

Future Past: *The Gay Science*, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, and Eternity

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Abstract:

The first version of *The Gay Science* was published in 1882 and the aphorism that concludes this book also serves for Nietzsche as *incipit* for his next book: *Thus Spoke Zarathustra: A Book for All and None*. This essay looks at the notion of eternal recurrence, which Nietzsche also happens to introduce at the end of Book Four of *The Gay Science*, and this notion connects *The Gay Science* and *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, two books, both of which were designedly, so I shall argue, initially published in unfinished versions. Indeed and because *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* was published in *several* unfinished versions the scholars' habit of citing the books of Zarathustra corresponds not to individual 'parts' but separate books, published seriatim. Thus the first Zarathustra book is published as *Also Sprach Zarathustra, Ein Buch für Alle und Keinen* with E. Schmeitzner in Chemnitz in 1883.

How his shadow stands even now behind everyone, as his dark fellow traveler. (GS IV: §281)

If you believed more in life, you would devote yourselves to the moment. (Z I: *Of the Preachers of Death*)

***The Gay Science* and *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*: Endings and Beginnings**

The first version of *The Gay Science* was published in 1882 and the aphorism that concludes this book also serves for Nietzsche as *incipit* for his next book: *Thus Spoke Zarathustra: A Book for All and None*. This essay looks at the notion of eternal recurrence, which Nietzsche also happens to introduce at the end of Book Four of *The Gay Science*, and this notion connects *The Gay Science* and *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, two books, both of which were designedly, so I shall argue, initially published in unfinished versions. Indeed and because *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* was published in *several* unfinished versions the scholars' habit of citing the books of Zarathustra corresponds not to individual 'parts' but separate books, published seriatim. Thus the first

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Karl Schlechta's *Nietzsche-Chronik* reports that "Zarathustra I was written out in ten days in January,"¹ giving us an ontic calendar-month illumination of the epigraph *Sanctus Januarius* which Nietzsche sets to Book Four of *The Gay Science*, an epigraph that is both located and dated, Genoa, January 1882. Januaries were manifestly good months for Nietzsche's productivity as he himself noted. Later in 183, Nietzsche publishes the second book, specifically numbered as such: *Also Sprach Zarathustra, Ein Buch für Alle und Keinen, 2*. And Nietzsche published the third book of Zarathustra in 1884 which was, at least patently, that is to say in terms of *public* publication, the final book of Zarathustra: appearing with same publisher under the likewise duly numbered title: *Also Sprach Zarathustra, Ein Buch für Alle und Keinen, 3*.

Notoriously, Nietzsche would restrict the circulation of the fourth, parodic book, his satyr play as it were, to a 'limited' edition — i.e., for 'friends only' — printed in 1885. Thereafter he attempted to reacquire all of the extant copies, which is a bit like hitting 'send' after writing an email and then wishing that one might later unsend or undo the message. That Nietzsche meant to "unsend" or repress the fourth book is clear because in 1886 he published the first three books as *Also Sprach Zarathustra*, but left out the fourth. That this exclusion was deliberate is also plain given the listing of the author's 'other published works' featured on the back-cover of *Beyond Good and Evil*. There Nietzsche emphasizes that 'the fourth and last part of the just mentioned work from the start of the year 1885, was not as yet to be made available to booksellers.'²

Of course, we Nietzsche scholars could seemingly care less about what Nietzsche sought to do — he attempted it and he certainly did not succeed or we wouldn't be talking about it — and nearly everyone writes as if there were four books to the *Zarathustra* cycle, rather than three (an issue complicated though I will not discuss this here by both Nietzsche's preoccupation with tragedy and its three-part form with a satyr play as well as by Nietzsche's characterization of his *Zarathustra* as music and hence the formal relevance of the number of parts as — either — sonata or as symphony).

There has been a great deal written about Nietzsche's writing of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, including what one author calls his aesthetic calculus,³ but also about the meaning of the book and its metaphors, explications of its style, its origins whether based, as a small percentage argue, on Wagner or, as is maintained by the majority of scholars, based on the gospels, whereby Nietzsche presents the prophet *Zarathustra* contra the evangelist, on the model of the new testament convention as Nietzsche also expresses this conventionality to conclude his ultimate author's catalogue of his own books (as of his own life) on the last page of *Ecce Homo* — “Dionysus against the crucified.”

For my part, I am going to update these older accounts in the contemporary context by situating Nietzsche's *Zarathustra* among the genre of parody, particularly the parabolic sort. I argue that Nietzsche draws on Lucian, the 2nd century AD author because I find echoes of this satirical author throughout, backwards and forwards, but especially given the ‘true stories’ or ‘serious’ or ‘earnest lies’⁴ characteristic of Lucian, the stylistic genius and satirist of antiquity, both Roman *and* Greek, both Jew *and* Christian, including all schools of philosophy and so on.

Everyone notes that Lucian was an outstanding stylist. Yet for me what is decisive is that Lucian happened to have been Diogenes Laertius' contemporary and, as we know, Diogenes Laertius wrote, a tad less flashily, on the just the same themes that occupy Lucian. Diogenes Laertius writes on all the philosophers, especially Empedocles, as well as topics Roman and Greek, Jew and Christian.

I find this the most relevant detail because Nietzsche specialized in Diogenes Laertius⁵ — and Diogenes Laertius would almost certainly have been the topic of his doctoral dissertation, had Nietzsche submitted one (as he did not in fact although he wrote extensively in preparation for such a text). And as we all know, a philologist, in particular a Graecist, especially one of Nietzsche's formation (and in this case and especially under Ritschl), who wrote on either Lucian or Diogenes Laertius could not dispense with the other.

I've written several essays now on Lucian and Nietzsche,⁶ but I believe that you can only take the point *not* if I say so, and especially *not* if you take my word for it, but, and this is also in Zarathustra's spirit as it is also the point of exigent or rigorous philology and philosophy of the continental kind, *only* if you yourself go and read Lucian for yourself. If you do, I think you will see that many of Nietzsche's reflections in *The Gay Science*, especially those on truth and lie and including his reflections "On Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense" are indebted to Lucian and only thereby to Plato as Lucian himself, of course, refers to Plato.

