzino Montinari's commentary, Nietzsche borrowed this book from the University Library in Basel on November 26th 1869 (KSA 14, 99).

[23] Here Nietzsche uses the verb *aneignen*, in much the same way that Goethe, in *Faust I*, writes: "What we are born with, we must make our own / Or it remains a mere appurtenance / And is not ours" (*Was du ererbt von deinen Vätern hast, / Erwirb es, um es zu besitzen*) (ll. 684-85; Goethe, *Faust: Part One*, trans. David Luke (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 25). These lines were one of Freud's favorite quotations from Goethe.

[24] Lessing, *Hamburgische Dramaturgie*, vol. 1, No. 2: "There was only *one* Athens, and there will only ever be *one* Athens, where even in the masses the ethical feeling was so fine, so delicate, that actors and authors of a dubious morality ran the risk of being hounded from the theater!" (Lessing, *Werke in fünf Bänden*, ed. Karl Balser, 5 vols (Berlin and Weimar: Aufbau-Verlag, 1982), vol. 4, p. 19); translated by Paul Bishop.

enthusiasm in the sense of the artistic task we have to presume here, in short: what an ideal concept of the actor! Here tasks were set for the most noble citizens; here a marathon fighter, even in the event of a mistake, suffered no loss of dignity; here the actor, just he as in his costume represented an elevation above the day-to-day level of human beings, experienced an internal sense of uplift, [175] in which the pathos-laden, immensely powerful words of Aeschylus must have seemed like a natural language. ◆

'Méditerraniser': The Flight from North to South.

A Reading of Nietzsche's Poems 'Prince Vogelfrei' and 'In the South' [1]

by Martine Prange (Maastricht University)

Soon after receiving a mechanical typewriter from his sister Elisabeth, in February 1882, Nietzsche wrote a substantial amount of poems, abiding in the 'electric-free' and 'cloudless' atmosphere of his 'favourite' city Genoa.[2] In the 1882 spring issue of his editor's magazine, the *Internationale Monatsschrift*, he published eight of those poems. Later, they were published separately as *Idylls in Messina*. With those, Nietzsche presented himself expressly as the poet-philosopher, 'Dichter-Denker' or 'musical Socrates' that he appreciated so much, and that confirmed his ideal of making a unity of 'Art and Reason' ('*Kunst und Vernunft*') out of oneself.[3]

Some time later, in 1884, Nietzsche rewrote six out of the eight *Idylls*, and published them as *Songs of Prince Vogelfrei* in an appendix to the *The Gay Science*'s second edition, published in 1887. The poem 'Prince Vogelfrei' opens the Idylls and returns, substantially modified, in Songs of Prince Vogelfrei under the name 'In the South.' In the 1886 preface to *Human, All Too Human I*, written in Nice (or 'Nizza,' as Nietzsche preferred to call the rather newly independent city), Nietzsche discusses his painfully

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[1] This article is a translation, abbreviation, and (slight) modification of pp. 120-127 of my book *Lof der Méditerranée: Nietzsches vrolijke wetenschap tussen noord en zuid* (Kampen: Klement, 2005). The title in English would be: 'The Praise of the Mediterranean: Nietzsche's *Gay Science* in between North and South.'

[2] Compare e.g. Nietzsche to Carl von Gersdorff, end of August 1882 (KGB III/1, p. 248). The typewriter was a Malling-Hansen writing ball from Denmark, and broke quite soon. Nietzsche expected the typewriter to help him write blindly, and to be the solution for his eye problems (which prevented him from writing more than 20 minutes a day). The first lines he wrote on the machine are the ones published as *Joy, Cunning, and Revenge* nr. 13 ('Für Tanzer. Glattes Eis/ Ein Paradeis/ Für Den, der gut zu tanzen weiss')—which therefore should be understood for what they say: 'the typewriter is heaven for the one who knows how to use it.' Cf. KSA 9. 673 and Nietzsche to Peter Gast, February 17th 1882 (KSB 6, pp. 171-172).

[3] Cf. GS §290 (p. 163/ 'Kunst und Vernunft,' KSA 3, p. 530). Of course, Nietzsche wrote poetry throughout his life, but with *Idyllen aus Messina*, *Scherz, List und Rache* and *Lieder des Prinzen Vogelfrei*, he came forward as a poet much more expressly than in previous books.

regained health. He describes a 'midway condition' in between convalescence and health, 'characterized by a pale, subtle happiness of light and sunshine, a feeling of bird-like freedom, bird-like altitude, bird-like exuberance.'[4] This bird-like condition in between convalescence and health (often already disguised as health) speaks from the poems 'Prince Vogelfrei' and 'In the South.' These poems reveal the explicit influence that his stays along the Mediterranean Sea, in Genoa and, later, Nice, exercised upon his thought. While 'Prince Vogelfrei' confines itself to the point that the free spirit must learn how to sing (as a sign that the old Christian morality is conquered), 'In the South' shows straightforwardly that this singing can only be mastered in the south. Hence, the recovery and health that Nietzsche is looking for by placing himself under the restraint of an '*anti-romantic* self-treatment' ('*antiromantischen* Selbstbehandlung'), includes the journey to the south.[5] This suggests that the 'revaluation of values' that Nietzsche expects from the 'new,' 'good European' philosophers, can only be carried out successfully on the condition that these (northern, German) philosophers have transformed themselves into a 'mix of cultures,' i.e. 'supra-national' '*Mittelländler*,' that are (like Goethe) '*more* than a German.'[6] In other words, the revaluation of values seems to require the kind of '*méditerranisation*' that Nietzsche requested from music.[7]

Let us take a closer look at the poems, first 'Prince Vogelfrei' and then 'In the South.'[8]

'Prince Vogelfrei'

The main character Prince Vogelfrei recounts in 'Prince Vogelfrei,'—which consists of five stanzas of five verses each—that he learned how to fly from the birds. The poem elucidates the meaning of flying to Prince Vogelfrei. In the first stanza, the technique of flying is central. Prince Vogelfrei learns the technique of sitting in tall trees and beating his wings by imitating the birds:

> So hang ich den auf krummen Aste
> Hoch über Meer und Hügelchen:

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[4] HH I §4 (p. 8/ 'Es giebt einen mittleren Zustand darin, dessen ein Mensch solchen Schicksals spatter nicht ohne Rührung eingedenk ist: ein blasses feines Licht und Sonneglück ist ihm zu eigen, ein Gefühl von Vogel-Freiheit, Vogel-Umblick, Vogel-Uebermuth,' KSA 2, p. 18).

[5] HH II §2, p. 210/KSA 2, p. 371. Nietzsche also calls his 'Freigeisterei' books HH I, HH II, D and GS his 'travel books' HH II 6 (p. 213/ 'meine Wanderbücher,' KSA 2, p. 376). Cf. 23[169], KSA 8, pp. 473-474. See also Martine Prange, *Nietzsche's Ideal Europe* (Gornigen: University of Groningen, 2007 [diss.]), pp. 209-218, esp. pp. 216-218.

[6] BGE Preface (p. 4/KSA 5, p. 13), AOM §302 (p. 282/KSA 2, p. 502) and BGE §254 (p. 147/ KSA 5, p. 200).

[7] 'Il faut méditerraniser la musique,' Nietzsche writes in WA §3 (p. 236/KSA 6, p. 16).

[8] I am only interested in interpreting the content of the poems here; I will not discuss their formal aspects.

Ein Vogel lud mich her zu Gaste—
Ich flog ihm nach und rast' und raste
Und schlage mit den Flügelchen.

The second stanza shows that flying has a wider meaning to Prince Vogelfrei than just learning a new technique. It offers him the possibility of forgetting his origin, terminus, and morals:

Das weisse Meer ist eingeschlafen,
Es schläft mir jedes Weh und Ach.
Vergessen hab' ich Ziel und Hafen,
Vergessen Furcht und Lob und Strafen:
Jetzt flieg ich jedem Vogel nach.[9]

As a consequence, Prince Vogelfrei goes where the winds take him instead of taking one step at a time towards a set goal, as the third stanza demonstrates. The limited, one-sided perspective of taking one's ambition as guidance on life is interchanged for the experience of the multi-perspectivism of life, for an openness to and enjoyment of the spontaneity and lightness of being:

Nur Schritt für Schritt—das ist kein Leben!
Stäts Bein vor Bein macht müd und schwer!
Ich lass mich von den Winden heben,
Ich liebe es, mit Flügeln schweben
Und hinter jedem Vogel her.

In the fourth stanza, human reason is defined as the source of all human errors—an important Nietzschean insight. In contrast, flying does not cost much power and effort, but it provides new energy and, surprisingly, also teaches one (or, the prince) how to sing. Singing takes the position of morality and traditional expectations of the future. As it turns out, by learning to fly Prince Vogelfrei also learnt how to romp around and sing. This is more worthwhile to him than his old ideas, which is the antithesis that is drawn in stanza four between reason as 'ein bos Geschäfte' and flying, which taught the 'schönere Geschäfte,/ Gesang und Scherz und Liederspiel.' The birds teach Prince Vogelfrei to fly and to turn his purposeful life into enjoyment of the moment:

Vernunft?—das ist ein bös Geschäfte:
Vernunft und Zunge stolpern viel!
Das Fliegen gab mir neue Kräfte
Und lehrt' mich schönere Geschäfte,
Gesang und Scherz und Liederspiel.

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[9] In GS §45, Nietzsche speaks of a 'wide, whitish sea' (p. 59/ 'ein weites weissliches Meer,' KSA 3, p. 411), at which Epicurus' eye gazes. This eye is a happy, secure, and calm eye, 'before which the sea of existence has grown still' (ibid./ 'vor dem das Meer des Daseins stille geworden ist,' ibid.). Nietzsche seems to hint at a similar experience with the verses 'Das weisse Meer ist eingeschlafen, / Es schläfft mir jedes Weh und Ach.'

In the final stanza, Prince Vogelfrei encourages communal singing and calls the birds to join in:

> Einsam zu denken—das ist weise.
> Einsam zu singen—das ist dumm!
> So horcht mir denn auf meine Weise
> Und setzt euch still um mich im Kreise,
> Ihr schönen Vögelchen, herum!

The singing indicates that Prince Vogelfrei has abandoned morality and the concomitant organization of life. The 'bird perspective' has freed him from his rational way of living. He understands that reason is not sanctifying, but, contrarily, a source of errors, an approach and morality that are hostile and unnecessarily strict towards life. Nietzsche indicates the dominant, linear view of time with the phrase 'Ziel und Hafen,' in the first stanza. 'Ziel,' or 'purpose,' points to the future and the 'Hafen,' 'harbour,' to the traditional morality of the past. The words 'Furcht und Lob und Strafen' intimate morality. The misleading and erroneous character of reason is revealed by the first two verses of the fourth stanza, while the hostility towards life is expressed by the first verse of stanza three, 'Nur Schritt für Schritt - das ist kein Leben!'

The birds have taught Prince Vogelfrei how to fly. In stanza one, flying appears as a technique, in stanza two as source of forgetfulness, in the third stanza as source of lightness and purposelessness, in contrast to verses three and four of stanza two. In stanza four, flying functions as a breeding ground of new powers and beauty, in the form of pleasure in singing. In the fifth stanza, singing indeed substitutes thought. Here, it is clarified that the poem must be interpreted within this opposition of singing and thinking: flying, it turns out, has realized the transition of thinking to singing. In the end, Prince Vogelfrei wants to learn how to sing. But in order to sing, he must first learn how to fly.

'In the South'

In the reworked poem 'In the South,'—which consists of five stanzas of five verses and a sixth stanza of six verses—the bird metaphor returns, now accompanied by the north-south perspective. The purposeful and strict, straight thought above that Prince Vogelfrei flies, in this poem, is now explicitly tied to Germany, at the beginning of the third stanza:

> 'Nur Schritt für Schritt—das ist kein Leben,
> Stets Bein vor Bein macht deutsch und schwer.'