Writing in Zarathustra, "the poets lie too much," (Z II, *Of Poets*) Nietzsche quotes the same Lucian whose 'true story,' his *alethe diegammata*, relates a tall tale (telling it as true while identifying it as a lie), about being caught in the belly of a whale and travelling beyond the pale, to the island of fantastic delights.⁷ The same section, "Of Poets," follows "Of Scholars" in *Thus*

Spoke Zarathustra and invokes Lucian's "betwixt heaven and earth of which only the poets have let themselves dream." Of course — and literary scholars have made this point before me — it is Lucian's language that inspires Shakespeare. And Zarathustra reflects rather more of Lucian's satirical critical dream than Hamlet's metaphysical musings especially where he goes on to say: "and especially above heaven: for all gods are poets' images, poet's surreptitiousness!" The reference is, as many references are, overdetermined, and we are "drawn upward" as Nietzsche says, wafted like the hero of Lucian's *Icaromenippus* (the first science fiction story so we pretend, because it involves an extraterrestrial flight),⁸ wherein Menippus the storied inventor of the satire that carried his name,⁹ tells a friend of his voyages in the heavens, outfitted with mismatched wings (echoes of Plato's soul), taken from two different giant raptors ("taking a good large eagle and also a strong vulture and cutting off their wings, joints and all").¹⁰ This fantastic story would already be a quite a lot, if this were all, as we read Zarathustra saying that "we set our motley puppets on the clouds and then call them gods and overhumans." (Z II, *On Poets*) If we all know that Lucian's *hyperanthropos* was the original source for Nietzsche's language of the *Übermensch*, we find, if we also read Lucian's 'true story,' further resonances with Zarathustra, beginning with the above mentioned travels, detailing boat voyages and adventures to strange lands (which also inspired Jonathan Swift among others) but in the same locus in Lucian we also meet Rhadamanthus and the souls of the departed, and a miraculous description of the Isles of the Blest.¹¹ And in addition to this, if we read further in Zarathustra's *Of the Poets*, we find resonances of what can seem to be a catalog of Lucian's dialogues including *The Dead Come to Life or the Fisherman*¹² as well as Lucian's *Philosophies* — sometimes rendered as *Creeds — for Sale*,¹³ "Ah indeed, I cast my net into their sea and hoped to catch fine fish; but always I drew out an old god's head." (Z II: *Of Poets*). And as we move to

the section in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* “Of Great Events,” once again at sea, exploring an island “not far from the Blissful Isles of Zarathustra,” we read that Zarathustra himself, like Menippus, has taken to the air, flying not above the clouds (like Menippus), but downward, as in Lucian’s *Downward Journey*, which is the dialogue where we read about the overhuman: the *hyperanthropos*.¹⁴ *Or the tyrant* is the subtitle of the dialogue and the tyrant is the kind of man who ought to be, and who inevitably will be, overcome. We all go down to the dark.

Serious or earnest liars, as both Nietzsche and Lucian may be described as being,¹⁵ they are also, like Aristotle, better or greater friends to the truth (preserved by inversion) than they are to Plato. Thus one can compare the advantage given Hesiod over Homer in Nietzsche’s discussion of the same¹⁶ and one can note that technically, as Nietzsche also emphasizes, this is inaccurate, that is to say, it is a lie, yet a noble one with living value, an earnest lie — rather as Eunapius, the fourth century AD sophist and historiographer named Lucian a “serious” or “earnest” liar — that is: a good lie, a white lie (as we recall the traditional reason given for valuing Hesiod over Homer, to praise peace rather than to promote war). For Nietzsche the focus on the invention is less about the ‘civic’ or edifying value of the one poet as opposed to the other (always according to our own lights in the present day) but, as his conclusion to his study of the traditionally named *Certamen* makes plain,¹⁷ the focus is on the culture not only of contest, but riddling and paradox. When Nietzsche goes on to summarize the point in *Homer’s Contest*, he points the confusion of today’s ‘Alexandrian’ Philo-Hellenes.¹⁸

Both Nietzsche and Lucian share a take on lying that stands opposed to the traditional philosophic, that is: Platonic dismissal of poetic invention. As Lucian observes: “on reading all these authors, I did not find much fault with them for their lying, as I saw that this was already a common practice even among men who profess philosophy,”¹⁹ arguing that where other authors

claimed their lies as “true” his own claiming of his lies as lies ought to be accounted “more honest” than the other author’s claims: “for although I tell the truth in nothing else, I shall at least be truthful in saying that I am a liar.”²⁰

In the same way as Erasmus and Thomas More read Lucian, so too David Hume who made it a point to read Lucian’s dialogues of the dead, particularly the *Kataplous*, variously translated as *The Downward Journey*, and it is indeed the *Journey into Port*, the port in question being Charon’s home port. As Nietzsche writes “The beauty of the *Übermensch* came to me as a shadow.” (Z II, *On the Blissful Islands*). The underworld for the Greeks is the world of shades and all of us are companions one with another, on that downward journey. In this sense, the overman is the man on the surface, the same surface upon which we find ourselves, here and now. But if all these philosophers from Erasmus to Hume to Nietzsche were reading Lucian, if Jonathan Swift was reading Lucian (his *Tale of a Tub* echoes this as does his *Battle of the Books* not to mention his *Gulliver*), the only philosophers not reading Lucian would be most philosophers today.

With these and other even more recondite distinctions in mind, I mean to begin (I can hardly finish here) to compare both *The Gay Science* and *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* as initially or first published as avowedly *incomplete* (which incompleteness is perhaps the most Lucianic joke, if we needed another one, of all: Lucian promises to finish his tale of his adventures at the conclusion of the second volume of his *True Story*, but, of course, he never does and scholars have been pointing this out since antiquity). And, to be sure, the final book of *The Gay Science*, ‘We Fearless Ones,’ foregrounds the question of parts and wholes in what Nietzsche regarded (in a musical context) as the art of endings. Endings matter for Nietzsche as a writer (and of course as a composer, failed or not) because the end of the fourth book of *The Gay Science*, features a

demon, that favorite philosopher's familiar now adding Nietzsche's version to that of Socrates' negative or cautionary *daimon* as also to Descartes' evil genius, a strange demon who predicts or foretells a future that includes no new news, as it were. This future is nothing but the past again, one's own past repeated — no chance for a new age discovery of having been Cleopatra or even Nietzsche himself in one's former life, just the same old, same old with everything great and small in it, repeated, *da capo* and without alteration, without exception. What returns is the everyday time of everydayness itself: that is what was, that is the stone fact, like Mozart's stone guest, the uncanny insight of the persistence of what has been that would prove to be so fruitful — *es war* — for Freud's theory of the unconscious, where all this sameness resides, the same: the past untouched by present reality. The future told by Nietzsche's demon is a future of the past: neither a cycle of recycled stars or souls but just and only the past one already knows so well that (according to Freud again) one spends most of one's waking life and all of one's dream-time revisiting and transforming it. No wonder the second book of Nietzsche's Zarathustra begins with *The Child with the Mirror*, pre-Dionysus, little Zagreus, who comes to Zarathustra to show him his mirror and to ask him to look into it, whereupon Zarathustra cries out as he does not recognize himself “but the sneer and grimace of a devil.” (Z II: *The Child with the Mirror*) What follows are denunciations — fairly hard ones (the Nietzsche of *The Antichrist* proves to be much kinder) — of the redeemer and those who preach the word of the redeemer, of redemption, of paradise: the future perfected, life eternal: “You want to be paid as well, you virtuous! Do you want reward for virtue and heaven for earth and eternity for your today.” (Z II: *Of the Virtuous*) This is the life of those of whom Zarathustra can mock — and the often strident, polemical, hammer-precision of Nietzsche is clearly at stake as he characterizes the virtuous. — “We bite nobody and avoid him who wants to bite; and in everything we hold the

opinion that is given us.” (Z II: *Of the Virtuous*) He had already done so in *The Gay Science* and repeats it explicitly in *Beyond Good and Evil* and again, in case we missed it, in *On the Genealogy of Morals*. This biting, also crucial as a word for parodic, satirical wit, turns out to be central.