'Müde' has become 'deutsch.' In addition, the north is unambiguously connected with the 'Vernunft,' the 'verdriessliches Geschäfte,' that causes a lot of distress, and the will to truth, in which the poet does not believe any longer.[10]

[10] Compare with the following note from 1870-1871: 'Alle Erkenntniss der Wahrheit ist unproduktiv: wir sind die Ritter, die im Walde die Vogelstimmen verstehen, wir folgen ihnen' (5[44], KSA 7, p. 104).

This is how 'In the South' ends:

'Im Norden—ich gesteh's mit Zaudern—
Liebt' ich ein Weibchen, alt zum Schaudern:
"Die Wahrheit" hiess dies alte Weib...'

The hesitation and shudder in this confession seem to be occasioned by a certain feeling of shame for an old love, of which one recognizes its absurdity.[11] The hesitation, shudder, and shame that this 'I' is said to feel opposes his supplication addressed to the 'Unschuld des Südens' in the second stanza to accommodate him. The southern innocence comes in the stead of the love of truth. But what does this innocence consist of? In any case, it consists of a constellation of things that, put together, form an idyllic environment:

'Das weisse Meer liegt eingeschlafen,
Und purpurn steht ein Segel drauf.
Fels, Feigenbäume, Thurm und Hafen,
Idylle rings, Geblök von Schafen,—
Unschuld des Südens, nimm mich auf!'

This time, the writer does not learn to fly with the birds, wherever they go. In contrast, he has a clear destination, because he flies from the north to the south, in stanza three:

'Ich hiess den Wind mich aufwärts heben,
Ich lernte mit den Vögeln schweben,—
Nach Süden flog ich über's Meer.'

In this resides the poem's main re-working; in the new version, it is not so much flying that liberates (in preparing the transition from thinking to singing), but the voyage to the south. Indeed, here too the soaring and flying oppose the 'Schritt für Schritt,' but the 'I' is not taken up by the winds to go wherever his wings take him. This time, he is taken up by the wind that takes him and other birds to the south. There, he finds the opportunity to discuss his passion for his 'old love' the truth and open up new ways for philosophical reflection. The south supplies him with the courage, blood, and energy for a new life, a new kind of play, as we can read in the fourth stanza:

[11] This is more understandable when the reach of this metaphor is taken into account. The truth as 'alte Weib' indicates that the philosopher has given up the battle of thinking out of tiredness and settles for his acquired knowledge (see D §542). The truth can be fixed now, because he does not choose to discuss it any longer. Hence, his scientific attitude towards truth is no longer 'heroic.' He is ashamed of this, but he just cannot longer afford the loneliness that this attitude requires (see D §487). He is now looking for 'party followers' (D §542, p. 216 / 'Parteigänger,' KSA 3, p. 312) rather than enemies. The weariness has come in the place of the passion of knowledge and instinct for truthfulness. The philosopher does not experience any 'Not' and therefore he has achieved the opposite of life.

'Im Fliegen lernt', ich, was mich äffte,—
Schon fühl' ich Muth und Blut und Säfte
Zu neuem Leben, neuem Spiel...'

Because this poem does not mention 'Gesang und Scherz und Liederspiel,' the singing of stanza five comes as a surprise. On top of that, the 'I' suddenly speaks to the birds, which he continues to do in stanza six, in which he talks of love to them. He tells them that he thinks they are made for love and confesses that he, when he was still living in the north, loved the 'alte Weib' truth.

Even though 'Im Süden' is unbalanced, it becomes clear what the speaker wants to convey.[12] Due to his stay in the south, he was able to take a distance from the convictions he was raised in and in which he still believed when he lived in Germany and Switzerland. As a matter of fact, he does not need the bird metaphor any longer. The new title also indicates this. But because Nietzsche did not want to abandon this metaphor, for some reason, the components have become a bit too much for him. But what is the point? The point is not that the poem is not a success as a poem. The important thing is that Nietzsche wanted to present himself as a philosopher-poet (or composer of songs). His poems 'Prinz Vogelfrei' and 'Im Süden' voice the change of perspective that took place when Nietzsche learned to love the south and adopt a foreign culture.[13] He manifests himself as a troubadour, who sings about his own life experiences and passions, as a 'poet of his own life,' 'Mittellander' and 'good European.'[14] He shows that the kind of 'light' and 'joyful' philosophy he proclaims is the result of his 'recovery.' He made the transition from northern morality and mentality, revolving around 'Selbstlosigkeit' (GS §21) to the 'Unschuld der höchsten Selbstsucht' (GS §99). In other words, to the 'Glaube an die grosse Leidenschaft als an das Gute an sich' (GS §99), what Nietzsche used to appreciate in Wagner's *Siegfried*. This means so much as the liberation from imprisonment in the common herd and gaining personal freedom.

Conclusion

As birds migrate to the south in winter, Nietzsche also migrated to the south every winter, only to return to the north towards the end of spring time. From 'Prince Vogelfrei' it transpires that Nietzsche develops himself by imitating successful examples, birds that master the technique of flying. 'In the South' teaches us that the goal of self-development requires more than just flying;

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[12] The poem is unbalanced for the following reasons: 1. The fifth and sixth stanza do not add to the content of the poem; 2. The function of the singing, in stanza five, remains unclear, in contrast to 'Prinz Vogelfrei'; 3. The rhythm of the second verse of the sixth stanza deviates from all other second verses, which breaks the rhythm of the poem as a whole; 4. With his confession to the birds towards the end of the poem, a new topic is introduced, which remains unclear, without being mysterious in the good sense of the word; 5. This is reinforced by the forced rhythm of the sixth stanza: the question mark after '*Zeitvertreib*' breaks the rhythm, as does the mystifying or shameful silence to which the ellipses point.

[13] Prince Vogelfrei is among two forms of 'Ernst' (cf. KSA 14, p. 712). We must probably think here of the 'Priesterernst' and the intellectual seriousness that comes in its place.

[14] Nietzsche initially thought of calling *The Songs of Prince Vogelfrei*: 'Prinz Vogelfrei. Oder: der gute Europäer' (KSA 14, p. 712).

in addition, one needs to visit pagan, sensual, and vital environments. This poem attests to Nietzsche's thankfulness for Italian and Mediterranean culture, without which he would have remained imprisoned in the northern coldness and morality instead of developing a new view on things, undergoing a strange and unique experience of life. Nietzsche understands and is thankful that due to his stay in Italy he gained the necessary distance to himself so as to regard his 'romantic' disease—German culture—and life in general as a comedy or, to say the least, a short and tragic moment in 'the eternal comedy of existence.'[15] Without his visits to the south, Nietzsche would never have been able to act out his fight against the power of numbers, against the lack of form and one-dimensional mass at the expense of quality, nuance, and multi-perspectivism with the help of laughter, jokes, and mockery. Without the south, Nietzsche would never have found the weapon of cheerfulness as partner of wisdom. In that case, Nietzsche would never have experienced the 'convalescence,' which founds his philosophy. A long visit to the Mediterranean is, henceforth, a prerequisite of 'gay science.' ◆

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[15] Cf. GS §1 (p. 29/ 'die ewige Komödie des Daseins,' KSA 3, p. 370).

REVIEW

The Time of Our Lives: A Critical History of Temporality

written by David Couzens Hoy (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2009)
reviewed by Keith Ansell-Pearson, University of Warwick

In a perceptive insight into the meaning of Proust's *In Search of Lost Time*, David Hoy suggests that when Proust speaks of lost time (*le temps perdu*) he does not simply mean either past time or wasted time, but rather 'the sting of time,' namely, the sense we have of being 'in' time, that is, subject to time's passing and aware that our lives are running out of time (p. 183). It is in this sense, Hoy says, that the 'time of our lives' becomes an existential issue for every one of us.

In the course of this wide-ranging and hugely instructive study, David Hoy shows that the time of our lives is not only an existential issue but also, amongst other things, a political one, a task for phenomenology to work through, a task for genealogy to complicate, and a problem for hermeneutics to decipher and interpret. It is the first volume in a projected two-volume study of the history of consciousness: this one on temporality, to be followed by a second volume on the history of self-consciousness. As Hoy rightly notes in his preface, for the phenomenological tradition—and even for post-phenomenologists such as Deleuze—temporality is a condition for the possibility of subjectivity, and hence it fitting that he should begin with a study of time before providing his study of the mind or consciousness. However, Hoy thinks it is an error to privilege one over the other, time over mind or mind over time. To break with the tradition of transcendental philosophy the author finds it necessary to renounce the project of explaining which is the more primordial and which is derived. The essential task, in fact, is to problematize both concepts, and on this point Hoy's special and longstanding interest in 'genealogy' reveals and asserts itself.

The book is divided into five chapters. In the first chapter the author focuses on Kant and Heidegger and selects the latter's *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* from 1929 as a seminal text for elaborating his own project into the history of thinking on temporality. In chapter two attention shifts to a working through of 'the now' and here the reader encounters a wide-ranging treatment of authors as diverse as Hegel, William James, Husserl, Merleau-Ponty, Derrida, and Nietzsche and Deleuze on eternal recurrence. In chapter three Hoy shifts his attention to the question and problem of 'the past' and largely focuses his attention on phenomenology; here the reader will find astute interpretations of Husserl, Heidegger, Bergson, and Deleuze. In

chapter four Hoy dwells on the question and problem of 'the future,' and here he provides readings of Kant and Hegel (on universal history), Heidegger on the futural, Benjamin's mournful figure of the angel of history, Deleuze on the time of the self, Derrida on democracy to-come, and Zizek on Bartleby politics. In his final chapter, chapter five, he turns to the question of the 'reconciliation' of time—for example, of time and temporality, or physics and phenomenology, the objective and the subjective—and considers various 'strategies,' including those we find in Proust and Benjamin, Heidegger, Foucault, Derrida, and Zizek, and Deleuze on *aion* and *chronos*. Finally, the author concludes his study with a 'postscript on method,' which covers genealogy, phenomenology, and critical theory, and this emphasis on 'genealogy' and critical theory will come as no surprise to readers of the author's work to date. It should perhaps be pointed out: there is no particular 'hero' in the book and no single theory or conception of time trumps any of the others that are considered. Hoy is far too an intelligent a philosopher and careful reader of life and texts to adhere himself to such a strategy. He is no polemicist for any particular theory or thinker. Instead he finds important resources for thinking time in all the traditions, texts, and thinkers he considers. As he puts it himself with regards to the different strategies he considers in chapter five: 'No one theorist gets it right and no one is wrong. These are different ways of dealing with different senses of the time of our lives. They are all possible strategies, even if ultimately each will fall short. The sting of time can never be taken away entirely' (pp. 185-6).

Hoy has done extensive research in preparing this book and there is a great deal to admire and welcome about it. Although wide-ranging in scope and ambition, the study never loses its focus on specific questions and problems. He is for the most part a reliable scholar; he writes fluently, even gracefully at times, and he does his best to explicate extremely difficult material and thoughts in lucid and instructive terms, especially the ideas of Bergson, Heidegger, and Husserl. In addition, he is extremely judicious in the assessments he makes of his chosen thinkers at various points in his study; and along the way he has some thought-provoking insights to offer readers and that serve to challenge the way we ordinarily and habitually think about time. Readers of *The Agonist* will perhaps be most provoked by his claim that Nietzsche's eternal return is a hypothesis for which we no longer have any need! (p. 89) It his credit to his acumen and wisdom that in the appreciation of time he provides the dimensions and ecstasies of time all assume an arresting fresh vitality, be it the past, present, or future. However, there are flaws in the book and a few criticisms can be made. The treatment of Deleuze on the temporality of the self in chapter four is, I think, unsatisfactory, with the author largely paraphrasing Deleuze on the three syntheses of time and offering little in the way of fresh or probing insight (by contrast, the section that then follows on Derrida on democracy to-come is hugely informative). In his consideration of how various thinkers seek to provide modes of 'reconciliation' with respect to concepts and problems of time, the author suggests that 'Nietzsche seeks reconciliation through "recurrence" ' (p. 185). But does Nietzsche not have Zarathustra teach that the task is indeed to reconcile oneself with time but also to will something

'higher' than 'reconciliation,' and is not the doctrine of eternal recurrence deeply implicated in this superior form of willing, including how to will backwards? Finally, I am not sure it is right to say, as the author does, that 'Proust had studied with Bergson' (p. 189). They were related—Proust was a page-boy at the wedding of his cousin Louise Neuberger to Bergson—and I believe Bergson once invited Proust to dinner. But whilst Proust did undertake a study of *Matter and Memory*, he was always keen to deny that Swann should be described as a Bergsonian novel. Thus, I think it is overstating things to say Proust had studied 'with' Bergson. Finally, although it may be churlish to draw attention to certain omissions, given how wide-ranging the study is, I think Hoy could have researched even more deeply and in the process uncovered forgotten and/or neglected contributions to our understanding of time and time-consciousness. The best example I can think of is Jean-Marie Guyau's thought-provoking posthumously published text of 1890 on the genesis of the idea of time (*La genèse de l'idée de temps*), which offers an important response to Kant (amongst other things) and which Ricoeur—whose contributions on time, narrative, and memory are curiously absent from Hoy's study—has written a lengthy essay on.

In closing, let me state once again my admiration for this book. It merits a broad readership in philosophy and the history of ideas and would make for an ideal companion text for anyone teaching an upper level undergraduate or graduate course on the philosophy of time. It is admirably wide-ranging and it displays an impressive and expert grasp of a large terrain of modern and contemporary thought. Perhaps best of all, it adequately conveys the thought that the time of our lives should be both joyful and just: the fact that this is far from being the case in our time is all the more reason to keep engaging in demanding intellectual work and political action—and also to prize astute and wise intellects and teachers such as David Hoy. ◆

REVIEW

Modernity in the Mirror:

Nietzsche's Economy: Modernity, Normativity and Futurity

written by Peter R. Sedgwick (Basingstoke: Palgrave McMillan, 2007)
reviewed by Frank Chouraqui, University of Warwick

As one of its prominent inaugurators, Nietzsche haunts modernity—and us moderns—both backwards and forward. He haunts us like the origin always haunts the present, like the essence always haunts the existent, and like the present haunts the future. Of course, the genealogist in him was acutely aware of the connections between essence, origins and futurity as well as the typically modern fascination with modernity, which now leads us to read him again and again, in an attempt to relieve and satisfy our fascination with ourselves, moderns.

If we read Nietzsche, therefore (that is, if we read him from any other perspective than some narrow antiquarian urge), it is because he is (at least partly) a reflection of our condition. After Nietzsche, 'modernity' denotes the necessary unity of modernity and its own awareness; a subject that doesn't cease to stare at itself in the mirror; a subject who finds its identity in being its own object. For us moderns, part of this staring is achieved in reading Nietzsche.

As an author who understands Nietzsche's standing as a point where modernity meets the discourse about itself, Peter R. Sedgwick has located the worthy, perhaps even essential task, of elucidating Nietzsche's picture of the modern condition through a concept supposedly discreet in Nietzsche and protuberant in modern life: economy. As he writes: 'the world of modernity is also the world of economics in its most assertive of historical forms' (Preface, ix). If Nietzsche haunts us backwards, and if modernity is correct to find itself in staring at Nietzsche, it must also find economy in Nietzsche. Indeed, the tension between the relative absence of any discussion of economics in Nietzsche's text and its omnipresence in modern life could threaten the general assumption that Nietzsche *must* haunt us, and therefore, that we must read Nietzsche for more than just historical reasons.

It doesn't take long for Sedgwick to relieve this tension. In his first two chapters entitled 'Economy and Society in Nietzsche's Middle Period Works' and 'Humankind, the Measurer of All Things,' he produces ample evidence for Nietzsche's concern for economics. Nietzsche's 'economic talk' is rich, diverse,

original, and spreads across many works and several years. The first chapter offers a presentation of all economic themes in the middle period books, laying welcome emphasis on oft-disregarded texts from *Human All Too Human*, *Daybreak*, and the *Gay Science* (although inexplicably, much of chapter II—pp. 28-38—is spent discussing aphorisms of book V of the *Gay Science*, added by Nietzsche in 1886—hardly the 'middle period').

In all these texts Sedgwick sees Nietzsche as laying out a certain economical worldview, where human reality is determined by a dialectic of advantages and disadvantages and where the human is defined as he who measures in order to place everything on a scale, thereby laying down a network of equivalences and effectively, inventing money.

Sedgwick's argument begins with an interesting remark on a text from paragraph 6 of the third *Untimely Meditation*, where Nietzsche criticizes modern, 'timely' men, by comparing them with interchangeable, mass-produced coins. Sedgwick disregards the metaphorical nature of this expression, and concludes from this text that society means 'being inexorably subject to the demands of mercantilism' (p. 2). As a result, Sedgwick makes the convincing argument that Nietzsche sees modernity as alienation, and culture and rationality as alienating forces. Then, he furthers this argument with considerations on the nature/culture divide. For Sedgwick humankind introduces economics as a drive for profit, which is not present in nature, because 'nature, in short, does not operate in order to make a profit' (p. 3); he concludes that 'nature and modernity thus stand opposed with regard to their dominant tendencies in Nietzsche's text' (p. 3). This opposition, however, is ambiguous, because, Sedgwick continues, 'there is nothing more natural than the use of money' (p. 6). The link between the two seemingly paradoxical ideas remains implicit, even though Sedgwick does point to the continuum of nature and un-nature established by Nietzsche in *Human All Too Human*, 1 (p. 7). Therefore, Sedgwick concludes with reference to *Daybreak*, 203 by regretting that ranks of money now stand for natural ranks of power, and thus falsify the natural hierarchical order (in the same way, one might add, as ranks of value falsify the natural hierarchy in the Genealogy). The consequence of such a monetary world, Sedgwick concludes, is a distortion of the natural power relations as well as a 'reification of subjectivity' (p. 20) where the 'factory slaves' (*Daybreak*, 206) become oppressed not for their lack of power (as in nature) but for their lack of money.

Chapter II addresses one of the implications of the previous chapter, namely that mankind introduced the economic system to the world, and that it is this 'economic mode of behavior that constitutes our essence' (p. 66). First, Sedgwick shows how the self-alienation described in chapter I leads Nietzsche to characterize modern men as 'actors to the extent that their self-understanding is unconsciously molded and distorted by the act itself' (p. 30). This is because self-alienation brings about trends, fashions, and in Nietzsche's terms, 'timeliness,' which are just so many illusions. As Sedgwick suggests perceptively, what Nietzsche calls 'timeliness' (transitoriness) is a form of temporality which is paradoxically unable to give birth to any future: 'Ceaseless change at the same time, denotes ceaseless present' (p. 34). There

follows a genealogical extrapolation from the opening aphorisms of *Human All Too Human*, in which Sedgwick establishes how Nietzsche regards the human mind as an 'equating' device, and how this equating makes economics possible. As a consequence, Sedgwick offers the reader a profound insight: the transitory aspect of modern life is expressed in terms of a *convertibility* of things and time into money (p. 38); of selves into masks and acts (p. 40); and by extension, of selves into religious and moral values, through sacrifice (p. 46, 52). As a result, mankind must be defined as the measuring species and therefore, as the self-alienating species. Indeed, Sedgwick seems to suggest interestingly that the human as measurer alienates itself even as it is involved in the act of measuring because it uses itself as the measure as well as a measurer for things. The human does this, it is implied, by way of language, therefore covering his environment with a web of metaphors, that is to say, a *linguistic* economy.

Having established the omnipresence of economical themes in Nietzsche in his two opening chapters, Sedgwick sets out to give more relief to this omnipresence. Chapter III, entitled 'The Great Economy' explores the theme of economics no longer in anthropologico-historical terms, but in cosmological ones. This gives Sedgwick his most substantial and successful chapter. First, the discussion moves to the textual context of the later works, by drawing its problematic from Nietzsche's discussion of the 'internalization of man' in *The Genealogy of Morality*, II, 16 (p. 68). Sedgwick regards this internalization as the mechanism that leads from a certain monetary lifestyle to a moral type of trade where sin is paid for with guilt. Sedgwick writes: 'the sense of guilt that is characteristic of bad conscience is a reinterpretation of the creditor-debtor relationship' (p. 70). Further, Sedgwick elaborates on Nietzsche's claim that the 'internalization of man' made man 'more interesting' by giving him a soul to conclude that this transposition of the economic level to the moral level opened the space for a greater economy, which for Sedgwick is 'the seed out of which all human greatness springs' (p. 70) insofar as humans are now 'open to being fashioned' (p. 82).

This means that the economic mode of being of mankind is responsible for its perfectibility. In a broad re-arrangement of the theses presented in an article from 2005,[1] Sedgwick shows how the relations of the drives that make up the human self can be expressed in terms of an economic give-and-take. This, Sedgwick argues, offers a precious chance for a fruitful futurity, because the struggle that defines us can be *optimized* (through breeding, presumably). Sedgwick's insight is that at this stage, Nietzschean virtue must be re-formulated in economic terms: virtues are measured against their economic efficacy, 'the virtues, in other words, receive their *justification* from the notion of economy' (p. 99). The chapter concludes by emphasizing the ambiguity of Nietzsche's position: even as Nietzsche rejects a society and a modernity sold out to 'commercialism,' he employs the same methods as

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[1] Peter Sedgwick, 'Violence, Economy and Temporality, Plotting the Political Terrain in the *Genealogy of Morality*,' in *Nietzsche-Studien* (2005): pp. 163-185.

modern capitalism towards the excellence of mankind (p. 109). This, Sedgwick suggests, indicates that Nietzsche's 'great economy' must be recognized as 'the Economy of the Overman.' This is the object of Chapter IV.

There, Sedgwick focuses on an economical formulation of Zarathustra's rhetoric of sacrifice, bestowing and exchange. 'Zarathustra's love of man,' Sedgwick writes, 'is love of its potential' (p. 116) and this means that we must *exchange* the actual man for the potential man. This leads to a reappraisal of the Zarathustran notion of sacrifice: 'the exchange,' Sedgwick says strikingly, 'is one of sacrificing what we are now for what our kind could become' (p. 117). In accordance with the claims of chapter III, the economy that Nietzsche (like Zarathustra) promotes, is *internal* economy. This explains why Zarathustra's speech on the 'three metamorphoses' (which aims at a transformation of the self) insists on acquiring self-possession by becoming able to renounce the past. This exchange is achieved by way of 'forgetfulness' (p. 123). In its opposition to the past, this self-possession is a promise of futurity: it produces a new man through culture. As Sedgwick writes, 'notions of activity and creativity sum up the self' (p. 129) and the self is the currency which Zarathustra wishes us to invest into the future, 'the greater the investment, Sedgwick writes, the greater the future return on that investment' (p. 130). For Sedgwick, therefore, the message of Zarathustra culminates in his rhetoric of redemption, which is best expressed in terms of trade. Therefore 'redemption' is attained through the optimal organization of the self, leading to the 'Gift-Giving Virtue'. Here, the internal economics of the self become correlated to the great economics of world redemption. Sedgwick writes: 'it is only by following the potential endowed to us in the form of our economic nature as primitive exchangers that it is possible to redeem humanity and make sense of its suffering at the hands of the self-imposition of culture' (p. 146). The correlation thus established between the present self and the redemption of the world means that a possibility for a fertile future is to be found in the self of the promised *overman*.