For Nietzsche, this same past focus becomes the concern with the ‘it was’ that he will go on to express as the musing, brooding preoccupation with the past that is the ultimate poison of *ressentiment*. The focus will be on the teaching of the eternal return expressed as a recurrence of the past raised to eternity and the challenge of affirming the standing past, like the *nunc stans*, throughout all possibilities of what will be.²¹

The last lines of the first published book of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* is a promise, a prayer, an oath, that expresses the heart of Nietzsche’s teachings of the death of god, the *Übermensch* or overhuman, and arguably, the will to power: “‘All gods are dead; now we want the Overhuman to live’ — let this be our last will one day at the great noontide.” (Z I: *Of the Bestowing Virtue* 3) What resounds, of course, in the notion of the great noontide is the standing moment of the cycle of the world year, both Empedocles and Heraclitus. Gadamer emphasizes this in his “The Great Year of Zarathustra” as I also argue for a parallel for Empedocles and Heraclitus for Nietzsche, especially with respect to Zarathustra.²²

Some scholars overlook the connection perhaps because the eternal return is such a complex notion. It’s been argued that the Eternal Recurrence doesn’t even appear in the first book.²³ Of course it does but for readers who require a label (one wonders if this is the best approach with Nietzsche) the reference can be elusive but there it is nonetheless. At the conclusion, albeit only in passing, I point out the connection between *The Gay Science* and

Beyond and Evil, and if I had more time I could add all the other published works as *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* functions as a cautionary fulcrum intervening between them. Here however I am simply noting the focus on the past (and the present) in Nietzsche's idea of the future as he speaks of it in terms of eternal recurrence as it is this that links the two texts under consideration here.

The Greatest Weight

The teaching Zarathustra comes down from his mountain to teach is not quite the Good News but and much rather and once again, the eternal return. It is not just anamnesis, recycling the soul for a new playing of a new life, expiating karma and all that, like the eternal whirl of the cosmos in all its complexity, like the spin around our own sun and everything it brings round, again and again, but — Nietzsche emphasizes this — *the same. Das Gleiche.*

It is the sameness that offers the light of eternity and the love song, the round with which Nietzsche concludes the third book of his Zarathustra, *The Song of Yes and Amen*. But if there is love and blessing — “for eternity and for the wedding ring of rings — the Ring of Recurrence!” This same sameness as “the breath of that heavenly necessity that compels even chance to dance in star rounds” (Z III: *The Song of Yes and Amen*, §3) is also the same sameness told by the demon who comes at the end of the fourth book of *The Gay Science* to tell us that we will not be ushered into *either* heaven or hell.

This is the kind of demon only philosophical minds like Descartes or, responding to Laplace, scientists like Maxwell could dream up. And the reference to science is important because the mathematician Henri Poincaré offered a stochastic proof of the Eternal Return, quite

independently of Nietzsche²⁴ and given the assumption that the universe was, for example, closed or finite.²⁵ This was the scientific assumption for Nietzsche and for others in his day, and some scientists still assume it.

The philosophic question however turns on the sameness of the eternal return of the same. This is echoed in the full presence of eternity, which is of course not *in* time, and thus the beautiful word scene or painting that Nietzsche gives us in Zarathustra's conversation with the dwarf in *Of the Vision and the Riddle*, claiming that the dwarf could not bear the weight of the thought itself. It is at this moment, that Zarathustra himself is no longer weighted down with the weight of the dwarf but lightened: the dwarf literally takes a load off, springing to the ground from Zarathustra's shoulder where he had been pouring thoughts of lead into his ear (do not forget leaden type, as you read this: do not forget the dwarves among philologists and philosophers, and do not forget the obstacles to made by the dead weight of everything they write). The gateway, *Augenblick*, has, as Zarathustra goes on to say, two aspects, two colliding, opposing, aspects: paths along which no one has ever travelled to their end. "The lane behind us," Zarathustra says to the dwarf, "an eternity, the long lane ahead of us, another eternity." (Z III: *Vision*, §2) And now we are counting with Cantorian dimensions. Zarathustra asks a geometer's question, because the point is a matter of mapping the points along the path — tracing the path, namely supposing that one were to "follow them further and ever further," he asks, "do you think, dwarf, that these paths would be in eternal opposition?" (Ibid.) The thought of the circle is evident here, but the key to the problem is the problem of the parallel postulate that shatters Euclidean geometry. And the circular answer is the answer given, disdainfully, if we remember, by the dwarf: "All truth is crooked, time itself is a circle" (Ibid.)²⁶

The question, the riddle Zarathustra riddles the dwarf, is cosmological, this is the domain of Ernst Mach's concern as indeed Avenarius and this was Erwin Schrödinger's field.²⁷ This is also one of the oldest riddles (and we remember Nietzsche's focus on "symptomatische Räthselspiele" at the conclusion of his scholarly study of Homer and Hesiod)²⁸ of time, that of the *Timaeus*, as indeed it is also the riddle of Kant's antinomy concerning the eternity of the world.²⁹

Zarathustra repeats the point in his own recounting:

'Behold this moment,' I went on, 'From this gateway Moment a long eternal lane runs back: an eternity lies behind us.'

'Must not all things that can run have already run along this lane? Must not all things than *can* happen *have* already happened, been done, run past? And if all things have been here before: What do you think of this moment, dwarf? Must not this gateway, too, have been here – before?'

And are not all things bound fast together in such a way that the moment draws after it all future things. *Therefore* — draws itself too. For all things that *can* run *must* run once again forward along this long lane." (*Z, Vision, 2*)

The solution to the riddle of the crossroad of past and future, the moment, fore and aft, the now of the present, is not merely as Small reads Heidegger as "as invitation to *enter* the gateway,"³⁰ but much more than that a presence to presence, as Heidegger himself says: "Den Augenblick sehen, heißt: in ihm stehen"³¹ where the language of standing here is and can only be a matter of presence to the eventuation of the present, the moment that by definition does not stay. What Heidegger says, strikingly extraordinary for an understanding of Nietzsche turns upon becoming as what is coming to be: the advent of the event and Heidegger connects it, he takes several passages to do so over a number of pages, with the notion of biting off and spewing forth, all as the physiological articulations of overcoming, which as we know also corresponds for Nietzsche to revaluating, and hence to the dangers of *Ressentiment*. For Heidegger,

that which is in advent [*was künftig wird*] is exactly a matter of decision, the ring does not close upon itself somewhere in the infinite but possesses its unbroken closing together in the Moment as the center of conflict [*Widerstreit*]...

That is what is most difficult and singular in the teaching of eternal recurrence, that eternity *is* in the Moment, that the Moment is not the fleeting ‘now,’ not the moment only rushing past a spectator, but the collision [*Zusammenstoß*] of future and past. In this the Moment comes to itself.³²

At the same time what must also be considered in *Of the Vision and the Riddle*, as one lists the *dramatis personae*, as it were, here now in addition to Zarathustra himself, the dwarf, the lanes of past and future, the gateway moment is the howling dog: the dog of Hecate,³³ that is Cerberus, and so on. It is “stillest midnight, when even dogs believe in ghosts” and Zarathustra finds himself, not coincidentally as at the end of the fourth book of *The Gay Science* “alone, desolate, in the wildest moonlight.”

There Zarathustra sees what may well be the strangest rebus image of all in Nietzsche’s text. Like a literary Hitchcock, Nietzsche does not paint his word picture directly but tell us that this is the sight that so agitates the dog he hears howling (Heidegger emphasizes Nietzsche’s striking choice of language for the dog’s anguishedly uncanny, otherworldly howl). The word image Nietzsche then proceeds to give us is archaic in its darkness, rustic and so beyond the civic order and steeped in mystery: “a young shepherd, writhing, choking, convulsed, his face distorted; and a heavy, black snake was hanging out of his mouth.” The man, so Zarathustra wondered — and Nietzsche was not unfamiliar with the dangers of obviously open mouths — had perhaps been asleep. Perhaps thus the snake had “crept into his throat — and there it had bitten itself fast.”³⁴ The problem, this is the snake of time is also the problem of the past, thus Nietzsche speaks of the dyspeptic, those who cannot have done with the past, with time and its ‘It was.’ The recommendation that comes to him is not a considered reflection but spontaneous — “a voice cried from me — ‘Bite! Bite!’” Nothing else works to dislodge the snake but the sudden insight

that one is not to be paralyzed or frozen ‘in disgust and pallid horror’ — think of the image of Laocoon but to act against the biting snake: to bite back and have done with the past.

This is the riddle Zarathustra now riddles his interlocutors — because this is no speech that Zarathustra tells to his own heart — ‘Who is the shepherd? ... who is the man ...’ And while riddling his “venturers and adventurers and those of you who have embarked with cunning sails upon undiscovered seas,” Zarathustra also reports the shepherd’s extraordinary response, biting as one who “bit as my cry had advised him; he bit with a good bite! He spat far away the snake’s head — and sprang up.”

Thereby, so we read, the shepherd, shades of Attis and Montanus, but also prefiguring a certain hero of recent youthful literature and cinema, Harry Potter, is thereby transformed, transfigured: “surrounded with light, laughing” — a human being like no other Zarathustra had ever seen. I guess the snake’s blood is magical, or maybe it’s just the magnificent spitting out, spewing says it better, of the snake’s head that does it. Whatever it is, the result is an other-human laughter “Never yet on earth had a human being laughed as he laughed.” (*Z, Vision, 2*)

So far so good, and all of us, know this passage. But how can the thought of “what is heaviest and blackest,” the snake of the past that weighs on us, be countered as Nietzsche says it can and what does it mean to say that one must bite into it? Heidegger himself goes on to note that just a bit later in *The Convalescent* there is a reprise of the seemingly circular problem of embracing the vision of time as circle, using the theistic language of the straight and the crooked:

» ‘ — Oh, you jokers and barrel-organs be still now, answered Zarathustra, and smiled again. How well you know what had to be fulfilled in seven days.« —

— and how that beast wriggled down my throat and choked me! But I bit its head off and spewed it far away from me. [*Aber ich biß ihn den Kopf ab und spie ihn weg von mir.*]

And you? — you've made a hurdy-gurdy song [*Leier-Lied*] out of it! But now I lie here, tired of this biting and spewing-away, still sick of my own redemption. *And you just watched it all?*³⁵

How would this “thought of thoughts” as Nietzsche’s Zarathustra names it, change one’s life, assuming we were *able* to think it to begin with? Like all paradoxes, like all riddles, it is hard to think, thus Nietzsche’s Zarathustra underscores the simple difficulty of thinking it. But, still, to ask an easier version of the same question: *why* on earth *would* thinking it, assuming we *could* think it, change us utterly?

Well it’s the same.

Sameness is what is at stake. Thus the point Nietzsche underscores is the exclusion of any change, much less any utter change, all change, any alteration, big and small, excluded at the outset. Isn’t this also part of the mathematician’s paradox that Hilary Putnam borrows from Abbot’s *Flatland* (a topological insider’s plagiarism none of us would care to fault, so I presume) when Putnam points out that, and this is just Leibniz’ point regarding a difference that would not (in this case because it could not) make a difference, that *were we all*, in fact, so many analytic brains in analytic vats, the very idea of being one would mean nothing (to us) and would-could not be true (there’s a hermeneutic rider here, but I am not going to do work Putnam never bothered to do).

The frozen temporal tableau of the ‘Moment’ in *Vision and the Riddle* reprises the personal dynamism of a lifetime, as Nietzsche puts the same insight into the mouth of the tightrope walker better said, tightrope dancer [*Seiltanzer*], the performing acrobat who falls to his death in the middle of Zarathustra’s first speech. (*Z, Prologue, §6*)

The figure of the tightrope-walker is essential rather than a simple background or decorative touch because after the death of God — as Hegel puts in quite explicitly in the wake of Kant —

we are all of us dancing without a net: suspended in our human, all-too-human lives as Nietzsche puts it, an interval, a breath, “a hiatus between two nothingnesses.” (KSA 12, 473)

Zarathustra pays no attention at all to the tight rope dancer — he doesn't see him and the drama is played out, as if in Plato's cave, above and behind the speaking Zarathustra.³⁶ And the dwarf is there too, this time in the guise of an evil hunchback, causing all manner of trouble, jumping over the tightrope dancer and causing him to lose his footing, crashing to his death in the marketplace below.

Zarathustra, who goes to the side of the fallen performer as he dies, comforts the dying man by telling him just what follows from the Enlightenment account: “...there is no Devil and no Hell. Your soul will be dead even before your body; therefore fear nothing anymore!” (Ibid., §6), the crushed man is not comforted as he hears the logical and nihilist implications of naturalist science:

If you are speaking the truth,' he said, 'I leave nothing when I leave life. I am not much more than an animal which has been taught to dance by blows and starvation. (Ibid.)