Sedgwick's concluding chapter, entitled 'Philosophical Temptations: Economy and Futurity' focuses therefore on the possibilities and expectations contained in such a promise. These include the transfiguration of monetary economics into 'spiritual economics' (with philosophy as the new currency, pp. 147-153), and the redemption of the exploitative system described in the *Genealogy* now transformed into an active form of philosophical breeding (pp. 154-161). This maintains mankind in a condition of permanent but fruitful effort and suffering, as it constantly gives birth to the future (pp. 161-180), however, giving birth to this new future (and to the humanity of tomorrow) shall allow us to 'sublimate' ourselves (pp. 180-181). This chapter therefore builds upon the idea found in *Zarathustra* that the great economist trades the present for the future. In this sense, selves are no longer described as the mere meeting point of the present and the future, but within it, of the individual and the social and of the psychological and the historical. Indeed, Sedgwick suggests, the economic picture bestows the present self with the power to redeem tomorrow's society.

Sedgwick's book is clearly successful in pointing out how variations on the theme of trade map out entirely the realm of human existence described by Nietzsche. The question, therefore, is the status of such variations.

The greatest achievement in Sedgwick's book is to forcefully establish the omnipresence of economical rhetoric throughout Nietzsche's works. This is achieved in the first two chapters, and sustained throughout the book. No one will close this book (as many of us may have opened it) doubting that any talk of 'Nietzsche's Economy' has any relevance. Yet, there is an intentional and promising ambiguity in the title of the book, which allows one to expect more: what is the status of the title's genitive? Does 'Nietzsche's economy' refer to the economy *of* Nietzsche's thought, to Nietzsche's theory of economics, or to Nietzsche's economical representation of ideas that may or may not be economical in essence (for example, anthropological or cosmological)? Or is Sedgwick trying to make the deeper point that there is a level where all three are unified? If so, the point, although crucial, is never explicitly made in the book. This leaves us with a certain confusion regarding the book's true focus, and this confusion can only be solved by way of a strong and consistent definition of what exactly Sedgwick (and, if possible, Nietzsche) means by 'economy.' For Sedgwick, economy must be understood as 'the economically inspired notions of exchange, credit, debit, sacrifice, labor, possession, expenditure, surplus, measuring, weighing, evaluation and the like' (Preface, x). In place of a definition therefore, the reader is offered a manifold of notions which are admittedly all related to economics, but are undoubtedly related to other traditional Nietzschean concepts too (for example, power and incorporation) and more importantly, related to economics in several ways, and to diverse degrees.

This has, I think, unfortunate consequences, two of which I will try to detail. The first is the clash between levels of readings of Nietzsche's texts and the second is the refusal to place the analysis at the level of systematic ontology.

By giving himself a non-unified characterization of economics, Sedgwick succeeds in reinforcing his first point, which is that Nietzsche's 'economic talk' is omnipresent since this characterization is broad enough to include a wide variety of expressions. Unfortunately, it makes any unified argument impossible and therefore it hinders his deeper point, which is to provide a *philosophical* account of the importance of economics for Nietzsche. As a result, the author often appears at best to be jumping from one economic expression (e.g.: measure, exchange, sacrifice) to another, and at worst, to be jumping from one word ('trade,' 'commerce,' but also 'workers,' 'mass culture,' 'modernity' etc.) to another, based on a recurrent assumption that these words essentially belong in the economical realm. This approach necessarily leads to a largely semantic approach to Nietzsche's texts (see esp. pp. 35-42 for an example). To an extent, this makes for a refreshing read when Sedgwick openly takes the time to let the texts linger, and to dwell on oft-neglected passages and formulations (see for example the presentations of *Daybreak*, 183 and 18 on pp. 51-52).

The obvious pitfall however, is to overlook the crucial distinction between *philosophical content* and *metaphor*. Too many times, Sedgwick appears to uncritically bring into his satchel of economic references some of Nietzsche's formulations without assessing which of the *expression* or the *thought* itself is truly economical. In chapter II for example, Nietzsche's rhetoric of hierarchy is

interestingly described in economic terms, by way of the concepts of domination, threats and social interaction (pp. 55-64). However, Sedgwick does not provide any argument for his preference for an economical approach rather than, say, a hierarchical, power-based one. Similarly, in chapter III, Sedgwick is content to express 'all manifestations of existence (including the most trivial) *in terms of* the drive for preservation' (my emphasis), and to reformulate this drive as 'the economy of human preservation' (p. 71). Again, it seems that the link is only metaphorical, at least in the absence of any argument otherwise. In chapter IV, Sedgwick quotes Nietzsche: 'In general, everything is *worth as much as one has paid for it*'[2] (p. 102; 12:9 [45]). Yet, the context makes it clear that Nietzsche says 'paying' in a non-monetary sense here. Does it mean it is also a non-economical sense? Not necessarily, but the issue certainly deserves discussion, and indicates that in order to understand the text, we must allow for different levels of sense (metaphorical and explicit) within Nietzsche's economic rhetoric. The same goes for the economic interpretation of Zarathustra's gift-rhetoric (p. 115), and Sedgwick's tendencies to express the will to power in economical terms, without demonstrating why this is better than the reverse (p. 127). When we express certain ideas *in economic terms*, what is the status of these *terms*? To this reviewer, they are metaphorical, and only thus can we bring cosmological, psychological, monetary and normative economics under the same concept; to the author, they are not, but his argument for this remains missing. As a consequence, some readers may find it difficult to establish to which extent this book is about Nietzsche's thought and to what extent, about his language.

However, rather than denoting a weakness on the author's part, I believe that this ambiguity hints to his philosophical instincts. Among them, a possibly postmodern aversion for definitions and the assumption that there is nothing outside the discourse, that any unification of *terms* under general *ideas* is dangerous (to the point of being sometimes led to mere paraphrase, e.g. p. 36) and above all, a reluctance to do any ontology (resulting in a near-absolute absence of mentions of the will to power). As respectable a philosophical option as this may be, it is this reviewer's opinion that Nietzsche's talk of economics, if it is to be built into a full-fledged philosophical topic, requires to be analyzed in terms of its philosophical stakes, and that those stakes are best brought to light in an ontological perspective. This is of course not a philosophical discussion to be engaged here, so I shall only limit my argument to one remark based on some texts overlooked by Sedgwick.

In a famous *Nachlass* fragment, Nietzsche says that when faced with the question of who gets to live or die (in the breeding humanity of the future), we really 'stand before a problem of economics' (12:10 [59]). This fragment is clearly connected with Nietzsche's cosmological—if not 'great' in Sedgwick's sense—economy as expressed by the affirmation that 'regarded mechanistically, the energy of the totality of becoming remains constant; regarded economically, it rises to a high point and sinks down in an

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[2] 'Im Allgemeinen ist jedes Ding so viel werth, als man dafür bezahlt hat.'

eternal circle' (12:10 [138]). These two remarks combined, I believe, suggest that we must view Nietzsche's use of economical language in terms of a management of *energy* related only *metaphorically* to human, socio-historical, and capitalistic economy. If this is the case, one may consider that this management of energy is best expressed by Nietzsche's own hypothesis of the will to power, or as Nietzsche says, of the 'overall quantum of power' (11:38 [12]). To be sure, this 'overall quantum' establishes in Nietzsche's cosmology one of the basic principles of economics, the principle of scarcity. As a result of this, in good economics, we must make the most of what we have, optimize power, in Sedgwick's terms. This optimization is for Nietzsche the very essence of the will to power, whose basic activity is to redirect alien forces into its own direction through incorporation, that is to say, of replacing conflict with mutual reinforcement. Must we, simply because this process may be expressed *in terms of* economics, replace Nietzsche's concept of power with Sedgwick's concept of economics? Only the answer to this question contains the final judgment on Sedgwick's book.

Nietzsche's Economy is a complete and effective exploration of the economic motif at work throughout Nietzsche's writings. Not only is the book original in scope and in treatment, it opens a truly refreshing set of possibilities to the Nietzsche scholar, and to us learners of—and actors in—modernity. The primary goal of the book, namely, to establish the economic theme as a fully relevant domain of Nietzsche's work is successfully reached. Further, and beyond possible debate, Sedgwick's core insight, which is to show how the economic rhetoric in Nietzsche takes place at the level of his critique of both the socio-economic setup of his society and at a greater, cosmological and psychological level, is a welcome contribution to the task of rejuvenating the Nietzsche scholarship. ◆

REVIEW

The Will to Technology and the Culture of Nihilism: Heidegger, Nietzsche & Marx

written by Arthur Kroker (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004)
reviewed by Joseph La Sac

Nietzsche, Marx, and Heidegger—although unlikely as a political or aesthetic combination—are critically appreciated in *The Will to Technology* as three cultural "trauma theorists" in advance of the 21st Century. Arthur Kroker's book is a transdisciplinary meditation on the genetic, biological, and emerging technologies, with human flesh "disappearing into" technological-being as the Ariadne's thread winding through and connecting their life's work. In addition to interpreting each author through other writings by the same author, this exegesis reads Heidegger, Nietzsche and Marx through and alongside writings of all three authors, together, as stand-ins and interpreters of each other, and as "perspectival simulacra" (78) of one another. Kroker repeatedly makes use of a "recombinant" DNA metaphor from the life sciences. In the context of critical digital studies this refers to more than a postmodern pastiche effect. It also refers to the "cutting and splicing"[1] of the material and analog surplus as they disappear and reassemble in virtual and digital forms. The author's cutting and splicing of the trauma theorists is a recombinant-style reading too, which makes this book a rich and uniquely chimerical consideration of the question of technology.

The first three chapters briefly set the stage for the author's main thrust of the book by exploring the aesthetic, social and political implications of new digital media. In Chapter 4, "Hyper-Heidegger: The Question of the Post-Human" Kroker's treatment of Heidegger starts by relocating the technological 'world picture' from the 1954 essay *On the Question Concerning Technology*[2]. In this text Heidegger announced the societal tendency toward enframing—where the dominating impulse of contemporary technology

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[1] Arthur Kroker and Michael A. Weinstein, "The Political Economy of Virtual Reality: Pan-Capitalism." *Ctheory.net*. March 15th 1994.

[2] Martin Heidegger, *On the Question Concerning Technology* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1998).

"pirates the human sensorium on behalf of a globally hegemonic apparatus" (47)—and secondly, toward *poeisis*—where an art of technology, variously expressed in language, poetry, the visual arts, speed writing, new media art, and in Kroker's phrase "an aesthetics of digital dirt" (47), could draw out of the world picture of technology. In this future technology once again has something to "unconceal" in the relationship between technology and art.

Kroker's Heidegger is a "historian of technology" (62) rather than a futurist, but "never a technophobe" (39). For this Heidegger technology is nothing less than the essence of being, which was for him the riddle of technology—that "technology could not be understood technologically."[3] Hence Heidegger's shift to a metaphysical understanding of technology. Here, Kroker turns to the 1969 essay, *The End of Philosophy*[4] where Heidegger proposed contemporary society is a vast materialization of a fundamental metaphysical force: the "will to will"-that is, the pure will removed from its motivating referents (to power, to life, etc.) The will to will is neither Nietzsche's will to power, nor Marx's will to capital accumulation, but is the "completed will" (Heidegger's phrase) and the "virtual will" (Kroker's phrase). It is no longer the will to anything but now only the will organizing every dimension of life in order to sustain its own existence. The will to will is Kroker's key to understanding the new information economy. It functions in the digital era not only as "virtual capital," or as an extension of the logic of neoclassical (financial) capital, but as a form of capital that so quickly achieves its "ascendant historical apogee" because it is "only derivatively about capitalism," (57) and essentially "about metaphysics." Yet the will to will is not capital. Kroker places capital in the service of the will to will, as a Nietzschean "mere condition of possibility" (56), a phrase which comes from Heidegger's own reading of *The Will to Power* in his text *Nietzsche*.