So what is the point of sameness here? What is the problem? Is what Nietzsche says any different from the Socratic alternative offered in Plato's dialogues, either a dreamless sleep, nothing at all, or the afterlife of poetic myth and faith? Plato teaches the same cycle as other Greeks, his theory of knowledge and learning depends on it: anamnesis. But Nietzsche's account excludes memory and identity in the sense of recognition. There is no memory, there is no recognition.

You, you yourself return but not as you are now, or better said exactly as you are now. You 'return' but not as a re-animated self with everything you take now yourself to be: you as you now suppose (or imagine) or remember yourself to have been and you now as expect yourself to become.

Instead what returns cannot be discerned from what is now. What returns is exactly what was: *and there will be nothing different in it.*

My title for this discussion of Nietzsche's teaching of eternal recurrence as set between *The Gay Science* and *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* is *Future Past*. What is at stake is the past, the same as it was and every tiny and every major aspect of it: this is *das Gleiche*: the same old, same old.

And the point of it all is the thought of death, which thought of course we do not think because we all already know it: like Zarathustra's companions and like his animals, like Rilke's spectators, everywhere and all around. And to say this as both Nietzsche and Heidegger say is to say that we do not think it. Indeed, not even when we claim that we do. Of course not.

I take this reading to a discussion of *Beyond Good and Evil* inasmuch as the problem of *Beyond Good and Evil* is nothing other than the problem of truth, considered as a problem and just as Nietzsche also raised the problem of science in the same light and questioned *as a problem*. Most of us are so keen to emphasize art or life that we have forgotten that it was Nietzsche's emphasis to raise the question he pronounced himself the very first to raise, very radically and in the spirit of the first critique, the very critically Kantian question of science, as such.³⁷ And if I had even longer I could include *Twilight*.

But I don't have more time — and part of the point of this essay is that none of us ever do — so let's go back to the thought Zarathustra calls his 'most abysmal thought' as this echoes the conversation with the demon in *The Gay Science*. As noted this is also the thought of death and *The Gay Science* has an aphorism titled with the same name, suggesting that the brotherhood of death that we share as mortal beings is the only brotherhood there is for living subjects of consciousness, subjects of desire, subjects such as ourselves, all of us, born to mortality and thus bound to die, whether we think about it or not.

Nietzsche's point is the philosophical point that living subjects abjure the thought of death: it is the furthest thing from their minds.

For his part, the economically (or dismally) minded Schopenhauer reflected that life was a business that did not cover its costs, a business that from an economic point of view, a *business point of view*, made absolutely no sense "as an enterprise," and therefore was the only thing that really compelled reflection. Nietzsche added more biology and more thermodynamic statistics to the same reflection, recognizing that abundance and waste was the way of life — and of death. Hence he could argue with the best of 19th century cosmology that a dancing star was born of chaos, excess, confusion.

Not that it mattered given that that dancing star too would have to die.

In another essay dedicated to Schrödinger and Nietzsche and life, I point to the parallels that may be made if one likes, beyond Nietzsche, to the philosophical problem of consciousness and personal identity but also with eastern philosophy.³⁸ Thus it matters that here is (and for the Stoics it was essential to reflect that there could be) no difference between the you that says I and the universe. You are already everything *and* you do not know it, with the one crucial exception that it is available to you to master the trick of thinking this identity, as Nietzsche also mused. To this extent, Nietzsche too could suppose that we are those who have figured out that we are figures in the dream of a god who dreams.

Amor fati

I begin the penultimate section of this essay "Future Past" by speaking of the love of fate, of fortune, of destiny: *amor fati*. And although Nietzsche held that it was perhaps "inhuman to bless where one was cursed," (BGE §181) he earlier maintained that what was divine could be called

“the ‘humaneness’ of the future,” (GS §337). A ‘happiness of a god’ was possible for the human being by means of the ultimate trick of divinity: blessing, yes-saying, affirmation: *amor fati*. Key here, and thus this is only a possibility, is the all-too-human element. One might well fall short of the monumental listing Nietzsche details, finding oneself unable to

“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 his fortune, being a person whose horizon encompasses thousands of years of past and future.” (Ibid.)

What is significant for Nietzsche, as for Schopenhauer, is the long run.

Thus when Nietzsche writes contra the usual role of the promises of the afterlife in an early unpublished note, he explains the inexorable or factive force of his thus more than merely categorical imperative here: “My teaching says, Thus to live that you would *wish* to live again is the task — you will do so in any case.”³⁹

In other words and this is the Heraclitean, Empedoclean point with which I began this essay, one will, in any case, be reborn, again and again but — and this insight is what can offer, provided one can think it, the happiness of a god — there will be no memory of that, for nothing changes. Qua reborn, your consciousness would be no more connected to your consciousness now or your consciousness past than your consciousness now is identical with the consciousness of even the recent past — even so recent as drinking this morning’s cup of coffee.

We do not remember our own present lives, moment to moment, how would we ever remember our past lives?

It is the past that does not change, what we call our ‘memories’ correspond to our fondest inventions, just as Nietzsche also argues that we cut the world down to the size of what he called our “foursquare” little human intellect, that we humanize nature in order to comprehend it, that even scholars are only able to get out of books what they bring to them, and that when it comes to other persons, we understand little more than our own projections, our own fantasies. This is

not merely a hermeneutic deficiency applicable to our dealings with the external world, texts, other people, etc., it also, so he argues, applies reflexively, to each of us, ourselves. We, Nietzsche says, especially we “knowing ones,” do not “know” ourselves. (GM, *Preface*).

Nietzsche reflects on pride and memory in *Beyond Good and Evil*, his prelude to a *Philosophy of the Future* (an especially important subtitle as we may now see, given our above reflections on the past).

“I have done that’ says my memory. That I cannot have done — says my pride and remains inexorable. Finally — memory yields.” (BGE §68)

You as you are and as you remember yourself are not identical: how could you be? You are no longer present to the past self that you were, that is to say you have no direct awareness of, you are not ‘conscious’ of the past.

As considered above in reflecting on eternal recurrence, Nietzsche emphasizes *the same*. This sameness is the curse emphasized in his account of the greatest heavy weight — *das grösste Schwergewicht* — in his *The Gay Science*, as Nietzsche breaks off the fourth book which he concludes before going on to write what should now be a bit more manifest as his Trojan Horse, or seductive gift to the masses, his *Thus Spoke Zarathustra: A Book for All and None*.