This metaphysics, for Heidegger, is simultaneously the "guarantee of stability (truth)" of technological society as well as its "exaggerating drives (art)."[5] In other words, technology—as the "guarantee of stability (truth)" of the will to will, together with the "exaggerating drives (art)"—is the dynamic instrument by which life is ordered on behalf of completed metaphysics. In the digital age the language of metaphysics can be dropped and pass into oblivion because this is the age of "technology as completed metaphysics"[6] and metaphysics is "now everywhere" (56) as the new digitally-augmented reality. Metaphysics is "completed," that is, because the carcass of external historical drives, from capitalist to religionist, "drop away," leaving only the edifice of a fully-realized technical society that has Heideggerian

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[3] Ibid.

[4] Martin Heidegger, *The End of Philosophy*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid.

"'aimlessness' as its aim" and "using up" as its method (54). Kroker presents this as no longer the "will to" anything but the will to everything. That is, the will that orders everything to sustain its own existence. One last topic in chapter four worth mentioning here is the treatment of technology as a "danger" and art as its "saving power." For Heidegger, the special purpose of art was understood as a poetics of listening to or "withdrawing into that which withdraws" (65). Even though the object of withdrawal may remain concealed as ever before, the act of "withdrawing into" is the "lost *poeisis*" (65) of art and the hidden essence of technology. It is the saving power (new media art) lying within the danger (digital culture) and a way of opening up being to the incommensurability of the digital nerve.

Chapter 5, "A Future That is Nietzsche," asks what order of moral values must be silently set in place as the fundamental precondition for human flesh to enter a new beginning as cybernetic, post-human beings. Nietzsche's role was to "confirm the reality of the hyper-real" and to announce that "impossibility" is the dominant discourse of the real (77). Nietzsche does this, not as a critic from the outside, but something much more dangerous—as the "interior voice of the times." The order of values silently set in place are those provided through Christianity, in GM II, and the myth of the sovereign individual, at an intersection where Christianity and digital technology are deeply entwined. Emerging out of the dynamic drive to "make of man a will and nothing but a will" (87) both Christianity and digital technology are based on the hatred of human flesh and a "transcendental urge" (88) to escape the mortality of the body. The sovereign individual connects the two, as the "moral axiomatic" and the "moral eugenics" by which a "will was burned into man" (99). In our enthusiastic digital age the morality of the sovereign individual prepares the human conscience for its assent into the post-human future. Found in *The Genealogy*, the sovereign individual for Nietzsche represents a huge apparatus of psychic repression, and the product of a long history of moral eugenics. In the 21st Century the sovereign individual is still the chained animal, trapped this time in a "consumer machinery of pseudo-choice," (90) who sometimes violently lashes out in agonistic fits of rage: "road rage, air rage, job rage, sex rage, life rage" (90). Christianity as moral eugenics, Kroker writes, was always a "moral preparation" (87) for the digital age, a carrier of a dominant cultural memetic virus by which the idea of the sovereign self was constructed. Christianity is an embodiment of the ascetic ideal, signaling that human flesh is on the way out, on the decline. However, with the death of God, the mask Christianity has fallen by the wayside and what is revealed or unconcealed, through the mirror of Nietzsche, is a future of pure will and pure technology. That is, the drive to Heidegger's planetary technicity under the sign of Marxian will to capital accumulation, with the human body and flesh as its harvest.

Nietzsche's ancient story of morality in *The Genealogy* is told again in a new light. This time the "sovereign individual grown weary of itself" meets "technology grown weary of itself" (99) and in this moment the digital nerve feels itself "a stranger in net time" (96). Kroker's doubled-meaning here is that the "triumph of the digital gods" is the real dawning of the age of Christianity—the return of the sacred object signified by the name of God in

the form of a will to nothingness. Its Heideggerian "aimlessness" motivates its movement through history as it "sky-drifts across the horizon" of social events (88). If written today, Kroker is convinced *The Genealogy* would be compelled to conclude with a fourth essay on "artificial flesh" and "electric eyes and robotic intelligence" (85) where the instinct for freedom turning against itself in the form of bad conscience has a "second sundering." The first was when, as narrated in GM I, the human species separates from its animal past. The second lies in a future where the will to technology separates from the human species: the civilized human animal breaking off into the networked-intelligence of digital technology. What Nietzsche called the "internalization of man" as drives are projected inwards from GM II, Kroker argues gives way to the "exteriorization of drives" (94) as the physical human body begins to "live inside" digital reality. Bad conscience, to summarize, "goes electronic" and leads to the "end of ressentiment" as the moral energizing force in history (95). With digital technology, "Man has been overcome," writes Kroker. But more than ever we are "nutcrackers of the (digital) soul" (89) because the digital nerve is forced to go on, to cross over and, with the voice of Heidegger always present, to "harvest the human remainder." In an eternally-recurring theme of bad conscience development, post-humanity quickly reaches the same point of "monstrous consciousness" (96) as the ancient originators of bad conscience. The digital nerve then becomes the spearhead of an inward-cutting nihilism.

Against this tale of morality's origins, Kroker presents the digital age as more than technological hubris. He invites the reader to consider this against the ancient equivalence of pain and punishment and the "maggot man." "Not fear; rather that we no longer have anything left to fear in man; that the maggot man is swarming in the foreground." (GM I §11) In Nietzsche's gallery of rogues and heroes, the maggot "man" is a tame and "hopelessly mediocre" character, seeing himself (in Nietzschean irony) as the pinnacle of history. In *The Will to Technology* both the "maggot man" and the "blond beasts of prey" (GM II § 17) are tropes which advance the virtual will. The maggot man is a (virtual) will to power, and the "creative leader of virtual capital feeding on dead flesh" (97), as well as the "last harvester" of the human sensorium before it is transitioned from human to cyborg. Kroker describes the maggot man as the recuperative arm of virtual capital—"seeking nourishment," "finding resistances" and "assimilating, appropriating, overwhelming," and at last, "conquering" the digitally nomadic proletariat (115). Like a "cyber-dog on speed," he writes, the maggot man transforms living energy and labor into "electronic cairns of dead culture skin, and crawls inside." "Not a cultural stone is left unturned" by the maggot man (97). In the spirit of digital capitalism the maggot man is the machinery of dead labor and virtual value.

Bill Gates is the essential contemporary expression of the will to power in Chapter 5. His corporation, Microsoft, is described as a contemporary blond beast of prey—a "conqueror" and "master race" which, "organized for war and with the ability to organize, lays its terrible claws upon the [digital] populace" (98). Gates' autobiography, *Business @ The Speed of Thought*, is a "futurist manifesto" and an "early read-out" of the methods by which key institutions of

public life will be compressed into digital format (115). Microsoft has economic, technical and political ability, and its manifesto predicts a future that it has the digital means to create. With Nietzsche as Microsoft's leading strategic managerial analyst, and Gates as its ascetic priest and maggot man, the task of the blond beast of prey lies in establishing the value-direction of the "softwareing of human flesh" (97). Rewarding the maggot men richly, the digital nerve also "sucks them dry, makes them rich and powerful, and arrogant," but especially, "transcendent." Digital capital "speaks through" these ascetic priests (98). If for Nietzsche this is a transitional period with humanity as a "gamble" and a "going-across,"[7] Kroker argues humanity is transitioning to the digital nerve and *The Genealogy of Morals* would not have it any other way.

Nietzsche and Heidegger alongside Marx informs Kroker's understanding of capitalism and the material forces by which it conquers. In Chapter 6, "Streamed Capitalism: Marx on the New Capitalist Axiomatic," Marx is interpreted as a "metaphysician of hyper-capital" (124) and his work *Das Kapital* is a political history and method of capital, and describes one process in the development of the pure will. This is a development by which capitalism, too, disappears into technology. Capitalism for Kroker is incidentally the name we have given the historical movement of the will to technology. Much more than a description of a system of production, *Das Kapital* can be critically appreciated now in an age when the fetishism of the commodity has given way to the fetishism of money and Baudrillardian signs. An age when "value valorizes itself" (118), and when the time it takes for capital to circulate is instantaneous.

Ours is an age in transition from labor as a "factor of production" to the "production of factored labour" (133), because Kroker's Marx writes of a future not of living labor but of dead labor, of human beings reduced to "the inertia of the [Heidegerrian] 'standing reserve'" (134). In this world picture of technology, digital capitalism is "networked knowledge" (136) instead of a labor exchange. An important theme here is the "knowledge theory of value," where knowledge is the exclusive medium of intellectual property and its creation, coding, patenting, and distributing is the motor-force behind the Nietzschean "impressing of forms," that is, to the digital commodity-form. With the falling rate of (digital) profit and the exploitation of knowledge-value, the author writes that proletarianization of knowledge-work "is only about to begin" (137).

In Kroker's digital capitalism, capital now occupies the same role of labor in the modern era. Just as the worker in relation to the capitalist appropriation of surplus-value creates a 'value alien' to himself, namely "the valorization of the capitalist process of production" (143), so too, capital in relationship to virtuality also creates a value alien to itself. Now that capital is incorporated into the digital process of production, at first as a necessary condition of historical development and now as its spectacular product, capital creates a

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[7] Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, trans. Maudemarie Clark and Alan J. Swensen (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 1998).

surplus-value of virtuality. On behalf of which capital is forced to serve as its "historical incubator" (143). The logic of capital was never so much about production for Marx, writes Kroker, as much as it was about circulation, which has an incidental relationship to production. Reading Marx against Heidegger, Nietzsche and the present age, Marx's thought "rubs against digitality" (121). Kroker observes Marx was always writing about the "disappearance of capitalism into technology" (123). Capitalism, "moving at the speed of light" (185), drops its disguises, unconcealing itself as a model of production, and becoming the historical possibility that was always its hidden sign of production, which is, capitalism as a "pure vector of circulation" (118).

An important theme throughout the book is the recurring theory of virtual classes. Articulated first in Kroker's *Data Trash,*[8] the virtual class is described in *The Will to Technology* as both the "subject" and "object" of the Heideggerian will to will (58). Subject, because the virtual class benefits directly from the unconditional attainment of the will to will, and object, because the virtual class is manufactured as a raw resource necessary for the transition to the will to will. The will to will, then, as a business strategy having become "the very objectivity of its objects." Always a Nietzschean "going-across" and a "down-going" between the imperatives of technology and capitalism, the virtual class represents the networked-intelligence necessary to realize the will to virtuality and its "potentiality for a fatal undermining" (141).

The last seventy pages are dedicated to an exposition of technology and art. In Chapter 7, "The Image Matrix" Kroker traces the death of the analog and the triumph of the digital to the physical internment of photography archives, such as the Bettmann Archive which is owned by Bill Gates. In 1995 it was brought to an underground "necropolis" (161) to be refrigerated and stored away. The author is motivated to describe this transition in lucid, literary detail. One of Kroker's more familiar tropes is found in Chapter 8, "The Digital Eye," where the digital eyeball as a bored, wandering sensory organ, jumps from image to image with a restlessness and "high-pitched consumptive appetite," "demanding novelty," and is never satisfied (167). This is no longer a story of body invasion, as in Kroker's 1987 book *Body Invaders: Panic Sex in America*, and no longer the culture of the "disembodied eye," but a culture where the image is both the goal and the precondition of culture. As goal, contemporary culture is driven forward by images as its most pervasive form of nihilism. As precondition, our possessive bodies are in turn possessed with such finality by the pervasive and "enigmatic dreams" of the image.

In 2002 Chicago-based artist Eduardo Kac engineered a "transgenic" bunny named Alba[9]—a rabbit with green glowing fur from a jellyfish gene—

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[8] Arthur Kroker and Michael A. Weinstein, *Data Trash: Theory of the Virtual Class* (New York: St. Marin's Press, 1994).

[9] Christopher Dickey, "I Love My Glow Bunny," *Wired Magazine* (April, 2001: Issue 9.04).

setting into motion the new transgenic art scene. The author's attitude toward this movement, which takes as its premise that genetic creations are art projects worthy of praise, is doubled. In recent years Arthur and Marilouise Kroker have teamed up with new media artists such as Steve Gibson, sparking their own dialogue on the disappearance of human flesh into digital technology. The transgenic artists similarly seek to stimulate dialogue about possible benefits and drawbacks of mutation, resequencing, cloning, and regenerative medicine through art, sound, multimedia and writing. With transgenic art, however, the controlling codes of genetic determinism "finally flee the skin of the body," exhibiting their "hyper-aesthetic possibilities" for genetic mutation (188). Transgenic artists in the author's eyes are not pioneers of an "unknown future of technicity," but are rather "aesthetic registers" of genetic destining. New media art, on the other hand, possesses the ability to perceive ancient repressed memories. Its aim, similar to mass media, is toward enhanced perception of digital culture and the creation of totally immersive experiences. The point, writes Kroker, is not to "mimic" digital mass media but to "break its spell" (205). In the imagination of new media art, the transgenic body is not only represented as it is through transgenic art, but "performed," "reverse-engineered," and critiqued (207).

Much has been said about Kroker's scientific and literary "border crossing" metaphors.[10] In *The Will to Technology* Kroker invokes Nietzsche's synaesthetic epistemology when referring to the "eye that hears," (Z) "the data tongue," (182) "code taste," (182) "mirror tongue," (182) "soul catchers," (180) "tattoo sound," (190) and "firewire eyes" (186). These metaphors are described by Best and Kellner as "extreme," "stretched and forced."[11] This perspective, however, overlooks the redeeming qualities of these metaphors and undermines the author's ability to provoke original thinking and generate transdisciplinary dialogue. Above all, this style holds "impossibility" as the dominant discourse of the real, and shocks its readers into critical awareness of the digital world.

The big question remains whether it is possible to really effect such a synthesis as Kroker strives for in chapters four, five and six, on Heidegger, Nietzsche and Marx respectively. Readers specialized in the scholarship of one philosopher might view Kroker's three-fold project as softening their edges. If Kroker errs in overlooking irreconcilabilities, he adds value to the discussion of their comportment toward technology. To label these irreconcilabilities as such would undermine the intelligent perspective of the author, for whom irreconcilability, incommensurability, and paradox are sources of inspiration. To prove worthy a many-sided engagement between emergent technologies and critical theory is itself the recombinant task of *The Will to Technology*. Kroker's strategy for unconcealing the broader implications of the will to technology is to "theorize at the edge of incommensurability" (14).

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[10] Steven Best and Douglas Kellner, *The Postmodern Turn* (New York: The Guilford Press, 1997).

[11] Ibid.

Throughout this book the author provides an ongoing account of street youth, anti-globalization counter-summits, "rap metaphysics," (72) and the "anti-virtual class" (149) which challenges the rise to, and the fetishism of, virtuality. They ask what the "human meaning" of globalism is. Explaining the counter-tendencies of the will to technology as expressed in "an emergent *human* class" (152) is the aim of both Arthur and Marilouise Kroker in their roles as public intellectuals. Above all their writings and collaborations with new media artists aim to voice critical concerns about the human body and its ascent into technology. *The Will to Technology* and its website (*http://www.ctheory.net/will/*) are positive dedications to their valuable public efforts to keep apace with technology and culture. ◆

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REVIEW

The Inner Touch: Archaeology of a Sensation

written by Daniel Heller-Roazen (New York: Zone Books, 2007)
reviewed by Jill Marsden, University of Bolton

What does it mean to feel that one is alive? Is this a sovereign sensation that one only encounters in privileged moments, in intoxicated raptures or at the edges of catastrophe? Or is it in the instant in which a self recovers itself after sleep, shock or stupor that one discerns, albeit dimly, what it is to be? Could it be that this elusive sensation is something that accompanies all our more mundane perceptions as a kind of background hum, revealing itself only fleetingly as the basic perception that every sensitive being possesses of its life? Or, more modestly still, is 'the sense of being sentient'—the sensory power which according to Aristotle is irreducible to the five senses yet shared by them all—an elementary form of 'awareness', one which precedes and exceeds the categories of thought and consciousness as such? In his enchanting and evocative *The Inner Touch: Archaeology of a Sensation* Daniel Heller-Roazen offers twenty-five beautifully written meditations on sensation and perception which by turns address all of these possibilities. Inspired by Aristotle, whom it is suggested may have been the first to describe a 'common sense' by which animals perceive themselves, Heller-Roazen presents his work as the archaeology of this 'single sense.'

If archaeology involves the recovery of the material conditions of a culture, Heller-Roazen's text amply succeeds in excavating the different discursive formations that lie 'beneath the conceptual edifice familiar to us today' (40).

> There are good reasons to excavate. The "thinking thing" of modernity conceals a past still to be uncovered, in which the relations between cogitation and perception, thought and feeling, were not what they became, and in which sensation, the primary power of the tactile being, held the keys to the life of all beasts, no less the two-legged one who would raise himself above those around him. (40-41)

Moving between classical Greek and Roman works as well as medieval, Arabic, Hebrew and Latin texts, Heller-Roazen shows how the 'master sense of the tradition' was revisited and reworked. Neo-Platonist readers of Aristotle provided the subsequent Christian and Islamic scholars of the medieval period with a rich and complex inheritance which the early modern European philosophers took up in turn. With deft and subtle brushstrokes, Heller-Roazen sweeps away the clay of historical and cultural accretions to

reveal how the 'common sense' (*koinē aisthēsis*) of Aristotle's *On the Soul* (*De Anima*) became sedimented in the tradition. In the course of doing so he contends that the common sense was invoked in doctrines that were not shared by Aristotle and the earlier Aristotelians (98). For example, the Neoplatonic exegetes Simplicius and Philoponus distinguished human animals from non-human animals on the grounds of the power to perceive the acts of perception whereas Aristotle and his classical disciples saw no such boundary and were unambiguous in attributing to animals and humans alike a sensitive nature in common (98).

By way of playful illustration of this shared animal nature, Heller-Roazen's text opens with a chapter entitled 'Murriana,' a prefatory series of reflections 'in which Hegel and E.T.A. Hoffmann's writing cat, Murr, consider the relations between sensation and consciousness'. In this delicately crafted few pages, Heller-Roazen presents the reader with selected views from the narrator of Hoffmann's *Opinions of Murr the Cat* who reports his ecstatic experience of 'feelings of existence' (*Gefühle des Daseins*), a heightened sensitivity afforded by his nocturnal perambulations over starlit rooftops (13-14). In addition to these sublime moments, Murr contemplates the power of feeling as such: 'For it is by sensing that Murr finds himself delivered over to that simplest and most universal dimension of all things, which is itself no thing: existence (*Dasein*)' (17). These remarks exemplify the diverse qualities of experience to which the 'feelings of existence' might refer, prompting one to question whether it is legitimate to conflate the feeling of life with the sense of being sentient. If this chapter serves to sow a seed of doubt as to whether a 'single' or univocal sense is to be uncovered in the course of the archaeology, it is worth remarking that this is a text which does not presume that its 'object' is ontologically given prior to its work of reconstruction. In this respect, it is as much a genealogy as an archaeology, a contestation of the values that have historically accrued to core philosophical concepts and an ambitious remapping of their terms.

One of the boldest aspects of this remapping is the assertion that the classical authors who discussed awareness and self-awareness tended to do so in terms of perception and sensation rather than in terms of cognition (22-23). Aristotle's *De Anima* is the primary locus for this thesis since it is here that the sense of being sentient is identified as an additional sensory power to the five senses, one which is required to account for the fact that we are able to sense qualities that are apprehended through more than one sense (for example, motion and magnitude). The common sense also enables combinations of qualities to be perceived simultaneously even though they relate to different senses (for example, bright and sweet). Difficulties arise, however, when Aristotle's readers attempt to reconcile how heterogeneous phenomena such as common-sensible qualities, complex sensations and the sense of sensing are all said to be objects of a single faculty of perception (43). Aristotle's use of a variety of terms ranging from the 'common sense' of the *De Anima* to the 'total sense', 'master sense' and 'primary sense' alluded to in other writings calls into question whether the common sense could be described as a coherent sense at all (38). To compound the matter further, contradictory

arguments are to be found in different parts of the Aristotelian corpus as to whether the 'master power' constitutes a faculty separate from the forms of perception or is indistinct from them (45). One cannot help but wonder whether 'the sense of being sentient' is simply the name for the limit of our ability to think outside the norms of unity, identity and the One.

However, whilst the Aristotelian model of sense-perception relies upon an implicit ground of unity which embraces the other senses in some way, there is no suggestion that the form of unity in this case should be located in the thinking subject. Heller-Roazen insists that the significance of the 'common sense' lies not in its proximity to, but in its distance from, modern notions of self-consciousness (40).

It is sometimes difficult to know exactly what modern scholars mean by the terms "consciousness" and "self-consciousness." But if they mean a power of thought or reason, as a reader familiar with philosophical terminology might well infer, it is certain that on this matter, at least, their views differ fundamentally from those of the ancients on whom they comment. (110)

Properly speaking, the sensation of sensing is a concept elaborated by Aristotle's commentators rather than by the philosopher himself. Heller-Roazen notes in particular that in 3 A.D. Alexander of Aphrodisias applies the technical term *sunaisthēsis* to the sense that we are sensing and observes that there are grounds for regarding it as a precursor to the modern concept of self-consciousness. However, it is worth noting that the Greek term *sunaisthēsis* contains no reference to a 'self' and might be better rendered as 'with-sensation' (84). Alexander's commentary 'defines a movement of the soul that involves the coincidence not of a self with itself but of an event and its potentiality to occur' (84). This novel and enticing formulation serves to return our thinking about sensation and perception to a field of immanence which is yet to be demarcated in terms of transcendent subjects and individuated objects. Although it is not Heller-Roazen's purpose to pursue this non-humanist vector, it provides contemporary readers with exciting resources for exploring the dynamics of impersonal auto-affection. This section also touches on the operation of the effects of palpable differences which conceptual determinations cannot grasp. Later commentators on Aristotle such as Themistius and Priscian of Lydia add the elaboration that sensing-with 'will not be deterred by the vanishing of that which it would escort' (89). In other words, an element of the sensing power continues in 'anaesthesia.' The common sense senses the operation of senses when they are active but also senses their privation when they fall into inactivity. The central sense is the power in the soul which jointly perceives itself not as a self but as a faculty 'in which the multiple activities of the senses, all felt at once, reach their "indivisible unity" (88). It is in these terms that an alternative cartography of sensation is adumbrated.

It is wholly appropriate that a text exploring the fine gradations of sensation and touch should so skillfully probe our conceptual vocabulary. *The Inner Touch* concerns itself with nuances as much as arguments, repeatedly resisting the temptation to commute the thought of the similar

to the identity of the same. Nowhere is this resistance more evident than in Heller-Roazen's rejection of the version of the Western tradition that would identify in antiquity a sharp distinction between intellectual and perceptual powers. He even goes so far as to argue that a blurring of the boundaries between knowledge and sensation can be discerned in the writings of Augustine where the distinction between them is so prominent (138). To illustrate this point he invokes a fundamental principle of the Stoic system that all animals 'possess a sense of their constitution'. Seneca and others had claimed that every living thing senses and 'cares' for its constitution without ever knowing it as such. For this reason, despite the profound difference between beasts possessing language and non-human animals, there is a more fundamental difference specific to all living beings: 'It is that within each animal which is not the animal itself and, in not being it, allows it "from the outset" to come to be' (115). Heller-Roazen indicates how in the work of Augustine the animal perception identified by the Stoics is combined with Aristotle's notion of common sense to designate an 'inner sense' (135-6). Augustine's assertion that human intelligence 'removes man from the realm of the other beasts' must be accommodated within the broader ambit of sensation (138). Accordingly, when Augustine intimates that a 'science of life' is available in principle only to human animals, Heller-Roazen suggests that even this must remain continuous with the 'inner sense' by which all animal life must perceive itself' (141). This is a crucial refinement because it implicitly appeals to immanent, unilateral differentiations which elude specification by concepts. It is this sustained resistance to dichotomous modes of reasoning that makes Heller-Roazen's general approach to these issues so distinctive.