For at the conclusion of the Fourth Book of *The Gay Science*, we recall that Nietzsche’s demon does not come to one in one’s loneliest loneliness in order to ask one to consider one’s life in the light of eternity, as the Stoic philosophers might have done, as the desert fathers would also do. Much rather the demon foretells a future that is not so much about a further future, this is not the substance of what the demon emphasizes, but announces a future prospect that is all about the past as we cannot have done with it. The future is a future of the past, your past, the past you already happen to know so well that, as already mentioned, Freud insists that you spend most of your living and dream time revising it. Nothing like a repetition compulsion. The point

as Nietzsche's reflection on memory and pride makes plain is that all such revisions are phantoms. We lie to ourselves. We retell ourselves to ourselves such that on our account the wretched things we have done can all of them be laid to someone else's account, some other cause, parents, children god, what have you. This is the "dangerous perhaps" (BGE §2), this is why we baptize our convictions, our prejudices as fact or as 'truths' (BGE §5), and it is the reason Nietzsche suggests that "every great philosophy has hitherto been: a confession on the part of its author and kind of involuntary and unconscious memoir." (BGE §6) Ultimately this is also why Nietzsche proposes in place of the antinomies so many "questions of conscience for the intellect, namely, 'Whence do I take the concept thinking? Why do I believe in cause and effect? What gives me the right to speak of an "I," and even of an "I" as cause of thought'" (BGE §16)

Nietzsche's solution, and I leave this for another paper he touches upon in *Twilight of the Idols*, nothing is to blame, there are no causes, no excuses, only necessities:

"One is necessary, one is a piece of fate, one belongs to the whole one *is* in the whole." (TI, *The Four Great Errors*, §8)

Da Capo: Once More, This Time with Woody Allen

For Nietzsche in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, our focus on the past explains the reference to our concern with ourselves, with the stone fact, the 'it was,' the musing, brooding preoccupation on the past that is also the poison of *ressentiment*. Let's spell this out a bit further by again recalling what Nietzsche's aggressive demon says in *The Gay Science*:

What if some day or night a demon were to steal after you and into your loneliest loneliness and say to you: "This life as you now live it and have lived it, you will have to live once more and innumerable times more; and there will be nothing new in it, but every pain and every joy and every thought and sigh and everything unutterably small or great in your life will have to return to you, all in the same succession and sequence — even this spider and this moonlight between the trees, and even this moment and I myself. The eternal hourglass of existence is turned upside down again and again, and you with it, speck of dust!" (GS §341).

The demon's intonation here, the eternity here, focuses on the past: a past elevated to an eternity of the past and not merely the generic idea of the past per se. Living life once, that was bad enough, we might say, living it eternally (and this is worse than infinity: "once more and innumerable times more; and there will be nothing new in it"), is far, far worse: "every pain and every joy and every thought and sigh and everything unutterably small or great in your life will have to return to you, all in the same succession and sequence." (Ibid.)

How are we to say yes to that? And what difference would it possibly make to do so?

It's the same, to say it once again. And what is more it's the same without there being any consciousness of repetition.

The past Nietzsche's demon foretells reliving again and again is *not* Woody Allen's phantom vision of sitting infinitely bored through an infinite number of seatings at the Ice Capades, this is not a cinematic, videographic, YouTube playlist — in Nietzsche's 19th century day, that would have been a zoetropic or praxinoscopic⁴⁰ experience — replaying *Groundhog Day*, again and again — as one attempts to shatter the monotony of the same, *déjà vu* — but and only the self-same.

Not the similar, not the 'rather like' and already seen done-drudgery of the been there, lived through that ennui of modern life as we live it, bored as we live our days, but and again and much rather: "This life as you now live it and have lived it, you will have to live once more and innumerable times more; and there will be nothing new in it..." (Ibid.)

This demon does not say as we read in Revelations, "Behold, I make all things new."

Nietzsche's emphasis on life, and the revenge that we mean to take on life, is an emphasis on created things, "what can be shaken" (Hebrews 12:27).⁴¹ It is an emphasis on all the things

we condemn as philosophers as he writes in *Twilight*, “Death, change, old age, as well as procreation and growth, are to their minds objections —refutations even.”

Hence Nietzsche’s call to us is to love what *becomes* in life in all its minor details, all of its trivial changes, all of them progressions towards and *including* old age and death. He argues that if one can say yes to one thing, anything at all, everything else is also necessary and nothing can be dispensed with: everything must be blessed. Nietzsche shares this insight as we have now seen with the ancient Stoics and with Heraclitus and with Empedocles and indeed Anaximander.

Like a speck of dust, as the demon says, the hourglass of existence is turned upside down, again and again. That is to say, so Nietzsche argues at the end of his 19th century (with the theories of the 19th century echoing in his mind, as we have also noted), and we may think of this as an harmonic oscillator, the universe is so cycled.

So Schrödinger will later argue the point in his own argument for eternal recurrence and as I have compared his argument to Nietzsche’s. But Schrödinger, interested as he is in the Presocratics, is echoing Schopenhauer and the cycling in question is an even older story, dating back before the tragic age of the Greeks: as Empedoclean as it is Heraclitean as it is Parmenidean and Anaximandrian, it is perhaps especially known to us today as a Vedic notion, also resonant in Buddhism.

This is the Atman and as Nietzsche says — more modern than any of us, making the same point Niels Bohr makes about his horse shoes and about superstition in the realm of the Real⁴² — shaking his head: *du wirst es jedenfalls*. (KSA 9, 505): *Tat tvam asi*. I quote the Sanskrit here to quote the Vedic tradition because, as Schrödinger says, translating Descartes’s powerful point about the need for creation and its co-equivalence with conservation, *it is you* in any case.

To give the last word to Schrödinger here:

It is certain that the earth will give birth to you again and again, for new struggles and for new sufferings. And not only in the future : it resuscitates you now, today, every day, not just once but several thousand times, exactly as it buries you every day several thousand times (...). (For) the present is the only thing which has no end.⁴³

Endnotes

¹ Karl Schlechta, *Nietzsche-Chronik. Daten zu Leben und Werk* (München: dtv, 1984 [1975]), p. 84.

² Cited by Montinari in a prefatory note to his edition of Zarathustra. See Nietzsche, *Kritische Studienausgabe*, Mazzino Montinari and Giorgio Colli, ed. (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1980) [KSA], Vol. IV, p. 7.

³ Claus Zittel, *Das ästhetische Kalkül von Friedrich Nietzsches „Also sprach Zarathustra“* (Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 2001).

⁴ See the translation of and commentary-contributions to Lukian, *Die Lügenfreunde oder Der Unglaubliche*, trans. and interpreted by Martin Ebner, Holger Gzella, Heinz-Günther Nesselrath, Ernst Ribbat (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2001). And see for my own argument on Nietzsche and Lucian, along with a good many additional references, Babich, “[Nietzsche’s Zarathustra and Parodic Style: On Lucian’s Hyperanthropos and Nietzsche’s Übermensch](#),” *Diogenes*, 58, 4 (November 2011 [March 2013]): 58-74 (originally published in French, see reference in note 32).