A further source of distinctiveness is Heller-Roazen's proposal that we entertain the idea that consciousness is 'a variety of tact and contact in the literal sense', an 'inner touch' as the Stoics are reported to have said, of the common sense by which we perceive ourselves (40). Whilst it is by no means obvious what the 'literal sense' means in a text so subtle in inflection and so alert to the different registers of sense, it is evident that this proposal entails a fundamental rethinking of somatic experience. Again, the *De Anima* is Heller-Roazen's inspiration since for Aristotle the most acute of all the senses is the sense of touch. Not only is this sense keener than that of any living being (in other senses many other animals surpass the human), there is a surprising correlation to be made between touch and intelligence (293). Heller-Roazen shows how despite suggestions made by Aristotle himself in *Nichomachean Ethics* and *Metaphysics* that vision may be a nobler sense than touch, 'in the ancient doctrine the power to think finds its roots in the tactile faculty and nowhere else' (292). The tantalizing thesis that self-consciousness derives from our ability to feel and grasp the world around us is lent further weight in the writings of Alexander, Themistius, Philoponus and Aquinas who all allude to the link between the subtlety of man's touch and his temperament and powers of judgment. Aquinas observes that a fine sensitivity is a disposition to a fine intelligence since touch is the basis of sensitivity as a whole such that 'the organ of each of the other senses is also an organ of touch' (294).

Although this thesis is treated with the very lightness of touch which befits the keen intelligence of its author, it may be of some benefit to the

reader to delineate its major points more firmly. Two key terms in the lexicon of *The Inner Touch* are *aisthēsis* and the 'elemental' and they are each employed to describe the 'matter' of an embodied-consciousness (although this is not a locution that Heller-Roazen himself employs). Heller-Roazen indicates how the term *aisthēsis* is something of a 'weasel word' in that it carries the meanings of 'sensation' (with its implication of passivity), 'perception' (with its suggestion of activity), 'feeling' (which describes a broad yet elusive affective range) and may even denote the affections of the inanimate (22-3). Significantly, for Aristotle the 'element' common to all animal life, beneath and beyond anthropocentric categories, is simply *aisthēsis*.

> It is, quite simply, the element that is left over in human beings once one has withdrawn from them what is particularly human: everything in man, for example, that remains after, or before, the life of reason, everything in him that cannot be said to owe its existence to the activity of thought. This is an element that persists in human nature without altogether coinciding with it. By definition, it cannot be said to be strictly human, since it remains distinct from the activity judged proper to man. To the degree to which it can, however, still be found in human beings it also cannot be said with any exactitude to be inhuman. The remaining element testifies to a dimension of the living being in which the distinction between the human and the inhuman simply has no pertinence: a region common, by definition, to all animal life. (92-3)

It is intriguing that in articulating *aisthēsis* that Heller-Roazen should have such recourse to the language of the elemental. It is only in his unassuming final chapter that he alludes to this idea more directly in his brief reference to the dimension of the flesh in Merleau-Ponty's notes for *The Visible and the Invisible*. Implicit in Heller-Roazen's appeal to Merleau-Ponty is the desire to redraw the lineaments of sense and sensibility without recourse to a pre-given empirical realm of individuated objects and coherent subjects. Although Heller-Roazen's terminology is non-phenomenological, the spirit of his investigation involves a constant 'bracketing of the natural attitude'. And again, whilst his language is non-Deleuzian, his work returns thinking to a field of pre-individual singularities. Just as Merleau-Ponty attempts to move beyond the world of perception to the conditions for the experience of perception, Heller-Roazen's approach is to explore sensation without presupposing the nature of that which enables sensation to take place. At the limit this leads in the direction of thinking about the Deleuzian percept, especially because self-hood is so resolutely suspended.

Heller-Roazen's account of *aisthēsis* also serves to account for the specific shape that his archaeological study assumes, skipping between the early modern philosophers and nineteenth century accounts of nervous maladies and sensory delusions without engagement with Kant and the major European philosophers of the post-Enlightenment:

> [B]y definition, animals for Aristotle and his successors, had all met in the terrain of the activity once called *aisthēsis*. Descartes' definition of the conscious mind erected an insurmountable barrier in this field. (165)

Since the medieval 'common sense' shared by human and non-human animals alike could find no place in the Cartesian theory of perception, after Descartes, the expression 'common sense' progressively lost its 'technical value as the designation of a power of perception' and came to signify 'sound judgment' as it still does today (167). Accordingly, the last site of significant contestation for Heller-Roazen is Leibniz, whose idiosyncratic position may owe something to the materialist monism of Campanella and Bacon. Like Descartes, Leibniz took the mind to be immaterial, immortal and distinct by nature from the body and he also held that it is the essential nature of the soul to always think. However, as evidence of the latter thesis, Leibniz appealed to the existence of 'small perceptions' that are always retained by the mind even though they may be too weak, banal or fleeting to be noticed in themselves. His argument went that we fail to realize that we think of many things all at once because we only pay heed to those things that stand out most distinctly. As a consequence, it is only when self-conscious attention is relaxed—in sleep or in a dazed or entranced state—that a myriad of small, confused sensations are registered at all.

Famously, Locke disputed the idea that the human soul is always thinking even when one does not perceive it, his position being that it is not possible for a sentient being to think and not be conscious of it. Effectively, for Locke as for mainstream philosophy more broadly, thought is the perception of what passes in a human's mind. As Heller-Roazen puts it:

> A central presupposition of many of the early modern discussions of the nature of thought, Cartesian and anti-Cartesian alike, now comes clearly to light. It is the principle that thinking and consciousness are strictly correlative: that thought in other words cannot occur without the thinker's being simultaneously aware of it. (186-7)

Challenging this deeply ingrained prejudice throughout his magisterial text, Heller-Roazen explores *aisthēsis* as the dimension of sensation which persists in the suspension of perceptual and intellectual activity whether in sleep (65-71), awakening (73-77) or coming to one's senses after some kind of physiological trauma or assault (211-218). In the case of the latter, Heller-Roazen relates Rousseau's description of the incomparable feeling he experienced when coming to his senses having been knocked unconscious by a charging dog. On regaining his senses Rousseau experiences a condition of awareness without either a clear object or an identifiable subject:

> This first sensation was a delightful moment. I was still not yet aware of anything other than it. In this instant I was being born again, and it seemed as if everything I perceived was filled with my light existence. (Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Reveries of the Solitary Walker*, Chapter Two; cited by Heller-Roazen, p. 213)

Delightful moments such as these thread through *The Inner Touch* from beginning to end. With these finely judged examples, Heller-Roazen succeeds in exemplifying one of the most enticing and provocative aspects of the book, namely, its pursuit of Murr the cat's idea that 'one only gets used to consciousness' (14). If reason is nothing other than the capacity to act with consciousness, the extent to which it can be set aside when exploring the

nature of sensation is potentially vast. In his many examples of pre-individuated sensory experience, including his absorbing accounts of anomalous perceptions, negation delirium and the phenomenon of 'phantom limbs', Heller-Roazen's work prompts a radical rethinking of the limits of sensory experiences.

In his closing chapter Heller-Roazen leaves his readers with the question: 'What would it mean for touch to be the root of thinking and for thinking, in turn, to be the most elevated form of a kind of touch' (295). It is fair to say that a close engagement with this question would entail teasing out the relationship between touch and the more general domain of *aisthēsis*, a project which would necessarily involve revisiting the awkward question of what it means to speak of touch in the 'literal sense'. Perhaps too it might entail questioning the extent to which *aisthēsis* relates to the aesthetic, not simply because art is a privileged site of inquiry for Merleau-Ponty's elemental thinking but because it is in the domain of artistic experimentation that the limits and potentialities of the sensory field are recast. If *The Inner Touch* is an exquisite book, it is because it contributes to this creative reconfiguration, helping to make the indiscernible zones of the body newly perceptible and composing the interplay of nameless sensations which enable both a work and a body to 'be.' ◆

Die Philosophie im tragischen Zeitalter der Griechen

selected by Rainer J. Hanshe

§ 3

Die griechische Philosophie scheint mit einem ungereimten Einfalle zu beginnen, mit dem Satze, daß das Wasser der Ursprung und der Mutterschooß aller Dinge sei: ist es wirklich nöthig, hierbei stille zu stehen und ernst zu werden? Ja, und aus drei Gründen: erstens weil der Satz etwas vom Ursprung der Dinge aussagt und zweitens, weil er dies ohne Bild und Fabelei thut und vom Wasser redet und endlich drittens, weil in ihm wenngleich nur im Zustande der Verpuppung der Gedanke enthalten ist: alles ist eins. Der erstgenannte Grund läßt Thales noch in der Gemeinschaft mit Religiösen und Abergläubischen, der zweite aber nimmt ihn aus dieser Gesellschaft und zeigt uns ihn als Naturforscher, aber vermöge des dritten Grundes gilt Thales als der erste griechische Philosoph. —Hätte er gesagt: aus Wasser wird Erde, so hätten wir nur eine wissenschaftliche Hypothese, eine falsche, aber doch eine schwer widerlegbare. Aber er gieng über das Wissenschaftliche hinaus. Thales hat in der Darstellung dieser Einheits-Vorstellung durch die Hypothese vom Wasser den niedrigen Stand der physikalischen Einsichten seiner Zeit nicht überwunden, sondern höchstens übersprungen. Die dürftigen und ungeordneten Beobachtungen empirischer Art, die Thales über das Vorkommen und die Verwandlungen des Wassers oder, genauer, des Feuchten, gemacht hatte, hätten am wenigsten eine solche ungeheure Verallgemeinerung erlaubt oder gar angerathen; das, was zu dieser trieb, war ein metaphysischer Glaubenssatz, der seinen Ursprung in einer mystischen Intuition hat, und dem wir bei allen Philosophien, sammt den immer erneuten Versuchen, ihn besser auszudrücken, begegnen: der Satz „Alles ist Eins".

Es ist merkwürdig, wie gewaltherrisch ein solcher Glaube mit aller Empirie verfährt: gerade an Thales kann man lernen, wie es die Philosophie, zu allen Zeiten, gemacht hat, wenn sie zu ihrem magisch anziehenden Ziele, über die Hecken der Erfahrung hinweg, hinüberwollte. Sie springt auf leichten Stützen voraus: die Hoffnung und die Ahnung beflügeln ihren Fuß. Schwerfällig keucht der rechnende Verstand hinterdrein und sucht bessere Stützen, um auch selbst jenes lockende Ziel zu erreichen, an dem der göttlichere Gefährte schon angelangt ist. Man glaubt, zwei Wanderer an einem wilden, Steine mit sich fortwälzenden Waldbach zu sehen: der Eine springt leichtfüßig hinüber, die Steine benutzend und sich auf ihnen immer weiter schwingend, ob sie auch jäh hinter ihm in die Tiefe sinken. Der Andere steht alle Augenblicke hülflos da, er muß sich erst Fundamente bauen, die seinen

schweren, bedächtigen Schritt ertragen, mitunter geht dies nicht, und dann hilft ihm kein Gott über den Bach. Was bringt also das philosophische Denken so schnell an sein Ziel? Unterscheidet es sich von dem rechnenden und abmessenden Denken etwa nur durch das raschere Durchfliegen großer Räume? Nein, denn es hebt seinen Fuß eine fremde, unlogische Macht, die Phantasie. Durch sie gehoben springt es weiter von Möglichkeit zu Möglichkeit, die einstweilen als Sicherheiten genommen werden: hier und da ergreift es selbst Sicherheiten im Fluge. Ein genialisches Vorgefühl zeigt sie ihm, es erräth von ferne, daß an diesem Punkte beweisbare Sicherheiten sind. Besonders aber ist die Kraft der Phantasie mächtig im blitzartigen Erfassen und Beleuchten von Ähnlichkeiten: die Reflexion bringt nachher ihre Maßstäbe und Schablonen heran und sucht die Ähnlichkeiten durch Gleichheiten, das Nebeneinander-Geschaute durch Kausalitäten zu ersetzen. Aber selbst, wenn dies nie möglich sein sollte, selbst im Falle des Thales hat das unbeweisbare Philosophiren noch einen Werth; sind auch alle Stützen gebrochen, wenn die Logik und die Starrheit der Empirie hinüber will zu dem Satze „Alles ist Wasser‟, so bleibt immer noch, nach Zertrümmerung des wissenschaftlichen Baues, ein Rest übrig; und gerade in diesem Reste liegt eine treibende Kraft und gleichsam die Hoffnung zukünftiger Fruchtbarkeit.