⁵ See, Jonathan Barnes, “Nietzsche and Diogenes Laertius,” *Nietzsche-Studien*, 15 (1986): 16-40 as well as Thomas Brobjer, *Nietzsche’s Philosophical Context: An Intellectual Biography* (Bloomington: University of Illinois Press, 2008). Nietzsche’s work on Diogenes Laertius and in the specific context thematic set by Ritschl is relevant for the doxographical context later established by Hermann Diels, his *Doxographi Graeci*, appears in Jaap Mansfeld and David T. Runia, *Aëtiana: The Method and Intellectual Context of a Doxographer: The Sources. Volume I* (Brill: 1997), p. 93ff. Mansfeld and Runia who are here clarifying the broader meaning of ‘synoptic’ (including a reference to Calvin) also note that Diels knew Nietzsche’s work. Significant here, in a hermeneutic context is also Nietzsche’s formation as Mansfeld and Runia also point to the sophistication of “the use of the Lachmannian stemmatic method,” pointing out that “as young student at Bonn he had become acquainted with the latest developments in New Testament criticism.” *Ibid.*, p. 117. Wolfgang Rößler in his own discussion of this same constellation notes that Diels had hoped to collaborate with Nietzsche. Rößler, “Hermann Diels und die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker,” in Annette M. Baertschi and Colin G. King, eds., *Die modernen Vater der Antike: die Entwicklung der Altertumswissenschaften an Akademie und Universität im Berlin des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2009), pp. 369-396, here, pp. 374-375. See too, Thomas Brobjer “Nietzsche’s Forgotten Book,” *New Nietzsche Studies*, Vol. 4 Nos. 1 & 2 (2000):157-161. I discuss Lachmann and Nietzsche in a related context in Babich, “[Towards a Critical Philosophy of Science: Continental Beginnings and Bugbears, Whigs and Waterbears](#),” *International Journal of the Philosophy of Science*, Vol. 24, No. 4 (December 2010): 343-391. See also although sadly all too elliptically, Lachterman’s contribution to Daniel Conway and Rudolf Rehn, eds., *Nietzsche und die antike Philosophie* (Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag 1992).

⁶ Most recently I have elaborated this argument further to emphasize its political dimensions in Babich, “The Time of Kings: Nietzsche’s Zarathustra, Nietzsche’s Empedocles” in: Horst Hutter and Eli Friedlander, eds., [Nietzsche’s Therapeutic Teaching: For Individuals and Culture](#) (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), pp. 157-174.

⁷ Lucian’s *Icaromenippus* retells Menippus’ tale of taking flight to visit the man in the moon (Empedocles, of course). The text of *Icaromenippus* (Or the One Who Flew Above the Clouds), was well-known to Nietzsche and any schoolboy — even those without Greek, translated as it was by Gottsched almost a century before Nietzsche was born and again in 1820 by Christoph Martin Wieland. See Lucianus (Samosatensis), *Auserlesene Schriften* Johann Christoph Gottsched, ed., and trans. (Leipzig: Breitkopf, 1745), pp. 49-78, and plainly apotheosized at the start of Nietzsche’s essay “On Truth and Lie.” See, in a bilingual edition, translated as “Icaromenippus or the Sky Man” by A. M. Harmon in *Lucian: Volume II* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1915), pp. 267-323.

⁸ One can also see, just as the start, the influence of Lucian on Jules Verne: “It was three thousand furlongs, then, from the earth to the moon, my first stage; and from there up to the sun perhaps five hundred leagues; and from the

sun to Heaven itself and the citadel of Zeus would be also a day's ascent for an eagle travelling light." *Lucian: Volume II*, p. 269.

⁹ It is Lucian who exemplifies Menippean satire as Nietzsche speaks of it (and Nietzsche also speaks of Lucian by name to be sure). But as I note elsewhere it has been the custom for more than a century to celebrate Menippus above Lucian for rather less reason that the praise of peace that assured Hesiod's triumph over Homer. When Massimo Fusillo suggests in commenting on Bakhtin that one might "understand 'Menippean' not as a definite genre" he is getting at this point while sidestepping it. Fusillo, "Modern Critical Theories and the Ancient Novel" in p. 277-306, here p. 280. Thus Fusillo remarks, rightly if parenthetically, that the 'features' of Menippean satire "would be very difficult to single out" (ibid.) for the plain reason that, as Fusillo neglects to note, we happen to have no single instantiation of any of Menippus' writings. By contrast, we have a lot of Lucian, and Menippus as a character comes via Lucian (see the note below). Hence Lucian, among other ancient authors, is also the reason we prize Menippus.

¹⁰ Lucian, "Icaromenippus or the Sky Man," p. 273.

¹¹ Lucian, *Alethe Diegammata*, translated as "A True Story" (I and II) by A. M. Harmon in *Lucian: Volume I* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1913), pp. 247-358.

¹² In *Lucian: Volume III*, Harmon, trans. (Cambridge: Loeb, 1921), pp. 1-82.

¹³ The Greek title is *Bion Praxis*, and as Harmon notes speaking of 'philosophies' (or we might add of 'creeds') is a euphemism: the title refers to lives for sale. *Lucian: Volume II*, pp. 449-511

¹⁴ Lucian, "The Downward Journey or the Tyrant," *Lucian: Volume II*, pp. 1-58.

¹⁵ See Lucian' "The Lover of Lies or the Doubter" here. *Lucian: Volume III* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1913), pp. 319-382.

¹⁶ Nietzsche, „Der Florentinische Tractat über Homer und Hesiod, ihr Geschlecht und ihren Wettkampf“ *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie*, Neue Folge, Vol. 25, (1870): 528-540 as well as the conclusion, Nietzsche, "Der Florentinische Tractat über Homer und Hesiod, ihr Geschlecht und ihren Wettkampf (Schluss)," *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie*, Neue Folge, (J.D. Sauerländers Verlag), Vol. 28, (1873): 211-249. See too Martin West, "The Contest Between Homer and Hesiod." *Classics Quarterly*, 17, 2 (1967): 433-50.

¹⁷ Physical discoveries support Nietzsche's dating, and most discussions of this text are disputes about its date and origination: George Leonidas Koniaris, "Michigan Papyrus 2754 and the Certamen," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, Vol. 75, (1971): 107-129. The issue for Nietzsche however largely concerned the conditions of contest: does the better poet always win? If not, for what reasons.

¹⁸ That Nietzsche himself did not parse the lie in this way, but saw it rather as a consequence of conventionality and truncation is clear in his conclusion where he summarizes the conclusion or upshot of the "contest" for our times, writing about the ultimate collapse of the simple opposition between the Homeric and pre-Homeric, resulting in yet another and more durable 'invention' or lie, whereby "Alexander, the courser copy and abbreviation of Greek history, now invent the Hellenic cosmopolitan and the so-called 'Hellenism.'" KSA I, 792. What should be evident, at the very least, is that apart from this last sentence one cannot understand the revised subtitle to Nietzsche's later edition of *The Birth of Tragedy Or Hellenism and Pessimism*. It's worth noting that Kaufmann mysteriously leaves out of the section he includes from this in his *The Portable Nietzsche* — Kaufmann ends his translation just after Nietzsche's "it becomes 'prehomeric' —", that is after a thought-slash and leading generations of Straussians and others to decide that the Hesiodic is the Dionysian. See by contrast two studies on this topic, both of which, nicely agonistically, appeared this current year, Christa Davis Acampora, *Contesting Nietzsche* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013) and Yunus Tuncel, *Agon in Nietzsche* (Milwaukee: Marquette Studies in Philosophy, 2013).