Ich meine natürlich nicht, daß der Gedanke, in irgend einer Beschränkung oder Abschwächung, oder als Allegorie, vielleicht noch eine Art „Wahrheit‟ behalte: etwa wenn man sich den bildenden Künstler am Wasserfalle stehend denkt, und er in den ihm entgegenspringenden Formen ein künstlerisch vorbildendes Spiel des Wassers mit Menschen und Thierleibern, Masken, Pflanzen, Felsen, Nymphen, Greisen, überhaupt mit allen vorhandenen Typen sieht: so daß für ihn der Satz „alles ist Wasser‟ bestätigt wäre. Der Gedanke des Thales hat vielmehr gerade darin seinen Werth—auch nach der Erkenntniß, daß er unbeweisbar ist—daß er jedenfalls unmythisch und unallegorisch gemeint war. Die Griechen, unter denen Thales plötzlich so bemerkbar wurde, waren darin das Gegenstück aller Realisten, als sie eigentlich nur an die Realität von Menschen und Göttern glaubten und die ganze Natur gleichsam nur als Verkleidung Maskerade und Metamorphose dieser Götter-Menschen betrachteten. Der Mensch war ihnen die Wahrheit und der Kern der Dinge, alles andre nur Erscheinung und täuschendes Spiel. Ebendeshalb machte es ihnen unglaubliche Beschwerde, die Begriffe als Begriffe zu fassen: und umgekehrt wie den Neueren auch das Persönlichste sich zu Abstraktionen sublimirt, rann bei ihnen das Abstrakteste immer wieder zu einer Person zusammen. Thales aber sagte: „nicht der Mensch, sondern das Wasser ist die Realität der Dinge‟, er fängt an, der Natur zu glauben, sofern er doch wenigstens an das Wasser glaubt. Als Mathematiker und Astronom, hatte er sich gegen alles Mythische und Allegorische erkältet, und wenn es ihm nicht gelang bis zu der reinen Abstraktion „Alles ist Eins‟ ernüchtert zu werden, und er bei einem physikalischen Ausdrucke stehen blieb, so war er doch, unter den Griechen seiner Zeit, eine befremdliche Seltenheit. Vielleicht besaßen die höchst auffälligen Orphiker die Fähigkeit, Abstraktionen zu fassen und unplastisch zu denken, in einem noch höheren Grade als er: nur

daß ihnen der Ausdruck derselben allein in der Form der Allegorie gelang. Auch Pherekydes aus Syros, der Thales in der Zeit und in manchen physikalischen Conceptionen nahe steht, schwebt mit seinem Ausdrucke derselben in jener Mittelregion, in der der Mythus sich mit der Allegorie gattet: so daß er zum Beispiel wagt, die Erde mit einer geflügelten Eiche zu vergleichen, die mit ausgebreiteten Fittigen in der Luft hängt, und der Zeus, nach Überwältigung des Kronos, ein prachtvolles Ehrengewand umlegt, in das er mit eigner Hand die Länder Wasser und Flüsse eingestickt hat. Solchem kaum in's Schaubare zu übersetzenden düster-allegorischen Philosophiren gegenüber ist Thales ein schöpferischer Meister, der ohne phantastische Fabelei der Natur in ihre Tiefen zu sehen begann. Wenn er dabei die Wissenschaft und das Beweisbare zwar benutzte, aber bald übersprang, so ist dies ebenfalls ein typisches Merkmal des philosophischen Kopfes. Das griechische Wort, welches den „Weisen" bezeichnet, gehört etymologisch zu sapio ich schmecke, sapiens der Schmeckende, Sisyphos der Mann des schärfsten Geschmacks; ein scharfes Herausmerken und -erkennen, ein bedeutendes Unterscheiden macht also, nach dem Bewußtsein des Volkes, die eigenthümliche Kunst des Philosophen aus. Er ist nicht klug, wenn man klug den nennt, der in seinen eignen Angelegenheiten das Gute herausfindet; Aristoteles sagt mit Recht „das, was Thales und Anaxagoras wissen, wird man ungewöhnlich, erstaunlich, schwierig, göttlich nennen, aber unnütz, weil es ihnen nicht um die menschlichen Güter zu thun war". Durch dieses Auswählen unnütz, weil es ihnen nicht um die menschlichen Güter zu thun war". Durch dieses Auswählen und Ausscheiden des Ungewöhnlichen Erstaunlichen Schwierigen Göttlichen grenzt sich die Philosophie gegen die Wissenschaft eben so ab, wie sie durch das Hervorheben des Unnützen sich gegen die Klugheit abgrenzt. Die Wissenschaft stürzt sich, ohne solches Auswählen, ohne solchen Feingeschmack, auf alles Wißbare, in der blinden Begierde, alles um jeden Preis erkennen zu wollen; das philosophische Denken dagegen ist immer auf der Fährte der wissenswürdigsten Dinge, der großen und wichtigen Erkenntnisse. Nun ist der Begriff der Größe wandelbar, sowohl im moralischen als ästhetischen Bereiche: so beginnt die Philosophie mit einer Gesetzgebung der Größe, ein Namengeben ist mit ihr verbunden. „Das ist groß" sagt sie und damit erhebt sie den Menschen über das blinde ungebändigte Begehren seines Erkenntnißtriebes. Durch den Begriff der Größe bändigt sie diesen Trieb: und am meisten dadurch, daß sie die größte Erkenntniß, vom Wesen und Kern der Dinge, als erreichbar und als erreicht betrachtet. Wenn Thales sagt „Alles ist Wasser", so zuckt der Mensch empor aus dem wurmartigen Betasten und Herumkriechen der einzelnen Wissenschaften, er ahnt die letzte Lösung der Dinge und überwindet, durch diese Ahnung, die gemeine Befangenheit der niederen Erkenntnißgrade. Der Philosoph sucht den Gesammtklang der Welt in sich nachtönen zu lassen und ihn aus sich herauszustellen in Begriffen: während er beschaulich ist wie der bildende Künstler, mitleidend, wie der Religiöse, nach Zwecken und Kausalitäten spähend, wie der wissenschaftliche Mensch, während er sich zum Makrokosmos aufschwellen fühlt, behält er dabei die Besonnenheit, sich, als den Wiederschein der Welt, kalt zu betrachten, jene Besonnenheit, die der dramatische Künstler besitzt, wenn er sich in andre Leiber verwandelt, aus

ihnen redet und doch diese Verwandlung nach außen hin, in geschriebenen Versen zu projiciren weiß. Was hier der Vers für den Dichter ist, ist für den Philosophen das dialektische Denken: nach ihm greift er, um sich seine Verzauberung festzuhalten, um sie zu petrificiren. Und wie für den Dramatiker Wort und Vers nur das Stammeln in einer fremden Sprache sind, um in ihr zu sagen, was er lebte und schaute, so ist der Ausdruck jeder tiefen philosophischen Intuition durch Dialektik und wissenschaftliches Reflektiren zwar einerseits das einzige Mittel, um das Geschaute mitzutheilen, aber ein kümmerliches Mittel, ja im Grunde eine metaphorische, ganz und gar ungetreue Übertragung in eine verschiedene Sphäre und Sprache. So schaute Thales die Einheit des Seienden: und wie er sich mittheilen wollte, redete er vom Wasser! ◆

QUOTE

Die fröhliche Wissenschaft ("la gaya scienza")

selected by Paul S. Loeb

109.

Hüten wir uns! — Hüten wir uns, zu denken, dass die Welt ein lebendiges Wesen sei. Wohin sollte sie sich ausdehnen? Wovon sollte sie sich nähren? Wie könnte sie wachsen und sich vermehren? Wir wissen ja ungefähr, was das Organische ist: und wir sollten das unsäglich Abgeleitete, Späte, Seltene, Zufällige, das wir nur auf der Kruste der Erde wahrnehmen, zum Wesentlichen, Allgemeinen, Ewigen umdeuten, wie es Jene thun, die das All einen Organismus nennen? Davor ekelt mir. Hüten wir uns schon davor, zu glauben, dass das All eine Maschine sei; es ist gewiss nicht auf Ein Ziel construirt, wir thun ihm mit dem Wort "Maschine" eine viel zu hohe Ehre an. Hüten wir uns, etwas so Formvolles, wie die kyklischen Bewegungen unserer Nachbar-Sterne überhaupt und überall vorauszusetzen; schon ein Blick in die Milchstrasse lässt Zweifel auftauchen, ob es dort nicht viel rohere und widersprechendere Bewegungen giebt, ebenfalls Sterne mit ewigen geradlinigen Fallbahnen und dergleichen. Die astrale Ordnung, in der wir leben, ist eine Ausnahme; diese Ordnung und die ziemliche Dauer, welche durch sie bedingt ist, hat wieder die Ausnahme der Ausnahmen ermöglicht: die Bildung des Organischen. Der Gesammt-Charakter der Welt ist dagegen in alle Ewigkeit Chaos, nicht im Sinne der fehlenden Nothwendigkeit, sondern der fehlenden Ordnung, Gliederung, Form, Schönheit, Weisheit, und wie alle unsere ästhetischen Menschlichkeiten heissen. Von unserer Vernunft aus geurtheilt, sind die verunglückten Würfe weitaus die Regel, die Ausnahmen sind nicht das geheime Ziel, und das ganze Spielwerk wiederholt ewig seine Weise, die nie eine Melodie heissen darf, —und zuletzt ist selbst das Wort "verunglückter Wurf" schon eine Vermenschlichung, die einen Tadel in sich schliesst. Aber wie dürften wir das All tadeln oder loben! Hüten wir uns, ihm Herzlosigkeit und Unvernunft oder deren Gegensätze nachzusagen: es ist weder vollkommen, noch schön, noch edel, und will Nichts von alledem werden, es strebt durchaus nicht darnach, den Menschen nachzuahmen! Es wird durchaus durch keines unserer ästhetischen und moralischen Urtheile getroffen! Es hat auch keinen Selbsterhaltungstrieb und überhaupt keine Triebe; es kennt auch keine Gesetze. Hüten wir uns, zu sagen, dass es Gesetze in der Natur gebe. Es giebt nur Nothwendigkeiten: da ist Keiner, der befiehlt, Keiner, der gehorcht, Keiner, der übertritt. Wenn ihr wisst, dass es keine Zwecke giebt, so wisst ihr auch, dass es keinen Zufall giebt: denn nur neben einer Welt von Zwecken hat das Wort "Zufall" einen Sinn. Hüten wir uns, zu sagen, dass Tod dem Leben entgegengesetzt sei. Das Lebende ist nur eine Art des Todten, und eine sehr seltene Art. —Hüten wir uns, zu denken, die Welt schaffe ewig Neues. Es giebt keine ewig dauerhaften Substanzen; die Materie ist ein eben solcher Irrthum, wie der Gott der Eleaten. Aber wann werden wir am Ende mit unserer Vorsicht und Obhut sein! Wann werden uns alle diese Schatten Gottes nicht mehr verdunkeln? Wann werden wir die Natur ganz entgöttlicht haben! Wann werden wir anfangen dürfen, uns Menschen mit der reinen, neu gefundenen, neu erlösten Natur zu vernatürlichen! ◆

NIETZSCHE
CIRCLE