¹⁹ *Lucian: Volume I*, p. 251.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 253.

²¹ See too for an earlier version of this example, Babich, "[Flamme bin ich sicherlich — Flame am I...: To Eternity](#)," *Existence*, Volume 8, No. 1 (Spring 2013): 7-15 and "[On Schrödinger and Nietzsche: Eternal Return and the Moment](#)" in: Christopher Key Chapple, ed., *Festschrift for Antonio de Nicolas*, based on a lecture originally given at Fordham University, late September 2011. A video version, recorded in early November 2011, may be seen here: <http://digital.library.fordham.edu/cdm/singleitem/collection/VIDEO/id/211>.

²² Gadamer, "The Great Year of Zarathustra" and for further references to the literature on Zarathustra and Empedocles as well as Heraclitus, see the above cited: Babich, "The Time of Kings."

²³ This is a lynchpin of certain readings. See for one instance, Brusotti, „Die ewige Wiederkehr des Gleichen in Also sprach Zarathustra“ in: G. Merlio, ed, *Lectures d'une œuvre. Also sprach Zarathustra. Friedrich Nietzsche* (Paris: éd. du Temps, 2000), pp. 139-154.

²⁴ Though one can argue that both Nietzsche and Poincaré were influenced as many were by the today more or less forgotten polymath, Gustav Teichmüller, one of the few authors Nietzsche bothers to footnote, perhaps because he was also a former Basel colleague. Most scholars of course, following the limited positivism of Nietzsche source scholarship that the only books Nietzsche *could have read* were books for which we have positive evidence: given that he cited them, borrowed them, owned them. As most things, we know, are left unsaid, and as Nietzsche famously liked to call himself the kind of author who says in aphorism what others do not say in book, meaning as the master of the unspoken (this is traditionally the esoteric), our positivist conviction in this regard is procrustean.

²⁵ See Babich, “Towards a Critical Philosophy of Science.”

²⁶ See here, although these are not my concerns here, Robin Small’s discussion of Paul Loeb and so on in his *Time and Becoming in Nietzsche’s Thought* (London: Continuum, 2010).

²⁷ See again, Babich, “On Schrödinger and Nietzsche.”

²⁸ Nietzsche, “Der Florentinische Tractat über Homer und Hesiod, ihr Geschlecht und ihren Wettkampf (Schluss),” p. 249.

²⁹ See Luc Brisson and F. Walter Meyerstein, *Inventing the Universe: Plato’s Timaeus, the Big Bang, and the Problem of Scientific Knowledge* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995). I thank Patrick Heelan for directing my attention, all these many years ago, to this very fine book on the notion and the nature of axiomatic systems.

³⁰ Small, *Time and Becoming in Nietzsche’s Thought*, p. 118.

³¹ Heidegger, *Nietzsche I* (Pfullingen : Neske, 1961), p. 312

³² Ibid.

³³ See Babich, « [Le Zarathoustra de Nietzsche et le style parodique. A propos de l’hyperanthropos de Lucien et du surhomme de Nietzsche](#), » *Diogenes. Revue internationale des sciences humaines*, 232 (October 2010): 70-93, here p. 97.

³⁴ Small gives a nice listing of possible sources for this, including Rumi, but Heidegger himself simply identifies it as “nihilism.”

³⁵ Cited in Heidegger, *Nietzsche I*, pp. 444-445.

³⁶ Zarathustra is in fact, as I like to point out is only talking over the heads of those who assembled there not at all to hear Zarathustra but to see the spectacle of “the pre-announced” tightrope walker. (*Z, Zarathustra’s Prologue* §3)

³⁷ See my book, [Nietzsche’s Philosophy of Science: Reflecting Science on the Ground of Art and Life](#) (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994) as well as two recent essays where I reprise this point, in my already cited above, “Towards a Critical Philosophy of Science” and, again in German, “[Nietzsches hermeneutische, phänomenologische Wissenschafts-philosophie. Unzeitgemäße Betrachtungen zu Altphilologie und Physiologie](#)” in: Günter Abel and Helmut Heit, eds., *Nietzsches Wissenschaftsphilosophie. Hintergründe, Wirkungen und Aktualität* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2012), pp. 291-311. But Heidegger who was lecturing at a time when just the same arguments were being reprised once again, in particular by Becker but also Szilasi and others points out in a section of his Nietzsche lectures, “Nietzsche Proof of the Doctrine of Recurrence: that the very effort to “prove” Nietzsche right are really directed to those who take themselves to be oh so clever (“wir ganz klugen”) — “One even shows, with mathematical detail, his proofs are not so bad, apart from a couple of ‘mistakes.’ Indeed, Nietzsche even anticipated several lines of thought in contemporary physics; and what could be more important for a contemporary person than one’s science.” Heidegger, *Nietzsche I*, p. 368.

³⁸ Babich, „On Schrödinger and Nietzsche.“

³⁹ Nietzsche, KSA 9, p. 505.

⁴⁰ Isobel Armstrong draws upon (and cites) Nietzschean (and Freudian) imagery in her final chapter “Coda on Time” in her book, *Victorian Glassworlds: Glass Culture and the Imagination 1830-1880* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 246-360. And in Babich, *Nietzsche’s Philosophy of Science*, I connect Nietzsche’s language of a lightning image from the eternal flux” (see p. 177) with Rüdiger Schmidt’s illustration of Nietzsche’s experience of the landscape glimpsed, as I put it: “through the windows of a railroad car.” (see p. 133) This experience of trains, as I note, would have been formative not only for Nietzsche but also Lacan and indeed Ingmar Bergmann himself (ibid.). In this locus I do not mention Woody Allen though the New York subways, as I can attest from my own experience, would also have lent him the same insights.

⁴¹ See for a related discussion, Babich, “Truth Untrembling Heart” in: Michael Marder and Santiago Zabala, eds., [Being Shaken: Ontology and the Event](#) (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

⁴² According to several reports, Niels Bohr was famously asked why he, a man of science, would keep a superstitious marker above his barn door, surely, the incredulous question came, he did not believe in such things. To which Bohr replied that he understood that the good luck of the charm worked whether he believed in it or not.

See one account of this anecdote in Abraham Pais, *Inward Bound: Of Matter and Forces in the Physical World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 210.

⁴³ Erwin Schrödinger, *Mein Leben, meine Weltansicht* (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1985 [1925]), p. 72.